

THE YEAR OF SAINT MARK
EATING WITH THE BRIDEGROOM

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT – YEAR B

CHANGING OUR HEARTS AND BELIEVING THE GOOD NEWS

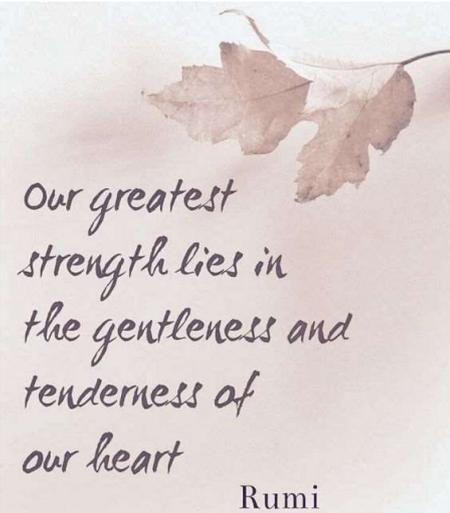
SUNDAY 21 FEBRUARY 2021



If you had been able to go to mass on Ash Wednesday, you would have received the traditional sign that Lent or Springtime has begun. The minister would have anointed your forehead with ashes and with words of invitation, "Change your heart, and believe the Good News!" It would be a mistake, of course, to think that this activity is confined to the six weeks of Lent! Changing hearts and believing in Jesus takes, at least, a lifetime.

Notice what unfolds as Jesus enters the waters of the river Jordan. He sinks. Then, He emerges in an act of human reaching and ascending openness. As He does so, he finds the heavens torn open, not for a second or two, but permanently. This opening allows the Spirit of Love to reach for Him. It does not land on him like a bird, it falls into Him. And then, from the inside, the Spirit drives Him into the wilderness. For Jesus, the moment of Baptism becomes the foundation for a struggle. The certainty of being loved unfolds into the desire to be faithful. This wilderness will be a place of testing and of conflict.

But not with God. It is Satan who holds sway here. Notice how quickly he makes his move on Jesus. He is associated with the 'wild beasts' - symbols of the violence Jesus will face if He is faithful to His mission. The Gospel of Mark isn't just 'Good News', it is good news in a bad world. Satan isn't a character in a novel and shouldn't be imagined this way. Rather, he is the inner, invisible energy of people, groups and nations who inflict suffering on others. This adversary of God manifests itself through individuals, groups and nations by turning them into wild beasts who devour God's good creation. At this moment, the Adversary is working through the wild beast Herod who has arrested John. But Jesus is not intimidated by this. In fact, he moves into the heart of Herod's territory. Jesus not only preaches the Kingdom of God, He is the Kingdom of God! His Baptism structures his identity in the world. He is sustained by divine love. His life in time is permeated by eternity. Now this must happen to others. Jesus' mission is to offer those He calls, the same gifts that are in Himself. This is why He tells them that the 'Kingdom of God is very near to you'.



Disciples must turn away from lives that alienate others and cause them suffering and turn toward lives that embrace the new humanity. Creation is being restored and they have a part to play in this work but the Adversary is strong and has many disciples of his own. This is why we speak of our struggle to be faithful. It does not come easily.

If we were to ask why it is difficult to change our hearts and believe the Good News, we might consider that it is because we also believe other things which don't sit well with the radical teaching of Jesus. We might prize wealth, beauty or power. We might have decided that no one can be trusted and increase our defence spending. We might believe in revenge or in our right to have power over others. This is why it is important to have a searing honesty with ourselves. Our behaviour will always reveal the beliefs we live by and this can be uncomfortable self-knowledge!

And finally, there is the thorny issue of time and death. If we allow Jesus to teach us how to value ourselves in a way that neither time nor death can destroy we will notice that our identity isn't defined by what we have or don't have. It will be found in the celebration of our true identity as daughters and sons of the Most High. If we keep faith with this, our faith in Jesus will gradually change to faith with Jesus. What we treasure and where our hearts live, will become united. The Good News will take us there and we will find that our choices, decisions and behaviour will flow from this treasure in our hearts. This is the adventure of discipleship. It is the lifelong journey of coming to know the infinite love which has chosen to live in the heart of our being. Wow!



ENCYCLICAL LETTER
FRATELLI TUTTI
OF THE HOLY FATHER
FRANCIS
ON FRATERNITY AND SOCIAL FRIENDSHIP

THE CONTEXT

57. This parable has to do with an age-old problem. Shortly after its account of the creation of the world and of man, the Bible takes up the issue of human relationships. Cain kills his brother Abel and then hears God ask: “Where is your brother Abel?” (Gen 4:9). His answer is one that we ourselves all too often give: “Am I my brother’s keeper?” (ibid.). By the very question he asks, God leaves no room for an appeal to determinism or fatalism as a justification for our own indifference. Instead, he encourages us to create a different culture, in which we resolve our conflicts and care for one another.

58. The Book of Job sees our origin in the one Creator as the basis of certain common rights: “Did not he who made me in the womb also make him? And did not the same one fashion us in the womb?” (Job 31:15). Many centuries later, Saint Irenaeus would use the image of a melody to make the same point: “One who seeks the truth should not concentrate on the differences between one note and another, thinking as if each was created separately and apart from the others; instead, he should realize that one and the same person composed the entire melody”.^[54]

59. In earlier Jewish traditions, the imperative to love and care for others appears to have been limited to relationships between members of the same nation. The ancient commandment to “love your neighbour as yourself” (Lev 19:18) was usually understood as referring to one’s fellow citizens, yet the boundaries gradually expanded, especially in the Judaism that developed outside of the land of Israel. We encounter the command not to do to others what you would not want them to do to you (cf. Tob 4:15). In the first century before Christ, Rabbi Hillel stated: “This is the entire Torah. Everything else is commentary”.^[55] The desire to imitate God’s own way of acting gradually replaced the tendency to think only of those nearest us: “The compassion of man is for his neighbour, but the compassion of the Lord is for all living beings” (Sir 18:13).

60. In the New Testament, Hillel’s precept was expressed in positive terms: “In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets” (Mt 7:12). This command is universal in scope, embracing everyone on the basis of our shared humanity, since the heavenly Father “makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good” (Mt 5:45). Hence the summons to “be merciful, just as your Father is merciful” (Lk 6:36).

61. In the oldest texts of the Bible, we find a reason why our hearts should expand to embrace the foreigner. It derives from the enduring memory of the Jewish people that they themselves had once lived as foreigners in Egypt:

“You shall not wrong or oppress a stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Ex 22:21).

“You shall not oppress a stranger; you know the heart of a stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Ex 23:9).

“When a stranger resides with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. The stranger who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the stranger as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt” (Lev 19:33-34).

“When you gather the grapes of your vineyard, do not glean what is left; it shall be for the sojourner, the orphan, and the widow. Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt” (Deut 24:21-22).

The call to fraternal love echoes throughout the New Testament:

“For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself’” (Gal 5:14).

“Whoever loves a brother or sister lives in the light, and in such a person there is no cause for stumbling. But whoever hates another believer is in the darkness” (1 Jn 2:10-11).

“We know that we have passed from death to life because we love one another. Whoever does not love abides in death” (1 Jn 3:14).

“Those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen” (1 Jn 4:20).

^[54] SAINT IRENAEUS OF LYONS, *Adversus Haereses*, II, 25, 2: PG 7/1, 798ff.

^[55] Talmud Bavli (Babylonian Talmud), Shabbat, 31a.



PLEASE PRAY FOR THE REPOSE OF THE SOULS OF:

ROBERT GEORGE SPRINGALL, RIP who died on Saturday 30 January 2021
Robert's funeral will be on **Tuesday 23 February 2021** at 1.30pm at Easthampstead Park Crematorium.

CATHERINE GRATTAN, RIP who died on Tuesday 9 February 2021
Catherine's Requiem Mass will be on **Tuesday 2 March 2021** at 11.30am, 1.30pm at Easthampstead Park Cemetery.

PATRICK ANTHONY BYRNE, RIP who died on Monday 15 February 2021.
Patrick's Requiem Mass will be on **Friday 26 March 2021** at 10.00am, 12.00noon at Easthampstead Park Crematorium.

MARY BRENNAN, RIP who died on Wednesday 17 February 2021. Mary's funeral arrangements to be advised.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.

WE ARE NOW OFFICIALLY LIVE!

All Masses and Exposition, weekday and weekend, are now streamed live; please see page 4 of the newsletter for Mass times.

MASS TIME CHANGE – FRIDAY MORNING MASS WILL NOW BE AT 9.00am EVERY WEEK.

To Watch Live, head over to our website: www.bracknellcatholicchurch.org/watch-live



JOIN US to reflect upon and discuss the Sunday readings in our online **FAITH FORMATION GROUP** weekly on **Thursday evenings 7:30pm-9pm**. We aim to develop a better understand of how scripture calls us to a continuing and deepening of our faith, including what it means to be Catholic in our world in these times. Please email Mary at bracknellpa@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk who will send you the Zoom link.

POPE FRANCIS' ENCYCLICAL LETTER – 'FRATELLI TUTTI' - Pope Francis' third encyclical inspired by the life and example of St. Francis of Assisi, completed during the pandemic, speaks to the possibility that, through it, we may rediscover a sense of common humanity, we are serialising the whole letter. This week: **'THE CONTEXT'**. We hope you enjoy and are inspired by his teaching.



CAFOD LENT APPEAL: The situation for the poorer communities in the world is unusually tricky at the moment. After the **CAFOD** coronavirus and Walk for Water appeals (thanks for the donations) it's time for the "proper" Lent Appeal. We are familiar now with Abdella and his daily walk for water during which he walks for 10 hours per day every day. There are no weekends off.

On the Parish website, scroll down and click on the "ordinary" CAFOD link. (Not the Walk for Water one). Click on the blue "Donate to the Lent Appeal" button and there's a two minute video showing the dry, dusty and rough countryside that he must walk through to collect water. It's not a level tarmac road. It also shows an example of another community not far from Abdella's where **CAFOD** has been able to help a community with a similar problem. So donate please if you can. If the internet is not for you then we would welcome a donation in an envelope marked "**CAFOD Lent Appeal**", posted through the Presbytery door. Thank you very much for your continuing support.

PASTORAL CARE - Are you lonely? Are you shielding? Are you ill and in need of prayer and/or support? Perhaps you haven't had contact with the Catholic Church for a while. Whatever the reason, please get in touch for a chat by emailing pastoralcare@bracknellcatholicchurch.org or by calling **07394 440 938** (Pastoral Care team mobile)

"Let us care for one another and let us be loving custodians of creation." Pope Francis



SOCIETY OF ST VINCENT de PAUL - Do you need help, particularly, as a result of the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The local Society of St Vincent de Paul (SVP) may be able to provide some assistance, as we have access to limited additional hardship funds from a variety of sources, including the generosity of local parishioners. Please contact **IN CONFIDENCE** the local SVP on 07731 862 349

WE PRAY FOR THOSE IN OUR PARISH COMMUNITY WHO ARE SICK, HOUSEBOUND OR IN HOSPITAL AND FOR THOSE WHO CARE FOR THEM

Brenda Theobald, Olga Maguire, Ena Stanton, Inge Walker, Eddie Moore, Peggy Pendergast, Ann Newton, Joyce Newland, Bridie Maughan, Josephine Timms, Anne Hardy, Patricia Holmwood, Evie & Ruby Shallom, Blanche Shap, Mike Garnham, Ethna Sweeney, Mary King, Mary Phelan, Tony Andrews, Derek Alexander, Margaret Clark, Shaun Howard, Sally Torode, Dorcas Innes-Grant, Veronika Jastrzebski, Jerry Tobin, Rico Morales, Reynalita Leysan, Donal Hanley, Jim McEvoy, Mary Murray, Thelma Briggs, Margaret Pearce, Audrey Lam, Pam Savage, Marie Swash, Terri Landmann, Jennie Tucker, Vilma Taborda, Zac Hoy, Terry Brennan, Brenda Lynch, Amanda Killestein, Doreen Pryor, Sharon Bryan, Chantal Addley, Chris Way, Terry and Peggy McCullough.

To add a name to this list with consent, or if you want a name removed, please contact the Parish Office.

PARISH OF ST JOSEPH and ST MARGARET CLITHEROW, BRACKNELL

A Prayer for Lenten Grace

Loving God,
During the sacred season of Lent, bring me closer to you.
Prepare a place in my home and heart for silence and solitude, so that I may re-discover the grace of a prayer-full life.
Enlarge my heart so that I give to those in need and, in so doing, re-discover the grace of gratitude and generosity.
Help me to fast from those things that threaten the well-being of body and soul, remind me of the grace and simplicity.
May this season be grace-filled time to rekindle my love for and faith in you.
Amen.



FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT – YEAR B

Sunday	21 st	10.30am	NON-ATTENDANCE MASS	<i>Ellen Whiteside, RIP</i>
Monday	22 nd		NO MASS	
Tuesday	23 rd	10.00am	Non-Attendance Mass	<i>Robert George Springall, RIP</i>
Wednesday	24 th	10.00am	Non-Attendance Mass	<i>Maria Ramos, RIP</i>
Thursday	25 th	10.00am	Non-attendance Mass	<i>Iain Campbell, RIP</i>
Friday	26 th	9.00am	Non-Attendance Mass	<i>Especiosa & Pedro Fernandes</i>
Saturday	27 th	10.00am	Non-attendance Mass	<i>Edward Sheppard, RIP (Foundation)</i>

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT – YEAR B

Sunday	28 th	10.30am	NON-ATTENDANCE MASS	<i>Parish Intentions</i>
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**THE ALARMING RISE OF INFECTIONS AND TRANSMISSIONS OF THE DEADLY COVID-19 VIRUS HAS LED US TO TAKE THE MOST CAREFUL AND CONSIDERED DECISION TO CLOSE THE CHURCH UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE TO PRESERVE THE LIFE AND HEALTH OF ALL OUR PARISHIONERS, VISITORS AND PROTECT THE NHS.**

**ALL MASSES ARE LIVE-STREAMED EVERY DAY EXCEPT MONDAY, DETAILS TO "WATCH LIVE" ARE ON PAGE TWO OF THE NEWSLETTER**

**STAY HOME = SAVE LIVES = PROTECT THE NHS**

**Parish Office:** 39 Braccan Walk, Bracknell, Berkshire, RG12 1HA

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**Pastoral Care:** 07394 440938 **Email:** [pastoralcare@bracknellcatholicchurch.org](mailto:pastoralcare@bracknellcatholicchurch.org)

**Website:** [www.bracknellcatholicchurch.org](http://www.bracknellcatholicchurch.org)

**Follow us on Facebook**

**DONATIONS TO PARISH FUNDS, PLEASE CHOOSE FROM THE FOLLOWING:**

**ONLINE 'GIVE AS YOU LIVE' BUTTON; DIRECT DEBIT, STANDING ORDER AND GIFT AID FORMS ARE ALL ON THE PARISH WEBSITE (drop down "Planned Giving")**

**BANK DETAILS: Account Name:** PRCDTR Bracknell St Joseph

**Sort Code:** 30-93-04; **Account Number:** 00875520; **Bank:** Lloyds Bank Plc, Palmerstone Road, Southsea

**PLEASE MAKE CHEQUES PAYABLE TO (FULL NAME):** PRCDTR BRACKNELL ST JOSEPH

**Parish Priest:** Fr. Daniel McAvoy **Deacon:** Rev. Aidan Lynch

**Parish Secretary:** Elizabeth Fisher **Pastoral Assistant:** Mary McNab

**Safeguarding Representatives:** Sarah Birch, Marion McGuire, Paula Read

**Safeguarding phone and email:** 07712 048695 [safeguarding@bracknellcatholicchurch.org](mailto:safeguarding@bracknellcatholicchurch.org)