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



Sunday 18th April 2021
Third Sunday of Easter

Dear brothers and sisters,

The New Testament book, The Acts of the Apostles, is read at every Mass throughout Eastertide. It describes the life of the early Church founded on the Good News of the Lord's death and Resurrection. In chapter three, St. Peter and St. John were going to the Temple to pray when a lame man saw them and began to beg. The two apostles, though poor in material wealth, were rich in the Spirit of God. St. Peter responded to the man's begging: ***'I have neither silver nor gold, but I will give you what I have: in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, walk!'*** (Acts 3:6). The lame man was healed. He began to walk, run and jump for joy to everyone's amazement. This miracle attracted people to come to the apostles and ask them about Jesus, whose mere name brought about an impossible healing. ***'...Many of those who had listened to their message became believers, the total number of who had now risen to something like five thousand.'*** (Acts 4:3)



However, the large number of converts caused the religious authorities to be jealous and resentful of the Church. Peter and the other apostles were arrested and questioned about Jesus and the new life they were preaching about. ***'By what power, and by whose name have you done this?'*** (Acts 4:7). In answer to their interrogation St. Peter openly declared that any power and authority he had came from the name of God the Son. ***'For all the names in the world given to men, this is the only one by which men can be saved.'*** (Acts 4:12).

The powerful name of Jesus which led to a lame man being healed, five thousand people converting and anxiety within an ancient religious institution was first received by St. Joseph at Nazareth: The angel of the Lord said, '*She [Mary] will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.*' (Matthew 1:21). The name Jesus is derived from the Old Testament name *Joshua* meaning '*The Lord God is salvation.*' That name was no longer a motif of hope but a concrete realisation in the person of Our Lord Himself.

In St. Paul's letter to the Philippians there is the *Carmen Christi*, the Christ Hymn, which has shaped and formed the prayer, spirituality and theology of the Church for almost two thousand years. It proclaims the sacredness and power of the Holy Name of Jesus.

*'But God raised him high
and gave him the name
which is above all other names
so that all beings
in the heavens, on earth and in the underworld,
should bend the knee at the name of Jesus
and that every tongue should acclaim
Jesus Christ as Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.'*
(Philippians 2:9-11)

The Saints throughout the ages have revered the name of Jesus and handed down the practice of holding it dear to us: '*A name of love. For the name of Jesus brings to our remembrance all the sufferings which Jesus has endured for us in his life and death.*' (St. Alphonsus de Liguori)

A nameless person doesn't really exist. They are a thing rather than an individual. They are a notion, a concept rather than a body of flesh and blood. God has given a name, a Holy Name, that reminds us Jesus Christ was and *is* real. It was He who died for our sins on the Cross. It was He who rose on the Third Day for us. It is He who calls us each and everyday to grow in holiness and be with Him. Let us remind ourselves this Easter Season to never take this Holy Name for granted or be complacent when we speak it. This is the Name that has changed the world.

Solemnity of Saint George, Martyr and Patron of England

On Friday 23rd April we will celebrate Saint George, our country's patron saint, with a Solemn Mass at 6pm. George was martyred at Lydda (Israel) 303 AD, in the persecution under Emperor Diocletian. His cult, predating the legend of the dragon, spread quickly through the East and West. During the crusades, George was seen to personify the ideals of Christian chivalry, and was adopted as patron saint of several city-states and countries. Richard I of England placed his crusading army under his protection, and in 1222 his feast was proclaimed a national holiday. At this present time our country needs saints like George, people of courage and service, to stand up and witness to the Faith, to the name of Jesus Christ.

St. George, patron of our country, pray for us. Amen.

Vocation Sunday

This year the World day of Prayer for Vocations to the Priesthood and Religious life will be celebrated on Sunday 25th April 2021, Good Shepherd Sunday. In the light of the Pandemic, the diocesan vocation department would like to encourage parishioners to think about donating directly to the Ecclesiastical Education Fund, which supports our seminarians. Any donations should be sent to Ruth Turley at the Finance Office Cathedral Centre, 3 Ford St, Salford M3 6DW.

Please hold our seminarians in your prayers: Luke Bradbury and Paul Chisnall at St. Mary's, Oscott College, Theo Sharrock at the Venrable English College in Rome as well as Carmine Rea and Mark McGeehan at the Royal English College of St. Alban in Valladolid, Spain.

With grateful thanks for all you do to support vocations in the Diocese of Salford.

Yours sincerely,

Fr. John Hitchen and Fr. David Featherstone

Office of Vocations

For more information about the priesthood in the Diocese of Salford, please contact:

Fr John Hitchen, Vocations Director

Tel 0161 445 2079 or email john.hitchen@dioceseofsalford.org.uk

For information about becoming a permanent Deacon in the diocese please contact:

Mgr Anthony Kay anthony.kay@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

Christian Heritage Centre at Stonyhurst Talk Series

The Logos & Literature: Elaborating the Divine. A series of online evening talks exploring some of the great themes of Catholic Christianity in writing old and new, with Catholic scholars and contemporary authors. Every second Thursday at 7:30pm from 29th April. For info and registration: <https://christianheritagecentre.com/events/logos-and-literature/>

Easter - Weekly Eco-Thought for Parishes

Third Sunday of Easter: In one of the Easter Prefaces we pray 'for, with the old order destroyed, a universe cast down is renewed.' Note the breadth of vision; not just people, not just the earth, but a UNIVERSE is renewed in the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead. How can I be an instrument of that renewal?

Message from Online Booking Team

Could we please ask that people who use the online booking system enter their correct email address. Sadly, in recent days a number of people have booked to attend a Mass but have not given us the correct information which means we cannot send a receipt of confirmation.

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.

Pope Francis sends condolences for the death of Prince Philip

The Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin has sent a telegram on the Pope's behalf to Queen Elizabeth II, recalling her husband's "*record of public service*".

"Saddened to learn of the death of your husband Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, His Holiness Pope Francis offers heartfelt condolences to Your Majesty and the members of the royal family," Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Pietro Parolin wrote in a telegram addressed to Queen Elizabeth. *"Recalling Prince Philip's devotion to his marriage and family, his distinguished record of public service and his commitment to the education and advancement of future generations, His Holiness commends him to the merciful love of Christ our redeemer,"* the Cardinal wrote. *"Upon you and upon all who grieve his loss in the sure hope of the resurrection, the Holy Father invokes the Lord's blessings of consolation and peace,"* he concluded.

Bishops Conference of England and Wales statement on COVID-19 and vaccination

The development of a vaccine against COVID-19 presents an important breakthrough in protecting others as well as oneself from the virus; a virus which has not only caused a global pandemic and led to a huge loss of life but has also placed a great burden on healthcare workers and systems. Each of us has a duty to protect others from infection with its danger of serious illness, and for some, death. A vaccine is the most effective way to achieve this unless one decides to self-isolate.

At present, debate concerns the use of the vaccines developed by Pfizer & BioNTech, Moderna, and AstraZeneca. Some have questioned the use of the Astra Zeneca vaccine since it has been developed from cell-lines originating from the cells of an aborted foetus in 1983. The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Pontifical Academy of Life have expressed the view that one may in good conscience and for a grave reason receive a vaccine sourced in this way, provided that there is a sufficient moral distance between the present administration of the vaccine and the original wrongful action. In the COVID-19 pandemic, we judge that this grave reason exists and that one does not sin by receiving the vaccine.

Both the Pfizer & BioNTech and Moderna vaccines have a different source since they are mRNA-based vaccines. On 2 December 2020, the Pfizer & BioNTech vaccine was approved for use in the UK. Each Catholic must educate his or her conscience on this matter and decide what to do, also bearing in mind that a vaccine must be safe, effective, and universally available, especially to the poor of the world. Catholics may in good conscience receive any of these vaccines for the good of others and themselves. In good conscience, one may refuse a particular vaccine but continues to have a duty to protect others from infection.

Right Reverend Richard Moth

Chair, Department of Social Justice

Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales

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).

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

Fr. O'Brien