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Saint Mary's Roman Catholic Church  
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Dear brothers and sisters,

Continuing from last weeks reflection about the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the First Friday Devotion I've come across some words written by Pope Francis that further explain the beauty of the Sacred Heart. The following message was given on the 9<sup>th</sup> June 2013 by the Pope during his audience with pilgrims gathered in St Peter's Square for the Sunday Angelus.

***Dear brothers and sisters!***

***The month of June is traditionally dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the highest human expression of divine love. Just this past Friday, in fact, we celebrated the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus: the feast that sets the tone for the whole month. Popular piety highly prizes symbols, and the Heart of Jesus is the ultimate symbol of God's mercy - but it is not an imaginary symbol, it is a real symbol, which represents the centre, the source from which salvation for all humanity gushed forth.***

***In the Gospels we find several references to the Heart of Jesus, for example, in the passage where Christ says, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart. (Mt 11:28-29)" Then there is the key story of the death of Christ according to John. This evangelist in fact testifies to what he saw on Calvary: that a soldier, when Jesus was already dead, pierced his side with a spear, and from the wound flowed blood and water (cf. Jn 19.33-34). John recognized in that - apparently random - sign, the fulfilment of prophecies: from the heart of Jesus, the Lamb slain on the cross, flow forgiveness and life for all men.***

***But the mercy of Jesus is not just sentiment: indeed it is a force that gives life, that raises man up! [This Sunday]'s Gospel tells us this as well, in the episode of the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11-17). Jesus, with his disciples, is just arrived in Nain, a village in Galilee, at the very moment in which a funeral is taking place. A boy is buried, the only son of a widow. Jesus' gaze immediately fixes itself on the weeping mother. The evangelist Luke says: "Seeing her, the Lord was moved with great compassion for her (v. 13)." This "compassion" is the love of God for man, it is mercy, i.e. the attitude of God in contact with human misery, with our poverty, our suffering, our anguish. The biblical term "compassion" recalls the maternal viscera: a mother, in fact, experiences a reaction all her own, to the pain of her children. In this way does God love us, the Scripture says.***

***And what is the fruit of this love? It is life! Jesus said to the widow of Nain, "Do not weep," and then called the dead boy and awoke him as from a sleep (cf. vv. 13-15). The mercy of God gives life to man, it raises him from the dead. The Lord is always watching us with mercy, [always] awaits us with mercy. Let us be not afraid to approach him! He has a merciful heart! If we show our inner wounds, our sins, He always forgives us. He is pure mercy! Let us never forget this: He is pure mercy! Let us go to Jesus!***

***Let us turn to the Virgin Mary: her immaculate heart - a mother's heart - has shared the "compassion" of God to the full, especially at the hour of the passion and death of Jesus. May Mary help us to be meek, humble and compassionate with our brethren.***

Source: Vatican Radio/VIS

### **Update: Mass Bookings**

Following government procedures and diocesan guidance, from the second week of June (beginning Monday 7th) there will no longer be the need to book for a **weekday** Mass. However, numbers will still be restricted because of the ongoing pandemic and therefore it will be '*First come, First Serve*'. Church will be open 30minutes before each Mass/Liturgy. We are still obliged to continue the Test and Trace system for public health reasons and so stewards will require contact details from those who turn up to church. The dates and times of weekday Masses appear below.

**10am Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> June, Votive Mass of St. Joseph:** Traditionally on Wednesdays that don't fall in Advent & Christmastide, Lent & Eastertide, a Votive Mass of St. Joseph can be celebrated. In this year dedicated to St. Joseph let's continue to ask his intercession. Let's ask his help to bring those who have fallen away back home to the Church just as he brought Jesus and Mary safely back from Egypt and protected them from Herod's jealousy.

### **10am Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> June, Weekday Mass**

**6pm Friday 11<sup>th</sup> June, The Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus:** Pope Benedict XVI speaking of the solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus said: "*In biblical language, "heart" indicates the centre of the person where his sentiments and intentions dwell. In the Heart of the Redeemer we adore God's love for humanity, his will for universal salvation, his infinite mercy. Practising devotion to the Sacred Heart of Christ therefore means adoring that Heart which, after having loved us to the end, was pierced by a spear and from high on the Cross poured out blood and water, an inexhaustible source of new life*" (Benedict XVI, Angelus 5 June 2005).

### **Weekend Masses**

Due to increasing numbers, especially on a Sunday, people will still need to book for a weekend Mass. This can be done via the parish website [www.saintmarysoswaldtwistle.co.uk](http://www.saintmarysoswaldtwistle.co.uk) or by calling Ursula on a Wednesday between 5pm -6pm on (01254) 232 433. Let's pray that as we move on through summer to autumn more restrictions can be safely lifted. As always, on behalf of all parishioners at St. Mary's, we thank those volunteers who have given up their time to keep church open. Thank you and God Bless.

### **Restart**

The Bishop has initiated a programme called Restart to assist clergy and religious in the next coming months regarding the wide range of changes on the restrictions affecting sacramental and pastoral ministry. One of the recent complications to the Restart initiative has been the increase in Covid-19 cases in the north of the diocese which we are all too well aware of – Blackburn & Darwen, Bolton, Burnley, Hyndburn and the Rossendale Valley. Due to this fact the deaneries within these areas, like ours of St. John Vianney, have been asked to continue with our current Covid health and safety implementations until we are further instructed.

## **Welcome Back!**

This weekend Adam Bamber, studying for the priesthood at St. Mary's College, Oscott will be returning again to take up residence in the presbytery during the summer. Let's continue to pray for him and all those who are discerning God's will for them – Priesthood, Diaconate, Marriage, Religious life.

### **A prayer to St. Joseph for Vocations**

*Blessed St Joseph,  
You listened in the depth of your heart to the call of God for you  
to participate in his plan for the salvation of the world,  
you responded with faith to that invitation.  
Help me listen for the call of God in my life,  
help me understand what the Holy Spirit is asking of me,  
and help me be open to follow that invitation,  
with courage and a trusting heart.  
May your fatherly hand guide me and keep me safe.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

## **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 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](mailto: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](mailto:giftaid@stmaryoswaldtwistle.org.uk)

## **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](http://www.caritassalford.org.uk/miles-that-matter)

## **Update: St Mary's Refugee Resettlement Programme**

The following Thank You letter was sent through from Caritas Salford in regards the parish refugee project:

*On behalf of Caritas Diocese of Salford, I would like to thank you for volunteering to welcome the Najjar family in your community and for being part of the St Mary Oswaldtwistle Community Sponsorship Group.*

*After a conversation with Dylan Owen, we have agreed to bring the formal process of Community Sponsorship project to an end in the next month. This was understandably delayed due to the pandemic and we are grateful for your continuance of support. We look forward to supporting you achieve this last step on the formal resettlement process...*

*...We want to make sure that you are able to enjoy building a relationship with the family that is not solely based on support. Caritas remains available to support you through this process...*

*On behalf of Caritas and the whole Community Sponsorship programme, I would like to thank you for your hard work over the past two years and have attached a letter of our thanks. We hope that in the near future we will be able to arrange a suitable social celebration to recognise your contribution and thank you in person.*

## **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 [www.theodorehouse.com](http://www.theodorehouse.com) or contact [bookings@christianheritagecentre.com](mailto:bookings@christianheritagecentre.com)

## **Christian Heritage Centre Event - Faith & Reason: A Catholic Integration**

A short, residential summer course exploring the relationship of faith with philosophy, science and culture. Particularly helpful for catechists and teachers fielding commonly-asked questions around Catholicism, besides anyone wanting to deepen their understanding of the Faith. Runs 5th – 8th August. For more info and registration, [www.christianheritagecentre.com/events/faith-and-reason](http://www.christianheritagecentre.com/events/faith-and-reason)

## **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**

- 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.

God Bless and keep praying.

Our Lady of Oswaldtwistle, pray for us.

Saint Joseph, pray for us.

Fr. O'Brien