

Our Lady of the Valley
Parish Newsletter 12th July 2020 – 15th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Once again this past week we have seen a steady flow of people coming into St. Michael and St. John's church for quiet prayer. Thank you to all for following the guidelines set out when visiting our church, and a big thank you to all the stewards who have given of their time to ensure your safety and also for cleaning the church after use. Without their generosity we would not be able to open the church.

St. Michael and St. John's is open for quiet prayer:

Monday to Friday 11am till 12 noon.

Saturday 11am till 1pm.

We use the main doors for entering the church and the side door near the pulpit as an exit. If you wish to light a candle then you must do this immediately before you leave church. Once you have left church you must not come back in though the way out. If you or any of your household present with any coronavirus symptoms then you must stay away.

As we start to look ahead to the time when we will begin to celebrate public weekday Mass, perhaps at 10am each morning, we will need more volunteers to act as stewards, again to welcome people and make sure that all procedures are being adhered to, and also directing people to where they can sit in church for Mass, directing them to receive Holy Communion, then cleaning the church after Mass. (The same will be needed when we start the celebration of Sunday Masses). Stewards will also be needed for Requiem Masses and for baptisms, both of which we can now celebrate, albeit with very small numbers present. I know that this is an awful big ask of people, but we have no choice but to do this if we are to open more, and safely remain open.

At first we were told that only people under the age of 70 could act as stewards, this has now been changed and anyone in good health can now act as a steward.

So if you would be prepared to offer your services as a steward for any of the above, weekday and weekend Mass, Requiem Masses, Baptisms, please email Fr. Paul or Janet with your name and contact details, and someone will get in touch with you.

At present we are only able to open St. Michael and St. John's church, and we look forward to the time when we are once again able to open our other two churches in Dunsop Bridge and in Sabden.

As in recent weeks I celebrated Mass in all three churches this past week.

Thanks to everyone for all your help and cooperation in making our church a safe and peaceful place to come in and pray.

Take care and keep well, Fr. Paul.

LATELY DEAD: We keep in prayer all who have died recently especially:

Ruth Humphreys aged 95 years

Ben Leeming (husband of Joan nee Embery)

Andrew Whitwell (son of Pat)

Love in a post Covid-19 and post Vatican II World

I pulled the sheets over my head and curled up into an embryonic ball in the warmth of my bed. I was 9 years old and I couldn't stop thinking about Hell. Along with my pals I'd stolen a bit of oil from a can in a derelict shed to help us light a fire and I was reflecting on the Hell Fire sermon we had had from the headmaster of St Michael and St John's Primary School at morning assembly: "Think of a metal ball in the sky, bigger than anything you can possibly imagine. Once in a million, million years a bird flies past and brushes its wing against the ball. When the metal ball is all worn away eternity won't even have started". He moved onto the most extreme pain and the most extreme everything else you could imagine that would go on forever. I remember dear kind Miss Hayhurst who told us later that Hell wasn't a physical place. It was separation from God.

I sometimes think being a Catholic was easier in those days. You knew the rules. You heard them at school and you heard them in the pulpit. Some of them were tough – the ones that were most difficult to talk about – but you could confess your sins and your place in Heaven was once more assured. Nowadays the rules aren't so clear. Over 20 years ago talking to my daughter about school she said: "They don't teach us about right and wrong".

There were big changes in the wake of Vatican II and apart from Mass in the vernacular, altar rails removed and priests facing the congregation the emphasis was less on guilt and damnation and more on love and forgiveness. Confession changed to Reconciliation and sin became more a question of conscience than the act itself. People made up their own ethic and acted comfortably within it. Catholics educated in the arcane legalisms of Catholic transgression—is eating meat on Friday a mortal or venial sin?—found themselves as adults thinking less about whether they were breaking the rules and more about their attitudes, intentions, and ideas about how to live a Christian life. Yet even what that means – living a Christian life – isn't clear with many Catholics leading a life of an inward looking personal relationship with God rather than the true Gospel meaning made clear by Pope Francis of an outward looking relationship of compassion with the whole of humanity.

When I look back it was easier for my parents who had enough to feed and clothe us but nothing much to spare for the poor. Apart from money they didn't have time to do more than work and look after us children. Moreover we weren't much aware of what was going on in the world and in any case it seemed distant and out of reach. You could even say that

perhaps Pope Francis' outward looking vision applied much less than it does now. It was easier to be a good Catholic. Today, most of us have more than enough to live on. If outgoings are the same or more than the money coming in it's because we spend beyond necessity. Vatican II changed the emphasis from sin to love but what also changed was the abundance of wealth and time that make it possible to translate love into action.

This last week we have seen more news items that call us to action and two in particular stand out.

Firstly, CARE, the charity that upholds the truth that human beings made in God's image deserve to be treated with dignity and compassion, reports that a dangerous home abortion amendment to the Domestic Abuse Bill was withdrawn. CARE worked with many MPs before the debate to furnish them with the key arguments to resist this extreme amendment and thanks all who helped with their emails or letters to MPs. "Be encouraged that your help has made a real, Christian difference!" Members of our Pro-Life Group were amongst those who petitioned against the amendment and although Nigel Evans abstains on anti-abortion bills we still ensure that he hears our voice. Sadly, it's true that democracy actually takes decision making away from us and it's the party line that rules the way. However petitions and movements like Citizens UK are forcing Parliament to hear us and if more Catholics added their voice we could be a genuine force for the good.

Secondly the scandal of labour exploitation and potential modern day slavery in Boohoo factories in Leicester has raised the issue of ethical investment and personal complicity in what Pope Francis has described as structural sin. Many investors have removed their money from Boohoo and it is clear that the clothes we wear are made on the backs of exploited workers and reflected in the price we pay. Pope Francis, Justin Welby and Bartholomew, Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople and the Orthodox and leader of 300 million Orthodox Christians worldwide have all said in one way or another that the greatest sin is personal complicity and doing nothing.

Let us reflect that Love in Action – the words chosen to describe Caritas Westminster's education curriculum – isn't just about touching the walls of our locked churches to feel the presence of Jesus within, it's about feeling the presence of God in the whole of the living world, accepting our complicity in structural sin and acting always with love.

Anthony Brown

FROM THE ARCHIVES:

JOB FOR THE BOY

A Comedy in Three Acts by Dennis Driscoll

The Hall Lowergate, Clitheroe, April 13th – April 16th 1955

“Job for the Boy”, the Lancashire comedy which the St Michael Players are presenting has special interest for local audiences.

It was written by Mr Denis Driscoll, a Blackburn man who was until recently manager of the Nelson branch of the Blackburn Trustee Savings Bank.

Many people will remember it being produced on T.V. a few months ago. Indeed, it was placed fifth by viewers among plays they liked best last year.

Characters

Patience Lomax (<i>daughter</i>)	Mary Dixon
Magie Lomax (<i>mother</i>)	Cecilia Speak
Walter Lomax (<i>father</i>)	Norman Cawley
Amos Entwistle (<i>friend of Walter's</i>)	John Cowman
Dwight Shiner Schuleman (<i>American</i>)	Thomas Cowman
David Lomax (<i>son</i>)	Derrick Hutchinson
Lady Ariadne Crofield	Margaret Brown

Stage Manager	F.Lofthouse
Electrician	T.Smith (Senr)
Asst. Stage Managers	Miss R Jackson & P.Fehrenbach
Properties	Miss P Hargreaves
Make-up & Wardrobe	Miss E.Wright & Miss M.Tyrer
Secretary	J.Loynds
Set designed by	D.Kershaw
Business Manager	H.Sutcliffe

The report in the Clitheroe Advertiser and Times as follows:-

Clitheroe Players Shine In Lancashire Comedy

THIS “JOB” PUTS THE BLUES OUT OF WORK

Roars of laughter from an appreciative audience enjoying to the full the broad Lancashire comedy of Denis Driscoll’s “Job For The Boy” must have warmed the hearts of the St Michael’s Players on the opening night of their latest production at The Hall, Lowergate, on Wednesday.

And well they merited this spontaneous reaction to what without doubt must be one of the pleasantest jobs they have ever tackled.

The wholesome comedy, focussed on a Lancashire family’s domestic upheaval, swept through to the final curtain on a tide of laughter which flowed unceasingly from the opening scene.

No doubt, many of the audience must have seen this play on their T.V. screens – a comedy which was placed high in the list of T.V. plays most enjoyed by viewers.

The reception given to the local production was a just reward for a cast which so admirably captured the rich humours of many delightful situations.

The living room of the Lomax family’s abode, with its dresser, sofa and the ornamental knick-knacks of a typical Lancashire home, formed an effective background.

The arrival from London of the boy," David, with a B.Sc. degree, creates a furore in the home when he announces his intention of "going down the pit" instead of, as his mother Maggie, expects, looking for a nice, clean "situation."

Complications follow with the unexpected arrival of his titled lady friend, and an American stepson of a friend of Maggie's.

Fitting into a role which was surely "made to measure" for him, Norman Cawley, as Walter, revelled in a perfect characterisation of an honest-to-goodness Lancashire family man, perfectly satisfied with his pope (when he eventually finds it) and his beloved hens, which he knows individually by name.

Maggie, his wife, confronted with the task of "putting up" her visitors, provides Cecilia Speak with scope for a well observed character study which rang consistently true.

As the unexpected guest of a family so obviously "Lancasheer," Thomas Cowman as "Shiner," survived the difficulties of having to sustain an American accent and with an attractive stage presence made a likeable figure of the Yank who captures the affections of both Walter and Maggie, and more particularly their daughter, Patience.

In the latter role, Mary Dixon, gives a wonderfully natural performance and making the most of a rich array of amusing situations adds to the comedy before she finally falls to the uninhibited advances of "Shiner."

Margaret Brown brings a touch of the aristocracy to the scene as Lady Ariadne Crofield, in love with David and willing to give up her present manner of living for the more everyday life as the wife of a mining engineer. Her portrayal of the titled lady entering into the Lomax household busily engaged in preparing a "parlour tea" to celebrate David's homecoming, was skilfully contrived and sincerely acted.

The "boy" himself, David was neatly played by Derrick Hutchinson, who showed himself more than equal to exacting demands of characterisation to create a natural and convincing study.

John Cowman, as Amos Entwistle, the cloth-capped friend of Walter Lomax showed a grand comedy sense and shared with Mr Cawley some of the play's funniest moments

Skilfully produced by Mrs M Bridge, the play reflected careful attention to detail and astute direction in the sure touch with which the humour was brought out to the full.

Praise is also due to the behind-the-scenes work of stage manager, Mr F.Lofthouse and his assistants, Miss R.Jackson and Mr P.Fehrenbach, Miss E.Wright and Miss M.Tyrer had charge of make-up and wardrobe, and others who contributed to the success of the production were T.Smith (senior, lighting, Miss P.Hargreaves, properties and Mr D Kershaw décor. Secretary was Mr J.Loynds, and business manager Mr H.Sutcliffe.

On the newsletter on 28th June I included a report in the Advertiser and Times for a production of Cinderella from 1915 which was the earliest report I could find. I knew there were some productions prior to this dating from 1911. However a colleague of mine has found an advertisement for a

production of "Castle - Spectre" from 1898. I will try and get some more information on this but in the meantime here is the advert - with some familiar names on.

THE HALL,
LOWERGATE.

THE MEMBERS OF THE CLITHEROE
CATHOLIC AMATEUR DRAMATIC SOCIETY
WILL PRODUCE ON

Easter Monday, April 11th,
THAT ROMANTIC DRAMA, ENTITLED,
"CASTLE - SPECTRE"
IN THREE ACTS, BY MATTHEW GREGORY LEWIS.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Earl Osmond...	Mr. C. Walmsley
Earl Reginald (a Captive, supposed dead) ...	Mr. J. Hartley, senior
Percy (Earl of Northumberland) ...	Mr. W. A. Thornber
Father Philip ...	Mr. H. Ince
Motley (the Castle Jester) ...	Mr. H. Mansland
Kenric (Confidant of Osmond) ...	Mr. R. Winckley
Saib ...	Mr. J. Hartley, junior
Hassan ...	Mr. J. Kilroy
Muley ...	Mr. A. Lofthouse
Alaric ...	Mr. R. Ormerod
Angela...	Miss M. J. Dewhurst
Alice ...	Miss K. Tresnan
Spectre of Evelina ...	

(Black Slaves of Osmond)

To Conclude with a Laughable Farce in One Act, entitled

"TURN HIM OUT"

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ:

Nicomemus Nobbs (An Itinerant vendor of Juvenile Toys) ...	Mr. W. Wells
Mr. Mackintosh Moke ...	Mr. J. Kilroy
Mr. Eglantine Roseleaf ...	Mr. W. A. Thornber
Julia (Moke's Wife) ...	Miss M. A. Moon
Susan (A Maid of all Work) ...	Miss K. Tresnan

SPECIAL COSTUMES FOR THE OCCASION.

Doors open at 7.0 p.m., to commence at 7.45 prompt.
 First Seats, 1s. 6d.; Second Seats, 1s.; Admission, 6d.

AN EFFICIENT BAND WILL BE IN ATTENDANCE.

Tickets may be had from any Member of the Society, or from the Secretary, W. A. Thornber.