



St. John Rigby Parish NEWSLETTER.

Incorporating the Former Parishes of Sacred Heart, Hindley Green, St. Richard's, Atherton & Sacred Heart, Hindsford.

Priests: Fr. Paul Seddon. (Tel: 883395)
Deacon: Ken Holding (Tel: 255834)

7th March 2021

Church Closure.

Following the long-awaited plan to ease down the Lockdown last week, the churches in the Deanery will re-open in time for **Palm Sunday, March 27th & 28th**. Whilst the situation seems to be getting more hopeful, we still have to monitor the Rate of infection after the schools re-open next week and as other parts of society gradually reopen. If there is an increase in the R Rate before that time, then sadly we may have to remain closed. But let us hope and pray that we will enjoy Easter in our churches this year.

Just a Reminder.

Please remember, if you or someone you live with has Covid-19 symptoms, then please stay at home and help us to protect everyone. You should stay at home if you are unwell or awaiting a test result. People who are vulnerable or who feel unsure about returning to Mass need to consider the wisdom of doing so. Remember the Sunday obligation has not been reinstated.

Pray for our sick

Joan Baines.
 Eileen McAlister.
 Joyce Gorton.
 Nora Smith.
 Jed Bamber.
 John Atkins.
 Eileen Watkinson.
 Shelia Ratcliffe.
 Maureen Blears.

Jean Culkin.
 Martin Culkin.
 Bernadette
 Boardman.

Teresa Weatherhead.
 Neil Gunson.
 Frank Vose.

Lately Dead

Bro. Michael Winstanley.
 David Urmston.

Anniversaries

Evelyn Silcock.
 Peter Baldwin.
 Anthony Crank.
 Stan Simpson.
 Molly Hooton.
 David O'Halloran.
 Sean Grainey.
 Elsie Needham.

Collection Last Week.

Envelopes:
 Loose Plate:
 CAFOD Box:

READINGS FOR THE WEEKEND.

Third Sunday of Lent.(B)

First Reading – Exodus 20:1-17.

God does not let sin continue forever. The commandments are also shared to help people follow the Law of God.

Second Reading – St. Paul to the Corinthians 2:13-25.

St. Paul says that, until we see God, God's wisdom will always look foolish to us.

Gospel Reading – John 2:13-25.

The cleansing of the Temple by Jesus warns us that he will continually cleanse the new temple of the Holy Spirit, which is the Church.

If anyone would like to add any items for the Newsletter each week then please let Deacon Ken or Fr. Paul know by Wednesday evening at the latest.

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GOSPEL REFLECTION.

In today's Gospel Reading, Jesus cleanses the Temple in Jerusalem. When he is challenged about his actions, he responds with these words, "Destroy this sanctuary, and in three days I will raise it up." His victory is guaranteed and the resurrection is a sign of that victory. Even though the historic Jerusalem Temple will be destroyed, the Risen Christ and the Church which is his Body will triumph. The destruction of the Temple and the death of Jesus were caused by sin and hate, but the resurrection is the triumph over sin and death. In purifying the Temple now, Jesus shows that his resurrection is about creating a new life.

This is one of the reasons why the Church continues to sing the Old Testament Psalms. The Psalms speak of victory, often in military terms, and this can seem strange and even offensive to our way of thinking. The key is that the victory is not ours but God's. God will win, and God does not need us to bring about that victory by force. Instead we are called to believe and hope in God's victory, the victory we prepare for by prayer. Much will be destroyed before that victory arrives, but what is destroyed, the Lord can raise up again, as Jesus says later in John's Gospel, "Now the will of him who sent me is that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, and that I should raise it up on the last day." We see so much degradation in the world, often caused by human beings, but there is nothing that falls that cannot be raised again, until we come to the place where the true Temple lasts forever.

If God is going to win, then what is our role in his victory? It is quite simple: we are called to believe and hope in that victory, and by love share the fruits of that victory with others. There are signs of the Kingdom to come here on earth, and there are small victories over evil, which can give us hope and protect us from despair. While we live on earth as Christians, we live in the Temple because we ARE the Temple. That is why self-examination and repentance during Lent are part of the process. If we fight injustice, or prejudice, we must start by considering our own injustice, to be constantly trying to overcome our own prejudices, and we must be honest doing so, even if it might be painful at times. We will fail if we rely on our own power, but we must remember that God is with us – he will teach us the truth and set us free.

CAFOD LENTEN REFLECTIONS 2021.

Usually at this time of year we hold a series of Lenten Reflections based on the Gospel Readings and some of the writings of Pope Francis. They are always really good meetings and it is always good to hear what people have to share. The meetings are meant to inspire us to take a few moments out of our busy lives and think what we can do to make our planet a better place. So why not read today's Gospel, the clearing of the Temple in John's Gospel, and reflect on the following questions:-

- Why was Jesus so angry about the money changers in the Temple?
- Our churches are not cluttered up with sheep and cattle. Our rituals do not involve blood-letting or money changing. So how does the Gospel relate to us? What are the things that stop us from having church as "My Father's house"?
- How do you relate this story to "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild"?

For read some of the other reflections please visit the CAFOD notice on the Deanery website.

BROTHER MICHAEL WINSTANLEY SDB.

We have to share the very sad news that Brother Michael Winstanley passed away this week. Brother Michael came from Atherton and worked for a while in Hindley Prison, so a number of people in the area may well know him. Please keep Br. Michael and his family, along with the Salesian Community, in your prayers.

CHURCH RE-OPENING.

After consultation and following guidance from the Archdiocese, we are looking to cautiously reopen our churches on the weekend of March 26th & 27th, which Palm Sunday weekend, the beginning of Holy Week. The reason for being so cautious is to simply wait for two more weeks after the schools have reopened fully so that we can check to see if the rate of coronavirus infections have begun to rise or if they continue to fall. This is for everyone's safety. When churches do re-open we will still have to adhere to the safeguarding rules and regulations as before, that is, facemasks must be worn in church, safe distancing must be maintained, and the liturgy itself will continue to be much shorter than before the pandemic began.

EASTER SERVICES.

Please remember that St.John Rigby is a very new Parish, the newest in the whole of the Archdiocese in fact. With this in mind, please remember that this is our FIRST Easter together. It will, therefore, be very different this year, not just because of social distancing regulations, but simply because we are ONE Parish and are called to come together to celebrate as one Parish family. Therefore, we plan to have the Easter Triduum spread out over the two churches and alternate venues each year. We will give you more details concerning times and venues in the next two weeks. In the meantime, stay safe, look after each other, and pray for one another. It will be great to get together at Easter this year and celebrate the Passion, Death and Resurrection of the Lord.