

A MESSAGE FROM FATHER SONY

Good news from the Health Directors of Lancashire County: “We have seen sustained reductions in Covid-19 cases and transmission rates across Lancashire, combined with reductions in hospitalisations and deaths and large uptake of the vaccine.” We are asked to maintain our Covid-safe practices, and we thank everyone attending church for abiding by the safety rules.

INGOL FOOD BANK

For many people, life this year is harder than ever. We are continuing our collections for Ingol Food bank in Preston. If you would be able to give any tins or packets of food – please leave them in a carrier bag in the box at the back of church or in the box by the presbytery if church is not open. Many thanks for supporting the needy and vulnerable during these difficult times.

PARISHIONERS WHO ARE UNWELL

If you would like the parish to pray for someone who is currently unwell, please email news@stfrancisgoosnargh.org.uk or ring Father Sony on 01772 865229. It will be then be included in the newsletter. We have an area in church where you can write a prayer intention on a card and hang it up if you prefer it not to go on the parish newsletter.

CHURCH DONATIONS

With many people still unable to attend church we still need to maintain an income for maintenance. There are several ways you can still make your contributions including by cheque or direct debit. For details please go to the church website or contact Tom Smyth on 017722 865689.

Attendance: Sunday 28 February – 23



St Francis Hill Chapel Parish Newsletter

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**In case of emergency (and unable to contact Father Sony) please ring
Father Dutton on 01772 782641 or Canon Doyle on 01772 782244**

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

8 March 2021 (Readings: Year B)

Parish Mission Statement

Our Parish, guided by the example of our patron St Francis of Assisi, seeks to be a welcoming Catholic Community, by living, sharing and growing in faith. We strive to deepen our own relationship with Christ and meet the needs of others.

Church is now open again for Sunday mass at 10.30am. **Please only attend mass if you feel safe to do so. The dispensation for Sunday mass is still in place.**

Mass today is for Teresa Bamber.

During Lent your prayers are asked for candidates for the sacraments, the needy and hungry of the world, survivors of sexual abuse, and penitents and wanderers. Please also pray for those whose anniversaries occur around this time.

Daily Mass live at 9.30am from St Clare's in Preston can be accessed on their YouTube channel at <https://www.youtube.com/user/StClaresChurch/>

SAFETY RULES FOR MASS

Stewards will be on duty to ensure that safety procedures are followed. Full details are on our website. Please do read them. **Face masks will need to be worn** as specified by the government.

Please follow these guidelines once entering church:

- * **Sanitise hands** on entry.
- * Please do **keep your distance** – use the high visibility tape on floor as a guide.
- * Place your collection on the collection plate **as you enter**.
- * Please take a mass sheet & newsletter on entry and **take them away when you leave**.

* At Holy Communion:

Please wear a mask as you go up the aisle to communion and remove their mask before they receive the sacrament.

People from upstairs will go first down the right-hand side and return down the opposite aisle to maintain social distancing.

People on the right-hand side will then receive Holy Communion, followed by people on the left-hand side – guided by the stewards.

Communion will be given in silence.

BIDDING PRAYERS

Loving Lord, as we continue on our journey through Lent, help us to follow your path, knowing that you are always there to support us and to listen to our prayers.

We pray for Pope Francis and all religious leaders, that they will inspire and cultivate hope and courage in people who are afraid and uncertain as they look beyond the threat of Covid 19. **Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

We pray for all those whose education has been disrupted during this period of isolation, with the closure of schools, colleges and universities. We ask for your support and guidance for pupils and staff as they return to the classroom this week. **Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

We pray for all those who hunger around the world, particularly those without access to the water they so desperately need to survive and flourish. Through our Lenten efforts, may God renew our resolve to work together so that our voices may be heard in order to end poverty and injustice. **Lord in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for your never-ending presence in our lives. May your love and compassion be constantly with us as we face the week ahead, through Christ our Lord, Amen.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

As we reach the third Sunday in Lent many of the good intentions made on Ash Wednesday may be becoming just a little harder to maintain. When I was at school the teacher always asked us on Ash Wednesday, “What are you going to give up for Lent?” We had to have a response ready, even if we hadn’t really thought about it and, as children do, someone in the class would always come up with an outrageous answer that was clearly unattainable. As Christians we are encouraged during the holy season of Lent to deepen our spiritual lives through the practices of fasting, prayer and almsgiving. The Church teaches that consistent participation in these practices – like the exercise we do for our physical health – improves our spiritual well-being by stripping away all that is unnecessary and becoming more mindful of how God is working in our lives.

In previous centuries, fasting rules for Christians were extremely strict, as they still are in Eastern Orthodox churches. One meal a day was allowed in the evening, and meat, fish, eggs, and butter were forbidden. The Eastern church also restricts the use of wine, oil, and dairy products. The strict law of fasting for Catholics was dispensed with during WW2, and only Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are now kept as Lenten fast days. In a recent article, Pope Francis asks us to challenge ourselves this year and go beyond the usual practice of “giving-up something” and to ‘fast’ not just from certain types of food and drink but, in his words:

“Fast from hurting words and say kind words.
Fast from sadness and be filled with gratitude.
Fast from anger and be filled with patience.
Fast from pessimism and be filled with hope.
Fast from worries and have trust in God.
Fast from complaints, contemplate simplicity.
Fast from pressures and be prayerful.
Fast from bitterness, fill your hearts with joy.
Fast from selfishness and be compassionate.
Fast from grudges and be reconciled.
Fast from words, be silent and listen.”
(Pope Francis)

Mike Bryan

READINGS:

First reading: Exodus 20:1-17

God spoke all these words. He said, 'I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

'You shall have no gods except me.

'You shall not make yourself a carved image or any likeness of anything in heaven or on earth beneath or in the waters under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God and I punish the father's fault in the sons, the grandsons, and the great-grandsons of those who hate me; but I show kindness to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

'You shall not utter the name of the Lord your God to misuse it, for the Lord will not leave unpunished the man who utters his name to misuse it.

'Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy. For six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath for the Lord your God. You shall do no work that day, neither you nor your son nor your daughter nor your servants, men or women, nor your animals nor the stranger who lives with you. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that these hold, but on the seventh day he rested; that is why the Lord has blessed the sabbath day and made it sacred.

'Honour your father and your mother so that you may have a long life in the land that the Lord your God has given to you.

'You shall not kill.

'You shall not commit adultery.

'You shall not steal.

'You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

'You shall not covet your neighbour's house. You shall not covet your neighbour's wife, or his servant, man or woman, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is his.'

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 18(19):8-11 **Response:** You, Lord, have the message of eternal life.

Second reading: 1 Corinthians 1:22-25

While the Jews demand miracles and the Greeks look for wisdom, here are we preaching a crucified Christ; to the Jews an obstacle that they cannot get over, to the pagans madness, but to those who have been called, whether they are Jews or Greeks, a Christ who is the power and the wisdom of God.

For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

Gospel Acclamation: Jn11:25, 26

Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory!

I am the resurrection and the life, says the Lord;

whoever believes in me will never die.

Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory!

Gospel: John 2:13-25

Just before the Jewish Passover Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and in the Temple he found people selling cattle and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting at their counters there. Making a whip out of some cord, he drove them all out of the Temple, cattle and sheep as well, scattered the money-changers' coins, knocked their tables over and said to the pigeon-sellers, 'Take all this out of here and stop turning my Father's house into a market.' Then his disciples remembered the words of scripture: Zeal for your house will devour me. The Jews intervened and said, 'What sign can you show us to justify what you have done?' Jesus answered, 'Destroy this sanctuary, and in three days I will raise it up.' The Jews replied, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this sanctuary: are you going to raise it up in three days?' But he was speaking of the sanctuary that was his body, and when Jesus rose from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the scripture and the words he had said.

During his stay in Jerusalem for the Passover many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he gave, but Jesus knew them all and did not trust himself to them; he never needed evidence about any man; he could tell what a man had in him.

HOMILY

Gentle Jesus, eh? "Making a whip out of some cord, He drove all of them out of the Temple, cattle and sheep as well, scattered the money changers' coins, knocked their tables over, and said to the pigeon-sellers "Take all this out of here, and stop turning my Father's house into a market".

Clearly, the Prince of Peace and advocate of non-violence was prepared to allow righteous anger to lead Him into conduct which, in our more squeamish age, would lead to criminal proceedings. I am reminded of the early days of Pope Francis, when he proceeded to withdraw power and influence from Cardinal Burke, who had long been striving to turn us into a Church of the scribes and Pharisees. The American far right, who loathe the

Holy Father because he constantly challenges us to become more Christ-like, set up a cry of “Where’s your mercy now?” It is easy to imagine the original Pharisees asking Our Lord “Where’s your non-violence now?”

What made Jesus so angry? Interestingly, it wasn’t sexual sin, with which the Church seems at times to have been pre-occupied to the exclusion of practically everything else, but two aspects of failure to observe the Commandments which He stated to be fundamental, love of God and love of neighbour. The Pharisees incurred His wrath for their hypocrisy in rejecting love of neighbour in pursuit of an adherence to petty rules: in the present instance, His ire was aroused by lack of true respect for the Temple as the dwelling place of God.

Yet the buyers and sellers in the Temple believed that they were performing a service to God. The coinage issued by the Roman state, and blasphemously bearing the head of the “deified” Emperor, had to be exchanged for the Jewish coins which alone were acceptable in the Temple, and the people needed cattle and sheep, or pigeons, to offer in sacrifice.

Thus there are two elements in Our Lord’s attack on these aspects of Temple life, one obvious and the other less so. It probably seems clear to us that all this trading in the Temple displayed a lack of the reverence due to a holy place. Business which had begun in the interests of worship in the Temple had “grown” like Topsy and far outstripped its original purpose. Here we might pause and ask ourselves whether there are similar instances in the Church. There are times when money-raising, which is necessary, can seem like the chief aim of a parish or diocese: far more serious are the financial scandals in which the Vatican has been embroiled in recent years. Yet far more dreadful than any of these is the clerical abuse scandal, of which the Church needs to be thoroughly cleansed and purified, to say nothing of the lesser, but still serious scandal of Pontius Pilate-like bishops and leaders of religious congregations who refuse to become involved in supporting falsely accused members.

Yet there is a second implication of Jesus’ cleansing of the Temple, which is less obvious but, in its way, more far-reaching. In driving out those who provided the animals or fowl for sacrifice, Jesus was implicitly indicating the end of Temple worship. He had come as the fulfillment of Malachi’s prophecy of the Messiah entering His Temple, and had been rejected. Now He declares His own body to be the true Temple, which is to be destroyed and built up again, unlike the stone-built Temple, which will be destroyed and never rebuilt. This was St. John’s understanding of Jesus’ actions: the Temple has had its day, and now the new Temple is here in the form of Jesus’ body, of which you and I are members.

This entails the encompassing of the Jewish Law within the person of Christ, the fulfillment of the Ten Commandments within the two Commandments of love promulgated by the Christ. Those who, for instance, at various times over the centuries have found their nether garments in a twist over what they have regarded as graven images have missed the point: in reverencing statues of their favourite saints, devout people, far from indulging in idol worship, have been and are engaged in celebrating the Communion of Saints, their and our unity in the one Body of Christ, the true Temple, with those who have gone before. Paradoxically, by a violent act, Jesus has proclaimed the triumph of love, as the two great commandments of love are to be fulfilled in membership of the Temple which is His Body.