

Feast Days This Week:

Monday: St John Bosco

Wednesday: The Presentation of the Lord

Thursday: St Blaise and St Angsar

Saturday: St Agatha

The Cycle of Prayer (winter; ordinary time):

For peace; For Christian unity; 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)

Attendance and Collection:

9 January: Attendance 61 | Collection £134

Epiphany: £10

16 January: Attendance 59 | Collection £256

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.



St Francis Hill Chapel Parish Newsletter

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Father Dutton on 01772 782641 or Canon Doyle on 01772 782244**

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

30 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.

Mass today is for Tom and Rosalina Bolton.

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

Please pray for all those whose anniversaries occur about this time, especially Thomas Bolton, Ellen Goring and Kathleen Ann Stecyk. *May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God rest in peace. Amen.*

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.

Synod Gatherings – first meeting today!

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.

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.

From The Archives

By now we should all be aware of the request from Pope Francis for the Church to engage in a ‘Synodal’ journey to discuss the important issues in the Church today. As Bishop Paul explains, “The word synod comes from the Greek word meaning ‘walking together on a particular way’.” This will involve everyone journeying together, laity, clergy, and the Holy Father, in a conversation for the sake of hearing the voice of the Holy Spirit in the tradition of the Church. Three areas for discussion have been identified, Communion, Participation and Mission. We are all invited to join the conversation and, here at Hill Chapel, by joining three short meetings to be held on three consecutive Sundays after the 10.30 mass.

The first of these meetings, with the theme of communion in the broadest possible sense, will consider how, amongst other things, our parish

community can communicate effectively as an inclusive body. Are any persons or groups marginalised and, if so, why? How do we engage with those baptised Catholics whom we rarely or never see in church? Do we communicate properly, and how can this be improved? Do we get the chance to meet together to speak openly and respectfully about the liturgy and other parish issues? How do we respond to cultural changes in our society and patterns of behaviour that affect our Christian lives? All those attending will be given the opportunity to voice their opinions in a simple, prayerful discussion, respectful of one another in both speaking and listening. There will be no right or wrong answers. Following the three discussions, our responses will be collated and sent back to Bishop Paul.

Ever since the Council of Jerusalem, the Church has met regularly to discuss prominent issues. The most recent was the Second Vatican Council which was held between 1962 and 1965 when Paul VI was Pope. The Council sought to address relationships between the Catholic Church and the modern world. Several key changes were the result of the Council, and these led, amongst other things to a much greater participation by the laity in the Mass. For the first time Mass could be celebrated in the local language, the layout of churches was changed with the priest facing the congregation and the laity were encouraged to participate in the readings and as Eucharistic Ministers. The permanent diaconate was established with deacons being ordained by the Bishop to serve the local church.

Every two years since the Vatican Council, Bishops from all over the world have met in Rome to discuss the principal issues in the Church. The present Synodal is your opportunity to contribute to the future of the Church in the twenty-first century and to have your thoughts listened to by the hierarchy. Please do try to get involved.

Mike Bryan

READINGS

First reading

Jeremiah 1:4-5,17-19

I have appointed you prophet to the nations

In the days of Josiah, the word of the Lord was addressed to me, saying:
‘Before I formed you in the womb I knew you;
before you came to birth I consecrated you;
I have appointed you as prophet to the nations.
‘So now brace yourself for action.
Stand up and tell them
all I command you.
Do not be dismayed at their presence,
or in their presence I will make you dismayed.
‘I, for my part, today will make you
into a fortified city,
a pillar of iron,
and a wall of bronze
to confront all this land:
the kings of Judah, its princes,
its priests and the country people.
They will fight against you
but shall not overcome you,
for I am with you to deliver you –
it is the Lord who speaks.’

Second reading

1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13

The supremacy of charity

Be ambitious for the higher gifts. And I am going to show you a way that is better than any of them.

If I have all the eloquence of men or of angels, but speak without love, I am simply a gong booming or a cymbal clashing. If I have the gift of prophecy, understanding all the mysteries there are, and knowing everything, and if I have faith in all its fullness, to move mountains, but without love, then I am nothing at all. If I give away all that I possess, piece by piece, and

if I even let them take my body to burn it, but am without love, it will do me no good whatever.

Love is always patient and kind; it is never jealous; love is never boastful or conceited; it is never rude or selfish; it does not take offence, and is not resentful. Love takes no pleasure in other people’s sins but delights in the truth; it is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope, and to endure whatever comes.

Love does not come to an end. But if there are gifts of prophecy, the time will come when they must fail; or the gift of languages, it will not continue for ever; and knowledge – for this, too, the time will come when it must fail. For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophesying is imperfect; but once perfection comes, all imperfect things will disappear. When I was a child, I used to talk like a child, and think like a child, and argue like a child, but now I am a man, all childish ways are put behind me. Now we are seeing a dim reflection in a mirror; but then we shall be seeing face to face. The knowledge that I have now is imperfect; but then I shall know as fully as I am known.

In short, there are three things that last: faith, hope and love; and the greatest of these is love.

Gospel Acclamation

Jn14:6

Alleluia, alleluia!

I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, says the Lord;

No one can come to the Father except through me.

Alleluia!

Gospel

Luke 4:21-30

No prophet is ever accepted in his own country

Jesus began to speak in the synagogue: ‘This text is being fulfilled today even as you listen.’ And he won the approval of all, and they were astonished by the gracious words that came from his lips. They said, ‘This is Joseph’s son, surely?’

But he replied, ‘No doubt you will quote me the saying, “Physician, heal yourself” and tell me, “We have heard all that happened in Capernaum, do the same here in your own countryside.”’

And he went on, ‘I tell you solemnly, no prophet is ever accepted in his own country.

‘There were many widows in Israel, I can assure you, in Elijah’s day, when heaven remained shut for three years and six months and a great famine

raged throughout the land, but Elijah was not sent to any one of these: he was sent to a widow at Zarephath, a Sidonian town. And in the prophet Elisha's time there were many lepers in Israel, but none of these was cured, except the Syrian, Naaman.'

When they heard this everyone in the synagogue was enraged. They sprang to their feet and hustled him out of the town; and they took him up to the brow of the hill their town was built on, intending to throw him down the cliff, but he slipped through the crowd and walked away.

HOMILY: 4th Sunday in Ordinary Time 2022

Jeremiah 1:4-5, 17-19; 1Cor 12:31-13:13; Luke 4:21-30.

The compilers of the Lectionary (the book of readings) can be irritating at times in the way that they edit passages from the Scriptures, and, in particular, in the choice of verses which they omit. Today's reading from the prophet Jeremiah skips twelve verses from the middle. In some cases this is understandable, as the verses in question deviate from the principal theme of the call of the young prophet, but it is galling to be deprived of verses 6-8, in which we hear of Jeremiah's reluctance and anxieties.

These verses read: "I said 'Ah Lord look. I do not know how to speak: I am a child.' But the Lord replied 'Do not say "I am a child". Go now to those to whom I send you, and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to protect you—it is the Lord who speaks.'"

From them we learn that Jeremiah resisted his call to be a prophet, because he foresaw difficulties and opposition, the same opposition which Our Lord encountered in the synagogue at Nazareth. Jesus was rejected because He told the people some home truths, and that rejection extended to violence. Jeremiah too was to encounter violence at the hands of the civil and religious authorities, and his unease proved to be well founded.

What about us, who were anointed at our baptism to be priests, prophets, and kings, as members of the Body of Christ; who are called to be a prophetic people, witnessing to the Gospel and opposing injustice? If we are true to our calling, we shall encounter opposition or, what can be worse, indifference. Nobody is interested in what we have to say, and if they listen at all, they are unlikely to be convinced.

Some twenty years ago, the late Cardinal Murphy-O'Connor, the Archbishop of Westminster, commented that we are singing the song of the Lord in a strange land. He was quoting the psalm in which the Jewish exiles in Babylon lamented their condition, asking, in the translation provided by

Boney M, now more than forty years ago, "How could we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?"

In Babylon, the exiles refused to sing those songs, even though their captors requested them. Jeremiah, Jesus, and we do not have that choice. If we are to be true to our baptism, we must sing the Lord's song. We have to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ by our words, but especially by the manner of our lives and we have to do it in our own country, which has become a strange land, estranged from Christ and from the values of His Kingdom.

Our greatest prophet at the present day is Pope Francis, who determinedly sings the song of the Lord and who, like Jeremiah, and like the Lord Jesus, encounters bitter opposition from his own people. It was Jesus' co-religionists who, in His own town, rejected Him, and who wished to kill Him, not least for pointing out that pagans such as the widow at Zarephath and Naaman the Syrian had won God's favour. Likewise, it is not pagans, but members of his own flock, who are vitriolic in their denunciation of Pope Francis for his determination to make the Church more Christ-like, and to bring the compassion of Christ to the world.

WEEKLY Reflections

Based on the gospel for 30 January, Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time: Luke 4:21-30

"... but Elijah was not sent to any of these: he was sent to a widow at Zarephath, a Sidonian town."

How quickly the villagers at Nazareth turn from amazement at Jesus' thought and speech to a violent resentment for the works that he has done elsewhere.

The jealousy of the villagers shows a sense of ingratitude. Instead of looking at the gifts that have been given to them, they focus on what others have received which they have not. It is likely that we have reacted this way sometimes, too.

When I tell people that I support CAFOD, it is not uncommon to be asked: "Why do you support people overseas when there are so many people suffering where you live?" Perhaps you have encountered this.

The Gospel of Luke is the Gospel which most portrays Jesus as a model for social justice. In this passage, Jesus speaks of times through history where God showed care outside of Israel, his 'chosen people'.

St Francis declares blessed all those who love their sister or brother "as much when he is far away from him as when he is with him" (*sic; in Fratelli Tutti, 1*). God's love is for all, and not limited by religious, ethnic, political, or national boundaries.

This week, let us strive to recognise Christ's presence both near and far.

God of infinite love,
All that is from you is pure gift.
Strengthen me so that I may give without counting the cost,
and have the humility to celebrate your works in others.
Grant that I may never turn away from you or my neighbour.
Amen.