

# Parish of St Mary, Middlewich & St Margaret Ward, Holmes Chapel

Parish Priest: Fr Peter Dutton, 2 New King Street, Middlewich ☎01606 832359 Deacons: Rev Tony Ford, 01270 759511  
 Rev Chris Wells 01606 738030 www.stmarysparishmiddlewich.org.uk . E mail: stmarysrcmiddlewich@gmail.com  
 Shrewsbury Diocese is a Registered Charity St Mary's School 01606 832164 E mail admin@2nd February

## Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, 26th July 2020

Saturday	25th July	6.30pm	<b>Priest's Int</b>
Sunday	26th July	9.00am 11.00am	<b>The Parishioners</b> <b>Hilda &amp; Jim Duffy Anniv.</b>
Monday	27th July	9.00am 6.30pm	<b>Dorothy Worthington</b> <b>Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament</b>
Tuesday	28th July	9.00am	<b>Gavin McAleer b'day</b>
Wednesday	29th July	7.30pm	<b>Private Int. St Martha</b>
Thursday	30th July	9.00am	<b>Private Int.</b>
Friday	31st July	9.00am	<b>Private Int. St Ignatius Loyola</b>
Saturday	1st Aug	6.30pm	<b>Lou Costello &amp; Mike Casey St Alphonsus Ligouri</b>
Sunday	2nd Aug	9.00am 11.00am	<b>Priest's Int.</b> <b>The Parishioners</b>

**Sacrament of Reconciliation : On request**  
**Sacrament of Baptism On hold until further notice.**

### Please Pray for

ALL who are sick at home and in hospital: Stephen Grey, Margaret McCallum, Sara O'Brien, Jamie Connor, John Bomford, Nathan Carter, Larry Porter, Gillian Robinson, Tim Bradbury, Roy Yearsley, Peter Hannon, Stan Rosiak, Sadie Everard, Alex Randall Jenny Ogden, John Evans, Shirley Gaskell, Joan Upton, Mary Morris, Michael McCluskey, Jan D, Margaret Scarlett, Fr Paul Hughes, Deacon Philip White, Martin Armitt, Fr Jim McGrath, Ursula Finn, Dorothy Worthington.



ALL who have died recently.

ALL whose anniversaries occur at this time: Mildred Wells, Jean Tunney, David Clarke, Mick Woodward, James McGorty, John Jordan, Leila Quinn, Joseph Harrup, Edward McSpadden, Annie Gilligan, John Oldfield, Christopher Wood, Dora Greenwood, Dorothy Richardson, Dorothy Keen, Rev Gerard Corcoran.

During the Global Covid Pandemic, Mary's Meals are continuing to support those they normally serve. Almost all children who normally are fed at school are now receiving a meal at home, thanks to a very adaptable system. It still only costs £15.90 to feed a child for a whole year. They need our help more than ever. You can donate in church or at marysmeals.org.uk, where you can also watch the new film "Love Reaches Everywhere" with Hollywood actor Gerard Butler

**Welcome back to Mass. If you are coming :  
 Wear a mask; Social distance when queuing;  
 sanitise your hands on entry;  
 Follow the one way system and instructions from stewards (wearing aprons to identify them). Communion in the hand only, no chalice.  
 Instructions will be given by Fr Peter. Strict limit of 50, no exceptions. Box for offerings at back of church. Leave promptly, as instructed, at the end of Mass, not before. THERE ARE NO TOILETS AVAILABLE. WE ARE NOT ALLOWED TO USE THE PARISH CENTRE**

Dear Parishioners,

From now on there will be no more Church Open for Private Prayer sessions as we will be celebrating public Masses every day. Please do not think this means we are back to normal: There are lots of restrictions and regulations.

Masses can only be held in churches which have been approved as fulfilling the Covid secure conditions, so Mass cannot be celebrated at St Margaret's. Numbers at St Mary's are strictly restricted to 50 per Mass, first come first served, but even though slightly increased numbers attended last week, there was still lots of spare capacity. You will only be allowed in if you are wearing a face mask (We cannot provide these: it would cost us £100 + each weekend) The same rules apply to weekday Mass. Masses will be shorter than usual but the good news is that you will be able to receive the Eucharist, but only the host and only in the hand. There is to be no congregational singing, you must remain one metre apart, except from members of your own household, and must sanitise your hands as you enter church. You must enter down the side aisles, sit only in the marked places and exit via the centre aisle. This process, and the numbers, will be overseen by two stewards at each Mass. Please follow their instructions. If 50 people have already entered you will be asked to come to another Mass (This has not happened so far). There is still no obligation to attend Mass on Sunday, so those who can come during the week are encouraged to do so. We hope to continue streaming the 11.00am Mass on Sundays for those who still cannot attend. After each Mass you will be asked to leave promptly and church will have to be closed and thoroughly cleaned in preparation for the next Mass. The provision of the Masses is dependant on there being sufficient volunteers as stewards and cleaners. We have sufficient volunteers for this week but offers of help for future weekends and weekdays should be emailed to the parish office. At the beginning of each Mass Fr Peter will give additional detailed instructions. It is important that you listen carefully and follow these. They will include instructions for Communion.

We intend to take the necessary steps to make St Margaret's Covid secure, but due to its restricted capacity, it cannot be used for Sunday Mass until distancing regulations are eased, as doing so would reduce the overall number of parishioners able to attend weekend Masses.

There is a lot to take in and rules may change, but let us not lose sight of the fact that we can once again gather to worship together and celebrate Eucharist. Alleluia!

Fr Peter, Deacon Tony, Deacon Chris

**CAFOD's response to coronavirus in Asia and the Middle East:** In the Middle East, our local experts are using your donations to continue their vital peacebuilding work and ensuring that legal advice can be given online. Volunteers and priests are delivering emergency food parcels to vulnerable families in the West Bank and we are also reaching out to Bedouin communities with health equipment and information. [£6 could buy a hygiene pack for a family.](#) Staff and volunteers are also already in vulnerable communities spreading essential health messages through village posters, socially-distanced visits to families and giving out PPE. In Myanmar, local experts are working alongside health departments and the Church to provide safe places for people to quarantine and to help set up track and trace systems In Bangladesh they've moved quickly to give cash to the poorest families - led by widows, or those living with disabilities - to buy life-saving food and PPE <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/St-Marys-RC-Parish-Middlewich-Cafod>

**N.B. All cheques, for both Mass Offerings and Offertory Collection, should be made to "St Mary's Middlewich" or the bank will not accept them.**

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is available on request, but outside, undercover, not in the Confessional. Please ring or email to make a request. The printed side of the bulletin is available on the website.

Those who came to Mass last week said that they felt very safe and it was lovely to be back even though they were nervous about coming, so please follow their example and give it a try!

Thank you for your prayers and good wishes for Fr Peter. He is feeling well, though still trying to take life at a slower pace than usual! If you need to speak to him, please ring the presbytery or email to make an appointment.

**Scripture Group** every Tues at 7.00pm We use Zoom and look at the scripture (particularly the Gospel) for the following Sunday. If you would like to join in send an email to: [stmarysmiddlewichvents@gmail.com](mailto:stmarysmiddlewichvents@gmail.com) as we will need your e-mail address to send the Zoom invitation (e-mail addresses will not be used for any other purpose). This is open to anyone, not just parishioners.

That is, it is the coming close of the living God into fields and markets and homes and streets, meeting the sinner and the saint, the sick and the strong, the learned and the simple, the young and the old, men and women.



The world of Jesus' time had a very strong sense of sin and evil. Evil could be caught through proximity. It was, in some sense, contagious. It's a common enough idea. Parents still warn their children not to mix with certain of their friends lest they become like them. Jesus didn't seem to worry too much about the contagion of wickedness. He sat and ate with anyone who would join him. His enemies called him a glutton and drunkard who ate with sinners.

DISCOVERING THE KINGDOM

Rather, Jesus believed in the contagiousness of holiness. He invited all sorts of dubious characters to sit and eat and talk with him and his disciples, to share what they had, to experience the gracious fruits of God's kingdom before he ever challenged them to change. He believed they would "catch" the kingdom and its joy and fellowship and discover how different their lives could be. They would come to know themselves the beloved sons and daughters of God, desired by God from all eternity.

As Jesus' disciples today, it is our calling to so live that others coming in off the streets to our worship, and into our homes, might discover among us the pearl of great price whose riches we already enjoy. May it be so.

Mass text

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

**God is in his holy place,  
God who unites those who dwell in his house;  
he himself gives might and strength to his people.**

FIRST READING 1 Kings 3:5. 7-12

PSALM Psalm 118

RESPONSE **Lord, how I love your law!**

1. My part, I have resolved, O Lord, is to obey your word.  
The law from your mouth means more to me than silver and gold. **R.**
2. Let your love be ready to console me by your promise to your servant.  
Let your love come to me and I shall live for your law is my delight. **R.**
3. That is why I love your commands more than finest gold.  
That is why I rule my life by your precepts: I hate false ways. **R.**

4. Your will is wonderful indeed; therefore I obey it.  
The unfolding of your word gives light and teaches the simple. **R.**

SECOND READING Romans 8:28-30

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Alleluia, alleluia!  
Blessed are you, Father,  
Lord of heaven and earth,  
for revealing the mysteries of the kingdom to mere children.  
Alleluia!**

GOSPEL Matthew 13:44-52

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.  
Blessed are the clean of heart, for they shall see God.**

**Next Sunday's Readings:**  
Isaiah 55:1-3  
Romans 8:35. 37-39  
Matthew 14:13-21

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HIDDEN TREASURE

Stories of buried treasure exist in all folk literature. They express a hope that a completely gratuitous occurrence could make a total change in our lives, transferring us from a state of care, coldness, hunger or horror into a world where all our desires could be satisfied. These stories are a universal expression of desire for meaning in the midst of lives often marked by absurdity or sickness, or violence and brokenness. They are a fundamental expression of human hope: that we'll just come across something that is of such value that, possessing it, we'll have nothing to worry about.



I remember my granddad driving us home from Mass in a pony and cart. It had been raining and now there was a beautiful rainbow in the brightening sky. My granddad told me that at the end of the rainbow was a crock of gold hidden by the fairies. So I begged him to go faster. But the faster we went, the quicker the rainbow disappeared and, sadly, we never found the crock of gold.

Religion can be like that. Against the dark it promises light, against fear it promises joy, against absurdity it promises meaning, against loneliness it promises community, against hate it promises love. But religious structures or even doctrines cannot provide these remedies. They must come from something deeper.

Judaism in the time of Jesus had different ways of promising these things. Most depended on some form of faithful practice of a variety of traditions. Some, like the Pharisees and Essenes, required the following of many rules and regulations; some were dependent on the chance of being born into blessed groups like the aristocratic Sadducees; some needed penitential practices of prayer and sacrifice in the Temple. And in the midst of these Matthew's community was still working out how its members were to receive the promise of Jesus' life, death and resurrection.

Pretty soon the Church itself would work out codes and rules and regulations that its virtuous members would need to follow if they were to be one with it and one with the God who called it into being. But it is worth remembering that Jesus did not talk much about the Church or about religious structures and doctrines. The treasure in the field, the pearl of great price is the kingdom of God.

Catching the kingdom



David McLoughlin is a teaching theologian who has spent nearly forty years helping to train Christian teachers, ministers and activists. Today he concludes this series of reflections on the Gospel readings by considering the "contagiousness of holiness".

26 JULY 2020

17TH SUNDAY  
IN ORDINARY TIME

YEAR A

DIVINE OFFICE WEEK I