

Our Lady of the Valley
Parish Newsletter 24th May 2020 – 7th Sunday of Easter

LAUDATO SI

To honour the 5th anniversary of Pope Francis' Laudato Si, we are invited to pray and reflect on how we can create a more just and sustainable future. At 12 noon (local time), we are invited to pray in our homes to create a global wave of prayer around the world.

Loving God,
Creator of heaven and earth and all that is in them,
You created us in your image and made us stewards
of all your creation.
You blessed us with the sun, water and bountiful land
so that all might be nourished.
Open our minds and touch our hearts,
so that we may attend to your gift of creation.
Help us to be conscious that our common home
belongs not only to us, but to all of your creatures and
to all future generations, and that it is our responsibility
to preserve it.

May we help each person secure the food and resources that they need.

Be present to those in need in these trying times,
especially the poorest and those most at risk of being left behind.

Transform our fear, anxiety and feelings of isolation into hope
and fraternity so that we may experience a true conversion of the heart.

Help us to show creative solidarity in addressing the
consequences of this global pandemic;
Make us courageous to embrace the changes that are
needed in search of the common good,
Now more than ever may we feel that we are all
interconnected and interdependent.
Enable us to listen and respond to the cry of the earth
and the cry of the poor.
May the present sufferings be the birth pangs of a
more fraternal and sustainable world.

Under the loving gaze of Mary Help of Christians, we make this prayer
through Christ our Lord.

Amen

Today is the seventh Sunday of Easter, that time between the Lord's Ascension into heaven, and next Sunday when we will celebrate the outpouring of God's Holy Spirit, Pentecost Sunday, the birthday of the Church.

The Apostles, and Our Lady, were locked in the Upper Room, afraid, waiting for something to happen.

It is possible that we too are feeling a bit like them at this time! Afraid, wondering what will happen!

What the Lord's followers did during those days between Ascension and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, is a challenge and an invitation to each one of us. Our reading from the Acts of the Apostles tells us today 'All of these joined in continuous prayer'. (Acts 1: 12-

14). During those days they didn't preach, or work miracles, or make converts – but what they did do, was to pray.

So let us pray; let us pray for the outpouring of that same Spirit in our lives, on our families, on our world, on the Church. And when filled with that Spirit, anything can happen, and all things are possible in and through the Lord.

Prayer

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful,
and enkindle in them the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.
And you shall renew the face of the earth.

Let us pray.

O God, who has taught the hearts of the faithful by the
light of the Holy Spirit, grant that by the gift of the
same Spirit we may be always truly wise and ever
Rejoice in his consolation.
Through Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

I hope that you are all keeping well and safe, as thankfully I am too.

I continue to remember you all in Mass each day which I celebrate at 9am every morning, behind locked doors as required.

I was conscious that I have only been celebrating Mass here in St. Michael and St. John's church, due to the restrictions on how far we could travel. Things having changed a little last week, I was able to celebrate Mass in our other two churches, in Sabden and in Dunsop Bridge, and hopefully will do the same again this week. As no one else is allowed to go into church for any reason at this time, which includes for public worship or for private prayer, it felt right and proper that I was able to celebrate Mass in all three of the churches in our parish of Our Lady of the Valley.

God bless you all. Fr. Paul.

LOCKDOWN EASING The government has advised that we may be in a position to re-open our Churches by early July, or possibly sooner for private prayer. **WE ARE GREATLY CHALLENGED WHEN WE RE-OPEN OUR DOORS!** The average age of our congregation, and the numbers involved, requires extra sensitivity. **There will be a need for volunteers when we open, to limit the numbers in Church and to wipe down surfaces e.g. benches and handles. More information will be given once we receive it.**

COVID-19 SECURE TEAM Bishop John has written to say: "There is, as yet, no indication as to when churches may be able to re-open, even for private prayer. It is important that we act together with all other dioceses under the guidance of the Archbishops, who are in discussions with government officials and Public Health England. What is already clear is that volunteers will be required to be present in the churches when they reopen to ensure that the conditions concerning social distancing are observed by people coming to the church." We will, therefore, need a team of volunteers who will be ready to ensure that our Church is COVID-19 Secure when we are eventually open (almost certainly first for private prayer.)

Volunteers Needed When the time comes, we will of course only be able to open our doors for private prayer if we have at least two people in there at all times that we are open so as to direct people in what is permissible and to make sure all guidance which we will be given is followed. Perhaps this might mean the church would be opened for just a limited time each day.

We obviously need to wait and see what the Bishops and the Government instruct us to do. But we certainly need to be looking ahead to the time when we can open our Churches again. So if you are under 70, and free of any underlying conditions, and would like to volunteer for this role, which would eventually allow our churches to be open, please email me at paul.brindle@dioceseofsalford.org.uk or Janet at janet.clegg@dioceseofsalford.org.uk with your name and contact details, or ring me on 01200 423307. As we receive more guidance from the Diocese I will then be in touch. Thank you.

First Holy Communions Some people have been asking ‘When will the year three children be receiving their First Holy Communion?’ The simple answer is, we do not know. We do not know yet the date on which public worship will be allowed to recommence nor the social distancing conditions that will be required. Until we do it is impossible to arrange dates or, indeed, make plans about the kinds of celebrations and the numbers involved.

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 livestreamed for people to join. This will take place every Thursday at 7pm. Links can be found at [https:// tinyurl.com/yaf2rprj](https://tinyurl.com/yaf2rprj) Cardinal Nichols said, ‘Use that time before 8 o’clock on a Thursday to offer your prayers of thanksgiving for these generous, courageous people, for their support – their encouragement – that God will sustain them in this great work that they’re doing. We applaud, but we pray and we pray fervently for them. May God bless them all.’ Bishop Robert Byrne, Hexham & Newcastle 28th May.

Live streamed Masses: It is possible to see Mass live streamed from various places by going to <https://www.mcnmedia.tv/schedule> or <https://www.churchservices.tv>

The ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION, St Alphonsus

My Jesus, I believe that Thou art present in the Blessed Sacrament. I love Thee above all things and I desire Thee in my soul. Since I cannot now receive Thee come at least spiritually into my heart. As though you were already there, I embrace Thee and unite myself wholly to Thee; permit that I should never be separated from Thee. Amen.

Feasts this coming week

Monday, Saint Bede the Venerable: Bede was born in 673, and was educated by the Benedictines; he eventually joined the monastery there, and began a life of great erudition,

producing many writings: he particularly worked on the interpretation of the Scriptures and the History of the Church in Britain. He died in the year 735.

Tuesday, Saint Philip Neri: renowned for his prayerfulness and sense of fun and humour, Philip was born in Florence in 1515; he arrived in Rome, and after a mystical experience in the catacombs, gathered a community of friends to look after the sick, which eventually became the Oratory. He died in 1595.

Wednesday, Saint Augustine of Canterbury: in 597 Pope Gregory the Great sent Augustine, then a monk of the monastery of Saint Peter on the Celian hill in Rome, to evangelize the people of Britain. Despite turning back once, Augustine succeeded in converting king Ethelbert and founding the see of Canterbury. He died in 605.

We need to find a New Normal

On April 29th Caritas Salford hosted a webinar: Reimagining CARITAS – Love in Action in a Post-Corona-virus Society. One of those speaking was our Bishop John Arnold. Bishop John does not speak from notes and this is a rough transcript of what he said:

There are great opportunities. There are great responses from people in our parishes who are networking their actions, but we have to address the wider issues beyond how we look after ourselves. The tendency has been to look inwards. A great call within our faith encouraged by Pope Francis has been to look outwards and tackle, for example, famine, modern slavery and the disintegration of aspects in our own society. There is a built in tendency to wait for government to do something. A recent report cites UK children being the unhappiest in Europe. We must be more generous in what are we going to do about social problems. If the pandemic allows us the time to think about the common objectives that we have in our common home, that people are our brothers and sisters, and that people have common dignity, then to go back to normal would be to neglect demands that we are beginning to see so much more clearly. We need to find a new normal that includes more of a sense of common wellbeing that we owe to all our brothers and sisters.

We have been made aware by countless radio and media interviews of the immense suffering of people. There is a great spiritual angle – people have been critical about closing churches but there was good reason to protect people from contaminating others and protecting health and wellbeing. Wherever we are we are Church. How wonderful it is that we can meet in public buildings and share the sacraments and liturgy but the fact that we cannot do that at this moment puts us in solidarity with many people around the world who have no churches. We are denied that sense of gathering in public that puts us in solidarity with each other. More importantly we should develop the idea that we are church wherever we are. St Paul calls us ambassadors for Christ. Pope Francis calls us to be missionary disciples, to do things in a Christ-like manner. Being Catholic is more than just being in buildings.

Anthony Brown, Parish CARITAS Rep.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

This week an entry from The School Girls Log Book 1880

Jan 16 th	Attendance not good, on account of weather. Mary Gerrard 2 nd Year Pupil Teacher commenced teaching in the Girls' School on the 5 th of January.
Jan 23 rd	A little improvement in the attendance. Examined all the Standards in Arithmetic and Dictations. Results favourable especially in Standard III
Jan 30 th	Schools visited daily by Rev W Lea. Attendance fair. Usual routine
Feb 6 th	Time Table changed on Friday morning. Rev'd Manager gave an Arithmetic lesson to Standards IV, V, & VI. Attendance good. The Pupils Teachers appear to be very zealous and the Children interested in their work.
Feb 10 th	Examined registers and found everything correct. W. Lean Manager and Correspondent.
Feb 13 th	School visited daily by Rev W. Lea and several times by Rev Speakman. Holiday on Tuesday afternoon.
Feb 20 th	Three children admitted to the school during the week. Attendance good.
Feb 27 th	Attendance very good. Highest weekly average since Christmas.
Mar 6 th	The School has been visited several times during the week by the Rev'd Manager. Average lower than previous weeks owing to wet weather.
Mar 12 th	Attendance very good. School visited daily by the Rev'd Manager.
Mar 19 th	All the scholars from Standard II were examined today in Geography. Results satisfactory.
Mar 26 th	School closed on Wednesday evening for the Easter holidays. Attendance has been poor this week owing to the fair being held in the town.
April 2 nd	Attendance very poor. School re-opened on Tuesday morning after Easter holidays. Holiday given on Wednesday afternoon on account of "The Election"
April 9 th	Attendance very good. School visited daily by the Rev'd Manager.
April 16 th	Examined the needlework of Standards IV, V and VI, results satisfactory. Jane Alice Birch absent on Tuesday with permissions.
April 23 rd	Attendance very good. Rev'd Manager examined Standards IV, V and VI in Geography on Friday afternoon. Time table changed from 3 o'clock in consequence.
April 30 th	School visited every day by Rev'd W Lea. Usual routine
May 7 th	Attendance good. Children work diligently. Examined each child from Standard I upwards in sewing. Result satisfactory.
May 14 th	Geography for Standards IV, V and VI in 1881 "British Isles Possessions"
May 28 th	School closed for Whitsuntide holidays
June 4 th	School re-opened on Monday after holiday. Church holiday on Thursday, school closed in consequence. Attendance very good.
June 11 th	Attendance very good. School visited every day by Rev's Manager.
June 18 th	Two children admitted to the school. Attendance not as good as last week.
	Attendance very good. Children and Teachers appear to be taking great interest in their work.
	The following is a copy of Her Majesty's Inspectors report Girls School
	<i>The Girl's School has gone on improving and now for pleasantness of general tone and for efficiency of inspection occupies a high position amongst the Girls Schools in this district. Elementary instruction is very good. In the second Standard there was not a failure, and only one in the third Standard. The other Standards were hardly less satisfactory. The examination work in Sewing is good. The specimens shown were unusually numerous and well worked. Geography is good in all classes. Discipline is excellent. "Singing, taught to Boys and Girls together is good, but as yet taught by ear only"</i>
	Mary Anne Walmsley Certificated 1st Division
	Mary Gerrard. Pupil Teacher 2nd Year
	William Lea. Manager & Correspondent.