



OUR LADY OF GRACE PRESTWICH

'Stay with us, Lord, on our journey'

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6th SUNDAY 'OF THE YEAR' 14 February 2021

HOLY MASS THIS WEEK

SUNDAY First Mass of Sunday is 7pm Saturday. Sunday morning 9.00 & 11.00 am
MONDAY 12 noon
TUESDAY 12 noon

WEDNESDAY ASH WEDNESDAY Day of fasting and Abstinence

Masses 12 noon and 7.00 pm with blessing and distribution of ashes at both
Please note: because of COVID regulations, admission must be by pre-booked ticket only.
The 12 noon Mass is already fully booked so please do not come unless you have a ticket.
To come to the 7 o'clock evening Mass, please apply by email or on the forms in church.

THURSDAY 12 noon Lenten Weekday
FRIDAY 12 noon Lenten Weekday
SATURDAY 12 noon Lenten Weekday

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
Also on Wednesday evening this week, from 6.45 pm to 8.00 pm

My dear Parishioners and Friends,

It's now just over a week since we began **live streaming** from Our Lady of Grace church. There have been one or two slight teething problems, but on the whole everything has gone smoothly. Quite a number of people have sent in very appreciative messages. If you have any suggestions for improvement please let me have them.

It's interesting to note the viewing figures for Sunday last: 934 people looked at the parish web page. 172 watched one of the Masses live. 146 watched later.

Access is easy via the parish website. Simply go onto the parish web page, click on 'Live Streaming' and you will see the list of upcoming and past streams. I hope this will be a great help to all parishioners but particularly to those who are sick or housebound.



As noted above, **Ash Wednesday** falls this week. We will miss our usual Friday early Masses at 8.00 am in Lent, and also the Lenten Station Masses in the deanery.

In his pastoral letter for today, our **Bishop John Arnold** draws our attention

to the traditional ways in which we keep Lent:

*There are the three signposts for our attention during Lent: **Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving**. These are themes for self-examination. Can they be the means for challenging ourselves, particularly in the experience of the Covid-pandemic, for re-setting our priorities, and stimulating action and change?*

I am preparing videos to be available during Lent on each of these themes by which I would hope to invite you to review your own personal understanding and response to each one.

Presumably these videos will be available on the diocesan web page. The address is at the top of this newsletter.



Previous newsletters told how **Elizabeth Prout**, foundress of the Sisters of the Cross and Passion and known as **the 'Mother Teresa of Manchester'**, has been declared 'Venerable' – a step towards canonisation. They gave a short account of her life before and after coming to Manchester. The story continues here:

Elizabeth Prout's Institute was a new venture. It was to be both contemplative and active. 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. Whereas other Congregations were founded to educate the poor, Elizabeth aimed to make the religious life available for the poor.

Sisters went out to teach, to sew, to work in the mills or in any employment compatible with their religious state. They visited the homes of the sick and the poor and taught them the 'advantages of cleanliness, sobriety and careful housekeeping'. It was recorded that 'many a hardworking heartbroken man had blessed the Sisters for the happy change in his home.' 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: it vindicated the new Institute.

Another religious order sprang from the new Institute. **Alice Ingham** from Rochdale joined Elizabeth's congregation in 1855, becoming Sister Veronica. Her health gave way and she left before receiving the habit. She later founded the Franciscan Missionaries of St Joseph. Her Rule was an adaptation of Elizabeth Prout's Rule written in 1863.

(To be concluded next week)



I found these words of **Pope Francis** useful (from his general audience on 10 February):

There exists no other wonderful day than the day we are living. Those who live always thinking about the future, in the future: "But it will be better...", but do not take each day as it comes: these are people who live in their fantasy, they do not know how to deal with concrete reality. And today is real, today is concrete. And prayer is to be done today. Jesus comes to meet us today, the day we are living. And it is prayer that transforms this day into grace, or better, it transforms us: it appeases anger, sustains love, multiplies joy, instills the strength to forgive.

Yes, we can pine for better days, but *today* is the day that really matters.

Fr Allen

Fr Dearman's reflections on CHARACTERS FROM THE BIBLE

4 - THE CALL OF ST MATTHEW

Jewish people serving the Roman oppressors as tax officials were naturally unpopular. They seemed to live a comfortable life at the expense of their fellow-countrymen.

Matthew was one such, and when he first heard about Jesus and his group of followers with their simple way of living he must have thought 'Not for me!'

Then suddenly there was Jesus in person, inviting him to join the group. Incredibly, Matthew accepted!

Furthermore he invited Jesus to dine in his house. St Bede says that Matthew had already begun to act as an apostle, bringing his fellow tax-collectors and friends into contact with the one who could save them from their sinful ways.

By inviting Jesus into his home, Matthew was inviting him into his heart. As St Bede suggests, we should make Jesus welcome in our hearts and ask him to make us fit to be welcomed to his heavenly banquet.