

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

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Twenty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time, 23rd August 2020

Saturday	22nd Aug	6.30pm	The Parishioners <i>Queenship of BVM</i>
Sunday	23rd Aug	9.00am 11.00am	Danny O'Brien, 50th Anniv. Priest's Int.
Monday	24th Aug	9.00am 6.30pm	Peter & Dorothy Worthington <i>St Bartholomew</i> Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament
Tuesday	25th Aug	9.00am	Private Int
Wednesday	26th Aug	7.30pm	Ints of Marie Claire & Daniel Lindsey
Thursday	27th Aug	9.00am	Private Int <i>St Monica</i>
Friday	28th Aug	9.00am	Tess Haney <i>St Augustine</i>
Saturday	29th Aug	6.30pm	Anne Casey Anniv. <i>Passion of St John the Baptist</i>
Sunday	30th Aug	9.00am 11.00am	Priest's Int The Parishioners

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, 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, Tess Haney.



ALL who have died recently, especially Nerys Brunker

ALL whose anniversaries occur at this time: Monica Horricks, Patrick Jordan, Danny O'Brien, Ted Hughes, Rene Costello, Thomas O'Keefe, George Dean, David Hughes, Carol Bagshaw, Patrick Kelly, Maggie Battersby, John McAleer, Peter Worthington, John Kehoe, Wesley Johnston, Anne Casey, Winefride Jordan, Mary Cathleen Furlong, Winifred Gowling, Phyllis Wormald, Frances Kerr, Caroline Green, Derek Ryder, Rev Christopher Jenkins, Rev Brendan Huggard

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. **NO MEETING THIS WEEK**

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 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, Numbers were up again to over 120 at the three Masses last weekend, but we still have room for another 30 people! **The quietest Mass is Sunday 9.00am. The other two were almost full last weekend.** You will only be allowed in if you are wearing a face mask. 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. 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 week but offers of help for future weekends and weekdays should be emailed to the parish office.

We are now allowed to celebrate weddings, funerals and baptisms with up to 30 people, but there are still many restrictions attached to these celebrations, and this could be reversed if there are more lockdown restrictions

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

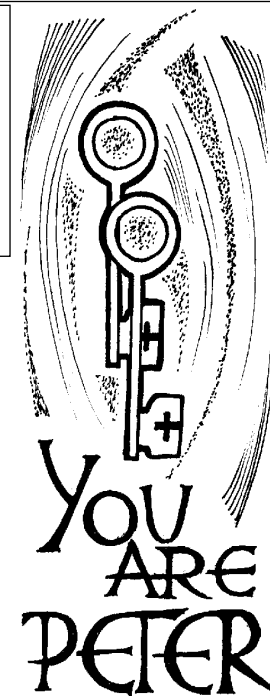
CAFOD has joined with the UK Disasters Emergencies Committee to help millions of people whose lives are at risk, as coronavirus spreads across refugee camps and countries suffering conflict. You can donate at <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/St-Marys-RC-Parish-Middlewich-Cafod> to help CAFOD scale up its coronavirus response through our global Church family.

Or use CAFOD's Summer of hope fundraising ideas with your family and friends to transform lockdown and raise money for the appeal: cafod.org.uk/summerofhope

The parish of St Mary Middlewich sometimes collects personal information about parishioners. All personal information is collected, processed and stored in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations. This is retained only as necessary and used by the parish/diocese for the benefit of the parish and for legitimate reasons such as administrative and religious purposes. You can read our full privacy notice at www.dioceseofshrewsbury.org/about-us/privacy-notice

Those who have come to Mass in recent weeks 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!

The LPA Pilgrimage to Walsingham, which was cancelled in March, will now take place at the end of March 2021. Details Later



You will notice that Isaiah (like all the prophets) does not really mind whom he offends. So at 1:10 we read:



Hear the word of the Lord, you rulers of Sodom;
pay attention to the Law of the Lord, you people of Gomorrah.

It is hard to imagine the religious establishment in Judah not being offended by this mode of address. Or you might like to contrast Isaiah's song of the vineyard (representing the infidelity of Israel) at 5:1-7 with the story of his encounter with the Lord (6:1-13). Then reflect on what he says to King Ahaz (7:1-17), as an excellent example of religion involving itself in politics. Or think of the prophet's vision of the new world that will come with the Messiah, the son of David (11:1-9).

SONGS OF THE SERVANT

Then read slowly through the rest of the prophet's text; and notice the change of tone when you get to chapter 40. You will find many familiar passages where Jews and Christians have felt that God was speaking to them, especially perhaps in the four "Songs of the Suffering Servant", which Christians readily applied to Jesus (you will find them in chapters 42, 49, 50 and 52-53). Then go slowly through "Third Isaiah" (56-66); and, as you read, ask what it is that God is saying to us today through the Isaiah scroll. For a modern equivalent, have you thought of those prophets whom God has been sending us for decades now, to warn us of the damage we are doing to our planet? We have not always believed them, but now it is hard to deny that they were right.

Mass text

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

**Turn your ear, O Lord, and answer me;
save the servant who trusts in you, my God.
Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I cry to you all
the day long.**

FIRST READING Isaiah 22:19-23

PSALM Psalm 137

**RESPONSE Your love, O Lord, is eternal,
discard not the work of your hands.**

1. I thank you, Lord, with all my heart,
you have heard the words of my mouth.
Before the angels I will bless you.
I will adore before your holy temple. **R.**
2. I thank you for your faithfulness and love
which excel all we ever knew of you.
On the day I called, you answered;
you increased the strength of my soul. **R.**
3. The Lord is high yet he looks on the lowly
and the haughty he knows from afar.
Your love, O Lord, is eternal,
discard not the work of your hands. **R.**

SECOND READING Romans 11:33-36

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Alleluia, alleluia!
You are Peter
and on this rock I will build my Church.
And the gates of the underworld can never
hold out against it.
Alleluia!**

GOSPEL Matthew 16:13-20

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**The earth is replete with the fruits of your
work, O Lord;
you bring forth bread from the earth
and wine to cheer the heart.**

Next Sunday's Readings:

Jeremiah 20:7-9
Romans 12:1-2
Matthew 16:21-27

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WHAT DO PROPHETS DO?

Prophets are extraordinary phenomena and not at all comfortable. The central fact about them is that they have had powerful and undeniable experiences of the presence of God, which drives them to speak (and the word "prophet" means not someone who foretells or predicts, but one who utters what God wants them to say), regardless of the feelings of those who are listening; and there will always be a tension between them and those who wield religious authority.

We have not space here to talk about all four of the major prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel) and the twelve minor prophets, not to mention the others who are mentioned in the historical narratives (read up on Elijah and Elisha in the books of Kings, and especially the extraordinary story of Micaiah ben Imlah in 1 Kings 22).

Instead it seems sufficient for our purpose to say something here about Isaiah ben Amoz, the prophet who is most often quoted in our New Testament; and he was the only one of whom a complete scroll was discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran. He received his vocation in the Temple (look at Isaiah 6), in a powerful experience that he never forgot. Now it must be said that almost certainly the eighth-century prophet did not write all sixty-six chapters ascribed to him, but (roughly) only the first thirty-nine chapters; then there are chapters 40-55, often called "Second Isaiah", which is possibly the product of a school of his disciples in exile in fifth-century Babylon; finally, and with perhaps rather less certainty, there are chapters 55-66, probably written when those exiles had finally, and just a bit reluctantly, been persuaded by the prophet to come back to Jerusalem (and found it not quite what they had imagined).

The basic message is that God is in charge; and it is perhaps important to read the text as a single scroll, and recognise that there are common elements that unite the whole book. Listen out for the beauty of the language and allow it to speak to you. You will see that there are many different kinds of material: autobiography, psalms, hymns, theological discussions, prophetic oracles and parables. In this respect this book is like many of the biblical books. Try to see the differences between the kinds of material.

How to read the Bible



Fr Nicholas King SJ
considers the Old
Testament prophets
and what they have to
say to us today.



23 AUGUST 2020

21ST SUNDAY
IN ORDINARY TIME

YEAR A

DIVINE OFFICE WEEK I