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Saint Mary's Roman Catholic Church
Catlow Hall Street, Oswaldtwistle
Lancashire
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Sunday 27th June 2021
Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Dear brothers and sisters,

Over the last month I've taken up walking. Not walking as in a gentle stroll through the park or a meander up the avenue. No. Walking as in over moor and fell, up and down ridge and hill. The obvious benefits from this new exercise routine has been that I've discovered more of the beauty of Lancashire; It's been a great way to clear the head, especially in these ever changing times and most importantly I've lost a stone!

I've also found myself being greatly humbled. No matter how good my boots are, how advanced my map and tracking system is or how well prepared my rucksack is, once you are out in God's green country you realise how small you are. Last week I was walking near Lancaster at Clougha Pike and the hill was dotted with boulders strewn all over the landscape. These rocks were pushed here during the last Ice Age. They have existed millions of years before me and after I have shuffled off this mortal coil they will continue to exist millions of years after me. Who am I in the great scheme of God's divine plan?

During a recent walk myself and a friend found ourselves suddenly swamped by low cloud. Despite having a map and following a very obvious path the rapid hill mist, without warning, disorientated us immediately. There was a realisation how vulnerable we are as human beings to the elements.

Technology and logic only go so far, the reality is that we are all still subject to the power of God's creation.

There is a verse from Psalm 8 that I would like to share with you, especially in light of my recent walking:

*'When I see the heavens, the work of your hands,
the moon and the stars which you arranged,
what is man that you should keep him in mind,
mortal man that you care for him?
Yet you have made him little less than a god;
with glory and honour you crowned him,
gave him power over the works of your hand,
put all things under his feet.'*

Psalm 8 :4-7

The Psalmist by accepting his smallness, his shortness of life, compared with the awesomeness of creation realises how profound God's love for him is. Moon and stars, weather and seasons, mountains and valleys, time and space, animals wild and tame all these things pale in comparison to the dignity God has given us. In the eyes of the Heavenly Father, when He sees us (When He sees you), He sees some of His finest creative work. Not yet perfect or complete but work in progress and He is overjoyed.

Brothers and sisters if you want to try a different way of prayer and continue to deepen your awareness of God the Creator then go walking. I can't recommend it enough. As Our Lord sent the disciples out two by two, so find a good friend and go out into the country. When you find yourself up a steep hillside, staring down at a lush valley, hop scotching over stepping stones across streams and muddy bogs then remember, though we are tiny in the great scheme of things we are the most loved. With this knowledge, with this truth we can do all things no matter what the future may have in store.

'What is man that you should care for him?.. Yet you have made him little less than a god!'

The Sacrament of Confession & The Holy Rosary

On Saturday 3rd July the Sacrament of Confession will be available from 9am – 10am. Those who haven't taken the opportunity to come to Confession during the last few months will testify to the safe and prayerful way in which it is celebrated. The Rosary will be publicly prayed in church, by kind volunteers, during Confessions. The intention for each rosary will be that all faithful disciples of the Lord will return to Him in this most merciful Sacrament that He instituted. The invitation is there, the welcome is warm and His forgiveness is REAL! Will you come?

Update: Mass Bookings

Following government procedures and diocesan guidance there IS no longer 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 are:

10am Wednesday 30th June, The First Martyrs of the Church of Rome

The first Martyrs of the Church of Rome are Christians who died, with Saints Peter & Paul, in the first great Roman persecution under Emperor Nero in the year 67A.D. The pagan writer Tacitus records their deaths.

10am Thursday 1st July, Votive Mass of The Precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ

During the First Italian War for Independence in 1849, Pope Pius IX went into exile to Gaeta in central Italy. While the war was raging, it was suggested to him, that he establish a feast to The Most Precious Blood of Jesus to beg God's heavenly help, end the war and bring about peace. The Pope immediately issued a proclamation to establish this feast in honour of the Precious Blood and to remind people of Jesus' most merciful sacrifice on the Cross for our salvation. The war soon ended and the Pope returned to Rome. Pius IX proclaimed that the 1st Sunday in July would be dedicated to the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ. Later, Pope Pius X assigned July 1 as the fixed date of this celebration.

6pm Friday 2nd July, First Friday Mass of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

Our Lord wants us to know how deeply we are loved by Him especially through his Passion, Death and Resurrection. He chose St. Margaret Mary Alacoque to remind the world of His life giving love by asking her to promote devotion to His Sacred Heart. Through this devotion, especially in the practice of going to Mass on the First Friday of the month, Our Lord made the following promises:

- (1) I will give them all the graces necessary in their state of life.
- (2) I will establish peace in their homes.
- (3) I will comfort them in all their afflictions.
- (4) I will be their secure refuge during life, and above all, in death.
- (5) I will bestow abundant blessings upon all their undertakings.
- (6) Sinners will find in my heart the source and infinite ocean of mercy.
- (7) Lukewarm souls shall become fervent.
- (8) Fervent souls shall quickly mount to high perfection.
- (9) I will bless every place in which an image of my heart is exposed and honoured.
- (10) I will give to priests the gift of touching the most hardened hearts.
- (11) Those who shall promote this devotion shall have their names written in my Heart.
- (12) I promise you in the excessive mercy of my Heart that my all-powerful love will grant to all those who receive Holy Communion on the First Fridays in nine consecutive months the grace of final perseverance; they shall not die in my disgrace, nor without receiving their sacraments. My divine heart shall be their safe refuge in this last moment.

Weekend Masses

At this current moment booking for a weekend Mass will still continue. This can be done via the parish website 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.

Online Retreat for Married Couples

The organisers of the online prayer resource Pray As You Go, in partnership with the Westminster Diocese's Marriage and Family Life Team, offer an Audio Retreat for Married Couples. It uses as its base ingredients scripture, the Ignatian tradition and other Christian insights to provide a simple recipe, which you can then enjoy blending together to make a tasty, exciting and balanced meal to feed your marriage.

Further information www.pathwaystogod.org/resources/where-two-are-gathered-marriage-retreat

Eco Thought of the Week, Sunday 27th June.

The Old Testament Book of Wisdom addresses us with these inspiring words today:

Death was not God's doing;
He takes no pleasure in the extinction of the living.
To be – for this he created all;
The world's created things have health in them,
In them no fatal poison can be found.

How can we value the health which is found in the world's created things and ensure their benefit for future generations? How can we keep 'fatal poisons' of discarded plastics and emissions and other pollutants from our lands and our seas and our skies?

Recruiting at the Cathedral Centre.

Communication and Marketing Officer (Cathedral).

An exciting opportunity has arisen to join the Diocese of Salford as a Communications and Marketing Officer to work with the Communications Manager and Cathedral Dean. This role will be key in supporting the Cathedral to tell its story, past, present & future in a busy, dynamic environment. The successful candidate will be responsible for delivering a variety of multimedia communications to assist the Cathedral team in raising awareness of the Cathedral among external audiences while encouraging greater engagement with the Cathedral Community. As a member of the Diocesan Communications Office, the incumbent will also play a part in supporting the team's work around the diocese, its projects, and parishes. Closing date for applications: 12 noon on Friday 16th July 2021.

Cathedral Campus Estate & Facilities Manager.

The Diocese of Salford are seeking to recruit a suitability qualified individual to provide leadership and oversee all facilities management aspects of the Cathedral Campus to develop and sustain excellence in all areas. The Cathedral, Cathedral House and Cathedral Centre are of great significance to the Church in Salford and this role will be responsible for delivering the highest standards of safety, hygiene, hospitality and service across this diverse setting through effective facilities management. Closing date for applications: 12 noon on Friday 16th July 2021. For more information please send them to: hr@dioceseofsalford.org.uk

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

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.

St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, pray for us.

Fr. O'Brien

