



# OUR LADY OF GRACE PRESTWICH

‘Stay with us, Lord, on our journey’

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## 21<sup>st</sup> SUNDAY ‘OF THE YEAR’ 23 AUGUST 2020

### My dear Parishioners and Friends,

You will join me, I’m sure, in congratulating our younger parishioners on their results in GCSEs and at A level.

**St Monica’s High School** saw ‘strong outcomes’ across the curriculum. Especially pleasing were the RE results, including 33.5% of pupils achieving grades 7 to 9, and 30% of pupils in English and 22% in Maths also achieving grades 7 to 9.

As headteacher, **Mr Christopher Foley**, said: *Results across all subjects have shown improvement and will provide a platform for the ongoing improvement journey.*



**Holy Cross College, Bury**, saw students achieving a 98 per cent pass rate for A Levels and 99 per cent pass rate for Level 3 BTECs. Some 17 A Level subjects enjoyed a 100 per cent pass rate and seven out of eight BTEC programmes achieved the same perfect marks.

Holy Cross’s University Centre saw 86 per cent of students gain a first class or upper second (2:1) degree overall.

At least six Holy Cross students have secured places at the Universities of Oxford or Cambridge, and many more are heading off to top institutions around the country.

**Dr Daveth Frost**, principal of Holy Cross College, commented: *Once again there are exceptional achievements in a wide range of sciences, social sciences, humanities and creative subjects. But because of our distinctive and supportive ethos, inherited from the Daughters of the Cross and maintained by our Diocese, we are equally and fully proud of students who have worked hard to achieve success at any level.*

Dr Frost has served the College and our Catholic and wider communities so well during his time in office. He retires at the end of this month. We wish him many happy and healthy retirement years.



In the parish, this will be our third weekend open for Holy Mass. Our **Sunday Masses** are at the usual times: 7.00 pm on Saturday, 9.00 and 11.00 am on Sunday.

I know that many of you are understandably still wary of mixing with others during the present pandemic. If you are going out at all, you might like to pop into the church at some time during the week. You will find that all has been carefully arranged in the church for your safety.

**The church is open** Monday to Friday from 11.45 am to 4.00 pm, and on Saturdays from 11.45 am to 3.00 pm, opening again at 6.40 pm for the first Mass of Sunday at 7.00 pm Saturday evening. Mass is at 12 noon each day, Monday to Saturday.

**At this point, let us salute the volunteers who act as welcomers and who attend to the sanitizing of the church. Without you it would not be possible to open the church. All in the parish owe you a very warm vote of thanks. You are appreciated!**



I’ve been hearing from so many of you in the past week about the wonderful places where you have been attending Mass, albeit virtually. There are so many choices now on the internet and on TV and radio. Last week’s newsletter gave

some of the sites you can access.

When you listen to the Gospel this Sunday, you will hear a famous passage from St Matthew's Gospel, where Our Lord says to St Peter: *You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church. And the gates of the underworld can never hold out against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.* (Matthew 16:18)

It's a good opportunity to thank God for giving us the gift of our Catholic faith, and also to say a prayer for the present successor of St Peter, **Pope Francis**. Before the Reformation, very many churches in England were dedicated to Our Lady, as is the old parish church here in Prestwich. The biggest number after that were dedicated to St Peter. It reflects the fact that this country was for over a thousand years in close communion with the See of Peter through the Bishop of Rome. The tragedy of the change in religion following the time of King Henry VIII is still with us today.



In 1970 Pope St Paul VI canonised forty of the English and Welsh martyrs who died rather than deny that the Pope was the head of the church on earth. The forty are only a small number of the many martyrs of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Among the forty was **St Richard Gwyn** (or Richard White, to use his English name). Richard Gwyn was a poet and a school master. He had studied at Oxford and Cambridge and was now living in the Wrexham area. He was a married man, with six children.

He suffered fines and imprisonment because of his teaching the Catholic faith. He was held in a number of prisons before finally he was hanged, drawn and quartered at Wrexham on 15 October 1584. He was the first Welsh martyr of the Reformation.



A sentence in today's Gospel reminded me of St Richard Gwyn. While a prisoner, Richard was subjected to a hectoring from a Protestant minister who had a prominent red nose. This man disputed with Richard about the keys of the kingdom. He claimed that the keys were given to him, no less than to Peter. *There is this difference*, said Richard Gwyn to him, *namely that whereas Peter received the keys of the kingdom of heaven, the keys you received were obviously those of the beer cellar!*

Just before Richard Gwyn was hanged he turned to the crowd and said, *I have been a jesting fellow, and if I have offended any that way, or by my songs, I beseech them for God's sake to forgive me.* His last words, in Welsh, were *lesu, trugarha wrthyf* (*Jesus, have mercy on me*).

As St David of Wales said, long before St Richard Gwyn: *Be joyful! Keep the faith!*

Have a good week!

**Fr Allen**

**Fr Dearman's reflections on the Lord's Prayer. Part Seven: Give us today our daily bread (1)**

The first plea in the second half of the prayer can be taken on two levels. On the one hand, Jesus was

preaching to people of the Jewish faith when he first gave us this prayer, and he was probably speaking about our bodily needs. But the Gospels also tell us how Jesus referred to himself as the Bread of Life which his followers would eat if they wanted to enjoy eternal happiness. As so often in the Gospels, a few words can contain a wealth of meaning.

Let's consider the first explanation first. Bread is just one thing which we need in our daily lives. As we ask our Father to supply us with bread we show that we don't take it for granted. After all, many of our brothers and sisters struggle to get the bare necessities of life for themselves and their families.

As well as bread we ask for all the other things we need in our daily lives: food and drink, clothes, a roof over our heads, and so on. We include in our prayer all those who are hungry or homeless. All the requests that we make in the second half of our prayer are in the plural: give us, forgive us, do not lead us, deliver us. Even if we say this prayer on our own, we still come before the Father, our Father, as representatives of the human family, many of whom do not know God as someone they can pray to.

Note also that we are asking for these things TODAY. We pray modestly, not for the luxuries of life, not for an indefinite supply of goodies for the future, but just for what we need here and now. This is in the spirit of the Gospels and in particular the Sermon on the Mount, in which St Matthew inserts the Lord's Prayer.