



OUR LADY OF GRACE PRESTWICH

‘Stay with us, Lord, on our journey’

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4th SUNDAY OF EASTER 25 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 Peter Chanel/St Louis Marie de Montfort
THURSDAY	12 noon St Catherine of Siena Also, 10.00am, Funeral Mass for Marjorie O’Connell: family only
FRIDAY	12 noon Easter Weekday/St Pius V
SATURDAY	11.00 am First Communion Mass Year4S: families only

The church is open every day

Monday to Saturday from 11.45 am to 1.00 pm (except next Saturday)
Sundays from 8.45 am to 10.00 am, 10.45 am to 12 noon

My dear Parishioners and Friends,

The next two Saturdays will be long-awaited joyful days for our children in Year 4 of the primary school. If the Covid pandemic had not occurred, they would have made their **first Holy Communion** twelve months ago. They have had to wait for a year. They have prepared very well and patiently for their great day. We all wish them well and will remember them in our prayers.



Today is known as ‘**Good Shepherd Sunday**’, since the Gospel read on this day always speaks of Jesus as our Good Shepherd. Today is also **Vocations Sunday** – an international day of prayer

for vocations to the sacred priesthood. How much the Church in Salford Diocese needs vocations at this time! We must pray that the families in our own parish will encourage such vocations.



During the past week the Catholic bishops of England and Wales met in their bi-annual conference. They praised families, parish communities and those who have worked tirelessly in hospitals, care homes, schools and prisons during these challenging times of ill-health, grief and isolation.

They spoke too of how we are to face the future, when the Covid restrictions are lifted. When that time comes, we must see again how important **Holy Mass** is.

This is part of the bishops’ message:

It is the Eucharist, the celebration of the Mass, that makes the Church; and it is the Church, in the gift of the Holy Spirit, which makes the Eucharist. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is the lifeblood of the Church. It requires our active participation and, to be fully celebrated, our physical presence.

At this moment, then, we need to have in our sights the need to restore to its rightful centrality in our lives the Sunday Mass, encouraging each to take his or her place once again in the assembly of our brothers and sisters. We face the task of seeking to nurture the sense of Sunday as “a weekly gift from God to his

people”, and something we cannot do without; to see Sunday as the soul of the week, as giving light and meaning to all the responsibilities we live out each day; to see the Sunday Eucharist as food for the unique mission with which we have been endowed.

Something there to keep in mind when restrictions are lifted. We may hope that they soon will be lifted in this country.



I'm writing this on **St George's Day**, 23 April. 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 about the year 303. He died at Lydda, in the Roman province of Palestine.

A Report issued only last week reminds us that such persecution is still with us. It is **Aid to the Church in Need Report on Religious Freedom**.

The Report shows how religious freedom is severely violated in one out of every three countries in the world. In the last two years, the fundamental right to freedom of belief was not respected in 62 (31.6 per cent) of the world's 196 countries.

In fact, most of the world's population (67 per cent, or 5.2 billion people) live in countries that are guilty of grave violations of religious freedom. These countries include China, India and Pakistan, three of the world's most populous countries. And Christians are the ones most often targeted by persecution.

The Report also shows that in the West, there has been a rise in “polite persecution”. This is a term coined by Pope Francis to describe how new cultural norms and values come into sharp conflict with individuals' right to freedom of conscience, and how they try to confine religion “to the enclosed precincts of churches, synagogues or mosques”.

We in this country of England need St George's bravery and resolve in these our times.



Last week's Newsletter recorded the grand total you gave in the recent collection for the Holy Land. You were also generous in the Lenten Fast Day for **CAFOD**. The total, including donations in the Starving World box, has come to £1443.88. The contents of the Starving World box during May will go to **Aid to the Church in Need**.



Sharp-eyed parishioners will have noticed the new external stairway erected on the parish hall during the past week. The original stairway had been condemned. Hesketh's of Bolton have done a good job, costing in the region of £11,400. It should last for many years.

Please continue to keep safe and well.

Fr Allen

Fr Dearman's Reflections on the Rosary:
THE JOYFUL MYSTERIES
THE ANNUNCIATION

In the **Angelus** we say the Hail Mary three times, each time preceded by a versicle reminding us of a feature of

the Annunciation story. In the first Joyful Mystery of the **Rosary**, we say the Hail Mary ten times.

Luckily we have plenty of rich food for thought supplied by God himself in St Luke's Gospel to help us to focus our minds on the various details of this amazing event.

We say 'Holy Mary, Mother of God'. The words of the Angel spell out something of what it means for her to be truly God's Mother.

After calling for God's help in the Our Father we can preface each of the ten Hail Marys by a short phrase from God's holy Word as follows:

- 1 The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a virgin whose name was Mary
- 2 Rejoice, so highly favoured: the Lord is with you
- 3 She was deeply disturbed and asked herself what this greeting could mean
- 4 Do not be afraid: you have won God's favour
- 5 You are to conceive and bear a son
- 6 You must name him Jesus
- 7 How can this come about, since I am a virgin?
- 8 The Holy Spirit will come upon you
- 9 The child will be holy and will be called Son of God
- 10 I am the handmaid of the Lord

We conclude each Mystery by thanking and praising God in the prayer Glory be.