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Great News

As from tomorrow, Monday 22nd June, St. Michael and St. John's church will be able to open its doors and welcome people back, **for quiet and private prayer.**

As you are aware whenever the church is open there must always be two stewards in the church who are able to direct people and also make sure that all the necessary requirements are being adhered to. They will also have the necessary antibacterial materials to wipe down benches as required. We have just had enough volunteers to enable us to open the church for private prayer at the following times: –

Monday to Friday 11am till 12 noon.

Saturday 11am till 1pm.

We will use the main doors for entering the church and the side door near the pulpit as an exit, and on entering and leaving you will be asked to sanitize your hands.

The doors will be left wide open during time for prayer.

A one way system will be in place inside the church.

You must keep social distancing.

Use only the benches that are not roped off.

We need to keep an atmosphere of complete silence at all times when in church.

If we are to continue to remain open, and hopefully at some future date increase the times of opening (with the help of more volunteers), it is important that we all follow the stewards directions and do what is being asked of us. By doing this we will not be putting ourselves or others at risk, and hopefully all stay safe.

If you or any of your household present with any coronavirus symptoms then you must stay away.

I know that all of this is so different to what we have ever been used to, but needs must, and we must get this right and at the same time get used to this new way of doing things.

But it is so good that we can come into our church again

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Today is the Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time. Sunday Mass readings are from Cycle B
Weekday readings are from Cycle 2. The Divine Office is from the Psalter week 4.

Feasts this week

22nd June Saint John Fisher and Saint Thomas More: John was born at Beverley (Yorkshire) in 1469, and died at London on 22 June 1535. He was appointed bishop of Rochester and combined pastoral ministry with study and writing, especially in defence of Catholic doctrine. Thomas More was born in London in 1478, and died there on this day in 1535. An Oxford scholar and an incorruptible judge who served as Speaker and Lord Chancellor. Both were drawn into conflict with Henry VIII over his remarriage and papal supremacy. Both were imprisoned and beheaded for treason.

24th June The Nativity of St. John the Baptist.

27th June Saint John Southworth: Samlesbury was the seat of the Southworth family, and John was born there in 1582. He trained in Douai, and returned to England in 1619, carrying out his missionary work in Lancashire. He was arrested in 1627 and imprisoned in Lancaster Castle, before being moved to London in 1630; there he was released on condition he left the country, but was found ministering to plague victims in London in 1636. Arrested again in 1654, aged 72, he was executed at Tyburn. His body lies in Westminster Cathedral.

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Building Compassion

We hear a lot about “mercy” in the bible, and in the Church, but a word that better captures the spirit of the ancient Hebrew is “compassion”. “Mercy” includes “compassion” but “compassion” is all-embracing and asks for us to understand and care for those we don’t like, those who haven’t wronged us and those we don’t even know. It isn’t easy to care for people we don’t like and it isn’t easy to feel the pain of those we have never met. Yet that is what Jesus commands us to do.

We learnt at school that God gave us free will and he commands us to use it to do what is right. Yet free will can feel so limited that we seem unable to fight our natural inclinations. As we go through life we never seem to break the patterns of weakness and transgression. It isn’t easy to feel compassion for those who have wronged us.

St Augustine taught that without God’s grace we could not prevail over the Devil. For a time and with limited success we can fight against our inclinations but without God’s grace we can’t change from “wanting” something to “not wanting” it. And even with God’s grace we have to work on it – to “flex the muscle and build up strength gradually” as a wise old priest once advised me in the confessional.

Leading a good life is all about compassion and being compassionate but first we have to understand compassion as the ancient Hebrews did; in a way that “mercy” and “love” never fully embrace. Compassion is recognising the suffering of others and taking action to help. “Action” takes compassion beyond empathy and Jesus teaches that we must have compassion for all.

During the Covid-19 lock down we have seen great acts of compassion. Hardship brings people together and Bishop John has said many times that this coming together and caring for everyone must continue as a New Normal when the lockdown comes to an end.

It was a month in Nepal in 2010, away from alcohol and living with some of the poorest people in the world, that changed me from “wanting” alcohol to “not wanting” it. When I returned to England the desire was much diminished and easy to fight. Over a few more months the desire went completely as did a habit of over 40 years. But the change in me

was bigger than that. Satisfying an urge makes one inward looking and freedom from alcohol was a release in a much wider sense. I came to understand what St Augustine meant and I hope too that I became more compassionate.

A month in Nepal, trekking in the foothills of the Himalayas was a time for reflection and so too has this period of lockdown, away from the fetters and preoccupations of routines built up over years. I think we have all become more outward looking, reflected in more rather than less communication. Everyone seems to want to talk and to share more. Let us not move back.

We cannot change without the grace of God but even with the Grace of God we have to “flex the muscle” and as well as theology a little psychology helps. And when the lock-down is over we will have a head’s start.

I got the below from a recent article in The Psychologist and thought it worth sharing:

8 Practical Steps for building compassion

1. Learn about what compassion is, what it isn’t, and its benefits to yourself and others
2. Practice self-compassion. Recognise the inevitability of suffering, notice your own, and treat yourself with the same kindness, care and understanding you might treat another.
3. Listen with more empathy. Imagine things from another’s perspective and communicate this attempt at understanding.
4. Spend time during your day – perhaps during any mindfulness practice, or when travelling or working – silently wishing other people well, wishing them happiness and freedom from suffering.
5. In seated practice, cultivate feelings of compassion for things which are easy, for example, people you love, close friends and relatives, loved pets etc. Then extend this ‘circle of compassion’ towards mere acquaintances and strangers. And then perhaps to people you actively dislike.
6. Increase your acts of kindness to others. Help people to do things that they cannot or might struggle to do for themselves. Try to be helpful, rather than harmful.
7. Try and shift from a self-focus to a systems-focus, recognising you as part of a much larger connected biological system in which cooperation commonly results in better outcomes.
8. Continuously hone your skills and abilities around noticing, approaching, alleviating and preventing suffering in yourself and others- such as non-judgement, empathy, distress tolerance, courage and technical helping skills

Anthony Brown

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FROM THE ARCHIVES:

A report in one of the National Newspapers sometime in 1934 about Stanley House (not sure whether Daily Mail, Daily Express or Daily Despatch)

The Headlines - *House 'Seized' by Couple at Night*

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CLAIM TO OWN IT

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FURNITURE IN STREET

From our own correspondent

Clitheroe, Friday

A CROWD of several hundred people saw an extraordinary occurrence in Lowergate, Clitheroe, today, when household goods were removed from Stanley House, the former residence of Mr C.J.B.Trappes, which had been unoccupied for a long time.

The furniture was deposited in the street, and it was noticed that a feeble elderly woman was sitting on a rocking chair.

It is stated that the man who gave the name of "John Lomax" and his wife arrived in Clitheroe last night with their goods and established themselves in the house.

MAN'S CLAIM

The solicitor for the property owners' was notified and the police were summoned, but the man declined to leave, claiming a legal right to the property as a descendant of an old Lancashire family of Lomax.

He and his wife were permitted to stay the night, but this afternoon, in the temporary absence of "Mr Lomax" who had gone to a shop in the town, his wife was led from the house and all the belongings were removed.

On his return, the man, seeing what had happened, excitedly addressed the crowd on what he considered were his rights to the property.

DEPARTURE IN CAR

He sent for his solicitor, who interviewed the representative of the property owners.

While this discussion, which lasted some time, was taking place, the woman was laid upon a couch in the street.

After the conference the claimant and his wife were taken away by a friend in a car and a van removed their goods.

The following is a report from Clitheroe Advertizer and Times on 13th November 1953:

Catholic Church Repairs Will Cost 'At Least £5.000'

It was disclosed this week that Clitheroe Roman Catholics are faced with the task of raising at least £5,000 to repair the ravages of dry rot in the church of St Michael & St John in Lowergate.

Total cost may be as much as £10,000, the Rector Fr Robert Walmsley S.J. told a meeting of the men of the congregation on Sunday. He emphasised however that this was not a firm figure as the full extent of the damage could not yet be determined.

Evidence of damage was found some weeks ago, when it was thought the trouble was restricted to woodwork. But more extensive damage has now been revealed as a result of the survey by a diocesan architect. The rot has penetrated stonework on the north wall of the church.

Councillor C Chatburn has been appointed chairman of a committee appointed to deal with the financial problems of repairing the damage.

Said Councillor Chatburn: "At least £5,000 will be needed but an even bigger sum may be required. The full extent of the necessary repairs can be determined only as the work proceeds."

Councillor Chatburn said a gift of £100 has already been received and members of the congregation have undertaken to make weekly contributions. Money raising contributions are being organised among them an autumn fayre on Saturday which yielded £303.

Every family in the parish is to be given envelopes to which all the wage-earning members are expected to contribute. They will be collected weekly. Secretary of the new committee is Mr P.Fullalove with Mr J Cowman treasurer.

Repair work is proceeding, but daily services are being held in the church.

Has anyone from either St Mary's, Sabden or St Hubert's, Dunsop Bridge anything they think may be of interest to publish under the Archives on our weekly newsletter?

Please email them to Janet on either

janet.clegg@dioceseofsalford.org.uk or janegg@hotmail.co.uk

Looking forward to hearing from you