

Bulletin 18 – 15th Sunday of the Year

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

It was such a joy to celebrate the Mass together with many of our parishioners present in church as well as being joined by others via the live stream. It has also been wonderful to see increased numbers at the weekday masses. I want you to be assured that this is your church and that you are all welcome, I know that some of you will continue to shield for some time, but please do keep in touch and let us know if there is anything we can do to help you.

The procedures for attending mass worked well last week, they are a little strange to us at present, but I'm sure we will all soon get used to them. I am grateful to our "stewards" who have volunteered to assist us all.

One of the comments that many made last week was how good our church and grounds are looking. No, the doors are not new, they have been renewed and re – stained and varnished. The Lawns and the garden areas too are looking at their best. The church itself has continued to be cleaned and sanitised, and the flowers refreshed weekly. I could list the people who have helped us care for our church, but knowing me I would forget someone, however I know who you are and so does The Lord, you have my gratitude and more importantly your reward in heaven.

As you may be aware Bob Osborn has done an amazing job in updating and maintaining our website whilst at the same time jumping all the hurdles for us to go on line with Streaming into your homes. We are also aware that Bob has a full time job and thank him for his generosity and patience in full filling our needs BUT we really do need a second person to support him when necessary by updating our website weekly with the Bulletin and Religious texts all in a set format. Is there anyone out there who would be able to step up and support Bob and their parish?

With every good wish
Fr. John

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sun 12 – 15 of the Year	10.00 Mass	People of the Parish
	18.00 Mass	Fr. Adrian Lowe (INT)
Tue 14 – feria	10.30 Rosary	
Wed 15 – St. Bonaventure	10.00 Mass (ORD)	Frank Cracknell (RIP)
Thu 16 – feria	10.00 Mass	David Ryan (INT)
	10.30 Adoration	
Fri 17 - feria	10.00 Mass	Jo Gallagher (RIP)
	10.30 Stations	
Sun19 – 16 of the Year	10.00 Mass	People of the Parish
	18.00 Mass	Monica Hogan (INT)

CONFESSIONS

As usual Fr John is available for outside Confessions. Please ring 01279 429388 for an appointment.

GOSPEL REFLECTION

“The one who received the seed in rich soil is the [one] who hears the word and understands it... the one who yields a harvest.”

Faith is a mysterious thing. Many devout parents have to bear the sorrow of knowing that the faith that they love and cherish has not passed down the generations. Despite their having done everything possible, their children have chosen not to embrace the faith in which they were raised. It's easy for people in such circumstances to blame themselves: maybe we should have tried harder, maybe we should have set a better example, sent them to a better school or had a more effective parish catechetical programme. It's often said that faith is caught, not taught. This may be true in many cases, but families where a vibrant and healthy faith is the norm and prayer a regular practice can still produce atheist children, whereas families where there is not an ounce of obvious faith can produce children who grow to be ardent Christians. Ultimately, it's a mystery known only to God.

Yet we need not despair, even if we have a certain sense of regret or failure. One of our Eucharistic Prayers reminds us that we not only pray for the shepherds of our Church, whose faith sustains that of the whole community, but we also pray for those whose faith is known to God alone. The many millions of people in the world who can be described as “people of good will” have that good will because of God's grace. A modern theologian spoke of “anonymous Christians”, those who live by the gifts of the Holy Spirit even if they don't acknowledge Jesus. However little room anyone makes for God in their life, God will always occupy that space and make it fruitful.

In today's Gospel Jesus preaches in parables and his disciple's question why he does this: would it not be better to speak plainly, in black and white? Yet faith does not offer easy solutions to complex questions, and the “grey areas” of life are often precisely where there is room for faith to grow and mature.

We also hear echoes in this Gospel of the difficulties facing the early Church. Jesus' first disciples were all Jews, and they had to come to terms over time with the painful truth that many of their fellow Jews did not become believers. The evangelisation of the pagan world emerged from the conflicts and failures encountered by the first generation of disciples. In Jesus' words we hear reflected their explanation to themselves of how the rejection of Jesus' ministry could have happened. There is room for caution here, however. There have been tragic and terrible consequences in history of a too-easy blaming of the Jewish people as a race for not accepting the teaching of Jesus. In the Gospel Jesus blesses those who never had the advantage of being exposed to the teachings of the prophets and yet believe. This is an acknowledgement by the Gospel writers, a generation later, of the faith of the pagans. Yet his warnings about closed eyes and hard hearts are not intended just for the Jewish people. They challenge every person who resists God's grace, for the reasons Jesus goes on to give.

Jesus does not focus on any particular group of people but on the thwarted tendency to good that lies in every human heart. God's good news, in whatever form it comes, is thwarted by superficiality, complacency, lack of confidence and the desire for a security based on consumption and status. These are universal human dilemmas.

Our response to grace is part of the freedom given to us from the beginning of creation. God is a God of surprises, but is also ready to be surprised by us.

It is a great blessing to us to have heard the message of Jesus and responded to it in faith. This is not the result of our virtue but of God's mercy. Why some people believe and others don't is a mystery known only to God. It is not our place to judge, but we are invited to do what we can to make the faith attractive to others. For some people, we are the only Gospel that they will ever hear. We are the only letter from God that they will ever read. Each of us is called to be a disciple and an evangelist in our own way. Even if we never see the fruits of our labours, we can trust that the closer we come to Jesus, the more like him we will become.