



# OUR LADY OF GRACE PRESTWICH

‘Stay with us, Lord, on our journey’

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## 26<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY ‘OF THE YEAR’ 27 September 2020

### HOLY MASS THIS WEEK

**SUNDAY First Mass of Sunday is 7pm Saturday. Sunday morning 9.00 & 11.00 am**

MONDAY	12 noon	(St Wenceslaus/St Lawrence Ruiz & Companions)
TUESDAY	12 noon	St Michael, St Gabriel & St Raphael
WEDNESDAY	12 noon	St Jerome
THURSDAY	12 noon	St Therese of the Child Jesus
FRIDAY	12 noon	The Holy Guardian Angels
SATURDAY	12 noon	

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 on Saturday evening for the first Mass of Sunday at 7.00 pm.

### **My dear Parishioners and Friends,**

This week will see us firmly into Autumn – ‘Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness’, as the poet put it. It is now over six months since we suffered the lockdown in Spring. Are we any nearer the end of it? Judging from the media, it would seem not. Meanwhile, we have to carry on, trusting ever more in God’s love for every one of us, and asking Our Lady’s protection. It is good to know that our churches still remain open and that we can have daily Mass here at Our Lady of Grace.



Yesterday should have seen a celebration to mark the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of **Elizabeth Prout**. Who was she? Elizabeth was gently nurtured, refined, intelligent

and well educated according to the standards of the time. She was a delicate young woman, barely five-foot-tall and of fragile build. But she was no shrinking violet, described as ‘a little woman brimful of energy and will’. Aged 29, Elizabeth Prout was chosen by God to found a Congregation of Religious women to bring the compassion and love of Christ to the poor. This she did over a period of sixteen years of self-sacrifice, grinding poverty and total submission to the will of God. She died at the age of 43, her mission accomplished. She had laid the foundations of the **Congregation of the Sisters of the Cross and Passion**, an international missionary Congregation, dedicated to keeping alive the memory of Christ’s Passion, Death and Resurrection ‘even unto the

ends of the earth’. Today her Sisters minister to people as far apart as North America and Africa, Papua New Guinea and Peru, Chile and Jamaica, Argentina and Australia, Ireland and Bosnia, England, Scotland and Wales, in diverse climates and cultures.

Elizabeth was born in Shrewsbury in 1820. Her mother was a staunch Anglican, her father a lapsed Catholic. Elizabeth was baptised and brought up in the Anglican tradition. The family moved to Stone in Staffordshire where her father’s job meant that the family could live comfortably. Whilst at Stone she met the Italian Passionist, **Blessed Dominic Barberi**, who had come as a missionary to England. She became a Catholic and entered a convent at Northampton. Due to illness she returned home and then made her

way to Manchester looking for work. She got a job teaching in St. Chad's School, at that time in Ancoats, and then in Angel Meadow, Manchester's worst slum.

Manchester in 1849 was at the height of the Industrial Revolution. The poor lived and worked in appalling conditions. Many were Catholic, famine refugees from Ireland. Children worked long hours in the mills; they could neither read nor write. Thousands were without any religious instruction. Mill girls were particularly vulnerable. Shocked by this inequality and injustice Elizabeth and a few companions were moved to do something about it. In 1852, in **St. Chad's church, Cheetham Hill**, with the support of local priests and Bishop William Turner of Salford, Elizabeth founded the Institute of the Holy Family. As Mother and Leader, Elizabeth was given the name **Mother Mary Joseph of Jesus**.

Elizabeth Prout's Institute was a new venture. The Sisters lived in community combining a humble, austere and prayerful life with an active ministry outside the convent. Anyone who was truly virtuous and could work for the support of the Institute could be admitted. There was no class distinction among members. No dowry was required. Lack of education was not an obstacle. Sisters went out to teach, to sew, to work in the mills or in any employment compatible with their religious state. They had no property, no patrons, no security. They pooled their wages and when they were out of work they, like their neighbours, went hungry.

Dire poverty was often their lot. This was a radical departure from the established Religious Orders of the day and many local clergy questioned their prudence. Some called for the Institute to be suppressed. Bishop Turner set up a diocesan enquiry which vindicated the new Institute.

Elizabeth died in 1864. Her body together with that of Blessed Dominic Barberi and Fr Ignatius Spencer lies in the shrine of St Anne's Church, Sutton, St Helens. The church and shrine are now a place of pilgrimage. After her death numbers grew. New works were undertaken. In 1875 the Sisters were affiliated to the Passionist Congregation, founded by St Paul of the Cross. They changed their name to **Sisters of the Cross and Passion** and ever since have worn the distinctive Passionist sign. Elizabeth's Cause is now being examined by the Holy See with a view to eventual canonisation.



Angels are servants and messengers from God. In unseen ways the angels help us on our earthly pilgrimage. The idea that each soul has assigned to it a personal guardian angel has been long accepted by the Church. Next Friday we keep the memorial of **the Holy Guardian Angels**. The Gospel reading from St Matthew that day tells us: 'See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven always look upon the face of my heavenly Father'. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says: 'Beside each believer stands an angel as protector and

shepherd leading him to life (336)'. The Church thanks God for our helpers, the angels, particularly next Friday and on 29 September, the feast of the archangels Michael, Gabriel and Raphael.

The funeral Mass for **Mr Kayombo Tshikaya** of Shelley Road is next Thursday at 10.00 am. Admission by invitation only.

**Thank you** for your generous offering of £447.74 for the Church in the Holy Land in last week's collection.

**Fr Allen**

**Fr Dearman's reflections on the Lord's Prayer. Part Twelve: The Power and the Glory**

It is the custom in Catholic devotion to end the Lord's Prayer after "Deliver us from evil" with the word Amen. This declares our agreement with all that has gone before. If another person has said the rest of the prayer, we can say Amen as the equivalent of "Hear, Hear!"

Other Christian traditions round off the prayer with a doxology or hymn of praise: "For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen." The Catholic Church, in a spirit of ecumenism, has introduced this doxology into the rite of Holy Mass, after a prayer by the celebrant which develops the theme of deliverance from evil.

It is good to end our prayer with a recognition that God the Father, despite his wonderful approachability, is still the supremely powerful and glorious King and Creator of the universe.

**AMEN!**