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Saint Mary's Roman Catholic Church
Catlow Hall Street, Oswaldtwistle
Lancashire
BB53EZ



Parish Priest: Rev Fr. S D O'Brien
Tel: 01254-232433

Sunday 9th May 2021
Sixth Sunday of Easter

Dear brothers and sisters,

The grounds around our church, you will no doubt have noticed, are being looked after and cared for. Hedges are being trimmed, flowers beds cleared and weeded, lawns mowed and fences painted. St. Mary's gardens are taking on a new life reinvigorated by the energy, service and faithful commitment of parishioners. This care speaks volumes to the world around us, it says this place matters, this place is wanted, this place is loved.

The book of Genesis begins with a garden - Eden. It was a place of perfection and harmony, but however, a lack of attention and love transformed it from a paradise into a desolate wilderness. Eve was tempted by the devil who seduced her to disobey God and indulge in her own wants and wills.

***'Did God really say you were not to eat from any of the trees in the garden?'...Then the serpent said to the woman, 'No! You will not die!'...The woman saw that the tree was good to eat and pleasing to the eye...so she took some of its fruit and ate it. She gave some also to her husband who was with her, and he ate it.'* (Genesis 3:1-6)**

Eve submitted willingly to the devil by tasting the fruit of the tree which resulted in the destruction of the harmonious life in the garden and allowed death to enter into the world.



Despite this tragic fall, God the gardener, did not give up on His creation. He began to prepare the world for the antidote that would destroy death and restore the broken relationship between Creator and creation. God's gift to a fallen world was to bestow on it the love of Our Lady. Eve, the original virgin, brought death into the world by her disobedience but Mary, the virgin of Nazareth, brought life into the world by her obedience. It was this free obedience from Our Lady towards God that allowed the work of restoring paradise to begin. In light of this fact it makes sense why the Bible calls all believers to honour Mary.

***'Yes, from this day forward all generations will call me blessed, for the Almighty has done great things for me.'* (Luke 1:48-48)**

In the third century, Tertullian, an early Christian writer and apologist from North Africa wrote the following:

'For it was while Eve was yet a virgin that the ensnaring word had crept into her ear which was to build the edifice of death. Into a virgin's soul, in like manner, must be introduced that Word of God which was to raise the fabric of life; so that what had been reduced to ruin by this sex might by the selfsame sex be recovered to salvation. As Eve believed the serpent, so Mary believed the angel. The delinquency which the one occasioned by believing, the other effaced by believing.'

Tertullian reminded his readers that Our Lady wasn't just a good person, a mere incidental cog in the work of salvation. No. She was an essential component, valued and loved by the Creator. She freely and passionately said 'Yes' to God with every fibre of her being and in so doing conceived Christ, the Lord. Through Mary the Word became flesh.

One of the reasons why as Catholics we dedicate the month of May to Our Blessed Mother is connected to the new life that is bursting through in many of our gardens. In theory the April showers have encouraged flowers to bloom and as new life emerges in the natural world around us, so we are drawn to contemplate the mystery of the Incarnation and Mary's role. Through Mary's 'Yes' new life, eternal life, was able to bloom in the garden of the world again.



Next time you come to church look at the grounds around you. Look at the work and care that goes into keeping them maintained and then think about Our Lady. Without her hospitality and love, without her faith and commitment, without her service and free obedience we would still be living in a wasteland oppressed by eternal death and no light of hope. Those simple words we pray at the Angelus, ***'I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done unto me according to Thy word'***, have allowed us to stand at the threshold of the garden of Eden again. Let's continue this May to ask Mary to walk with us. To encourage us to move forward to the life that awaits us with God, if we too have the courage to say 'Yes' with all our heart, with all our might and with all our strength. Our Lady, pray for us.

Solemnities and Feasts for the coming week...

Thursday 13th May, Ascension of the Lord.

The Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord (more commonly known as Ascension Thursday) is one of the great solemnities in the liturgical calendar, and celebrates the mystery of the bodily ascension of Our Lord Jesus into heaven. Ascension Day is traditionally celebrated on a Thursday, the fortieth day of Easter. During the current Covid-19 pandemic the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord is not a Holy Day of Obligation this year. You can book to come to the 10am Mass via the parish website.

Friday 14th May, Feast of Saint Matthias, Apostle

St. Matthias was chosen by the apostles to take the place of Judas Iscariot, so that the number of apostles might remain as twelve. Tradition has it that Matthias went on to preach in Ethiopia.

Wednesday 12th May, Holy Mass

The Requiem Mass due to be celebrated on Wednesday has now changed. There is an opportunity, via the parish website, for parishioners to book and attend this Mass as usual.

Confirmation Congratulations!

On Saturday (8th May) one of our younger parishioners, Rheon who many of you will know as the Altar Server during this year's Sacred Triduum, will be Confirmed. Please pray for this young man who is voluntarily making this faith filled commitment to be a disciple of the Lord. Let's ask God the Holy Spirit to pour out those Seven Gifts of Wisdom, Counsel, Understanding, Knowledge, Courage, Piety and Fear of the Lord. Rheon has chosen Joseph as his Confirmation name – a good patron saint to have, especially in this Holy Year dedicated to him.

**Come O Holy Spirit,
fill the hearts of your faithful and enkindle within them the fire of your love.
Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth.
O, God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by
the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever rejoice in His consolation,
Through Christ Our Lord, Amen.**

Lately Dead and Anniversaries

The parish website has a new section where people can submit the names of their own deceased loved ones where people can pray for them. The list of names and anniversaries will be changed each month. [Roman Catholic Parish of St Mary Oswaldtwistle](http://www.saintmarysoswaldtwistle.co.uk)

***Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
and let perpetual light shine upon them.
May they rest in peace.
Amen.***

Song for St Joseph

Fr Kevin Murphy, a Salford diocesan priest, has written a Song for St Joseph as part of the year of St Joseph and the Feast of St Joseph the Worker on 1st May. Alex Patterson, Cathedral Director of Music, has recorded Fr Kevin's song - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xYEn06thM-o>
Sheet music will be available online in due course.

SOS! HELP! SOS!

The wooden fencing surrounding the church property is in need of a good lick of paint. As always parishioners of St. Mary's have stepped up with a kind donation of paint being given, however, people are needed to put that paint on the fencing – can you help? All social distancing requirements will be maintained so that people continue to feel safe volunteering at St. Mary's. It's a chance to be outside with others and help the church. Days and times are flexible according to when people are free. For more information email Navada Keenan at keenannavada@gmail.com

Young Adults: An Evening with Austen Ivereigh

We are privileged to invite all young adults (18 – 35 years) to an evening of reflection with Dr Austen Ivereigh. Thursday 13th May 2021 7pm – 9pm. Austen is the co-author of Pope Francis' latest book: "*Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future*" In it the Pope sets out his vision on how to create a better world as we emerge from the crisis that we have been living through. He sees this crisis as having meaning for us and inviting us to new ways of thinking and doing things.

To listen to the invitation on YouTube, please click on the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HZT4nZcd1yE> The first 20 young adults to register will receive a free copy of the book! To register or for more information, please email: formation@dioceseofsalford.org.uk

The God who Speaks through Mark

As we return to Ordinary Time after Pentecost, the Department for Formation is pleased to offer four online evenings on the Gospel according to Mark.

Wednesday 26 May 2021 – *Mark Time* – some of the main themes and ideas to look out for in our Sunday Gospels over the coming weeks and months (with Fr Christopher Lough)

Wednesday 2 June 2021- *The Humanity of Jesus in Mark* (with Fr Eamonn Mulcahy CSSp)

Wednesday 9 June 2021 – *The Disciples in Mark* (with Fr Michael Deas)

Wednesday 16 June 2021 – *The Little People in Mark* (with Fr Michael Winstanley SDB)

Each presentation will be from 7.00 to 8.30 pm and will include time for discussion and questions. They are offered free of charge. To reserve a place on one or all the evenings and to receive the Zoom link in advance, please email formation@dioceseofsalford.org.uk

Gift Aid and Envelopes

On behalf of the parish I would like to thank Rob Harrison for all his voluntarily work concerning the gift aid scheme and donation envelopes. Over the next few weeks, as people book to come to the Holy Mass, those who have signed up to the gift aid scheme will receive their envelopes from a steward. In line with GDPR, envelopes can only be given to the individual whose name and address is printed on the box. If you do not contribute to the gift aid scheme but would like a box of donation envelopes then please ask a steward when you come to church. For more information about helping the parish through gift aid you can contact Rob: giftaid@stmaryoswaldtwistle.org.uk

Easter - Weekly Eco-Thought for Parishes

Sixth Sunday of Easter: On Thursday of this week we will celebrate the Ascension of the Lord. Notice Jesus' parting words, as recounted by Mark; 'proclaim the Good News to all creation.' What is the Good News we bring to creation?

Pray the Rosary with Pope Francis

FROM THE DEPARTMENT FOR FORMATION

In response to the Holy Father's heartfelt wish, the month of May will be dedicated to a "marathon" of prayer, to ask for the end of the pandemic, which has afflicted the world for more than a year now, and to ask for the resumption of social and work activities. Pope Francis wishes to involve all the Shrines around the world in this initiative, so that they may become vehicles of the prayer of the entire Church. The initiative is being conducted in the light of the biblical expression: "Prayer by the Church was fervently being made to God" (Acts 12:5).

Together with the prayer of the Holy Rosary, each day of the month is characterized by a prayer intention for the various categories of people most affected by the plight of the pandemic: for those who have not been able to say goodbye to their loved ones, for all health care personnel, for the poor, the homeless and those in economic difficulty and for all the deceased. These are some of the intentions that will punctuate our prayer to Our Lady.

Every Shrine around the world is invited to pray for the resumption of social life, work and the many human activities that were suspended during the pandemic. This common appeal seeks to create an unceasing intercession, dispersed over the meridians of the world, which rises continuously from the entire Church to the Father through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary. For this reason, the Shrines are called to promote and solicit as much as possible the participation of the faithful, so that everyone can devote a moment to daily prayer, in the car, on the street, and thanks to communication technologies, with the smartphone, requesting the end of the pandemic and the resumption of social and work activities.

These thirty representative Shrines, scattered throughout the world, have been chosen to lead the Marian prayer each during one day of the month. These shrines are: Our Lady of Walsingham in England; Jesus the Saviour and Mother Mary in Nigeria; Our Lady of Czestochowa in Poland; Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth; Blessed Virgin of the Rosary in South Korea; Our Lady Aparecida in Brazil; Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage in the Philippines; Our Lady of Lujan in Argentina; Holy House of Loreto in Italy; Our Lady of Knock in Ireland; Virgin of the Poor at Banneux in Belgium; Notre Dame d'Afrique in Algeria; Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima in Portugal; Our Lady of Health in India; Our Lady Queen of Peace at Medjugorje in Bosnia; St. Mary's Cathedral in Australia; Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in the United States; Our Lady of Lourdes in France; Meryem Ana in Turkey; Nuestra Señora de la Caridad del Cobre in Cuba; Our Lady of Nagasaki in Japan; Nuestra Señora de Montserrat in Spain; Notre Dame du Cap in Canada; National Shrine Our Lady Ta' Pinu in Malta; Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe in Mexico; Mother of God in Zarvantsia in Ukraine; Black Madonna of Altötting in Germany; Our Lady of Lebanon – in Lebanon; Blessed Virgin of the Holy Rosary of Pompeii in Italy.

Miles that Matter

Caritas is proud to have supporters, staff and volunteers who are walking in solidarity and in the 'virtual' footsteps of so many people who have fled war and conflict and seek a new life on these shores and in Greater Manchester and Lancashire in particular. Miles that Matter is running from 1st May until International Refugee Week in June. If you are interested in finding out more, or wish to participate, please call Rachel Taylor 0161 817 2285 or visit the website www.caritassalford.org.uk/miles-that-matter

Reopening of Christian Heritage Centre at Stonyhurst

Theodore House, on the Stonyhurst estate, will be reopening from 11th June, and welcoming groups from 21st June in line with Government de-restrictions. A spacious and comfortable venue for retreats, away-days and conferences for any parish or diocesan group, in uniquely beautiful and historic surroundings and with access to St Peter's church next-door. For more information, please visit <https://www.theodorehouse.com> or contact bookings@christianheritagecentre.com

Online Parish Events

Parishioners from different parishes have been organising online rosaries, online sing-a-longs and virtual coffee mornings for their churches. I think this is a wonderful idea as many children and grandchildren have been stepping up to help older family members link up and use computers, mobile phones, i-pads etc. Any parishioner here at St. Mary's who would like to facilitate this has my complete support and I am happy to put them in touch with diocesan safeguarding department so that all correct procedures and online safety protocol can be followed.

Covid-19 Health and Safety Reminder

The government has allowed places of worship to remain open during this third national lockdown but we must not become complacent. The diocese have asked us to remind people of the following procedures:

- Please make sure you are wearing a face mask before you enter the church building. Nobody should be putting a mask on once they are sat down at a pew or in the entrance/foyer near the stewards.
- Please do not remove your mask to speak to a steward or another parishioner in church. This shows a lack of safe respect for others. We all need to care and look out for each other.
- Please wear your mask when you are coming forward to receive Holy Communion. Once, and only once, you are stood before the priest then you can remove your mask. Communion is not a race so please take your time and do not rush. Once you have received the Blessed Sacrament then replace your mask and leave the church building.
- Please do sanitise your hands at the stations provided at both entrances and exits of church.
- Please keep the Two Meter Rule. This new strain of Covid-19 is more easily transmitted therefore it's important that we all keep to this practice.
- Please do not congregate to socialise on church property before or after Mass/Liturgy.
- Please do not come to church if you have Covid-19 symptoms, have tested positive for Covid-19 or are in isolation.

Mass Bookings

To book a place at Mass via our telephone service then please ring (01254) 232 433 on Wednesdays between 5pm – 6pm. To book a place at Mass online please visit the parish website www.saintmarysoswaldtwistle.co.uk Sadly, some volunteers have had to return to work and therefore you will only be able to book online during the week (Monday to Friday).

God Bless and keep praying.
Our Lady of Oswaldtwistle, pray for us.
Saint Joseph, pray for us.

Fr. O'Brien.