

St Teresa & St John Southworth Churches, Cleveleys

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Sunday : 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time

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Gospel:

Matthew: 21:28-32

Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people, "What is your opinion? A man had two sons. He went and said to the first, "My boy, you go and work in the vineyard today." He answered, "I will not go", but afterwards thought better of it and went. The man then went and said the same thing to the second who answered, "Certainly, sir", but did not go. Which of the two did the father's will.?" "The first" they said. Jesus said to them, 'I tell you solemnly, tax collectors and prostitutes are making their way into the Kingdom of God before you. For John came to you, a pattern of true righteousness, but you did not believe him, and yet the tax collectors and prostitutes did. Even after seeing that you refused to think better of it and believe in him.'

Gospel Reflection : "What You See Is What You Get "

"Words are cheap." "Put your money where your mouth is." "Don't promise what you can't deliver."

Everyday sayings. Common sense you might say. Surely there was no need for a divine revelation to state the obvious? No need for the Son of God to become a human being to utter platitudes?

But Jesus is always telling us about God as well as ourselves, and that is not obvious; in fact it is often mysterious.

What you and I see about God, how we see Him, is what we get. So it is so important to hear what Jesus says and follow the way he lives with all types of people, because that is what God is like for us, and how we can and should be for others

Our Christian Religion then is more than a rule book, more than a catechism, more than a creed. It is, rather, a way of life lived in the company of Jesus and our fellow human beings - a shared life. Not *my* life, but *ours*.

Notices

This Sunday the Special Collection Is For our Bishop's Administration Fund. Parishes pay for their expenses throughout the year from the weekly Sunday collections we take, whereas today's Special Collection is the only collection each year which funds the Bishop to support us in so many different ways. There is a separate basket for this in the porch and at the back of church.

Next Sunday We Have The Annual CAFOD Collection, following the traditional Family Fast Day next Friday, 2nd October. Envelopes for this will be given out as you come in church, although those who use the boxed parish envelopes will have a white envelope for this, both to be collected in the basket at the back of church **next** Saturday/Sunday, 3rd/4th September.

About this Collection CAFOD writes : " The Coronavirus has affected every country we work in. In countries like Brazil, where the disease spread rapidly, many have died of the virus. In other places lockdown measures have made it impossible for people to work and left many facing hunger. This virus has had an impact on everyone and everything we have worked together to help. But we have faced crises before, and together we have beaten them. With skills learnt on the frontlines of life-saving work, our local experts are ready to put a three-part plan into action, to save lives and protect the progress we have made towards a fairer, greener world for everyone. The three-part plan has been given the title **Survive, Rebuild, Heal.**

'Survive' is the first step on our plan, and the most urgent. This is about saving lives, now. We all know from sore experience how deadly this disease can be. We must act now, and fast, to help the most vulnerable communities on earth protect themselves and their families. In this country we have felt the strain this virus has put our own incredible NHS - just imagine the impact a widespread corona virus outbreak could have in a country where many lack even the most basic medical care, and food and drink. With you by our side, our network of local experts and community volunteers are ensuring urgently needed help reaches the most vulnerable people.

As crucial as it is that we help people survive in the initial months of this crisis, it is every bit as crucial that we stay with them as they **'Rebuild'** their lives. Our mission has always been to work for a world where every woman, man and child can not only survive, but live - independently with dignity and hope. In the wake of this unprecedented crisis we must stand together to hold onto and rebuild the things we have worked so hard for - security, education, hope and an end to generations of poverty and living hand to mouth.

The third part of our plan is to **'Heal'**. Even as the crisis has kept us apart, it has also brought us together, and together we have spread some healing ourselves. Through small acts of kindness, like picking up the phone to check on a friend, or leaving a bag of groceries on the doorstep for someone who can't get out to the shops, we have shown that even in isolation we are united, closer than ever before. By holding each other in love and prayer, we have truly become neighbours. Let's not forget this. We have the chance now to step back and reflect on the world we want to live in. Helping the most vulnerable communities on earth survive this crisis, and standing with them as they rebuild their lives, is our chance now to heal our human family, and to heal our common home." If your own circumstances allow it, please give generously.

Refugees : Many of us were reminded of the terrible plight of many refugees when, on the news, we saw the Moria Centre Refugee Camp burn to the ground on the Greek Island of Lesbos. A Lancaster based Charity, Ripple Effect, is trying to help by appealing for specific items which are now needed, and which will be sent there. These are : - Nappies, Soap, Toothpaste, Shampoo, Shower Gel and Deodorant. A box will be placed in the porches of both our churches for any items you could kindly give.

A big 'thank you' to those who have already contributed to this Appeal, and to Sharon for organising it.

St. Teresa's Church Shop : Because of our current situation we regret that we are not able to open the shop at St. Teresa's. This means that, amongst other things, Christmas Cards will not be available for sale this year.

Daily Reflections for this week

Monday (Carlo Carretto)

That evening I had seen an old man trembling with cold. I thought of the night and I knew that I, too, would shiver. The little charity that was in me made me think that I had best give him my spare blanket. When I left the village, the blankets were still on the jeep. To have resisted love, not to have been capable of accepting the demand of this love is so serious that it creates an obstacle between me and God. What is the good of defending the truth, of fighting over dogma, of saying the Divine Office well, of sharing the Eucharist, if one is not impelled by love?

Scripture (Matthew 21:28-32)

Jesus said to the chief priests and elders, "A man said to his first son, 'Go and work in the vineyard today.' He answered, 'I will not go,' but later thought better of it and went. The man then went and said the same thing to his second son who answered, 'Certainly, sir,' but he did not go. Which of the two did the father's will?" "The first," they answered. Jesus said, "I tell you solemnly, tax collectors and prostitutes are making their way into the Kingdom of God before you."

Tuesday (Cardinal Newman)

While we think of Christ, let us not forget to be up and doing. Let us beware of indulging a mere barren faith and love, which dreams instead of working and is fastidious when it should be hardy. This is only spiritual childhood in another form; for the Holy Spirit is the author of active good works, and leads to the observance of all lowly deeds of ordinary obedience as the most pleasing sacrifice to God.

Scripture (Micah 6:6-8)

With what shall I enter Yahweh's presence and bow down before God All-high? Shall I enter with burnt offerings, with calves one year old? Shall I offer my eldest son for my wrong doing? "You have already been told what is right and what Yahweh wants of you. Only this; to do what is right, to love loyalty and to walk humbly with your God."

Wednesday (Charles Peguy)

God speaks:

A salvation that was not free, that did not come from a free person, could not in any way be attractive to me. How do you expect me to be interested in that kind of thing? Does one care to be loved by slaves? In my creation which is endued with life, I wanted something better, I wanted something more. When you once have known what it is to be loved freely, submission no longer has any taste. All the prostrations, all the submission in the world are not equal in value to the beautiful straight soaring up of one single invocation from a love that is free.

Scripture (1John 3:18-24)

Children, our love must be not just words or mere talk, but something active and genuine. This will be the proof that we belong to the truth and it will convince us in his presence even if our own feelings condemn us, that God is greater than our feelings and knows all things. My dear friends, if our own feelings do not condemn us, we can be fearless before God because we keep his commandments and do what is acceptable to him. Whoever keeps his commandments remains in God and God in him.

Thursday (Brother Lawrence)

We must, during all our labour and in all else we do, even in our reading and writing, holy though both may be - I say more, even during our formal devotions, and spoken prayers - pause for some short moment, to worship God in the depth of our heart. Since you know that God is present before you whatever you are doing, that he is at the depth and centre of your soul, why not then pause from time to time at least from that which occupies you outwardly, even from your spoken prayers, to worship him inwardly. All these acts of worship must arise from faith, and the belief that in truth God is in our hearts; that we must worship him, love him and serve him in spirit and in truth.

Scripture (Luke 18:10-14)

A Pharisee and a tax-collector went up to the Temple to pray. The Pharisee stood there and said this prayer to himself, "I thank you Lord that I am not grasping, unjust, adulterous like everyone else, especially like this tax-collector here. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes on all I get." The tax-collector stood some distance away, not daring even to raise his eyes to heaven; but he beat his breast and said, God, be merciful to me, a sinner." This man, I tell you went home again, justified; the other did not.

Friday (Caryll Houselander)

In life there are many secret resurrections. In our sin, we are the tombs in which Christ lies dead, but at the first movement of sorrow for sin he rises from the dead in us, the life of the world is renewed by our sorrow. It is not just the poor sinner licking his wounds and limping on, crippled by the past; it is Christ risen, alive, whole. There is no place he will not come: prisons, hospitals, schools, camps, cathedrals and little tin churches; he comes to them all.

Scripture (Galatians 2:16, 19-20)

We have learned that someone is reckoned as upright not by practising the Law but by faith in Jesus Christ; and we, too, came to believe in Christ Jesus so as to be reckoned as upright by faith in Christ, not by practising the Law: since no human can be found upright by keeping the Law. I have been crucified with Christ and yet I am alive; yet it is no longer I, but Christ living in me. The life that I am now living, subject to the limitations of human nature, I am living in faith, faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

Martin Bennett