



NEWSLETTER ❖ 7TH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY

Dear friends

This week has proved both more and less eventful than hoped for the Rectory household. More: Beth woke us early on Thursday morning feeling very unwell with a temperature and sore throat, necessitating a visit that afternoon to Kirkcaldy for a COVID test. Although the medics who saw her thought it was tonsillitis - and she has recovered well thus far - we are currently all ordered to stay at home in isolation at least until the test result is known, possibly rather longer. I am grateful to members of the Standing Committee who have liaised to cover as many issues as possible since Thursday, and especially to Fr Giles for picking up more services than expected on this, the 7th Sunday after Trinity. In between periods of rest on the beautiful island of Islay, it is both fortuitous and kind that Giles has been able to offer to cover any Masses that I cannot between now and Friday, before he and Kate return west. Less: Having begun to visit those unable to get to church for so long, it is most frustrating to have had to 'phone around postponing friend's first Communion in months. I am looking forward to resuming visits as soon as it is deemed safe to do so, knowing how much it means to those patiently waiting.

Meanwhile, restoration work on the church this week has been concentrated at the west end, on the flat lead roof over the chapel and south aisle. Back in 2015, this was a concern to Vestry since a persistent leak indicated the need for some serious attention. This fault led us to have the whole building surveyed, which in turn found many other problems, which has led eventually to the general restoration project now well underway. Speaking at that early stage with conservators from Fife Council, I was struck by their description of it as a 'beautiful roof' when it appeared merely a problem requiring an expensive solution. However, in watching the highly specialist lead-workers about their craft over the last few days, it is hard not to appreciate the transformation of huge rolls of shiny new lead, wooden battens, and a great deal of heating and skilled shaping of the softened metal, into what is clearly going to be a beautifully crafted roof. I now appreciate this structure much more, surveying it daily while brushing my teeth. It reminds me that 'the church is people, not buildings' is neither a sufficient nor a wise statement.

Fr Alasdair

THE WEEK AHEAD

The Rector is away on Tuesday this week: Morning and Evening Prayer will be placed on the website by kind members of the congregation; The Revd Anne Haselhurst will celebrate the Tuesday Mass at church at 6.30 pm.

To alleviate pressure caused by social distancing in the church building, an additional Mass is being celebrated on Sundays at 7 pm until further notice.

SERVICES THIS WEEK

		TRINITY 7
Sunday	8 am Mass 10 am Sung Mass 6 pm Evening Prayer 7 pm Mass	
Monday	8 am Morning Prayer* 6 pm Evening Prayer followed by Mass	
Tuesday	6 pm Evening Prayer followed by Mass	
Wednesday	as Monday but with Compline at 9 pm	Sts Martha & Mary
Thursday	as Monday	St Silas
Friday	as Monday	St Ignatius Loyola
Saturday	11 am Morning Prayer* followed by Mass* 6 pm Evening Prayer	

** These services are likely only to take place in public if the Rector is free from isolation.*

Another Zoom meeting (bring your own coffee or tea) is scheduled for **1000 on Wednesday**.
To Join Zoom Meeting at 1000 on Wednesday:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82546386442?pwd=Nklvc005SGINVIldDSIJTZEFHalkUT09>

Meeting ID: 825 4638 6442

Password: 4mkGii

A reminder that although the content is under review, wherever possible, audio recordings of all services are still being shared on the church website here:

<https://www.allsaints-standrews.org.uk/category/virtualseervices/>

Thank you to Peter, Becky, and Jim for reading and leading intercessions today, to Fr Giles for celebrating rather more than originally agreed, and to Andrew and Sarah for musical input at the Sung Mass.

SERVICES BY TELEPHONE

The Scottish Episcopal Church has organised coverage of some services by telephone for those who wish to use it but do not have internet access. The following guidance has been issued by the General Synod Office.

How to join the service over the telephone:

In order to hear our broadcast service by telephone there are a couple of things you need to do.

1. Call the free phone line before 11am. The line will be active from 10.45am before the Sunday service and 6.15pm before the Thursday service. In case of any difficulties, we encourage you to phone in as early as possible, although not before 10.45am on a Sunday or 6.15pm on a Thursday.
2. Once you have called the number you will be prompted to enter a "meeting ID". The number appears at the end of this email, and please note that there are two different 'meeting ID' numbers listed, one for Sunday service and one for Thursday service. Type the relevant number on your telephone keypad, then press the # (hash) key.
3. You will then be prompted to enter a participant ID. Simply ignore this request, and once again press the # key.
4. You should then hear music, and a sporadic countdown until the start of the service.
5. The service will run according to the 1982 liturgy. While you are listening you will be joining hundreds of others in worship at exactly the same time. Those who have been participating on the internet have been praying along at home, some even joining in to sing. Although the service is recorded, everyone watching or listening is worshipping at the same time. When participating in the worship, your voice will not be heard by the other participants in the meeting, this is to ensure that all callers can hear the service clearly.

If you have any problems accessing the service, please feel free to contact the General Synod Office and ask for Aidan Strange - the Digital Communications Co-ordinator - to call you back on a number you provide. He will aim to be in touch before the next service to help you resolve any problems with the telephone service.

The details are as follows:

The phone number is 0800 260 5801

Sunday Worship

Meeting ID: 817 1523 4515

Service Begins at 11am

Phone line open at 10.45am

Service lasts around 30-40 minutes

Thursday Worship

Meeting ID: 894 7162 6403

Service Begins at 6.30pm

Phone line open at 6.15am

Service lasts around 20-30 minutes

SERMON FOR TRINITY 7

One of the greatest engineering feats of all time, the Millau Viaduct soars up to 336 metres above the Tarn Gorge in southern France, a symbol of superb cooperation between a French engineer (Michel Virlogeux) and a British architect (Norman Foster). Some years ago, a couple in the town of Millau beneath it were trying to unblock a drain when they found a hoard of gold coins. Hidden hundreds of years before and worth about £90k, under French law the treasure belonged to the couple since it was found on their own land.

We can see the same custom in one of the parables this morning since the treasure is shrewdly re-hidden until the field is owned. Then as now, those ploughing fields occasionally find long forgotten valuables under the ground; it's satisfying to ponder the reversal implied in the story of a hired labourer earning his subsistence wage, striking gold. There's a note of moral uncertainty in that only he knew the true value of the field when he purchased it but, as with the parable of the Unjust Steward, the point of the parable is vivid, not puritanical.

Following on from the wheat and the tares, the parables tumble out in today's Gospel: mustard seed, yeast, treasure, pearl, and net. The mustard seed puzzled me as a child. How, I wondered, could a bird make a nest in that modest plant? The answer is that the Lord has a different plant in mind: Mediterranean mustard is black mustard, not yellow, and is a member of the Brassica family. Cultivated for thousands of years, it grows much bigger and bushier, up to nine feet tall, maturing rapidly from its tiny, 1 mm seed. Pliny the Elder while praising the healthy properties of the plant's leaves, oil and spice, notes that

when it has once been sown it is scarcely possible to get the place free of it, as the seed when it falls germinates at once.

His nephew, Pliny the Younger would write of Christians in similarly critical terms in around 112 AD, having executed a fair few for what he called their *depraved superstition*, their belief in the risen Lord.

A similar point seems to be made by the yeast that leavens *three measures* - about 39 pounds - of flour, but we are not helped by our translation. Leaven and yeast are not the same thing; leaven was part of the old batch of dough kept back and carefully fermented over several days. It was a process not without risk since, if tainted, it would spread poison to the new dough. For this reason, leaven was for the biblical peoples a symbol of the infectious power of evil.

Now this is a striking choice of images for the kingdom of heaven; dare I say, a bit like comparing it with a virus. In contrast with the mustard seed, the Lord is here suggesting that the work of God is not only like something contemptibly small, but also like something plainly contemptible. Remembering the tax-collectors and sinners, it would seem that the kingdom of heaven is not about *subversion* or *perversion* - as the Lord's enemies claimed - but about *inversion*. Like the mustard, what grows from the seeds of the kingdom is only good and, like the leaven, the Lord's saving works have their own power to transform into something new whatever they touch, while maintaining continuity with the past. And that huge quantity of flour perhaps suggests that a banquet is what he has in mind.

Like the hidden treasure, the pearl illustrates a similar need to abandon everything if the kingdom is to be gained, but the detail of the respective finders is contrasting. The merchant

does not just happen upon the pearl of great price because, we are told, he is looking for fine pearls as though skilled in the search. When he finds it, the merchant knows that it is worth more than all his possessions suggesting, again, that the kingdom calls for a unique decisiveness and discernment. Far from suggesting that gaining the kingdom is an easy matter, these two parables suggest that everything is demanded, although what was formerly held in esteem pales into insignificance beside what is received.

The tables are turned for the last of the parables, that of the dragnet. Instead of a tale illustrating the kingdom's surpassing value, vitality or transforming power, this brief story reminds the hearer that judgment is present in the kingdom, with the just and the wicked separated by the angels: like fishermen sorting edible from inedible fish. It's a frightening picture, echoing the message of the parables of the wheat and the tares and the fig tree that won't fruit. In each of these pictures we are warned of the ultimate consequence for those who take up resources and mix themselves in with the crops, the orchard, the shoal, but do not ever truly cooperate with God's creative purpose.

It's just as well for us, who have received the tradition they have handed down, that the disciples understood our Lord's teachings at this point; but note how he describes their role. He tells them - and us - that we are to be like scribes, those who know how to faithfully pass on the traditions of faith, as was the case for Jewish scribes but there's a difference.

Jewish scribes were bound by strict rules so that the thought of introducing new material into something they were writing would have horrified them. Remarkably, St Matthew here gives us a unique passage with Jesus suggesting that the Christian scribe does exactly this, blending the new with the old: not the old with the new, but the new with the old, as though in Jesus' revelation of the kingdom the old covenant finds its true meaning and worth.

Applying this complex Gospel to our own lives unavoidably sets us reflecting, with the treasure and the pearl, on how well we discern the value of our faith in the Lord and our commitment to him. The vital matter would seem to be that the kingdom of heaven is something close to our hearts - very close - and demands that we use all the gifts we've been given in a positive way for the good of those among whom we live, with an infectious - even subversive - generosity and grace, guided always by our faith and mindful of our own frailty.

Perhaps the pearl of great price illustrates in a special way the manner in which this witness takes place. For inside the soft body of the shellfish, the pearl is formed around a tiny piece of grit that has accidentally been drawn into the shell. Gradually, concentric layers of smooth material build the pearl up with an iridescent beauty that, very rarely, might be perfectly spherical and of great value.

What an image that is for the kingdom of heaven! For the beautiful pearl is the way that the oyster copes with pain deep inside, transforming pain into freedom and a matchless beauty, not completely unlike the beauty of Christ's self-giving, completing, fulfilling the hopes of God's people, and bridging earth to heaven through his divine love.

The Rector

GIVING TO ALL SAINTS'

A reminder for any who would like to support All Saints' financially our bank details are:

Bank: Royal Bank of Scotland
Branch: 113 – 115 South Street, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9QB
Sort Code: 83-26-28
Account name: All Saints Episcopal Church – St Andrews
Account number: 00104363

Treasurer's contact details: Mr Ian Palfrey, 8a Howard Place, St Andrews, Fife, KY16 9HL
01334 472358 treasurer@allsaints-standrews.org.uk

MALAWIAN RICE

A renewed supply of Malawian rice is available from Lil at the Rectory, should you wish to purchase some. With thanks to Margaret Duffy who first made us aware of this source of excellent, ethically-sourced food.

INTERCESSIONS

In particular need

Debbie & Priscilla White, Eleanor Ross, David McLean, Anne Zweers, *Priest*, Amy Cox, Robyn Seenan, Anne Clayton, Ian Sadler, Andrew Mate, Graham Kennedy, Robin White, Berenice Smith, Andrew Macgregor

Continuing need

Lenora Mahoney, Effie Keracher, Jonah & Chris Andrews, Gareth, Jenni & Rosalie Saunders, Judy, Ashley & Kathleen Cummins, Charles & Thomas Ware, Ann Noltie, Lawrence Reynolds, Sally-Marie Gardner, Edie, Alice Bullough, Joan Day, Janet Reid, Catherine Rowe, Bill Hyland, Samantha, Steve Scott, Angela Allaway, Lori-Mark Quate, Elizabeth Talbot, Juliet Davey, Lucy White

Residential care

Catriona, Fiona Ingham, John Shillaker, *Priest*, Marie-Louise Moffett, *Priest*, Charlie Mather

Recently departed

Anthony Meredith, *religious*, Les Davies, Ian Ross, Bill Scott, *Priest*, Frances Humphries

Year's mind

27/7 Ethel Greig, 1933
28 Ishbel Macintyre, 2006
29 David Bogler Deas, 1992
31 Angus Campbell Hewitt, 2002, George Douglas, 2003
1/8 Luciana (Lucy) Stewart, 2010

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