

FIRST READING

Isaiah 55:10-11

Thus says the Lord: " As the rain and the snow come down from the heavens and do not return without watering the earth, making it yield and giving growth to provide seed for the sower and bread for the eating, so the word that goes from my mouth does not return to me empty without carrying out my will and succeeding in what it was sent to do.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Psalm 64

Some seed fell into rich soil, and produced its crop.

SECOND READING

Romans 8:18-23

I think that what we suffer in this life can never be compared to the glory, as yet unrevealed, which is waiting for us. The whole creation is eagerly waiting for God to reveal his sons. It was not for any fault on the part of creation that it was made unable to attain its purpose, it was made so by God; but creation still retains the hope of being freed, like us from its slavery to decadence, to enjoy the same freedom and glory as the children of God. From the beginning till now the entire creation we know, has been groaning in one great act of giving birth; and not only creation but all of us who possess the first-fruits of the Spirit, we too groan inwardly as we wait for our bodies to be set free.

Alleluia, alleluia! Speak, Lord, your servant is listening; you have the message of eternal life. Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Matthew 13:1-23

Jesus left the house and sat by the lakeside, but such crowds gathered round him that he got into a boat and sat there. The people all stood on the beach, and he told them many things in parables. He said, "Imagine a sower going out to sow, some seeds fell on the edge of the path, and the birds came and ate them up. Others fell on patches of rock where they found little soil and sprang up straight away, because there was no depth of earth; but as soon as the sun came up they were scorched and, not having any roots, they withered away. Others fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. Others fell on rich soil and produced their crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. Listen, anyone who has ears!

Then the disciples went up to him and asked, "Why do you talk to them in parables?" "Because," he replied, "the mysteries of the kingdom of revealed to you, but they are not revealed to them. For anyone who has will be given more, and he will have more than enough; but from anyone who has not, even what he has will be taken away.

The reason I talk to them in parables is that they look without seeing and listen without hearing or understanding. So in their case, the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled: You will listen and listen again, but not understand, see and see again, but not perceive. For the heart of this nation has grown coarse, their ears are dull of hearing, and they have shut their eyes, for fear they should see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their heart and be converted and be healed by me.

But happy are your eyes because they see, your ears because they hear! I tell you solemnly, many prophets and holy men longed to see what you see, and never saw it; to hear what you hear and never heard it. You, therefore, are to hear the parable of the sower. When anyone hears the word of the kingdom without understanding, the evil one comes and carries off what was sown in his heart: this is the man who received the seed on the edge of the path.

The one who received it on patches of rock is the man who hears the word and welcomes it at once with joy. But he has no root in him, he does not last; let some trial come or some persecution on account of the word, and he falls away at once. The one who received the seed in thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this world the lure of riches choke the word and so he received the seed in rich soil is the man who hears the word and the one who yields a harvest and produces now a hundredfold, now thirty."

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Good soil

The parable of the sower and the seed is very familiar to us as are the various interpretations of the nature of the soil which symbolise the state of our heart. We have rightly been encouraged to lead lives which have all the ingredients of lives rooted in good 'soil': lives of love, of prayer, of forgiveness, of gentleness, of compassionate action.... These are the fruits of growth from good soil. But what is good soil? In farming terms good soil is soil that has been ploughed, has been turned over and over, and has been fertilised. In other words it has had lots of manure dug into it. It stinks, it is messy but it is rich for planting. It is where growth takes place. The seed has to be transformed from one form into another. This is done in the dark womb of the soil. It is in darkness and in solitude that transformation takes place. Death, darkness and solitude are used as vehicles of transformation. Out of death comes life. Out of darkness comes life. Pain, darkness and discomfort are the vehicles or portals that are used to transform us.

Our culture today despises pain and difficulty, it does everything it can to avoid it. "We give answers too quickly, take away pain too easily and too quickly stimulate. We build false structures on top of the soil. The soil is piled high with things that will hopefully anaesthetise the pain. These are the weeds and the thorns and the hard ground. The seed cannot even reach the soil. In terms of soul work, we dare not get rid of the pain before we have learned what it has to teach us. Darkness and brokenness are where we learn lessons of humility, trust, gratefulness, resilience and reliance. Yet this sacred space is the very space we avoid...we avoid God, who works in the darkness – where we are not in control! Maybe that is the secret: relinquishing control?" (R.Rohr)

If you feel that circumstances have ploughed through your life; if you feel that your life is messy; if you are in a dark place right now, know that you are in the very space where transformation can take place. Allow the spirit of God to begin that metamorphosis in you. Embrace the pain and allow it to teach you. Don't become hard and bitter or look for things to anaesthetise the pain. Life will come to your spirit. Trust the process and allow it to produce good fruit in you. Let the darkness do its work. You are in good soil.

Adapted: Lisa Hunt-Wotton and Richard Rohr

Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A

12th July 2020

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Eucharistic Prayer 2

DIARY AND MASS INTENTIONS

for the week beginning Saturday 11th July 2020

Sat 10.00am 6.00pm	<i>St. Ant</i> <i>St. Ant</i>	Tom Gardner John Calvey	
Sun 9.30am 11.00am 5.00pm	<i>St. Ant</i> <i>H.Family</i> <i>St. Ant</i>	Cecilia Lonsdale For our parish For our parish	<i>15th Sunday in Ordinary Time</i> <i>Collection: Apostleship of Sea</i>
Mon 12noon	<i>H.Family</i>	Funeral Mass: Elsie Croasdale	
Tue 9.15am	<i>St. Ant</i>	In thanks for successful operation	
Wed 9.15am	<i>St. Ant</i>	Yvonne Cumming	<i>Feast: St. Bonaventure</i>
Thur 10.30am	<i>H.Family</i>	Canon Frank Cookson	
Fri 9.15am	<i>St. Ant</i>	Margaret Kennedy	
Sat 6.00pm	<i>St. Ant</i>	Tom Gardner	
Sun 9.30am 11.00am 5.00pm	<i>St. Ant</i> <i>H.Family</i> <i>St. Ant</i>	Margaret Stopyra For our parish For our parish	<i>16th Sunday in Ordinary Time</i> <i>Collection: Good Shepherd</i>

Masses received this week:

Yvonne Cumming, Alec Lavery, Margaret Kennedy.

Parish Centre

St. Anthony's Parish Centre has now reopened. Don't all rush to the bar at once!

Please pray for: Joan Anderton, Bill Embery, Lawrence Dunnagan, John Myerscough and Alice Myerscough, Kathleen Kellett, Chris Goldsmith, Frank Stanton, Betty Murphy, Marie Gardner, Carole Adnitt, Joan Green, Frances & Les Farrer.

Also the isolated and lonely, all medical staff and carers, those in research, Government and all world leaders, all who are assisting the public in any way.

... for those who have died recently: Elsie Croasdale, Annamarie McAleese, Canon Frank Cookson;

... and for those whose anniversaries are around now: Barbara Fraser, Ronald Whitby, Frank Coates, Robert Whittaker, Winifred Chadwick, Charles Hodson, David Noon, Gary Clarkson, Mary Molloy, Margaret Stopyra, Harry Murphy.

We remember in our prayers those who have been injured or lost their lives in conflict, especially those from our parish.

Church is open!

We opened for public Masses last weekend. And it was great to be back! Over 100 people attended Mass spread evenly over the four Masses.. All the planning paid off, thanks to our excellent stewards. We adapted a little as the weekend progressed as we learnt what worked well. We're trying to get back to something like normal though it will take time.

We added the two extra Masses to allow for safe distancing but we didn't need both. So next Saturday there won't be the extra Mass at 10.00am.

If you or a member of your household/bubble have any of the COVID19 symptoms you should not attend church.

A BIG THANK YOU to our volunteer stewards. If you are able to join them we'd be very glad to hear from you. The wider we can spread the load the better. Unless there are sufficient stewards public Masses are not allowed. Contact parish.priest2@btinternet.com OR pjnewsham@aol.com OR phone: 01772 724576

Our stewards will ask you for your telephone number. This is simply so that we can contact you in the event of anyone at your Mass later being diagnosed with covid 19. Hopefully we won't need to use this and the record will be destroyed after one month. It's an additional layer of safety for everyone.

The obligation to attend Mass on Sundays remains suspended.

1. We would be allowed to reduce social distancing to 1-metre if everyone wore a face mask. We do not think it is feasible to require this so we must retain the 2-metre rule.
2. To minimise movement in church Stewards will direct parishioners to fill the benches from the front (you may light candles at the statues first if you wish but remember that sanitising liquid is highly flammable so keep your hands away from the flame.). You will probably not be able to go in your 'usual' bench but that will give you a new perspective!
3. There will be standing room at the back of church when all the benches are occupied but you must still keep the 2-metre distancing.
4. Stewards will direct you for Holy Communion. Please do not form a long queue in the centre aisle because you will be close to people in benches.
5. There will be no Bidding Prayers and a short homily. There will be no offertory procession or collection. Please put your offerings in the basket at the start of Mass (envelopes are now available). There is no Sign of Peace and no singing.
6. PLEASE NOTE: If church reaches safe capacity be prepared to go home and come to a later Mass.
7. Weekday Mass will return as usual - Tues - Fri at 9.15am at St. Anthony's; Thurs only at Holy Family.
8. Confessions will be available in the Sacristy on request.
9. The toilets will remain out of use for the time being.
10. Funeral Services and Masses can now be in church (maximum 25 people).
If all this sounds too complicated don't worry: there will be stewards on hand to assist. We're trying to get back to normal as soon as possible.

OFFERTORY ENVELOPES were available from last weekend. Thank you to everyone who brought the offerings they'd saved up from previous weeks.

Repeat notices

Virtual 'Coffee Morning' We have another zoom Coffee Morning today. Log in details: Join Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88576710178> Meeting ID: 885 7671 0178
Thanks again to Angie for facilitating and hosting this.

Preston 5km Challenge for CAFOD's Coronavirus Appeal.

Did you take part yesterday? Well done! Let us know what you did and how you got on.