

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

5th November 2017

31st SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME – Year A

43/2017/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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Administration and Social Events: Gabrielle Halliday - mobile: 07764 245344

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SUNDAY REFLECTION

Today is the 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time and we are coming very near the end of the Liturgical Year. We are also coming to the end of Matthew's Gospel where there is a growing conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders of his people. But there is no conflict with the ordinary people who are delighted and amazed at the words and actions of Jesus. The Scripture Readings of today contain serious attacks on the religious leadership of the time and they tell us of God's rejection of inauthentic religious attitudes.

In the First Reading from the "Book of Malachi", the Prophet Malachi speaks God's word to the Israelite priests after their return from exile. He criticizes them for the injustice and unfairness of their decisions concerning others. In the Second Reading from his "1st Letter to the Thessalonians", St. Paul tells the Christians at Thessalonica that it was in an attitude of humble service, that he and his companions taught the Gospel to them, just like a mother caring for her children. He also thanks God that they recognized in his preaching not a human message, but the word of God Himself. The Gospel Reading from St. Matthew is an even clearer indictment of the Pharisees, popularly regarded as models of religious holiness. Jesus criticizes them for their lack of personal coherence, preaching to others what they themselves would not do. He also condemns their vanity, searching for public praise and honour instead of offering genuine worship due only to God. Jesus then reminds the crowd that it is the Father in Heaven who is to receive all honour. The mark of the genuine Christian is humble and sincere service. It is easy to read today's Gospel and start pointing fingers at others but it is important that we see how it applies in my own life. The Gospel is always addressed to ME. And today I need to hear what it is saying to me now. Of course, I can point a criticizing finger at all the officials I know, political, religious or otherwise, but am I so different? How often do I stand on ceremony? How touchy am I about how people treat me, especially if I have some title or responsibility, even if just that of a parent or schoolteacher? Respect cannot be demanded but only earned. Although Jesus' criticisms are directed explicitly against the popular Pharisees as religious teachers and apparent models of holiness, it is clear from the text that Jesus wants to teach everyone authentic religious devotion. Today, we all are called for integrity and honesty, where there is no pulling of rank, no demand for respect or privilege or a hearing, no double standards but a deep sense of equality and mutual respect, a desire to serve, to share what we have and are for the benefit of all.

Every Christian therefore, despite the temptations to Pharisee-ism in all of us, is to seek to render selfless service rather than to obtain titles, recognition or power. Our Christian love demands of us to manifest God's love in our life. This sounds simple but, in practice, it is something we seldom seem to do. Let us remember Jesus saying: "The greatest among you must be your servant". The best soil for the growth of Christian virtue is humble service and detachment - detachment from not only things, but from praise and prestige. In the humble Christ - poor, shunned and oppressed - is where the growth of virtue always finds a home. 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 9th November.

Children in non-Catholic Schools requiring preparation for the Sacraments and **non-Catholic children in Catholic Schools** wishing to become Catholics. Next session, Saturday 25th November, after 9:30 Mass in St. Augustine's Presbytery. For more information please contact Gabrielle Halliday on 07764 245344.

Preparation for the Sacrament of Baptism will take place at St. Augustine's on January 10th & 24th at 19:00. Parents and Godparents are invited. Please inform a member of clergy after Mass on Sunday if you wish to attend.

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! Collecting money now for 2018 – only £12 for 12 months – see Albert Griffin.

St Filumena - Tote winners for October: 1st prize - Sarah Woods, 2nd prize Larah Newton, 3rd prize - G. Kieher-Knapper. Congratulations!

PRAYERS FOR HOLY SOULS - November is the month in which we are particularly asked to pray for the dead. You are invited to write down the names of any deceased whom you would like to be prayed for, and place them in the purple box provided. During the month, those named will be especially remembered in prayers during daily Masses.

St Augustine's Pre-Christmas Cracker Evening, 8th December 19:00. This year, there will be a 'new look' to St. Augustine's fund-raising effort. We are very grateful to Ashley, who has volunteered to bring members of his choir to provide a medley of Seasonal music – with some opportunities for all to join in a Christmas 'sing-a-long' – in a cosy atmosphere of lighting by lanterns with festive food and mulled wine. There will be games of chance and a stocking filler mini-Christmas Market. Tickets available now £5 – proceeds towards the new heating fund. Lots of jobs for all before and on the day. For anyone who would like to be involved, please let Ann H know how you can help. There is a box in the porch for Donations of Prizes.

Fr Hudson's has 2 job vacancies in Stoke on Trent. Please see notice board for more information.

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, Pat Joan Brindley and Pat Shufflebotham.

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

Parish Offertory for last weekend:

<u>Meir:</u>	£305.10 of which £102.50 was gift aided
<u>Caverswall:</u>	£370.92 of which £241.50 was gift aided
<u>Cresswell:</u>	£129.47 of which £ 96.00 was gift aided

MANY THANKS FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

please gift aid, if possible

This weekend there is a Second Collection for the Johnson Association

NOVEMBER – MONTH OF PRAYER FOR HOLY SOULS

As the weather grows colder and the leaves fall, and Christmas approaches, it is natural that our thoughts turn to those whom we have loved who are no longer with us.



How appropriate, then, that the Catholic Church offers us November, which begins with All Saints Day and All Souls Day, as the Month of the Holy Souls in Purgatory - those who have died in grace, yet who failed in this life to make satisfaction for all of their sins.

In recent years, perhaps no Catholic doctrine has been more misunderstood by Catholics themselves than the doctrine of Purgatory. Consequently, we tend to downplay it, even seem a little embarrassed by it, and it is the Holy Souls who suffer because of our discomfort with the doctrine.

Purgatory is not, as many people think, one last trial; all of those who make it to Purgatory will one day be in Heaven. Purgatory is where those who have died in grace, but who have not fully atoned for the *temporal punishments* resulting from their sins, go to finish their atonement before entering Heaven. A soul in Purgatory may suffer, but he has the assurance that he will ultimately enter Heaven when his punishment is complete. Catholics believe Purgatory is an expression of God's love, His desire to cleanse our souls of all that might keep us from experiencing the fullness of joy in Heaven.

As Christians, we don't travel through this world alone. Our salvation is wrapped up with the salvation of others, and charity requires us to come to their aid. The same is true of the Holy Souls. In their time in Purgatory, they can pray for us, and we should pray for the faithful departed that they may be freed from the punishment for their sins and enter into Heaven.

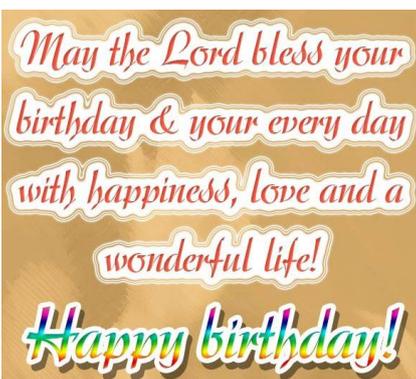
We should pray for the dead throughout the year, especially on the anniversary of their death, but in this Month of the Holy Souls, we should devote some time every day to prayer for the dead. We should start with those closest to us - our mother and father, for instance - but we should also offer prayers for all the souls, and especially for those most forsaken.

We believe that those Holy Souls for whom we pray will continue to pray for us after they have been released from Purgatory. If we live Christian lives, we too will likely find ourselves in Purgatory someday, and our acts of charity toward the Holy Souls there now will ensure that they remember us before the throne of God when we are most in need of prayers. It's a comforting thought, and one that should encourage us, especially in this month of November, to offer our prayers for the Holy Souls.

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BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS IN NOVEMBER:

Harriet Perry, Teresa Walley,



Holy Mass for the birthday intentions of those listed above will be offered at St. Augustine's Church on Sunday, 26th November 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 !**

MASS TIMES AND INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK

	St. Augustine's MEIR	St. Filumena's CAVERSWALL	St. Mary's CRESSWELL
4th November Saturday			18:00 (<i>Sunday Vigil</i>) – Deceased Members of the Halliday Family
5th November SUNDAY 31 st SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME - Year A	11:00 – Private Intention [KS]	9:00 – People of Parish	
6th November Monday <i>Feria</i>	9:30 – Josephine Delicata RIP	9:15 –	
7th November Tuesday <i>Feria</i>	9:30 – Annie O'Neil RIP <i>Followed by Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Succour</i>		
8th November Wednesday <i>Feria</i>	9:30 – Eric Long's Intentions	9:15 –	
9th November Thursday <i>Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica</i>	9:30 – Aubrey Chetwyn RIP		
10th November Friday <i>Memorial of St Leo the Great, Pope, Doctor of the Church</i>	9:30 – Sybel Ottewell RIP 18:00 – Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament & Benediction 19:00 – Margaret James Int		
11th November Saturday <i>Memorial of St Martin of Tours, Bishop</i>	9:30 –		18:00 (<i>Sunday Vigil</i>) – Deceased Members of Shaw Family
12th November SUNDAY 32 nd Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year A	11:00 – Barbara Allsopp & her Parents RIP	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</i> before Mass 8:15 – 8:45	<i>Saturday</i> before Mass 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)