



# OUR LADY OF GRACE PRESTWICH

'Stay with us, Lord, on our journey'

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## 2<sup>nd</sup> SUNDAY 'OF THE YEAR' 17 January 2021

### HOLY MASS THIS WEEK

<b>SUNDAY</b>	<b>First Mass of Sunday is 7pm Saturday. Sunday morning 9.00 &amp; 11.00 am</b>	
MONDAY	12 noon	
TUESDAY	12 noon	(St Wulstan)
WEDNESDAY	12 noon	(St Fabian/St Sebastian)
THURSDAY	12 noon	St Agnes
FRIDAY	12 noon	(St Vincent, Deacon & Martyr)
SATURDAY	12 noon	

### **The church is open every day**

**Monday to Saturday** from 11.45 am to 1.00 pm  
**Sundays** from 8.45 am to 10.00 am, 10.45 am to 12 noon.

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

The heading at the top of this page may puzzle you. It reads: 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday 'Of the Year'. But today is 17 January. It's the *third* Sunday of the year! So where are we?

The explanation is this. The official title for today is '2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time'. 'Of the Year' is an alternative title. Advent and the Christmas Season are now over. There are several weeks before we begin the next season, Lent. The Sundays of these weeks before Lent are numbered in the order in which they occur. Later, when the seasons of Lent and Eastertide are over, we shall pick up the numbers again. Then we shall have the second part of 'Ordinary Time'.

But why 'Ordinary'? Doesn't that make these Sundays sound rather 'common'? No. Ordinary Time is called 'ordinary' since the weeks of Ordinary Time are numbered in a series, one after the other. And the Latin word for this numbering is *ordinalis*, which is part of the Latin word *ordo* (from which we get the English word *order*). **Ordinary Time therefore is called 'ordinary' simply because the weeks of Ordinary Time are numbered, in order.**

On the Sundays of Ordinary Time, we read from the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke, following a three-yearly cycle. This year is the turn of St Mark's Gospel. We will hear how Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, walks among us and changes our lives. Nothing 'ordinary' about that!



Tomorrow begins the **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**, 18-25 January. This year's theme is taken from St John's Gospel, 15:1-17: 'Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit'.

This year's Week of Prayer will be very different from past years. There will be no united service for Churches Together in Prestwich and Kersal. We can however keep each other in our daily prayer. This Week of Prayer for Christian Unity should help all Christians to see that the closer they draw to Christ, the closer they will be to one another.

A message from the Vatican Secretariat for Christian Unity said: 'Divisions among Christians—moving away from one another—are a scandal because it is also

moving further away from God. Christ's prayer for unity is an invitation to turn back to Him and so come closer to one another, rejoicing in the richness of our diversity.'

**Pope Francis** will preside over the Second Vespers of the Solemnity of the Conversion of Saint Paul the Apostle at the end of the Week of Prayer on **Monday 25 January** at 5.30 pm in the Basilica of Saint Paul Outside the Walls, with representatives of the other Christian communities in Rome and Italy. The celebration will be broadcast live on the Vatican News website.

Nearer home, St Paul's community in Kersal invite us to share in a virtual service of prayer and reflection on **Friday 22 January** at 7pm. This would be via Zoom and it will be on St Paul's Facebook page. More details: revhilaryshedlock@gmail.com or 07817651408.

Following what was said above about the three-yearly rota of the Gospel readings in Ordinary Time, we can note a step forward in Christian Unity from the fact that the other main Christian Churches in the UK and around the world have copied our system.



**Bishop John Arnold** has written a Pastoral Letter to be read and distributed in the churches of the diocese today. Copies are available at the back of church. You will also find the letter on the diocesan website.

Our Bishop makes two main points. He recommends the work of Caritas Diocese of Salford and its continuing need of support. He also

writes of how 'we must expect our parishes to flourish in the increasing secularisation of the times in which we live ... Parishes will need to be increasingly reliant on the contribution of their parishioners in many and diverse ways.'

A glance at our parish Year Book shows how many of you are already involved in the parish, for which I am most grateful. Please God we will be able to resume many of our activities as this year unfolds.

One simple service we might offer during the pandemic is to keep in touch with other parishioners, particularly the elderly. Many of these are shielding and are very cautious about coming out. It would be a charity to phone them if you know them or to drop the weekly newsletter through their door. Already quite a few of you are doing this. All those who were on my Communion list before the pandemic began receive a weekly posting but there must be others who are missing out. If you can help in this respect, please do. If you wish to receive the newsletter by email, please send me an email request.



Thank you for your response last Sunday to the '**White Flower**' appeal for the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children. Loose money in the collecting buckets came to £320.11.



It's good that we are able to remain open. Our Bishop though asks us to 'remind the congregation that the greatest danger lies in any social gathering after Mass and that people should not linger for any conversation.'

Do please keep safe and well this week.

**Fr Allen**

**Fr Dearman's reflections on CHARACTERS FROM THE BIBLE - INTRODUCTION**

The Bible is revered by Christians as the record of God's dealings with his people. The human authors were all inspired by the Holy Spirit to write what God wanted us to know about himself, and about ourselves as the people he made and loves. Because these writings come from God himself, they are tremendously important and valuable to us, more than the words of any human writer, however holy.

So everyone in these books is supremely holy, right? Of course not! Some are humbly trying to do God's will; some are dedicated to doing wicked things. Some are rather like ourselves; some are larger than life characters.

Over the next few weeks our reflections will be about some of the characters in the Bible. They come from the Old Testament, the history of the people chosen by God to prepare for the coming of the Messiah and the prophets called by God to encourage them in that preparation. And they come also from the New Testament, which tells us about Jesus and the early story of his Church.

We can all learn something from these people.