

The Little Flower Messenger

Year A SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME 26th July 2020

Welcome to our Parish Community of St. Theresa of Lisieux

The Presbytery, High Lane, Stansted Mountfitchet, CM24 8LQ

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(Office Hours: Tuesday–Thursday 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.)

Gospel: Matthew 13:44-52

‘He sells everything he owns and buys the field’

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| 1st Reading: | <i>1 Kings 3:5,7-12</i> |
| Psalm 118: | <i>Lord, how I love your law!</i> |
| 2nd Reading: | <i>Romans 8:28-30</i> |
| Gospel Acclamation: | <i>Alleluia, alleluia! I call you friends, says the Lord, because I have made known to you everything I have learnt from my Father. Alleluia!</i> |
| Communion Antiphon: | <i>Bless the Lord, O my soul, and never forget all his benefits.</i> |

This Week’s Good News

Dear Friends,

In today’s Gospel, Jesus continues with a further series of parables about the Kingdom of God, by praising those wise people who have listened, understood and responded to his message.

The Gospel Reading of today completes the *‘Discourse in Parables’* in which St. Matthew has collected various teachings about the nature of the Kingdom of Heaven proclaimed by Jesus. We are again presented today with three parables, each of which contributes some insight into the nature of that Kingdom. The first and second parables are closely linked in meaning but with slight differences. They are in effect saying that the Kingdom of Heaven is the most precious thing in life. That is, it is through Jesus and his words that we come to know and understand what the real meaning of life is, what are the most important things in life.

a) The parable of the hidden treasure:

In the first parable, the parable of the hidden treasure, Jesus compares entering the Kingdom of Heaven to a person who unexpectedly, while tilling the soil, stumbles upon a hidden treasure buried in a field. Forthwith, he buries it again for the field where it is hidden does not belong to him. He does not tell the owner of his discovery but sells everything he has in order to get ownership of the field and hence of its buried treasure. The idea obviously is that when one really discovers Jesus and his vision of life everything else becomes secondary. In the service of the Kingdom of Heaven there are no half measures, and, in that service, there is a special kind of liberating joy. It requires boldness and decisive action, a single-minded commitment of all one’s resources. It is also true that conversion to Christ is happening in such an unexpected way.

b) The parable of the pearl:

In the second parable, the parable of the pearl, Jesus tells of a merchant in search of fine pearls. When he finds one of great price, he also sells everything else he has in order to acquire it. This parable is similar to the first one but, in this case, it is not a labourer (a poor man) who actually is not looking for the treasure and then discovers the treasure in the course of his ordinary working day, but a merchant (a rich man)

who purposely seeks it out. There is a need, as the Gospel constantly urges, for us to be ready whenever and however Jesus comes into our lives. The Kingdom of Heaven is all-inclusive, available to rich and poor alike. Still, the merchant like the labourer, must risk everything to succeed. The Reign of Jesus in our hearts is the buried treasure or the pearl of great price. It is for this that Jesus is asking us to search, and once discovered and its value fully appreciated, to sacrifice everything to possess it. And the message is clear - discipleship is open to all but entails sacrifice. Equally clear is the outcome of the disciple's quest - a joy that exceeds imagination when he has found the only truly valuable thing in life.

c) The parable of the dragnet thrown into the sea:

This brings us to the third parable today, the parable of the dragnet thrown into the sea and it focuses on the ultimate judgment. Here Jesus compares the Kingdom of Heaven to a fishing net which, when thrown into the sea, collects all sorts of fish. The net could not and does not discriminate. It is left to the fishermen to do the dividing and the separating process. While the first and second parables speak of the total commitment and dedication which are the ideal of every follower of Christ, this third parable helps us to put our two feet firmly back on the ground. It hearkens back to last week's parable of the wheat and the weeds that tried to explain the presence of those evil ones who seem unfit for the Kingdom. The invitation of Jesus to be part of God's reign is open to rich and poor, good and bad; in fact, many of all sorts are collected into the community of disciples. But at the end there will be a sorting out of those who are worthless and those who have been proven valuable, and reward and punishment will be administered accordingly. But this time it is the angels who will make the judgment.

d) "Do you understand all this?"

At the end when Jesus asks his disciples, "Do you understand all this?" the disciples declare that they have understood what he has taught them in and through these parables. Jesus then responds with a saying that describes the calling and task of everyone who desires to be his follower in the Kingdom of Heaven. It is a matter of drawing on the rich treasury of the past but shaping it to apply for guidance into the future. Jesus tells them that they will be like Scribes or men of learning who will have ancient and modern teaching with them to give to the hearers. The past tradition is not to be done away with, but we can never return there to live. The future requires the past for a firm foundation without which it will never be realised. This balancing act is the task of each one of us who has been instructed in the Kingdom of Heaven.

This calls us to think about what our greatest treasure is actually. Is it the pursuit of wealth and success, reputation and status? Or is it the desire to discern right from wrong, to bear witness to God even if it means becoming unpopular or experiencing suffering. The pursuit of the Kingdom of Heaven is and always will be the greatest treasure that we can pursue, which is why the message contained in the Gospels is known as the Good News.

Deacon Des

Making an Act of Spiritual Communion

When we cannot fulfil our obligation to attend Mass on a Sunday or Holy Day of Obligation, whether because of illness or bad weather, or some other reason outside of our control, we can, and indeed should make an Act of Spiritual Communion. It is also good to make an Act of Spiritual Communion when we can attend Mass, but when something prevents us from receiving sacramental Communion that day—say, a mortal sin that we know we have not had the opportunity to confess yet.

We can make an act multiple times a day—even on days when we have been able to receive the Eucharist; because each Act of Spiritual Communion that we make increases our desire to receive sacramental Communion, and also helps us to avoid the sins that would make us unable to receive Communion worthily.

My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the most Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there, and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

Parish News

First Holy Communion 2020: Our congratulations to the children who made their First Holy Communion last Sunday; and a huge thank you to the Parish for your kindness in prayers which have sustained the children over these passed months, particularly in their extended preparations. They and their parents have worked very hard but it all came together beautifully on the day and even the sun, to keep to the theme, put in an extended visit. May the children continue to be filled with the joy and blessing of the Holy Eucharist as they continue their faith journeys.

First Holy Communion Programme 2021: As we write, with the limitations on practice currently in place, we are not sure how the First Holy Communion programme will look for the coming year of preparations. However, it would be helpful to focus our minds by inviting interest in joining the programme.

If you have a child who will be starting the school Year 3 this September, and you would like your child to be a part of the programme, then please contact Clair, the Parish Administrator, at stansted@dioceseofbrentwood.org. Please give your name, your child's name and your contact email, address and telephone number.

Donations: Your continued support for our Parish is appreciated notwithstanding that during these difficult times, we recognise that the financial impact on some parishioners can be significant. While we are currently unable to circulate the basket for donations at Mass, should you wish to make a donation, baskets are located at the exit doors as you leave the church.

Many of you have been able to use up old Gift Aid envelopes to make your donations. Gift Aid envelopes for the current financial year are available; should you wish to have them, please contact Clair in the office and she will arrange for them to be delivered to you.

We know that many of you are not comfortable with handling cash, nor do you use electronic banking. Should you prefer to use a cheque, this is acceptable.

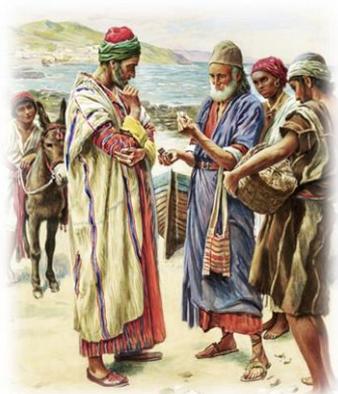
Alternatively, you can make your donation before or after attending Mass on the website <https://www.sttheresastansted.org/donations/>. Please ensure that 'Stansted Mountfitchet – St. Theresa of Lisieux' is selected. There is a box to tick for those who wish their donation to be Gift Aided - even if you have not completed a Gift Aid Declaration. Any funds donated will come in full to the Parish. You can also set up a standing order, whether or not your donation is Gift Aided. This is the case even if you have traditionally donated using envelopes. Should you wish to start making donations by standing order, please email stansted-giftaid@dioceseofbrentwood.org for details.

Sunday Coffee morning: We are now able to attend Mass in person, however, we are not yet able to hold our coffee mornings in person. If you would like to socialise virtually then why not join us for a chat and a short fun quiz from the comfort of your own home? Held every Sunday at 11.30 am via the following Zoom details: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83024819984> Meeting ID: 830 2481 9984 Password: CM24Thrsx - All are welcome.

Weekday Masses: Please note that from **Monday 27th July** no weekday Masses will be held for three weeks whilst Fr. Lee has his summer break. Weekday masses will recommence on **Monday 17th August**. Weekend Masses will continue as normal during this time.

Mass Times and Intentions

| SEVENTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME - Year A | | |
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| Saturday 25 th July <i>St. James, Apostle</i> | Confessions: 5:15 p.m. – 5:45 p.m. Mass: 6:00 p.m. <i>Livestreamed on our YouTube channel</i> | People of the Parish |
| Sunday 26 th July | Mass: 8:30 a.m. <i>Livestreamed on our YouTube channel</i> Confessions: 9:15 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. Mass: 10:00 a.m. <i>Livestreamed on our YouTube channel</i> | <p style="text-align: center;">James Braeckman (RIP) (H Braeckman)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Mary Lappin (RIP) (Lappin Family)</p> |
| Monday 27 th July | No Weekday Mass | |
| Tuesday 28 th July <i>SS. Nazarius & Celsus MM</i> | No Weekday Mass | |
| Wednesday 29 th July <i>St. Martha</i> | No Weekday Mass | |
| Thursday 30 th July | No Weekday Mass | |
| Friday 31 st July <i>St. Ignatius of Loyola</i> | No Weekday Mass | |
| EIGHTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME - Year A | | |
| Saturday 1 st August <i>Our Lady's Saturday</i> <i>St. Alphonsus Liguori</i> | Confessions: 5:15 p.m. – 5:45 p.m. Mass: 6:00 p.m. <i>Livestreamed on our YouTube channel</i> | Annie & Edward Tarrant (RIP) (M&T Rhead) |
| Sunday 2 nd August <i>1st Reading: Isaiah 55:1-3</i> <i>Psalm: 144</i> <i>2nd Reading: Romans 8:35, 37-39</i> <i>Gospel: Matthew 14:13-21</i> | Mass: 8:30 a.m. <i>Livestreamed on our YouTube channel</i> Confessions: 9:15 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. Mass: 10:00 a.m. <i>Livestreamed on our YouTube channel</i> | People of the Parish |



**PLEASE TAKE THIS NEWSLETTER HOME WITH YOU
AND DISPOSE OF IT RESPONSIBLY. THANK YOU.**