

The Catholic Parishes of St Augustine of Canterbury, Meir St Filumena, Caverswall & St Mary, Cresswell

15th October 2017

28th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – Year A

40/2017/ks

St Augustine's (for Parish Office): 146 Sandon Road, Meir, Stoke-on-Trent. ST3 7DF

St Filumena's: Blythe Bridge Road, Caverswall. ST11 9EA

St Mary's: Cresswell Old Lane, Cresswell. ST11 9RF

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SUNDAY REFLECTION

Today is the 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time. The common theme of today's Scripture Readings is the abundant providence of God and His universal salvation, exemplified in a *'luscious feast'*. God loves all and wants all to be saved and to attain eternal happiness. In the First Reading from the "Book of the Prophet Isaiah", Isaiah speaks of the abundant providence of the Lord of hosts for all peoples. Here, we have a very clear graphic description of the *'great banquet'* that the Lord will prepare on the mountain for all peoples. There will be rich food and fine wines. There will be neither mourning nor death. There will be exultation and rejoicing, because the Lord *'has saved us'*. Isaiah's image of salvation is the fulfilment of our deepest longings, viz. the absence of hunger, mourning, death and shame.

The Gospel Reading from St. Matthew contains a parable which likens the Kingdom of Heaven to a *'wedding feast'* to which all are graciously invited. Some have rejected the invitation; others have accepted. But admission to the feast is not enough. It is necessary to don the wedding garment. Participation in the feast requires living lives worthy of the Kingdom. In the Second Reading from "St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians", the following words of St. Paul can be linked to the imagery of banquet and feasting, *"In every circumstance and in all things, I have learned the secret of being well fed and of going hungry, of living in abundance and of being in need"*. Indeed, his deep participation at the Lord's Table has prepared him to relish abundance and feasting as well as to endure hunger and various difficulties in times of scarcity. Again, in the familiar Responsorial Psalm of today, we sing: *"The Lord prepares a banquet for us in the sight of our foes"*. This song of thanksgiving to the Lord is a prelude to the Eucharist we celebrate this Sunday.

"The Lord prepares a banquet for us in the sight of our foes" and He invites us all out of a free act of kindness. The invitation is to all, the party is free for all, yet anyone who decides to attend has a responsibility to present himself or herself fit for the king's company. The Kingdom of Heaven is freely offered to us. Those of us on the way to the kingdom must spare no effort in acquiring the moral and spiritual character that is consonant with life in the Kingdom. What is your response going to be then? How can you receive and accept it? Have you ever thought that other things were more important, or that you were too busy to accept God's invitation to His table? To what extent, even right now, are you closed to calls from God because you are so tied up in all kinds of concerns and anxieties about things which do not really matter or about things which cannot guarantee you any real fulfilment and happiness? The Gospel parable of today is a challenge to accept God's invitation. Moreover, we need to have a proper wedding garment if we are to enter the wedding banquet of the Lord. It is the characteristic mark of the wedding guest and without it there is no entry. Symbolically, it is the garment of virtue that the faithful must clothe themselves with. But the choice is ours. And this is the Good News of today.

NEWS FROM THE PARISHES

Bible Study meets on Thursdays at 19:30 in the St Augustine's Presbytery. We spend time looking at the Mass Readings for the following Sunday – why not join us?

Journey in Faith – This course is for those who are interested in learning more about the Catholic Faith. Sessions are on Thursdays in term time at 19:30 in St. Augustine's Sacristy. Next session, Thursday 19th October.

Children in non-Catholic Schools requiring preparation for the Sacraments and **non-Catholic children in Catholic Schools** wishing to become Catholics. Next session, Saturday 21st October, after 9:30 Mass in St. Augustine's Presbytery. For more information please contact Gabrielle Halliday on 07764 245344.

Padre Pio Prayer Group meets on the first Wednesday of the month at 14:30 in the St Augustine's sacristy.

50/50 Club Draw Results – winners in October: 1st Prize – V. Brundrett, 2nd Prize – A. Hewetson, 3rd Prize – M. Owen. Well done! Congratulations! There are several numbers still unsold – only £12 for 12 months – see Albert Griffin.

St Filumena's Autumn Fayre - We would like to thank all those who worked so hard to make the day a great success and all those who came to support us on the day. A highlight being the well-attended children's fancy-dress competition, in which all the children were worthy winners! The final tally of the amount raised will be announced shortly.

St Filumena's 'Care Boot Sale' on 28th October. Details and location to be confirmed.

St Augustine's Pre-Christmas Social Evening, 8th December – There will be a meeting after Mass on Thursday 19th October for anyone able to help organise this event. If unable to attend meeting but willing to help please contact Ann Hewetson or write down offer on sheet at back of church. From next weekend there will be a box at the back of church for prize contributions. We are also looking for donations of spare wool. Thank you.

PLEASE PRAY

For those who are ill, especially: Hollie Tomkinson, Susan Brady, Ursula Grocott, Kathleen Smith, Sarah Stevenson, Dorothy Swift, Josie Coates, Arthur Rushton, Mrs. Burton, Cekeera Grocott, Olivia Killeen, Frederick Blaize, Jean Dawson, Michele Yon, Dorothy Vasey, Molly Blurton, Margaret Smith, Betty Walton, Margaret Stones, Marjorie Birks, Vincent Coleman, Dorothy Tantrum, Val Emery, Rosa Coronato, Edigio Coronato, Doris Kelly, Dorothy Sawyer, Christopher and Elizabeth Browne, Jane Preston, Molly Crowther, Chris Kelsall, Joyce Brown, Lynn Kent, Christopher & Clifford Browne, Deacon Trevor, Janice Austin, Fr Joseph Tynan, Albert Dawson and Joan Brindley.

For those who have died recently and those whose anniversary occurs around this time.

Parish Offertory for last weekend:

<u>Meir:</u>	£406.70	of which	£156.70	was gift aided
<u>Caverswall:</u>	£	of which	£	was gift aided
<u>Cresswell:</u>	£	of which	£	was gift aided

MANY THANKS FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

please gift aid, if possible

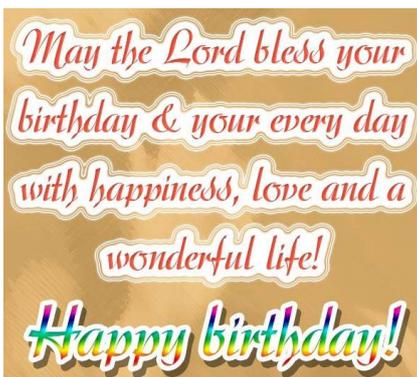
Next weekend there will be voluntary Second Collection for World Mission Sunday

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS IN OCTOBER:

Sheila Killeen, Hannah Palser (21), Doreen Peacock, Paul Richards, James Richards, Dorothy Tantrum (100!),

Holy Mass for the birthday intentions of those listed above will be offered at St. Augustine's Church on Sunday, 29th October at 11:00.

**On your birthday, we pray that God continue to pour out his blessings into your life and to the people you love.
HAPPY BIRTHDAY !**



THE MESSAGE OF THE WEEK

The Church Precepts – part 1

We all know the Ten God's Commandments, or - I think - we should do. Among other things, the Commandments are an excellent basis for examination of conscience before Confession. I am not as sure that we all know the Beatitudes. Maybe you cannot recite them from memory, though I hope you have some grasp of the virtues they counsel. You will find the list of all eight in the first paragraph of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* which deals with this subject. Here too we have the basis for an excellent examination of conscience, this time concerning not merely our avoidance of sin but our cultivation of the dispositions and virtues of the Christian life.

But I suspect we almost never hear much about the **Precepts of the Church**. These are seldom mentioned from the pulpit and do not come up in Scripture readings. They are often treated as a sort of addendum or final check in an examination of conscience. But they can be explored more deeply with great profit. The five precepts can actually be used to orient our spiritual lives and fuel the New Evangelization.

The most important thing about the Precepts of the Church is that they are the Precepts of the *Church*. We ought to pause to consider what the Church is, for it is no mere social body with purely human lines of authority and rules geared primarily toward its own preservation and growth. The Church is alternatively described in Scripture as the body of Christ (1 Cor 12:26-27; Col 1:18), the bride of Christ without spot or wrinkle (Eph 5:25-27), and the embodiment on earth of Divine authority, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail (Mt 16:18).

The Church is the repository on earth of the power to forgive our sins (Jn 20:22-23). It is formed by our assimilation to Christ in the Eucharist (1 Cor 10:16-17). The hierarchy of the Church, despite being made up of sinful men, has the power to "bind and loose on earth" such that the same judgment is bound or loosed in heaven (Mt 16:19; Mt 18:18). The faith of the head of the hierarchy has been guaranteed by Christ Himself, for the purpose of ensuring a right faith in all the Church's members (Lk 22:32). Thus the Church remains always the household of God, "the pillar and bulwark of the truth" (1 Tim 3:15). Moreover, she is sent by Christ to preach and baptize, and secured by Christ until the end of time (Mk 16:15-16; Mt 28:19-20).

Much more could be said about the Church, into which Our Lord has poured His very life, including all the goods and graces necessary for perfection, union with God and salvation: Tradition, Scripture, the Sacraments, the hierarchy, the priesthood, Divine authority, the fullness of truth - all of which combine to produce the sublimity of her doctrine, the holiness of her saints, and her unparalleled works of charity.

Once we not only grasp the identity of the Church but begin to cherish the Church in her deepest reality, her Precepts begin to glow in a whole new light. Though they are formulated as minimum requirements for being a Catholic, each one opens up a key aspect of a fully Christian life. This is what *The Catechism* says about the Precepts of the Church: "The Precepts of the Church are... obligatory... [and are] meant to guarantee to the faithful the indispensable minimum in the spirit of prayer and moral effort, in the growth in love of God and neighbour" (CCC 2041). The "indispensable minimum"! A person literally cannot do any less and still consider one's self a "living Catholic". That is why the Precepts are a matter of life and death; if a Catholic is not doing these things, they do not have a pulse. If this is all I am doing to live out my faith, I have a faint pulse, but a pulse nonetheless. Furthermore, these Precepts are required, and if we consciously refuse to fulfil them, this is likely a mortal sin.

Here are the 5 Precepts of the Church:

- 1) **"You shall attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation and rest from servile labour."**
- 2) **"You shall confess your sins at least once a year."**
- 3) **"You shall receive the sacrament of the Eucharist at least during the Easter season."**
- 4) **"You shall observe the days of fasting and abstinence established by the Church."**
- 5) **"You shall help to provide for the needs of the Church."**

In a positive sense, you are going to be protecting and nourishing your relationship with God and the Church if you keep these five Precepts of the Church. You can think of them as some arbitrary obligation placed upon you, or as check-points to make sure your life remains on course. They are a simple test of your spiritual "pulse". The Precepts are neither arbitrary nor mysterious. They are practical and concrete. You can trust them.

Part 2 – next week

MASS TIMES AND INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK

	St. Augustine's MEIR	St. Filumena's CAVERSWALL	St. Mary's CRESSWELL
14th October Saturday			18:00 (<i>Sunday Vigil</i>) – Private Intention (MC)
15th October SUNDAY 28 th SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME - Year A	11:00 – People of Parish	9:00 – Damian Bowyer Int	
16th October Monday <i>Feria</i>	9:30 –	9:15 –	
17th October Tuesday <i>Memorial of St Ignatius of Antioch, Bishop, Martyr</i>	9:30 – Private Intention <i>Followed by Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Succour</i>		
18th October Wednesday <i>Feast of St Luke, Evangelist</i>	9:30 –	9:15 –	
19th October Thursday <i>Feria</i>	9:30 –		
20th October Friday <i>Feria</i>	9:30 – Private Intention 18:00 – Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament & Benediction 19:00 –		
21st October Saturday <i>Feria or Optional Memorial of Our Lady</i>	9:30 –		18:00 (<i>Sunday Vigil</i>) – Patrick McVey RIP
22nd October SUNDAY 29 th Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year A	11:00 –	9:00 – People of Parish	

 <p style="color: purple; font-size: 1.2em;">Confessions</p>	<i>Friday:</i> 18:00 – 18:45 <i>Saturday:</i> 10:00 – 10:30	<i>Sunday before Mass</i> 8:15 – 8:45	<i>Saturday before Mass</i> 17:15 – 17:45
	and <i>BY REQUEST</i>		

MASS INTENTIONS – PLEASE HAND IN ENVELOPE TO A MEMBER OF THE CLERGY

When in the church
talk only to God before the service;
let God talk to you during the service;
and talk to one another after the service but only outside the church!

Please send items for the Parish Newsletter by Thursday evening (e-mail: augustineandmary@hotmail.com)