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Saint Mary's Roman Catholic Church
Catlow Hall Street, Oswaldtwistle
Lancashire
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Parish Priest: Rev Fr. S D O'Brien
Tel: 01254-232433



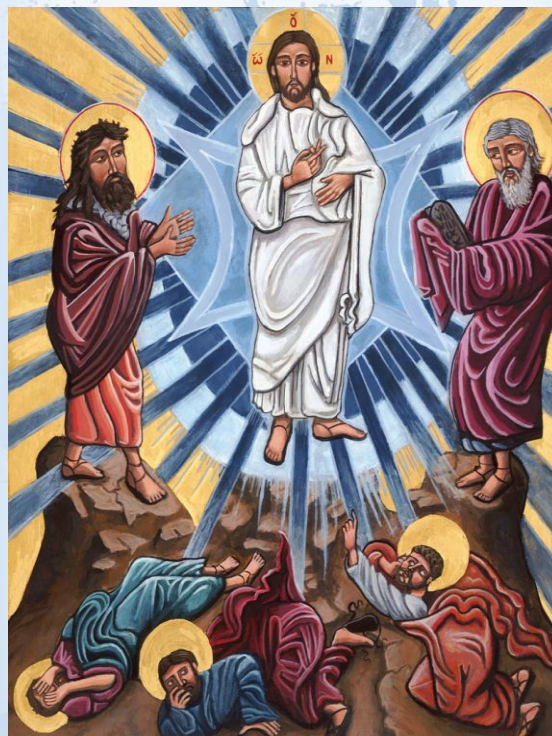
Sunday 29th August 2021
Twenty Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Dear brothers and sisters,

This week we reflect with on the Fourth Luminous Mystery – The Transfiguration.

'He [Jesus] took with him Peter and John and James and went up the mountain to pray. As he prayed, the aspect of his face was changed and his clothing became brilliant as lighting. Suddenly there were two men there talking to him; they were Moses and Elijah appearing in glory, and they were speaking of his passing which he was to accomplish in Jerusalem.'

(Luke 9: 28-31)



The following meditation was written by Sherry Antonetti, a freelance Catholic writer and published author. She was asking her son, John, what mystery he found the most challenging to mediate on when praying the rosary...

'Which one do you find most puzzling?' I asked my son as we drove to his Confirmation retreat. John thought for a minute. "The Transfiguration. It's one that doesn't make much sense to me." "Okay." I said, and wished him well on his retreat. Internally I fretted. That mystery remained mysterious to me too. We understand something of the Crowning of Mary as Queen of Heaven because we've known people we wished to honor before all others. I could get the descent of the Holy Spirit because all Confirmed Catholics experience this gift, both in Baptism and all the more in Confirmation. And who doesn't see themselves in the sorrowful mysteries in the course of life? But the Transfiguration?

As I drove home, my thoughts ran in a muddled fashion. Peter, James and John go up the mountain with Jesus. They pray and fall asleep. Jesus's face becomes dazzlingly white and they see Him talking with Moses and Elijah. Peter loses his head for a moment and says something very Peter, "Let's build three booths" because he wants to capture the experience permanently and stay always on the mountain. I know Moses represents the Law, and Elijah the prophets. How does that relate to a 13-year old boy preparing for Confirmation? How does it relate to me? How does it relate to anyone?

I opened the Bible and read Matthew's Version in Chapter 17 and it referenced John the Baptist being Elijah for Jesus. My own son John received his name in Advent of 2003 when I felt struck by the Gospel and the words, "His name is John." I decided I needed to brush up on Elijah too. The prophets, of the Old Testament and the New, were voices crying out in the wilderness, proclaiming to the people, reminding them that while God is patient, He does judge, He will bring justice, and we're culpable for all the damage we do in our lives to others, and for our own stubbornness to God's law and God's love.

The Luminous mysteries declare to us over and over again, "Listen." In the Baptism at the River Jordan, God speaks from the Heavens, "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased. Listen to him." At the Wedding Feast in Cana, Mary tells the servants, "Do whatever He tells you." Jesus gives us the Proclamation of the Kingdom, Jesus's words to our hearts in the Beatitudes, in all He reveals at the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus tell us when He institutes the Eucharist, "This is my body. Do this in memory of me." Having read the other two versions of the Transfiguration in Luke 9:28-36 and Mark 9:2-13, a bright cloud descends and from that cloud comes God the Father's voice, God's declaration. "This is my beloved son whom I love. Listen to Him."

In that moment, it felt rather hard to miss the point. How could it be, I'd somehow heard this Gospel year after year and missed God's still quiet voice when here He's practically shouting to the world? Answer? Even the apostles struggled to stay awake at times, and often in our lives, via neglect, via sin, via not wanting to think about things, it's easy to find one's self sleeping through the reality of being in the presence of God. The Transfiguration is a reminder of what is to come, and a "WAKE UP!" call to our souls about what needs to be ongoing.

Are we on the mountain? Are we taking ourselves to prayer, talking with Jesus, being with Jesus, consistently seeking to stay in His presence? Are we seeking to get ever closer to God? Are we awake? Are we interested in the spiritual high of prayer, or in an actual relationship with Christ and what that entails? "Good questions for a candidate for Confirmation," I thought, not to mention myself. We're not supposed to get everything about any of the mysteries. We're supposed to get that there is always more within each of these encounters with Christ, and that God being the infinite Lover, always has more to share with us if only we will stay awake and listen."

I can't wait to share this with John.

Masses & Liturgies for the Coming Week...

Wednesday 1st September

10am Mass. Saint Edmund Arrowsmith, Priest & Martyr (Feast)

St. Edmund Arrowsmith was born in 1585 at Haydock, Merseyside. He was ordained at the seminary in Douai, France and returned to England to begin his priestly ministry despite the persecution of the time towards all Catholics. He worked in Lancashire, including Salmesbury and Walton-le-Dale. He was known for his zealous faith. In 1628 he was arrested, imprisoned at Lancaster and there finally martyred.

Thursday 2nd September

10am Mass (Feria)

Friday 3rd September

6pm Mass. Saint Gregory the Great, Pope & Doctor (Feast)

St. Gregory was born in Rome in 540A.D. He became a civil servant and Prefect of the City. Gregory entered the Abbey of St. Andrew and was ordained a deacon in 578A.D. He later was elected Pope in 590A.D and showed great pastoral care in his preaching, writing, care for the poor and tirelessly working for the welfare of Rome.

He is known as the "*Apostle of England*" because he sent St. Augustine (of Canterbury) to minister there after encountering English slaves in the Forum.

The evening Mass will also be the First Friday Mass of the month for those praying the devotion to the Sacred Heart.

Saturday 4th September

9am – 10am Confessions & The Holy Rosary

6:30pm Vigil Mass for The Twenty Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Sunday 5th August

10am Mass for The Twenty Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

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 Sacrament of Confession & The Holy Rosary

On Saturday 4th September the Sacrament of Confession will be available from 9am – 10am. Those who haven't taken the opportunity to come to Confession during the last year 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?

Future Masses & Liturgies

Thanks to many good parishioners who are offering up their time and gifts we are able to have more opportunity for prayer at St. Mary's. Come the autumn there will be a Holy Hour (Exposition) before the Blessed Sacrament on Tuesday's and Friday's (5pm – 6pm) and Saturday's (9am -10am). There will also be two extra Masses on Tuesday evenings at 6pm and Saturday mornings at 10am. Again all this is possible because of volunteer parishioners. If you would like to help then please contact Jennifer Pickles at jennifer.pickles@virginmedia.com

Parish Feast – Our Lady of Oswaldtwistle

On Wednesday 8th September the Universal Church celebrates The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Our Lady's Birthday). For us as St. Mary's this Feast day marks when our parish church was consecrated formally in 1948. The memorial stone that records this event is at the side of church (Hawthorn Ave by the small side gate). It was also on this day, through parishioners generous contributions, we restored the statue of Our Lady of Oswaldtwistle and blessed her in 2018. This year on the 8th September there will be Mass at 7pm. The Mass intention will be for all those parishioners who have worked to keep our church open during the Covid pandemic. It will be a Mass giving thanks to God for our parish family and the work people do, big or small, public or behind the scenes. Everyone is invited and everyone is welcome. Let's raise the roof in praise and thanks to God.

Our Lady of Oswaldtwistle, Pray for us.

Farewell

This weekend we say goodbye to Fr. Stamp. He will be celebrating his final Mass as parish priest of Accrington at St. Anne's Church this Sunday at 11am (29th Aug). Immediately after our parish 10am Mass I will be driving straight there. Let's pray for Father as he takes up his new appointment as parish priest of Our Lady & St. John's, Chorlton-cum-Hardy, Manchester. On a personal note I have been very grateful for Father's help, support and friendship especially in the transition from monk to parish priest. Any move is stressful, as I'm sure many of you can testify to, so let's keep Fr. Stamp and his new parish in our prayers.

Fr. Francis Wadsworth, the new parish priest of St. Anne's and St. Joseph's, will be arriving in Accrington next week and we keep him also in our prayers.

The Holy Mass in Spanish

Invitation to Spanish Mass:

Salford Cathedral, 250 Chapel Street, M3 5LE.

Every third Sunday of each month at 2pm

Next mass on Sunday 19th September 2021.

All are welcome to join. Refreshments will be served after Mass for sharing.

Information: salfordcathedralenespanolmisa@gmail.com / Mobile: 07475468128

Invitacion a Misa en Español

Catedral de Salford, 250 Chapel Street, M3 5LE

Todos los terceros Domingos de cada mes a las 2pm.

Próxima misa: Domingo 19 de Septiembre 2021.

Todos están bienvenidos a la Misa, Refrigerio compartir siempre al final de la Misa.

Información: salfordcathedralenespanolmisa@gmail.com / Mobil: 07475468128

ABC (About Becoming Catholic)

During the last year of lockdowns, social distancing, furloughs and daily life being interrupted many people have found themselves with time to think. To think about the direction of their own lives, to think about the fragility of this world, to think about what happens after death and even daring to contemplate the person of Jesus Christ! If you or somebody you know is contemplating such things then tell them to email me at sean.obrien@dioceseofsalford.org.uk or call the presbytery 01254 232 433 (leaving a voicemail if I don't answer straight away). We are made for the Lord and we will only find real happiness, true purpose and total completeness in adoring and loving Him.

*'You have made us for Yourself, O Lord,
and our hearts are restless until they rest in You.'*
(St. Augustine of Hippo)

Welcome Home: Inviting People Back to the Post-Pandemic Church

Tuesday 7 September, 7pm. Join Alpha UK and Divine Renovation UK as they discuss how to draw people back to Jesus and the Church in the post-pandemic world. As we as a Church begin to survey the new terrain, we will face new opportunities to reach those around us. We will be in conversation with Bishop David Oakley, Bishop of Northampton, Fr Philip Cunnah, parish priest from St Paulinus in Yorkshire, and Eleanor Oliver, mother and founder of Colour and Shape.

For more information visit: www.tfaforms.com/4917263

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 Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion to assist me at the Mass.

Reopening of Salford Cathedral Centre Facilities

We are delighted to announce that Cathedral Centre Books has now reopened. The shop is open 8.30am - 3.30pm Monday to Friday. Orders can be also placed via the shop website or over the phone on 0161 817 2208. The Cathedral Centre Café has also reopened and is open to the public 8.30am - 1.30pm Monday to Friday.

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

Fr. O'Brien

