

# *St Teresa & St John Southworth Churches, Cleveleys*

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## **Sunday : Sts Peter and Paul**

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### **Gospel:**

#### **Matthew: 16:13-19**

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi he put the question to his disciples, 'Who do people say the Son of Man is?' And they said, 'Some say he is John the Baptist, some Elijah, and other Jeremiah or one of the prophets. 'But you, he said, 'who do you say I am?' Then Simon Peter spoke up, 'You are the Christ,' he said 'the Son of the living God.' Jesus replied. 'Simon son of Jonah, you are a happy man! Because it was not flesh and blood that revealed this to you but my Father in heaven. So now I say to you: You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church. And the gates of the underworld can never hold out against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven: whatever you bind on earth shall be considered bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be considered loosed in heaven.'

#### **Reflection : Eternity - A Ring of Confidence**

Our life with God is a journey, sometimes uphill, other times level, through light and shadow, to the fullness of **eternal joy**.

It is a journey, sometimes gentle, sometimes strenuous, through doubt and faith, to the fullness of **eternal life**.

It is a journey, sometimes solitary, other times accompanied, through isolation and love, to the fullness of **eternal friendship**.

It is a journey in which we are never really alone. There are those around us now, *and* those who have gone before. Saints Peter and Paul are two of those, and we remember them today. They discovered an eternal message amongst all the hardships and worries of daily life. Like them we can live that message if, like them, our lives too are founded on the One who came to share his joy, his life, his friendship - Jesus himself.

## Notices

\* We remember in our prayers Bob Walker of St. John Southworth Parish whose Funeral is this coming week. We remember him and his family, and all those whose anniversaries are at this time. May they rest in God's peace.

\* **Our churches are opening for the celebration of Mass:** As you might know, the Government announced last Tuesday that from 4th July religious groups may open their doors for public worship, though they have to strictly comply with current regulations.

At this stage it is important to remember that the Corona Virus has not yet been defeated, and we must continue to make sensible decisions for ourselves and for others in order to stay as safe as possible. In fact with our church practice our Bishop reminds us that we remain in a stage of transition, and the dispensation from attending Sunday Mass still holds. For the vulnerable it might be very wise to stay with what we have discovered in our prayer and spiritual lives at home, or, as Mass will be celebrated from next weekend on Sundays **and** weekdays, to come to Mass during the week instead of Sunday. As it is, despite all the benches and seats we have in our churches, because of physical distancing not all of them can be used, and so the capacity size of the congregation will have to be reduced.

At the same time, as with other things, it will not be "All back to as it was before" It will be a "new normal", maybe for some time, with aspects which will certainly not seem to be 'normal' for us. For instance in the three pages of guidelines we have received, besides the physical distancing, we are instructed that during Mass there can be no singing, no Bidding Prayers, no Offertory procession or collection (there will be a basket near the door at the end of Mass), Holy Communion will be under one kind, the host, and received only on the hand, **and** - a short sermon! (Hurray!!)

To be together again, and to celebrate and receive Holy Communion, will be a welcome privilege for many of us, including your parish clergy. You have been sorely missed!!

Starting next Saturday evening (4th July) the times of Masses will be as we have had before :

### St. Teresa's :

Saturdays (Vigil Mass) : 6.30 pm

Sundays : 9 am and 10.30 am

Weekdays : Monday - Tuesday and Thursday - Saturday 9.30 am

### St. John Southworth :

Sundays : 5pm

Weekdays : Wednesday : 9.30 am

**Please note :** Like last week, this Wednesday (1st. July) St. Teresa's Church will be open for private prayer from 10 am till 12 noon.

**Please read the following message from our four Catholic Archbishops in England.**

## **A Message from the Metropolitan Archbishops Of the Catholic Church in England**

Dear Brothers and sisters in Christ,

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

On Tuesday we heard the announcement that, from the 4th July this year, places of worship will be able to reopen for prayer and services. We welcome this news with great joy. Since the lockdown began, members of all faiths have faced restrictions on how they have been able to celebrate important religious festivals. Our own experience of Easter was unlike any other we have known. Now, in our churches, and with our people, we can look forward again to celebrating the central mysteries of our faith in the Holy Eucharist.

The recent reopening of our churches for individual private prayer was an important milestone on our journey towards resuming communal worship. Our churches that have opened have put in place all the measures needed to ensure the risks of virus transmission are minimised. This includes effective hand sanitisation, social distancing, and cleaning. We remain committed to making sure these systems of hygiene and infection control meet Government and public health standards. We want to thank everyone within the Catholic community for sustaining the life of faith in such creative ways, not least in the family home. We thank our priests for celebrating Mass faithfully for their people, and for the innovative ways in which they have enabled participation through live-streaming and other means. We are grateful for the pastoral care shown by our clergy to those for whom this time of lockdown has been especially difficult, and, in particular, towards those who have been bereaved. We recognise too the chaplaincy services that have played a vital role in supporting those most in need. Gaining from the experience of all that we have been through, and bringing those lessons into the future, we must now look forward. With the easing of restrictions on worship with congregations, we tread carefully along the path that lies ahead. Our lives have been changed by the experience of the pandemic and it is clear that we cannot simply return to how things were before lockdown. We remain centred on the Lord Jesus and His command at the Last Supper to “do this in memory of me.” We must now rebuild what it means to be Eucharistic communities, holding fast to all that we hold dear, while at the same time exploring creative ways to meet changed circumstances.

It is important to reaffirm that, at present, the obligation to attend Sunday Mass remains suspended. A significant number of churches may remain closed as they are unable to meet the requirements for opening for individual prayer. Fulfilling these requirements is a precondition for any church opening after the 4th July for the celebration of Mass with a congregation.

Please be aware that there will be a limit on the number of people who can attend Mass in our churches. This will be determined locally in accordance with social distancing requirements. We therefore need to reflect carefully on how and when we might be able to attend Mass. We cannot return immediately to our customary practices. This next step is not, in any sense, a moment when we are going ‘back to normal.’

We ask every Catholic to think carefully about how and when they will return to Mass. Our priests may need to consider whether it is possible to celebrate additional Masses at the weekends. Given there is no Sunday obligation, we ask you to consider the possibility of attending Mass on a weekday. This will ease the pressure of numbers for Sunday celebrations and allow a gradual return to the Eucharist for more people.

Moving forward, there will still be many people who cannot attend Mass in person. We therefore ask parishes, wherever possible, to continue live-streaming Sunday Mass, both for those who remain shielding and vulnerable, and also for those unable to leave home because of advanced age or illness.

When we return to Mass there will be some differences in how the celebration takes place. For the time being, there will be no congregational singing and Mass will be shorter than usual. None of this detracts from the centrality of our encounter with the Risen Christ in the Eucharist. We ask everyone to respect and follow the guidance that will be issued and the instructions in each church.

“As I have loved you,” said the Lord Jesus, “so you must love each other.” (Jn 13:34) The lockdown has brought forth remarkable acts of charity, of loving kindness, from Catholics across our communities as they have cared for the needy and vulnerable. We have seen love in action through charitable works, and through the service of many front-line keyworkers who are members of our Church. Now we can begin to return to the source of that charity, Christ himself, present for us sacramentally, body, blood, soul and divinity, in Holy Communion. As we prepare to gather again to worship, let us, respectful of each other, come together in thanksgiving to God for the immense gift of the Holy Eucharist.

Yours devotedly in Christ

- ✠ Vincent Cardinal Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster
- ✠ Malcolm McMahon OP, Archbishop of Liverpool
- ✠ Bernard Longley, Archbishop of Birmingham
- ✠ John Wilson, Archbishop of Southwark

## **Daily Reflections for this week**

### **Monday (Henri Nouwen)**

How can we live in the world and not be destroyed by it? To live in the world and not belong to the world summarises the essence of the spiritual life. Hardly a day passes in our lives without our experience of inner or outer fears, anxieties and preoccupations. Still it is possible not to belong to these powers, not to build our dwelling place among them, but to choose the house of love as our home. This choice is made not just once and for all but by living a spiritual life, praying at all times and thus breathing God's breath.

### **Scripture (Psalm 119:33-34, 42-47,51)**

*Teach me, Lord, the way of your will, and I will observe it. Give me understanding and I will observe your Law and keep it whole-heartedly. Give me an answer to the taunts against me, since I rely on your word. Do not deprive me of that faithful word since my hope lies in your judgments. I shall live in all freedom because I have sought your precepts. I shall speak of your instructions before kings and not be ashamed. Endlessly the arrogant have jeered at me but I have not swerved from your Law.*

### **Tuesday (Dietrich Bonhoeffer)**

No one should be surprised at the difficulty of faith if there is some part of your life where you are consciously resisting or disobeying the command of Jesus. Is there some part of your life which you are refusing to surrender at his behest, some sinful passion, maybe, some hope, perhaps your ambition or your reason? It is now time to take the bull by the horns and say, 'Only those who obey believe. You are trying to keep some part of your life under your control. Somewhere in your heart you are refusing to listen to his call.' Only those who obey can believe, and only those who believe can obey.

### **Scripture (Luke 9:57-62)**

*They met a man who said to Jesus "I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus answered 'Foxes have their holes and birds have their nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.' Another to whom he said 'Follow me' replied, 'Let me go and bury my father first.' But Jesus answered, 'Let the dead bury the dead; your duty is to go and spread the kingdom of God.' Another said 'I will follow you, but first let me say goodbye to my people at home.' Jesus said once the hand has been laid on the plough, no one who looks back is fit for the Kingdom of God.'*

### **Wednesday (Oscar Romero)**

A Christian's authenticity is shown in those circumstances in which following the gospel supposes a multitude of ruptures with the tranquility of an order that has been set up against or apart from the gospel. It is much easier to keep on following the many easy lords set up as idols of the moment: money, power, prestige and so on. More than ever is there need for prayer united with a genuine will to be converted, prayer that out of intimacy with God cuts one off from the confused clamour of life's shallow experiences, a will to be converted that is not afraid to lose prestige or privilege or to change a way of thinking when it is seen that Christ insists on a new way of thinking more in keeping with the gospel.

### **Scripture (John 17:13-19)**

*Jesus said to the Father, 'I have passed your word on to them, and the world hated them, because they belong to the world no more than I belong to the world. I am not asking you to remove them from the world, but to protect them from evil. They do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world. Consecrate them in the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world, and for their sake I consecrate myself so that they too may be consecrated in the truth.'*

### **Thursday (A Carthusian)**

We want God, and so we love him, and we know the consequences and the conclusion. We do not think enough of this, and when we do we soon forget it. This is the great reality that should hold the whole of our attention; and it is in the light of this truth that we should look at and appraise everything here below. It has always been our conviction that God was calling us to live this truth with particular intensity. The deep interior anguish which results from this conviction is reserved for those souls whom God is calling to a higher life. God keeps them almost continually aware of the sheer nothingness of all that is around them, in order to detach them from it, so that he may take possession of them more readily.

### **Scripture (Ecclesiasticus 51:15-18,20)**

*My foot has pursued a straight path, I have sought wisdom ever since my youth. By bowing my ear a little, I have received her, and have found much instruction. Thanks to her I have advanced; glory be to him who has given me wisdom! For I was determined to put her into practice, have earnestly pursued the good, and shall not be put to shame. I have directed my soul towards her, and in purity have found her; having my heart fixed on her from the outset, I shall never be deserted.*

### **Friday (Carlo Carretto)**

Faith is a new dimension at work in each of us, one which does not start from reason, one which, while not contradicting reason, surpasses it infinitely because it can reach God. Abraham is the ancestral head of all those whose lives enjoy this new dimension, who accept the risk and the consequences, who consider themselves to be exiles on earth, perpetual nomads, who are not satisfied with what they can see but look for the invisible God, who learn to find him everywhere and who obey him.

### **Scripture (1 John 2:3-6, 15-16)**

*In this way we come to know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says 'I know him' without keeping his commandments is a liar, and truth has no place in them. But anyone who does keep his word, in such a one God's love truly reaches its perfection. This is the truth that we are in God. Whoever claims to remain in such a person must act as he acted. Do not love the world or what is in the world. If anyone does love the world, the love of the Father finds no place in them, because everything there is in the world - disordered desires of the body and of the eyes, pride in possessions - is not from the Father but is from the world.*

**Martin Bennett**