



OUR LADY OF GRACE PRESTWICH

'Stay with us, Lord, on our journey'

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1st SUNDAY IN LENT 21 February 2021

HOLY MASS THIS WEEK

SUNDAY	First Mass of Sunday is 7pm Saturday. Sunday morning 9.00 & 11.00 am
MONDAY	12 noon The Chair of St Peter the Apostle
TUESDAY	12 noon Lent Weekday/St Polycarp
WEDNESDAY	12 noon Lent Weekday
THURSDAY	12 noon Lent Weekday
FRIDAY	12 noon Lent Weekday
SATURDAY	12 noon Lent 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

My dear Parishioners and Friends,

Have you noticed a little change in the Bidding Prayers at our Sunday Mass? For some years now we have been praying in turn for the parishes within our **deanery** - the deanery of St Therese of Lisieux, covering Bury and Rochdale.

More recently, the diocesan website has released a network of prayer covering **the whole diocese**, deanery by deanery. We will now follow this network, remembering one particular parish each week. We began last Sunday with the Cathedral deanery of St John.



Messages continue to arrive in appreciation of the **live streaming** from Our Lady of Grace church, including from

a number who are housebound or shielding. These comments are typical:

Just a quick note to say how wonderful it has been to be able to join you virtually for Mass over the last couple of weeks and this evening for Ash Wednesday too.

Order is restored in my life now being able to see my precious church ...It makes me feel a lot more closer to our beloved God.

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.



Our diocese is holding an **Altar Servers Online Retreat next Saturday 27 February:**
- 10am-12pm (ages 8-11)
- 1pm-3pm (ages 12-17)

Our Bishop will speak on the ministry of serving during this time and in the future.

To register your place or for more information email formation@dioceseofsalford.org.uk indicating your child's age and which session they will be attending. An under 18's videoconferencing consent form must be downloaded from the diocesan website (address at top of this letter). The retreat will take place on Zoom.

Altar servers, I hope you will take advantage of this online retreat and that you will find it helpful.



*Previous newsletters gave a short account of the life of **Elizabeth Prout** before and after she came to Manchester and how she has been declared 'Venerable' – a step towards*

canonisation. *The story concludes here:*

Elizabeth had become a Catholic with the help of Blessed Dominic Barberi, a member of the Order of the Cross and Passion, founded by St Paul of the Cross. Guided then by another Passionist, Fr Gaudentius Rossi, and later by Fr Ignatius Spencer, Elizabeth took on board the charism and spirituality of St Paul of the Cross.

Following his example, she and her Sisters became contemplatives in action, combining Martha and Mary into one. She was devoted to the passion and death of Jesus, expressed very simply in a verse she once wrote:

*A cross no cross where
Jesus is;
With Jesus crosses are my
bliss;
Why should the cross so
frighten me
When on the Cross my God I
see?*

Elizabeth drew her strength from the Sacraments and from the presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, the 'Memorial of the Passion'. She treasured having the Blessed Sacrament in the convent chapel.

A Sister later explained how they *felt they were truly His Spouses, living under the same roof with Him. Now, when the day's toil was over, they could visit Him, and when weary and discouraged, often seeing little fruit in their work for souls, they could lay the burden at His Feet, and always receive comfort, and strength to take up His Cross and follow Him once more.* Elizabeth died at Sutton in 1864. Her body, together with Blessed Dominic Barberi

and the Servant of God 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. On 21 January 2021 Pope Francis approved a decree of the Congregation for the Causes of Saints, recognizing the 'heroic virtue' of Sister Mary Joseph of Jesus, and declaring her 'Venerable'.



Next Friday, 26 February, is Family Fast Day for CAFOD (Catholic Agency For Overseas Development). This is the official aid agency of the Catholic Church in England and Wales. CAFOD's message is: *This Lent in lockdown, you and your parish can help transform lives!*

The CAFOD website tells how people in developing countries often have to walk for hours to get water. On visits to Kenya, I've seen how CAFOD has transformed the lives of such people. We can make this possible by putting in the CAFOD envelope what we save next Friday and returning it next Sunday. For those who are not at church, the CAFOD website provides for online donations. Here's wishing you all a Happy Lent!

Fr Allen

Fr Dearman's reflections on CHARACTERS FROM THE BIBLE

5 - ELEAZAR

The cruelty of the Greek invaders in the books of Maccabees knew no bounds. As well as torturing and killing seven Jewish children in the presence of their mother, they seized the 90-year-old Eleazar and tried to force him to eat pork, which they knew would mean a rejection of his Faith which he had lived and taught for so many years.

His well-meaning friends urged him to escape death by eating another portion of meat and only pretending to eat the pork. But he knew that to do this would lead many people to lose their faith and so he went bravely to his death.

We can sometimes find ourselves in a situation where to do something would not be wrong but could upset other people and lead them into wrongdoing. St Paul said that eating food which had been used in a pagan sacrifice would not be sinful, but might be an obstacle to other people's consciences, so he would rather go without than cause another person's downfall.

Following Jesus can sometimes make great demands on our generosity!