



±
Saint Mary's Roman Catholic Church
Catlow Hall Street, Oswaldtwistle
Lancashire
BB5 3EZ

DIOCESE OF  Salford

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

Sunday 24th January 2021
Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Dear brothers and sisters,

In 1862 a card was exchanged between two people with the following words written inside:

*A cross no cross where Jesus is.
With Jesus crosses are my bliss.
Why should the cross so frighten me
when on the Cross My God I see?*

The sender of this card was a religious sister called Elizabeth Prout (1820 – 1864) whose name you may have heard recently in the news. She was the foundress of the Sisters of the Cross and Passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ and our Holy Father Pope Francis has just declared her 'Venerable'. In other words the official process toward declaring her a Saint is now taking place. The reason why I share this good news with you is that Venerable Elizabeth Prout lived and worked in our diocese of Salford. She arrived in Manchester early September 1849 and witnessed the human misery behind the facade of the industrial revolution. The slums, the mass of Irish immigrants driven from their homes because of the famine, the dire poverty and lack of educational provision and opportunities for young women. Before her she experienced a vision of hell on earth and was taken back by how human beings were forced to live in animalistic conditions.

Those words she wrote above, in the card exchanged with another religious sister, reveal Elizabeth's connection and identification with the crucified Lord. In the suffering of the slums she saw the face of Christ. In the anguish of hunger and cries of disease she heard the words of Jesus on the Cross '*I thirst*'. Rather than be an onlooker, rather than just simply feel pity Venerable Elizabeth actively responded. Her whole life was not stagnant in apathy but alive in action driven by her love for Christ and her want to console him through those around her who were suffering.



The photo above is of Venerable Elizabeth Prout and I think she is a good person to turn to and ask for intercession at this time. She saw the face of Christ in all those who were suffering around her. Christ is still suffering amidst those around us whether that be family, friends or neighbours and members of our local community. Covid-19 has multiplied the sickness of loneliness and exacerbated the disease of sadness. Therefore let us ask Venerable Elizabeth for the same faith and love that she had for our Lord so that we too through kind words, outreaching actions and prayerful thoughts may console the crucified Lord through those struggling around us.

Good News, New Experiences and Prayer!

Last week I began teaching the First Holy Communion and Confirmation classes online! It's all a new experience and feels slightly strange and remote, however, the important thing is that the Faith and the blessings it brings is being passed on. Please keep in your prayers Faye, Francesca, Georgia, Luke, Poppy, Rheon and Tessa who are preparing for the Sacraments. I would also ask your prayers for Wesley who is currently studying at sixth form and is preparing to be received into full communion with the Church at Easter. Many of you will recognise Wesley as one of the volunteer stewards we have at St. Mary's. Our Lady of Oswaldtwistle, pray for them all.

Christian Heritage Centre Online Formation

Stefan Kaminski, Director of The Christian Heritage Centre at Stonyhurst, has emailed me the following events that are taking place to help people in their faith and formation.

We are pleased to be offering an online series of sessions for young adults (18-30 years old), on human sexuality and relationships. The "Set Free Summit" is being offered by ICPE Mission, in partnership with the CHC, and is led by a number of exciting speakers from around the world, building on St John Paul II's beautiful writings. It takes place (online) on the six Sundays from 7th February to 14th March, from 4 – 5:30pm. Each session involves a talk, sharing in small groups and a general Q&A. For info and registration: <https://christianheritagecentre.com/events/set-free/>

The Drama Displayed series continues with the next talk, 'The Naked Truth' by Dr David Torevell, on Thursday 28th January at 7:30pm. The series offers theological reflections on the key moments of salvation, supported by a study of various great works of art. For info and registration: <https://christianheritagecentre.com/events/the-drama-displayed/>

Recordings of the previous talks are available here: <https://christianheritagecentre.com/media/video/>

Welcome

We welcome Adam Bamber, a local man who many of you already know and a seminarian for the diocese of Shrewsbury who is studying for the priesthood at Oscott. Due to the current pandemic Adam is not immediately able to return to seminary and so he will be temporarily using the facilities and space at St. Mary's to resume his studies and begin his online learning. Following all due processes and procedures and risk assessments Adam will arrive this week and so we keep him in our prayers during his short sojourn with us. It's good to know that the Lord's call to the priesthood is still be heard and acted upon. Welcome Adam.

Devotions for the Year of St. Joseph

Seven Sundays

'Honour my Seven Sorrows and Seven Joys on the Seven Sundays leading up to the 19th March.'
Like any devotion it allows those who participate in it the opportunity to come closer to the Lord and honours God the Father's work in Joseph, His saint and the protector of the Holy Family. Starting 15 minutes before each of the weekend Masses (Vigil & Sunday) from January 31st until March 14th this devotion will be prayed in honour of St. Joseph, here at St. Mary's. The humble request underlying this devotional prayer will simply be to help us all, family & friends, in these uncertain times.

Petition Box

In front of the statue of St. Joseph there is now a prayer box. I invite you to place any petitions that you may have in that box the next time you are at church. You may want to ask St. Joseph to pray for a loved one, to intercede for a soul in purgatory, to keep vigil over a friend or family member you have not been able to visit because of the pandemic. Your petition could be for a family going through financial troubles, mental health issues or your prayer to St. Joseph maybe for a person who has lapsed and walked away from Christ and His Church. Whatever your prayer write it at home and then place it in the box before St. Joseph who will always bring your needs to God.

Votive Mass

Wednesdays, for us as Roman Catholics, is the weekday traditionally given to St. Joseph. Why? Wednesday is halfway between Sunday, the day of Our Lord, and Saturday, the day of Our Lady. It is the mid-point of the week and on any journey pilgrims often become tired midway through. However, just as St. Joseph carried Mary and her unborn child safely to Bethlehem and later on to Egypt, so to his prayers carry us when we are tired or distracted. The practice of a Wednesday Votive Mass in honour of St. Joseph has slowly started to return and each Wednesday in this year dedicated to our spiritual father I too will be offering up this votive Mass (dependant on funerals and obligatory liturgical feasts). If you find your self tiring in prayer or doubting in faith then come to St. Joseph so that he may bring you closer to his foster Son who said:

'Come to me all you who labour and are overburdened and I will give you rest.'

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).

Stewards, Cleaners & Gardeners

If you would like to serve Our Lord as a volunteer steward then please email Jennifer Pickles (St. Mary's Steward Co-ordinator) at: jennifer.pickles@virginmedia.com or to volunteer as a cleaner please contact Karen Beard (Parish Housekeeper) at jakey9998@aol.com. The parish grounds are always crying out for attention. If you could help please contact Navada Keenan (Parish gardens facilitator) at keenannavada@gmail.com

Online Prayer

As you know I completed a diocesan safeguarding course last autumn via the internet on a thing called Zoom. This Zoom allows you to meet interactively and if a parishioner would like to organise and facilitate an event, like the rosary or a bible study group, where we could pray together online I would be very happy for that to happen and be part of it. You will need to contact the diocesan safeguarding office in regards to appropriate procedure and practice when hosting a Zoom meeting. If you would like to organise this then please email me and I can pass on the safeguarding contact details to you.

God Bless and keep praying.

Our Lady of Oswaldtwistle, pray for us.

Saint Joseph, pray for us.

Venerable Elizabeth Prout, pray for us.

Fr. O'Brien