

The Little Flower Messenger

Year C – EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – 27th February 2022

Welcome to our Parish Community of St. Theresa of Lisieux

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

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Gospel: Luke 6:39-45

'A man's words flow out of what fills his heart.'

Mass book (P. 144)

1st Reading:

Ecclesiasticus 27:4-7

Psalm 91:2-3:

It is good to give thanks, O Lord

2nd Reading:

1 Corinthians 15:54-58

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia! Open our heart, O Lord, to accept the words of your Son. Alleluia!

Communion Antiphon: (P. 146)

I will sing to the Lord who has been bountiful with me, sing psalms to the name of the Lord Most High.

This Week's Good News

Dear Friends,

In today's Gospel Jesus draws our attention to practical points of Christian living and challenges us to use our words as he used his in his preaching and healing ministry — to heal, to restore, and to bring back life, joy, and hope. Today's readings also instruct us to share our Christian life, love, and spiritual health by our words, and to avoid gossiping about and passing rash, thoughtless, pain-inflicting judgments on others, thus damaging their good reputation and causing them irreparable harm.

The first reading, taken from the Book of Sirach, teaches that what is inside us is revealed through our conversation – as the grain and husks are separated in a farmer's sieve, as the quality of the shaped clay is revealed in the potter's fire, and as the size and quality of a tree's fruit reveal the care it has received from the planter. Sirach's teaching serves as an excellent preview for today's Gospel, which reminds us, when we're feeling judgmental, to think before we speak because what comes out of our mouth reveals our heart. The Responsorial Psalm (Ps 92) advises us to spend our time praising and thanking God for all His blessings. In the second reading St. Paul advises the Corinthian Christians *"to be firm, steadfast, always fully devoted to the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain,"* instead of wasting time on useless and sinful conversations, which bring punishment instead of the victory of resurrection and eternal reward.

In today's Gospel passage, taken from the *Sermon on the Plain* given in Luke's Gospel, Jesus condemns our careless, malicious, and rash judgments about the behaviour, feelings, motives, or actions of others by using the funny examples of one blind man leading another blind man and one man with a log stuck in his eye, trying to remove a tiny speck from another's eye.

We should avoid judging others because no one except God is good enough to judge others because only God sees the whole truth, and only He can read the human heart. Hence, only He has the ability, right, and authority to judge us.



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We do not see all the facts or circumstances or the power of the temptation which has led a person to do something evil. We are often prejudiced in our judgment of others, and total fairness cannot be expected from us, especially when we are judging those near or dear to us. We have no right to judge because we have the same faults as the one, we are judging and often in a greater degree (remember Jesus' funny example of a man with a log in his eye trying to remove the dust particle from another's eye?) St. Philip Neri commented, watching the misbehaviour of a drunkard: "There goes Philip but for the grace of God." Abraham Lincoln said that the only one who has the right to criticize is the one who has the heart to help. Hence, we should leave all judgment to God, practice mercy and forgiveness, and pray for God's grace to get rid of all forms of hypocrisy in our lives. Let us remember the warning of saints: "When you point one finger of accusation at another, three of your fingers point at you."

Often, when someone has pointed one finger of accusation at us, and we feel hurt and wronged we also need to remember to pray for the grace not to react despite how wronged we feel. If we do, we provide the justification for the one who has pointed the finger, and who will undoubtedly fail to see the error of their actions and only the action of our response as a means of satisfying themselves that they were not in the wrong at all.

It can often be the hardest thing to not react to provocation and hurt, but all we can do is to pray for the grace and humility to accept the wrongs we encounter without responding in kind. We will fail many times, but that is why we need to pray and pray some more.

Deacon Des

Parish News

Lent 2022: The word Lent comes from a Middle English word 'Lencten' which means springtime. With springtime comes a great sense of confidence, a looking forward and a fresh start. The Lord knows we all need that following on from this past two years. Lent can be this fresh start for us. By walking faithfully with Our Lord in this great season of grace we shall be better able to enter more fully with him into the joy and victory of Easter.

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, 2nd March. There will be two Masses that day –at 9:30am and at 7:30pm.

During this Mass we have the opportunity of having ashes placed on our heads to remind us of the call to penitence and also to remind us of our frailty.

CONFESSION - If it has been a long time since your last Confession and you want a gentle reminder of what you say and do, please ask for help – that's one reason why you have clergy here to serve you. Lent is the perfect time to come back to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. We have Confession here at St Theresa's every day, the times are advertised in this newsletter on the back page where the Masses are listed, why not come along? Confessions take place in St Theresa's room where there is adequate space to remain socially distanced and very good ventilation.

FASTING - Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are days of Fast and Abstinence. This means that those who are over 16 and under 60, and who are fit and well (not those with health issues that preclude fasting) are asked to deny themselves some food and not to eat meat. The Church states that this includes one full meal and two small meals that together do not constitute one full meal. These meals should not include meat. Fasting is a good way to draw closer to God, to hunger and thirst for Him. Fridays are a day of abstinence, that means we are asked to undertake the discipline of not eating meat, (we can still eat fish).

MASS - During the Pandemic, some people have stayed away from Church and have solely engaged in Mass online. Can I please take this opportunity to urge you to return to Mass in person if you are able to. I know some people have been waiting for the Catholic Bishops in England and Wales to reintroduce the 'Sunday Obligation' before they return, but we all know in our heart of hearts that we don't need a



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Bishop or anyone else to tell us we should really be at Mass on a Sunday or Holy Days of Obligation if we are not prevented from doing so. If you are well, fit, and healthy, and not vulnerable then do please come back to Mass.

Lent is a very special opportunity for each one of us to be renewed in Spirit, in our life of prayer and worship, so as to be renewed in our service of God and neighbour. One excellent way of keeping a good and holy Lent is to set yourself the goal of coming to one extra Mass during the week. Here at St Theresa's, we have the enormous blessing and privilege of a Mass on every day of the week. The blessings that flow from the Mass are beyond measure, both for the individual and for the Parish. I hope that we will use this Lent to think together about the opportunities we have of renewing our commitment to the life of prayer and worship here in this place. Please consider carefully and prayerfully your own pattern of worship and set yourself to come back to Mass, and if you have already returned, do please consider coming to an extra midweek Mass.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS - This is an ancient and beautiful devotion, loved by generations of Christians. Stations will take place each Wednesday at 12:00 noon, and Friday at 7:00pm in Lent beginning on Friday 4th March. We follow Our Lord in the Way of the Cross and are reminded of the immense love He showed for us. Deacon Des will lead us on Friday evenings on the Way of the Cross followed by Adoration and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Fr Lee will lead us in a short Stations of the Cross before the Wednesday Mass. Do please try to come to Stations if you possibly can.

Finally, it is very important not to take on too much at the start of Lent. It is much better to take on a sensible amount and have the joy of being able to sustain it throughout the Lenten Season. You may find it helpful to think of GUS and TOM. GUS – give up something, and TOM – take on more. One thing to set aside (give up) for the season of Lent rather than many things, and take on one extra task rather than committing to doing many things.

Do try and enjoy this season of grace, it can make all the difference to your spiritual life if you allow it to.

Fr Lee

Our Synodal Journey Together: Please join us after any Mass this weekend in the Parish Centre to develop our thoughts for the forthcoming Synod. The Pope has asked us all to contribute our views.

After all Masses on 26/27th Feb we will meet in the Parish Centre to reflect on the event featuring Blind Bartimaeus. We will then use this reflection to consider what we would like to contribute to the Synod. We will cover:-

- Brief introduction to what and why this is happening
- Clarification of the Holy Father's request
- Reading of the reflection followed by recording of the thoughts we generate

Our input will then go to our Bishop in Brentwood Diocese and ultimately to the Synod of Bishops in Rome next year. Pope Francis has invited the entire Church to 'reflect on a theme that is decisive for its life and mission', the path of synodality. Our Holy Father has affirmed that: Synodal Church is a Church which listens. The faithful People, the College of Bishops, the Bishop of Rome: all listening to each other; and all listening to the Holy Spirit.

CAFOD Family Fast Day, Lent Appeal: Every child should grow big and strong. Family Fast Day takes place on **Friday 11th March**, a day when we eat simply and give generously to support mums around the world, like Amie in Sierra Leone, with expert training in growing and making healthy food.

Your small act of love this Lent will make a big difference to many communities affected by extreme hunger and children suffering from malnutrition. You can donate in church using a **CAFOD** envelope which will be inserted in next week's Newsletter or by visiting the **CAFOD** website (Cafod.org.uk/lent)



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Mass Times and Intentions

EIGHTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – YEAR C		
Saturday 26 th February	Confessions: 5:15 p.m. – 5:45 p.m. Mass: 6:00 p.m. <i>Livestreamed</i>	David Matthews R.I.P. (M&T Rhead)
Sunday 27 th February <i>Day for the Unemployed</i>	Mass: 8:30 a.m. <i>Livestreamed</i> Confessions: 9:15 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. Mass: 10:00 a.m. <i>Livestreamed</i>	People of the Parish Deceased members of the Spencer & Grace Families (R.Spencer)
Monday 28 th February	Confessions: 9:00 a.m. Mass: 9:30 a.m. <i>Livestreamed</i>	Robbie Moser R.I.P. (E. Moser)
Tuesday 1 st March <i>St David Shrove Tuesday</i>	Confessions: 7:15 p.m. Mass: 8:00 p.m. <i>Livestreamed</i>	
Wednesday 2 nd March <i>Ash Wednesday</i>	Confessions: 9:00 a.m. Mass: 9:30 a.m. <i>Livestreamed</i> Confessions: 7:00 p.m. Mass: 7:30 p.m. <i>Livestreamed</i>	People of the Parish Peace for the People of Ukraine
Thursday 3 rd March	Confessions: 9:00 a.m. Mass: 9:30 a.m. <i>Livestreamed</i>	
Friday 4 th March <i>Women's World Day of Prayer</i>	Confessions: 9:00 a.m. Mass: 9:30 a.m. <i>Livestreamed</i> Stations of the Cross Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament & Benediction: 7:00 p.m.	
FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT – YEAR C		
Saturday 5 th March	Confessions: 5:15 p.m. – 5:45 p.m. Mass: 6:00 p.m. <i>Livestreamed</i>	Michael Bambridge (J. Bambridge)
Sunday 6 th March	Mass: 8:30 a.m. <i>Livestreamed</i> Confessions: 9:15 a.m. – 9:45 a.m. Mass: 10:00 a.m. <i>Livestreamed</i> Confessions: 11:30 a.m. Mass: 12:00 p.m. <i>Livestreamed</i>	People of the Parish

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



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