

Congratulations To Barrie and Margaret Swales who were married at St. Michael and St. John's on 30th April 1960 and are celebrating their Diamond wedding anniversary.

Prayers We keep in our prayers all who are sick and those who care for them, and all who keep our wonderful NHS going in these difficult times. We commend to the Lord all who have died recently, especially Ellen Walters and Margaret Donnelly who died suddenly this week.

Offertory Collection Parishioners are asking what they should do at this time. Our main concern is for your well being and everything else is secondary. Thank you for your continued financial support of the parish at this time. Several people have dropped their envelopes through the letterbox at the presbytery. If, as some people have asked, you would like to set up a direct debit for your offertory collection, please get in touch with Janet at janet.clegg@dioceseofsalford.org.uk or paul.brindle@dioceseofsalford.org.uk or ring the presbytery.

"STRONG IN THE FACE OF TRIBULATION" The Vatican has this week published a new book, called "Strong in the Face of Tribulation", containing prayers used by Pope Francis during the current crisis, as well as all his daily Mass homilies from March 9th. The book is available to download as a PDF in English from <https://tinyurl.com/ycv227fo> Also highly recommended for Church and world news at this time is the Vatican News Service, available at www.vaticannews.va/en

MASS FOR HEALTH WORKERS The Catholic Bishops of England and Wales recognise that this time of the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting every person in our countries. Those who are sick, and their families, are suffering many hardships of isolation from contact with those they love. Our front-line workers in hospitals and in care homes all over our lands are giving exceptional service to those who are vulnerable at this time. In order to show a spiritual solidarity with all those who are involved in the ways described above, each Thursday, a Catholic Bishop will celebrate Mass in their Cathedral which will be live streamed for people to join. This will take place every Thursday at 7pm. Links can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/yaf2rprj>

The Word This Week

This Sunday is traditionally called Good Shepherd Sunday, because of the Gospel references to Jesus as the Good Shepherd. It is also the day of prayer for Vocations to the Priesthood. On this Sunday we hear one of the great 'I am' statements of Jesus from Saint John's Gospel today 'I am the gate of the sheepfold' . Through Jesus we enter into life and safety, and we go through Jesus, the gate by baptism. This image is implied in all today's readings: the people listening to Peter find this gateway and enter through it: Peter writes to remind us that we have come back to the Good Shepherd, who heals us by his wounds.

Let us pray for all our clergy and pray also that those who God is calling to the Priesthood or the Religious Life, that they will hear his call and generously respond.

Today is of course the first Sunday in May, as we used to call it 'May Sunday', and May is the month of Mary. "And you so loved the world, Father most holy, that in the fullness of time you sent your only Begotten Son to be our Saviour. Made incarnate by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, he shared our human nature in all things but sin" (Eucharistic Prayer 1V)

Mary listened to God's Word, she acted on God's Word, and so through her the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Let us continue to listen to God's Word, let us act on it, so that through us Jesus may continue to be known and loved.

Mary is the faithful one – the one who is full of faith. She is our model. She is the true believer, the one whose faith we must do our best to imitate. We must receive the Word of God in faith and ponder over it, as she did. By doing this the Son of God becomes incarnate among us.

Perhaps we could try and say at least one decade of the Rosary each day. Let us never be afraid to turn to Our Lady in faith and ask her help. When the Angel appeared to Mary at Nazareth, she must have been confused, afraid, frightened, but she still said 'Yes'. During these times we perhaps feel confused, afraid, frightened, so

let us turn to Our Lady in this time of great need, and ask her intercession. Let us try during these days to deepen our love and admiration for Our Lady. Our Lady, Queen of the Rosary, pray for us.

Thank you for your notes and emails and phone calls, they are much appreciated. Thankfully I am keeping well. Keep safe and well, and let us pray for each other.

I continue to celebrate Mass at 9am each morning, and although no one else can be present, you are always in my prayer. God bless. Fr. Paul.

Memorare

Remember,

O most gracious Virgin Mary,
that never was it known, that anyone
who fled to the protection,
implored thy help, or sought thy intercession,
was left unaided.

Inspired with this confidence,
I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother.
To thee I come, before thee I stand,
sinful and sorrowful.

O Mother of the Word incarnate,
despise not my petition,
but in thy mercy hear and answer me.
Amen.