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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 25th July 2021
Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Dear brothers and sisters,

On Friday after the evening Mass some of our young parishioners, who are preparing to receive Holy Communion for the first time, had a short period of Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. One of the reflections I gave was about the story of the Pelican whose image is carved on our High Altar. Since we are still in the month of July, the month dedicated to Our Lord's Precious Blood, the story of the Pelican seems apt to be retold.

The legend begins with the Pelican and her three new-born chicks being exposed to a severe famine raging through all the land. Food was in short supply and so was water. No matter how far the Pelican searched and scoured the land she could not find any sustenance for her offspring. Eventually hunger and thirst began to take its toll on the pelican family and the new-born chicks were close to death. The Pelican, full of love and desperate to save her babies, pierced her own breast and fed her children with her own blood.



One of my favourite Eucharistic hymns was written by St. Thomas Aquinas and is called '*Adoro te Devote*' which translates '*I adore you devoutly*'. It contains a verse that alludes to the legend of the Pelican and sees the shedding of her own blood as an echo of Jesus shedding his blood for us on the Cross. As the Pelican gave life to her chicks so Christ our Lord has given eternal life to us, through the shedding of his own Most Precious Blood.

***Lord Jesus, Good Pelican,
clean me, the unclean, with Your Blood,
One drop of which can heal
the entire world of all its sins.***

We are so blessed in the Catholic Faith to have the Real Presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. Every time we come to Mass and the Host and Chalice are raised up by the priest at the consecration, we know that the Lord is truly present! Not symbolically or spiritually but truly substantially present! He is there! No matter what's going on in our lives, how tired we may be, how distracted or anxious we are, how frustrated or just feeling down and low, the Lord still comes among us at the Mass. As the pelican shed her blood to give life to her babies, how much more real is the grace and the real life that we are offered by Christ at the Sacrifice of the Mass. We don't have to do anything but simply come and be present to worship and glorify God around His Altar.

The penultimate verse of *Adoro te Devote* just clarifies why the Blessed Sacrament is so vital to our lives. It reminds us that through Jesus' sacrifice, through the shedding of His Blood we have life, Real Life! Amen to the God who loves and saves us!

*O thou our reminder
of Christ crucified,
living Bread, the life of
us for whom he died,
lend this life to me then;
feed and feast my mind,
there be thou the sweetness
man was meant to find.*

Masses & Liturgies for the Coming Week...

Wednesday 28th July

10am Votive Mass of St. Joseph

'O how I love to call St. Joseph the patriarch of Christians and of the elect of God! And why would we not confer on him this venerable name, he who was always called father of Jesus; he who was the true husband of Mary; he especially who played such a part in the mysteries of our spiritual regeneration?' Blessed William Joseph Chaminade

Thursday 29th July

10am Mass, St. Martha (Memoria)

St. Martha was the sister of St. Mary Magdalene and Lazarus. She received the Lord into her house and provided for his needs with great care. At her request the Lord raised her brother from the dead.

11:30am Funeral Liturgy for Pearl Soutar RIP

Friday 30th July

6pm Votive Mass of the Precious Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ

*'Do not hold yourselves cheap,
seeing that the Creator of all things and of you estimates your value so high, so dear,
that he pours out for you every day the most precious blood of his only-begotten Son.'*

St Augustine of Hippo

Saturday 31st July

6:30pm Vigil Mass for Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Sunday 1st August

10am Mass for Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

www.saintmarysoswaldtwistle.co.uk

Following guidance from the diocese, we are still strongly encouraged to wear face masks in church and continue with the NHS Test & Trace system. Thank you for continuing to make St. Mary's a safe and prayerful place for the Glory of God.

The Covid Vaccine

"Bishop John is urging all adults, who are able to do so, to be vaccinated. Pope Francis has reminded people of the duty to be vaccinated if they are able. The Church is clear that all Catholics can take any of the vaccines on offer with a clear conscience. Even if you are at a low risk of becoming seriously ill, being vaccinated will lower the risk of transmitting the virus to somebody else who might then have a severe reaction or even die. It is particularly important that those in our parishes, clergy and lay-people who visit those who are housebound or otherwise vulnerable are vaccinated."

Parish Readers

As restrictions are now being eased and parishes around the diocese are adapting to new circumstances I would like to invite both existing readers and potential new readers to contact me. The Word of God is so vital and life giving! It's through the Scriptures that we encounter the Lord and He is able to speak, guide, direct, challenge, affirm and heal us. Readers are so important because through their clarity and voices they transmit the message that God wants us to hear at the Liturgy.

Covid has disturbed many peoples routines and personal circumstances which has meant that one or two existing readers have said they can no longer continue. That is perfectly understandable and I think it is so important nobody feels pressure to continue. The world has changed. If parishioners would like to volunteer to be readers or any existing readers would like to continue then please email me at sean.obrien@dioceseofsalford.org.uk and we can talk about the practicalities.

Extra-ordinary ministers of Holy Communion

We have been blessed over the years with dedicated parishioners who have been chosen by the various parish priests of St. Mary's to be Extra-ordinary ministers of Holy Communion. Their chief and first role is to support the parish priest by visiting the sick who genuinely cannot attend the Holy Mass and bring the Blessed Sacrament to them. That time of praying together in the Real Presence of Jesus in Holy Communion brings such healing and consolation to those who are suffering and housebound.

I am aware that many of our existing Extra-ordinary ministers of Holy Communion have found that personal circumstances and routines have changed since the start of the Covid Pandemic last year. Therefore, without anybody feeling pressure, if those existing parish Extra-ordinary ministers of Holy Communion would like to continue then please do contact me and we can work out safely and correctly the sick visits that need to be undertaken. Email sean.obrien@dioceseofsalford.org.uk Similarly, if people would like to stand down I fully understand and appreciate that things have changed in parish life and nobody should feel under any pressure to continue. Thank you for what you have done for our sick and housebound in the past and may God Bless you.

I'll personally meet with those who wish to continue and go through the new format of safely distributing the Blessed Sacrament to those who are sick. At present there is no need for Extra-ordinary ministers of Holy Communion to assist me at the Mass.

World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly 2021 – Sunday 25th July

The inaugural World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly falls on Sunday 25 July 2021, instituted by Pope Francis. It has been given the theme “I am with you always” from the Gospel of Matthew (Mt 28: 30). Identifying with the more senior members of our society, the Holy Father says, *“The whole Church is close to you – to us – and cares about you, loves you and does not want to leave you alone!”*

PRAYER FOR THE FIRST WORLD DAY FOR GRANDPARENTS AND THE ELDERLY

I thank You, Lord,
for the comfort of Your presence:
even in times of loneliness,
You are my hope and my confidence,
You have been my rock and my fortress since my youth!
I thank You for having given me a family
and for having blessed me with a long life.
I thank You for moments of joy and difficulty,
for the dreams that have already come true in my life and for
those that are still ahead of me.
I thank You for this time of renewed fruitfulness to which You
call me.
Increase, O Lord, my faith,
make me a channel of your peace,
teach me to embrace those who suffer more than me,
to never stop dreaming
and to tell of your wonders to new generations.
Protect and guide Pope Francis and the Church,
that the light of the Gospel might reach the ends of the earth.
Send Your Spirit, O Lord, to renew the world,
that the storm of the pandemic might be calmed,
the poor consoled and wars ended.
Sustain me in weakness
and help me to live life to the full
in each moment that You give me,
in the certainty that you are with me every day,
even until the end of the age.
Amen.

Lourdes at Home - live-streamed Mass

We invite you to join us online for a special pilgrimage Mass celebrated by the Bishop from Sacred Heart Church, Rochdale this Sunday 25th July at 2pm. All are welcome.
www.stmargaretlitherowrochdale.org.uk

Caritas Bishop's Fund

Caritas is pleased to offer the Caritas Bishop's Fund to parishes and schools to provide immediate support to families or individuals facing a crisis and now also to include food shopping vouchers. (We noted how helpful this was for families in crisis during the recent distribution of the National Lottery grant). Each school or parish may be allocated up to 6 applications per year to this Fund. For more information email: bishopsfund@caritassalford.org.uk

Recruiting at the Cathedral Centre.

PA/Senior Administrator – COO Office.

The Diocese of Salford is seeking to recruit a suitability experienced individual to provide office management and oversight of the administration of the COO Office. This role will have responsibility for providing robust administrative and secretarial support to the COO and her team across all areas but particularly in relation to the IT, telephony, and Data Protection.

Closing date for applications: 12 noon on Monday 26th July 2021.

Personal Assistant to the Vicars General and the Secretary to the Trustees.

The Diocese of Salford is seeking to recruit a suitability experienced individual to provide high quality administrative support to the Vicars General and the Secretary to the Trustees to enable them to fulfil their specific roles and wider responsibilities for the governance of the diocese. The role will require regular interaction with a wide and diverse range of individuals and the incumbent must understand that they are an ambassador for the Diocese in all their encounters.

Closing date for applications: 12 noon on Monday 26th July 2021.

Receptionist

The Cathedral Centre is the office base for diocesan curial staff and houses the Cathedral Bookshop, Café, and conference rooms. A large number and wide variety of visitors, contractors and personnel come to the Cathedral Centre and the wider estate as a whole. The Cathedral House is adjacent to the Centre and houses some of our retired clergy.

Closing date for applications: 12 noon on Monday 26th July 2021.

For more information and application packs, please visit the diocesan website. If you have any queries, questions can be sent 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

God Bless and keep praying.

Our Lady of Oswaldtwistle, pray for us.

Saint Joseph, pray for us.

Fr. O'Brien