

Feast Days This Week:

Monday: St Francis de Sales

Tuesday: The Conversion of St Paul

Wednesday: Sts Timothy and Titus

Thursday: St Angela Merici

Friday: St Thomas Aquinas

Saturday: The Blessed Virgin Mary

The Cycle of Prayer (winter; ordinary time):

For peace; For Christian unity (Sunday of the Word of God 23 Jan); For victims of human trafficking and those who work to combat it (8 Feb, St Joseph Bakhita); For the sick and those who care for them (Day of the Sick 11 Feb); For racial justice (Racial Justice Day 13 Feb); For the unemployed (27 Feb)

Parishioners Who Are Unwell: If you would like the parish to pray for someone, please email news@stfrancisgoosnargh.org.uk or ring Father Sony on 01772 865229 for inclusion 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.

Church Opening Daily: Church will be open Monday to Friday throughout January and February (during term time; roughly school hours) for people to call in during the day to say a prayer. It will also be open on Sunday afternoons.

First Communion: The programme to prepare children to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Sacrament of the Eucharist is due to start in January. If your child would like to take part but is not a pupil at St Francis' school, they are more than welcome. Please contact Mary Doran for further details.

Request from the Gardening Team: Please could all Christmas arrangements and wreaths be removed from the churchyard before 26 February. On this date the gardening team will remove any that remain as they start working towards preparing for spring. Many thanks.

Safety Rules For Mass

- * **Sanitise hands** on entry.
- * Please **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 newsletter on entry and **take it away when you leave**.
- * **Please wear a mask** as you go up the aisle to communion and remove the mask before you receive the sacrament.
- * **At Holy Communion**, please wait until you are guided by the stewards.



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 IN ORDINARY TIME

23 January 2022 (Readings: Year C)

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.

Today is the Sunday of the Word of God.

Mass today is for Theresa Bamber.

Every Tuesday there will be mass at Hill Chapel at 9.30am.

Please remember in your prayers Mary Doran's mum, Marie Tomlinson, who died recently. Our thoughts and prayers are with Mary and her family. *Eternal rest give unto her, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon her. May she rest in peace. Amen.*

Please pray for all those whose anniversaries occur about this time, especially Mary Theresa Griffiths, Basil Knight, Dan Parker, and Mark Laurence Bolton. *May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God rest in peace. Amen.*

Synod Gatherings

All Parishes have been asked to express their views for the Synod that is scheduled to take place in Rome. We have been asked by Bishop Paul to have three gatherings to discuss: **Communion, Participation and Mission. This is to give all parishioners the opportunity to pray, listen and speak together** before filling in the Diocesan survey. **The Three meetings will take place after Sunday mass on:**

- * **January 30th**
- * **February 6th**
- * **February 13th**

This is an ideal opportunity for people to come together and to share ideas. Your attendance would be very gratefully appreciated.

From The Archives

A few years ago, I had the pleasure of attending the presentation of the Benemerenti Medal to a good friend and colleague of mine at St Gregory's church, Preston. He'd worked all his working life as a teacher and latterly, headteacher at St Gregory's school. During this time, he'd conducted numerous voluntary tasks for and on behalf of the parish and school and the presentation of the medal was in recognition of this dedicated service. The Benemerenti Medal, which loosely translated means 'well deserved', is a great honour and very few are awarded each year.

The Benemerenti Medal is awarded by the Pope, usually at the request of the parish priest and bishop, **to members of the clergy and laity for long and exceptional service to the Church.** Originally established as an award for soldiers in the Papal Army by Pope Pius VI in 1799, it was not until 1925, when Pius XI was Pope, that the concept of awarding this medal as a mark of recognition to other persons in the service of the Catholic Church, military, lay, and clergy alike, became acceptable. Members of the Swiss Guard may receive the medal after three years of faithful service.

The current version of the Benemerenti Medal was designed by Pope Paul VI. The medal is a gold Greek Cross depicting Christ with his hand raised in blessing. On the left arm of the cross is the tiara and crossed keys symbol of the papacy. On the right is the coat of arms of the current Pope. The medal is suspended from a yellow and white ribbon, the colours of the Papacy. Previous versions and variants consisted of a round medal with the portrait of the reigning Pope on the front and a laurel wreath with an inscription 'Benemerenti' or 'Bene Merenti' on the back.

The Catholic laity do also qualify to be included in the UK honours list and it was good to see a number of practising Catholics being recognised in this year's New Year's Honours list. Among those honoured were the 'golden couple' Jason and

Laura Kenny who received a knighthood and damehood, respectively. The Queen also knighted former PM Tony Blair, the longest-serving Labour PM, who said it was an 'immense honour' to have been made a Knight Companion of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, the oldest and most senior British Order of Chivalry, to which appointments are in the Queen's gift, without advice from the Government.

Mike Bryan

Brock Valley Churches Together: This Sunday is the end of the week of prayer for Christian unity. BVCT would normally have held a combined service for all our church communities. In view of high levels of covid-19 infections it was thought unwise to do so. Here are the prayers from BVCT churches in lieu of our usual service.

St Hilda's Bilbottle: For the monthly family service to grow and attract more families. Major roof repairs are required and will need much practical attention, for wisdom and guidance in dealing with all that such major work entails.

St James Whitechapel: That the younger families from Messy Church would become more involved in the life of the church. There are also practical jobs to do with the building, again, wisdom and guidance in dealing with these issues.

Bleasdale: We pray for our farming community at a time of great change in the industry and as lambing approaches, that they may be blessed in their work, in their stewardship of the land, and in the future of the industry.

Goosnargh: We pray for our communities as they grow and develop, and as this impacts on our churches, schools and other services, that we might give a warm Christian welcome to those new to our communities.

Hill Chapel: Lord Jesus, give us the grace to hear your voice and the strength to continue working for your kingdom in this time of pandemic. Do not allow us to be indifferent to those who today suffer the loss of a loved one, or who suffer from the absence of work. But give us the courage to accompany and side with those who suffer violence or injustice. Amen.

Trinity: We ask your prayers that the next generation of young adults take up the yoke and help us continue to develop our work with children and families. We also ask your prayers for those who have lost loved ones since we last worshipped together as Churches Together and for those facing major medical treatments in the coming weeks.

Inglewhite: We pray for the fellowship and Pastor Paul as they develop their ministry together in 2022.

AMEN

Readings

First reading

Nehemiah 8:2-6,8-10

All the people listened attentively to the Book of the Law

Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, consisting of men, women, and children old enough to understand. This was the first day of the seventh month. On the square before the Water Gate, in the presence of the men and women, and children old enough to understand, he read from the book from early morning till noon; all the people listened attentively to the Book of the Law.

Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden dais erected for the purpose. In full view of all the people – since he stood higher than all the people – Ezra opened the book; and when he opened it all the people stood up. Then Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people raised their hands and answered, ‘Amen! Amen!’ Then they bowed down and, face to the ground, prostrated themselves before the Lord. And Ezra read from the Law of God, translating and giving the sense, so that the people understood what was read.

Then Nehemiah – His Excellency – and Ezra, priest and scribe, and the Levites who were instructing the people, said to all the people, ‘This day is sacred to the Lord your God. Do not be mournful, do not weep.’ For the people were all in tears as they listened to the words of the Law.

He then said, ‘Go, eat the fat, drink the sweet wine, and send a portion to the man who has nothing prepared ready. For this day is sacred to our Lord. Do not be sad: the joy of the Lord is your stronghold.’

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 18(19):8-10,15

Your words are spirit, Lord, and they are life.

The law of the Lord is perfect,
it revives the soul.

The rule of the Lord is to be trusted,
it gives wisdom to the simple.

Your words are spirit, Lord, and they are life.

The precepts of the Lord are right,
they gladden the heart.

The command of the Lord is clear,
it gives light to the eyes.

Your words are spirit, Lord, and they are life.

The fear of the Lord is holy,
abiding for ever.

The decrees of the Lord are truth
and all of them just.

Your words are spirit, Lord, and they are life.

May the spoken words of my mouth,
the thoughts of my heart,

win favour in your sight, O Lord,

my rescuer, my rock!

Your words are spirit, Lord, and they are life.

Second reading

1 Corinthians 12:12-30

You together are Christ's body, but each a different part of it

Just as a human body, though it is made up of many parts, is a single unit because all these parts, though many, make one body, so it is with Christ. In the one Spirit we were all baptised, Jews as well as Greeks, slaves as well as citizens, and one Spirit was given to us all to drink.

Nor is the body to be identified with any one of its many parts. If the foot were to say, ‘I am not a hand and so I do not belong to the body’, would that mean that it stopped being part of the body? If the ear were to say, ‘I am not an eye, and so I do not belong to the body’, would that mean that it was not a part of the body? If your whole body was just one eye, how would you hear anything? If it was just one ear, how would you smell anything?

Instead of that, God put all the separate parts into the body on purpose. If all the parts were the same, how could it be a body? As it is, the parts are many but the body is one. The eye cannot say to the hand, ‘I do not need you’, nor can the head say to the feet, ‘I do not need you.’

What is more, it is precisely the parts of the body that seem to be the weakest which are the indispensable ones; and it is the least honourable parts of the body that we clothe with the greatest care. So our more improper parts get decorated in a way that our more proper parts do not need. God

has arranged the body so that more dignity is given to the parts which are without it, and that there may not be disagreements inside the body, but that each part may be equally concerned for all the others. If one part is hurt, all parts are hurt with it. If one part is given special honour, all parts enjoy it.

Now you together are Christ's body; but each of you is a different part of it. In the Church, God has given the first place to apostles, the second to prophets, the third to teachers; after them, miracles, and after them the gift of healing; helpers, good leaders, those with many languages. Are all of them apostles, or all of them prophets, or all of them teachers? Do they all have the gift of miracles, or all have the gift of healing? Do all speak strange languages, and all interpret them?

Gospel Acclamation

Lk4:18

Alleluia, alleluia!

The Lord has sent me to bring the good news to the poor,
to proclaim liberty to captives.

Alleluia!

Gospel

Luke 1:1-4,4:14-21

This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen

Seeing that many others have undertaken to draw up accounts of the events that have taken place among us, exactly as these were handed down to us by those who from the outset were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word, I in my turn, after carefully going over the whole story from the beginning, have decided to write an ordered account for you, Theophilus, so that your Excellency may learn how well founded the teaching is that you have received.

Jesus, with the power of the Spirit in him, returned to Galilee; and his reputation spread throughout the countryside. He taught in their synagogues and everyone praised him.

He came to Nazara, where he had been brought up, and went into the synagogue on the sabbath day as he usually did. He stood up to read and they handed him the scroll of the prophet Isaiah. Unrolling the scroll he found the place where it is written:

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me,
for he has anointed me.

He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor,

to proclaim liberty to captives
and to the blind new sight,
to set the downtrodden free,
to proclaim the Lord's year of favour.

He then rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the assistant and sat down. And all eyes in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to speak to them, 'This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen.'

HOMILY: 3rd Sunday in OT 2022

Nehemiah 8:2-6, 8-10; 1 Cor 12:12-30; Luke 1:1-4; 4:14-21

I love that passage from the Book of Nehemiah, describing how Ezra and the scribes read from the Law—the first part of the Hebrew Bible—and interpreted it, all through the morning. Hands up if you can hear the word “Watergate” without thinking of Richard Nixon, and hands up if you are not tempted to think that anyone would be in tears if they had to listen to readings and sermons all morning. Why were the people in tears? Bear in mind who they were. These were the exiles who had come home to Judah and Jerusalem after the Babylonian exile. They were now in that homeland of which they had heard so much from their parents and grandparents, but which they themselves had never seen, having been born in Babylon, where their elders could not even bring themselves to sing the Psalms, so deep was their distress. Those same elders—parents and grandparents—would have done their best to pass on the faith of Israel to this generation, but inevitably it would have been piecemeal, even at times a little garbled. Now this new generation is, at last, learning in full of their ancestral faith, hearing the Scriptures read and explained: no wonder they are overwhelmed. What about us? What effect do those same Scriptures, and the many more passages which we hear, have on us? Every Sunday, we hear three parts of those Scriptures—actually four, if we include the Psalm. A passage from the Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, is read to us; we respond with the Psalm, before listening to part of a New Testament Epistle and, finally, the Gospel. How does it strike us? Are we, like the exiles, moved in the depth of our being? Are we moved to tears, and are they tears of joy, or tears of boredom? I have heard priests, who should know better, being very dismissive of the Old Testament. If they haven't steeped themselves in the Old Testament and the other readings, if they haven't struggled to penetrate their meaning so as to convey it to their congregations, how are those congregations to be moved, to have their hearts stirred, to be brought to the verge of tears? All of us, priests, deacons, religious, members of the congregation, need to have listening ears and listening hearts, attuned to the

Word of God which we are hearing. During the Liturgy of the Word, we will bring our ears, our minds, and our hearts into harmony, allowing the Scriptures to seep into us. A few weeks ago, I saw a cartoon: a family was sitting in church, attending Mass in person after months of following it online. The husband was whispering to the wife “I don’t half miss being able to fast forward past the homily”. Does the homily lead you more deeply into the word which you have heard? If not, it may be worth going through the readings again, allowing them to take root, taking the Word of God more deeply into ourselves, looking out for the link between the Old Testament reading and the Gospel. That link can be seen this week, as Jesus follows Ezra in reading from, and then interpreting, God’s Word in the Scriptures. The people are attentive: “all eyes were fixed on Him” we are told. He begins His interpretation by saying “This text is being fulfilled today, even as you listen”. Those words are as true today, as you listen to them in Cloughton, Clitheroe, or Ontario, as they were when Our Lord spoke them in Nazareth. God’s Word is a living word: it speaks to you here and now. Do you have ears to hear, and hearts to welcome and absorb?