

Parish of St Mary, Middlewich & St Margaret Ward, Holmes Chapel

Parish Priest: Fr Peter Dutton, 2 New King Street, Middlewich ☎01606 832359 Deacons: Rev Tony Ford, 01270 759511
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 Shrewsbury Diocese is a Registered Charity St Mary's School 01606 832164 E mail admin@2nd February

Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, 19th July 2020

Saturday	18th July	6.30pm	Anne Casey B'day
Sunday	19th July	9.00am 11.00am	Priest's Int The Parishioners
Monday	20th July	9.00am 6.30pm	Denise Quinn Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament
Tuesday	21st July	9.00am	Stephen Roberts
Wednesday	22nd July	7.30pm	Michelle Tim <i>St Mary Magdalene</i>
Thursday	23rd July	9.00am	Catherine Morrison Anniv. <i>St Bridget</i>
Friday	24th July	9.00am	Private Int.
Saturday	25th July	6.30pm	Priest's Int
Sunday	26th July	9.00am 11.00am	The Parishioners Hilda & Jim Duffy Anniv.

Sacrament of Reconciliation : On request
Sacrament of Baptism On hold until further notice.

Please Pray for

ALL who are sick at home and in hospital: Stephen Grey, Margaret McCallum, Sara O'Brien, Jamie Connor, John Bomford, Nathan Carter, Larry Porter, Gillian Robinson, Tim Bradbury, Roy Yearsley, Peter Hannon, Stan Rosiak, Sadie Everard, Alex Randall Jenny Ogden, John Evans, Shirley Gaskell, Joan Upton, Mary Morris, Michael McCluskey, Jan D, Margaret Scarlett, Fr Paul Hughes, Deacon Philip White, Martin Armitt, Fr Jim McGrath, Ursula Finn, Dorothy Worthington.



ALL who have died recently.

ALL whose anniversaries occur at this time: Esther Fazackerley, Arthur Wardle, Joan Kerr, Peggy Flynn, Margaret McGuire, Judith Fisher, Catherine Morrison, Anne Cull, Patrick Molloy, Christine Jennings, Jean O'Rourke, Catherine O'Sullivan, John Donohue, Joseph Tynes, Henry Aloysius Murphy, Diane Willemse, Rev Michael Wentworth, Provost John Burgon.

During the Global Covid Pandemic, Mary's Meals are continuing to support those they normally serve. Almost all children who normally are fed at school are now receiving a meal at home, thanks to a very adaptable system. It still only costs £15.90 to feed a child for a whole year. They need our help more than ever. You can donate in church or at marysmeals.org.uk, where you can also watch the new film "Love Reaches Everywhere" with Hollywood actor Gerard Butler

**Welcome back to Mass. If you are coming :
 Wear a mask; Social distance when queuing;
 sanitise your hands on entry;
 Follow the one way system and instructions from stewards (wearing aprons to identify them). Communion in the hand only, no chalice.
 Instructions will be given by Fr Peter. Strict limit of 50, no exceptions. Box for offerings at back of church. Leave promptly, as instructed, at the end of Mass, not before. THERE ARE NO TOILETS AVAILABLE. WE ARE NOT ALLOWED TO USE THE PARISH CENTRE**

Dear Parishioners,

From now on there will be no more Church Open for Private Prayer sessions as we will be celebrating public Masses every day. Please do not think this means we are back to normal: There are lots of restrictions and regulations.

Masses can only be held in churches which have been approved as fulfilling the Covid secure conditions, so Mass cannot be celebrated at St Margaret's. Numbers at St Mary's are strictly restricted to 50 per Mass, first come first served, but even though slightly increased numbers attended last week, there was still lots of spare capacity. You will only be allowed in if you are wearing a face mask (We cannot provide these: it would cost us £100 + each weekend) The same rules apply to weekday Mass. Masses will be shorter than usual but the good news is that you will be able to receive the Eucharist, but only the host and only in the hand. There is to be no congregational singing, you must remain one metre apart, except from members of your own household, and must sanitise your hands as you enter church. You must enter down the side aisles, sit only in the marked places and exit via the centre aisle. This process, and the numbers, will be overseen by two stewards at each Mass. Please follow their instructions. If 50 people have already entered you will be asked to come to another Mass (This has not happened so far). There is still no obligation to attend Mass on Sunday, so those who can come during the week are encouraged to do so. We hope to continue streaming the 11.00am Mass on Sundays for those who still cannot attend. After each Mass you will be asked to leave promptly and church will have to be closed and thoroughly cleaned in preparation for the next Mass. The provision of the Masses is dependant on there being sufficient volunteers as stewards and cleaners. We have sufficient volunteers for this weekend but offers of help for future weekends and weekdays should be emailed to the parish office. At the beginning of each Mass Fr Peter will give additional detailed instructions. It is important that you listen carefully and follow these. They will include instructions for Communion.

We intend to take the necessary steps to make St Margaret's Covid secure, but due to its restricted capacity, it cannot be used for Sunday Mass until distancing regulations are eased, as doing so would reduce the overall number of parishioners able to attend weekend Masses.

There is a lot to take in and rules may change, but let us not lose sight of the fact that we can once again gather to worship together and celebrate Eucharist. Alleluia!

Fr Peter, Deacon Tony, Deacon Chris

CAFOD's response to coronavirus in Asia and the Middle East: In the Middle East, our local experts are using your donations to continue their vital peacebuilding work and ensuring that legal advice can be given online. Volunteers and priests are delivering emergency food parcels to vulnerable families in the West Bank and we are also reaching out to Bedouin communities with health equipment and information. [£6 could buy a hygiene pack for a family.](#) Staff and volunteers are also already in vulnerable communities spreading essential health messages through village posters, socially-distanced visits to families and giving out PPE. In Myanmar, local experts are working alongside health departments and the Church to provide safe places for people to quarantine and to help set up track and trace systems. In Bangladesh they've moved quickly to give cash to the poorest families - led by widows, or those living with disabilities - to buy life-saving food and PPE. : <https://cafod.org.uk/Give/Donate-to-Emergencies/Coronavirus-appeal>

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is available on request, but outside, undercover, not in the Confessional. Please ring or email to make a request. The printed side of the bulletin is available on the website.

Those who came to Mass last week said that they felt very safe and it was lovely to be back even though they were nervous about coming, so please follow their example and give it a try!

Thank you for your prayers and good wishes for Fr Peter. He is feeling well, though still trying to take life at a slower pace than usual! If you need to speak to him, please ring the presbytery or email to make an appointment.

Scripture Group every Tues at 7.00pm We use Zoom and look at the scripture (particularly the Gospel) for the following Sunday. If you would like to join in send an email to: stmarysmiddlewichvents@gmail.com as we will need your e-mail address to send the Zoom invitation (e-mail addresses will not be used for any other purpose). This is open to anyone, not just parishioners.

N.B. All cheques, for both Mass Offerings and Offertory Collection, should be made to "St Mary's Middlewich" or the bank will not accept them.



The mustard seed is a very small seed and so it makes a good symbol for the beginnings of faith, which at first can seem very small. But it is also an unlikely symbol to choose, as in Jesus' world it was regarded as a terrible pest which had to be kept under control or it would take over the whole vegetable patch. It's a provocative image showing that just a small response in faith could, with God's grace, flourish and become all-pervasive. Most people looked for some greater sign. The prophet Ezekiel had talked of the great cedars on the high mountain which would spread their strong branches for the winged creatures of the earth to gather among. He was speaking to a people who were looking for a miracle.

OPEN TO GOD'S PRESENCE

Jesus offers no such spectacle. But he does provide another perspective. God's presence is deep down within all life but we have to be open to that presence or we can pass it by, and so Jesus uses the metaphor of a woman making bread. More specifically, kneading yeast into the dough. Again yeast was regarded as something ritually unclean; no one knew how it had the effect it did and so they were suspicious of it. And it had this strange quality that while it made the bread rise it disappeared in the process. So its effects could be seen, but it could not. This is so true of Jesus' teaching about God. When God comes close, all sorts of things happen but we can't see God, only the fruits of God's presence. Jesus teaches all who will listen how to discern that presence; and that is part of the role of the Church in the world, to point to the signs of God's Spirit in all the unexpected places. And so Pope Francis, too, points to God in the midst of the ordinary.

Mass text

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

**See, I have God for my help.
The Lord sustains my soul.
I will sacrifice to you with willing heart,
and praise your name, O Lord, for it is good.**

FIRST READING Wisdom 12:13. 16-19

PSALM Psalm 85

RESPONSE **O Lord, you are good and forgiving.**

1. O Lord, you are good and forgiving, full of love to all who call. Give heed, O Lord, to my prayer and attend to the sound of my voice. **R.**
2. All the nations shall come to adore you and glorify your name, O Lord: for you are great and do marvellous deeds, you who alone are God. **R.**
3. But you, God of mercy and compassion, slow to anger, O Lord, abounding in love and truth, turn and take pity on me. **R.**

SECOND READING Romans 8:26-27

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION
Alleluia, alleluia!
**Blessed are you, Father,
Lord of heaven and earth,
for revealing the mysteries of the kingdom
to mere children.**
Alleluia!

GOSPEL Matthew 13:24-43

COMMUNION ANTIPHON
**The Lord, the gracious, the merciful,
has made a memorial of his wonders;
he gives food to those who fear him.**

Next Sunday's Readings:
1 Kings 3:5. 7-12
Romans 8:28-30
Matthew 13:44-52



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WEEDS, BIRDS AND MUSTARD SEEDS



Jesus is walking in and out of farming villages that never appeared on any map. And so, talking of the spreading of God's holy rule and the Good News of God's mercy coming close, and the gifts of faith and the challenges of discipleship, he uses examples from the everyday experience of his audience.

I wonder if there were already problems emerging in Matthew's community? He puts a lot of emphasis on Jesus' teaching about such situations; much more so than Mark and Luke. So what do you do if there are people in the community whose life is undermining the simplicity and purity of the Gospel message? Elsewhere Matthew has advice about challenging them and offering multiple opportunities for reconciliation but here he keeps it simple. There will always be those whose lives are not simple and transparent, who say one thing and mean or do another. But Jesus' advice uses the wisdom of the farmer. If you dig up all the weeds as they appear in a wheat field you will inevitably destroy good wheat. Much better to let them grow to harvest and only then separate the still usable wheat from the weeds.

We can imagine this would have provoked quite a discussion. It might still do so for us. In every age we have members of our Church who seem to know all too well who are the wheat and who the weeds, and are very ready to excommunicate the weeds. If you go onto a number of international Catholic blogs you will find some that accuse Pope Francis of being heretical because he responded to the realities and difficulties of married people, expressed in the Synods on the Family in 2014 and 2015, with the encouraging text *Amoris Laetitia*, where all those in our family of faith – the happily married, the separated, the divorced, the remarried – are treated with compassion and patient care. Pope Francis was not intending to introduce new teaching; but to continue the practice of his teacher, Jesus.

Catching the kingdom



David McLoughlin is a teaching theologian who has spent nearly forty years helping to train Christian teachers, ministers and activists. In this series of personal reflections, he considers the Sunday readings.

19 JULY 2020

16TH SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME

YEAR A

DIVINE OFFICE WEEK IV