



OUR LADY OF GRACE PRESTWICH

'Stay with us, Lord, on our journey'

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3rd SUNDAY OF EASTER 18 APRIL 2021

HOLY MASS THIS WEEK

SUNDAY	First Mass of Sunday is 7pm Saturday. Sunday morning 9.00 & 11.00 am
MONDAY	12 noon Easter Weekday
TUESDAY	12 noon Easter Weekday
WEDNESDAY	12 noon Easter Weekday/St Anselm
THURSDAY	12 noon Easter Weekday
FRIDAY	12 noon St George, martyr, patron of England
SATURDAY	12 noon Easter Weekday/St Fidelis/St Adalbert

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,

'It's the beginning of the end of lockdown.' A sentence overheard last Monday, and said with glee. Helped by the fine weather, crowds came out onto the streets and into the shops and filled the outdoor eating and drinking spaces. There was a general feeling of relief, with perhaps a reservation on the part of some who thought it 'over the top'.

The lockdown has certainly taken its toll on many people. Those families with relatives in care homes have been badly affected, unable to visit and share normal signs of affection. Children and older students have missed out on learning and social contacts. Families have struggled with home learning and confined space.

With what relief therefore we welcome this 'beginning of the end of lockdown'! There is a wish all round to 'get back to normal'.

But what will 'the normal' be like? When this pandemic is over will we be just the same as before? **Pope Francis** has suggested that we should be changed. He writes:

From this crisis we can come out better or worse. We can slide backward, or we can create something new ...

God asks us to dare to create something new. We cannot return to the false securities of the political and economic systems we had before the crisis. We need economies that give to all access to the fruits of creation, to the basic needs

of life: to land, lodging and labour. We need a politics that can integrate and dialogue with the poor, the excluded, and the vulnerable, that gives people a say in the decisions that impact their lives. We need to slow down, take stock, and design better ways of living together on this earth.

The above extracts are from the Holy Father's recently published book, *Let us Dream: The Path to a Better Future*. In the book, he goes on to suggest what should be done. He offers 'an inspiring and actionable blueprint for building a better world for all humanity, that puts the poor and the planet at the heart of new thinking'. He also shows how 'ordinary people acting together despite their differences can discover unforeseen possibilities'.

Plenty there to keep in mind as we approach local elections on 6 May.



From next week, Fr Dearman's *Reflections* will begin a series on the Rosary. This week, he writes about the *Angelus* prayer.

The *Angelus* reminds us of Our Lord's Incarnation. We recall the angel's greeting to Our Lady Mary; her reply; and the result – 'The Word was made flesh.'

The prayer is traditionally said three times a day: in the morning, at 12 noon, and in the evening. The *Angelus* bell announces the prayer and invites us to take part. The bell rings here at Our Lady of Grace at 8.00 am, 12 noon and 6.00 pm.

However, during Eastertide, the *Angelus* is replaced by another ancient prayer, the *Regina Caeli*. It is said here in church at the start of the 12 noon daily Mass. It is reproduced here for the sake of those at home:

*O Queen of Heaven, rejoice, alleluia!
For he whom you merited to bear, alleluia,
has risen, as he said, alleluia.
Pray for us to God, alleluia.*

*V. Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia.
R. For the Lord has truly risen, alleluia.*

Let us pray: O God, who have been pleased to gladden the world by the Resurrection of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ, grant, we pray, that through his Mother, the Virgin Mary, we may receive the joys of everlasting life. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.



Technical advances can also come with problems! We've seen that during the past week, with the parish website and also with the live streaming of Masses. But now, the problems seem to have been resolved. The website is up and running. The sound system in church has been remedied. We have received an apology for the failures of the live streaming and a promise it will be trouble-free in future. Alleluia!



The seasons of Advent, Lent and Eastertide are largely free from the celebration of Saints' days, and we can therefore focus better on the seasons themselves. This week however celebrates **St George's Day**. He is England's principal patron, and has been such for many centuries.

There are many legends about St George. He was a Roman soldier, martyred because of his Christian faith during the persecution of the emperor Diocletian in the year 303. He died at Lydda, in the Roman province of Palestine, and is revered in many countries of the world.

*Great Saint George, our patron, help us,
In the conflict be thou nigh;
Help us in that daily battle,
Where each one must win or die.*

Lydda (or Lot as it is also known) is still there, with a church dedicated to St George. The Church in the Holy Land is going through a tough time just now. That's why your magnificent **total of £3007.31 given for the Holy Land** this Easter is so timely.

Fr Dearman's Reflections:

THE ANGELUS

I sometimes wonder what Prestwich-dwellers make of our Church bells when, instead of chiming the hour, they give out three groups of three bongs, then a series of nine. As Fr Allen explains, they are reminding us of a long-standing custom of praying the *Angelus* three times a day.

The *Angelus* contains three Hail Marys. A priest once said to a child in Confession, 'For your holy Penance say three Hail Marys', to which the child replied, 'I only know one.' Why say the same words three times?

But in the *Angelus* each Hail Mary is introduced by a brief reminder of one stage in the story. In the first Hail Mary we can share Mary's astonishment at the Angel's proposal. In the second one we marvel at her openness to God's will. And in the third we rejoice that she has become the Mother of the Word of God.

Thus we can make each repetition of the same words have a different and special meaning for us each time. And this approach can help us to cut down on our distractions!

In the next series of reflections we'll see how a similar approach can help us to pray the Rosary more fruitfully.