

St Mary's Newsletter – 2nd May 2020

A WARM WELCOME to all of you who are meeting in church today.

*** PLEASE DO NOT TALK IN THE CHURCH TO FOLK OUTSIDE YOUR HOUSEHOLD OR BUBBLE ***

Wear your face mask at all times, keep 2m distance and use the hand sanitiser.

St Mary's 10am Sunday Service will be recorded & added to YouTube later that day. Get the direct link from my Sunday email, the website, or 'St Mary's Acocks Green' channel on YouTube (use playlist).

Service + Collect & Readings on separate sheets

Hymns for the week:

O Love that Wilt not Let me Go.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nt69WDtYNLo>

Love Divine

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sw5ZCZeS32M>

The Thought

There's so much anxiety in the world at the moment. Despite Britain beginning to open up and improve, other countries' Covid cases are growing massively; this adds to the usual emotional, family and financial worries and cares we all have. Fear abounds.

And spiritually, many walk through this world without acknowledging their own mistakes, sin and separation from God, even denying that he exists; certainly feeling that thoughts about the next world are unnecessary. Yet, in bravado, the most pragmatic of people can just fall apart when the final straw breaks them. We end up fearful of this world and the next.

St John comes to the rescue in the first reading in assuring us that God's perfect love casts out fear. God's love is so powerful that it overwhelms all that is against life and turns it around. The very source of love is God. He made us in love, for love; saved us with love and sustains us to love. Since God has loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. But, being so fearful, how are we to do that?

In last week's gospel, we had one image of God's love in Jesus as the Good Shepherd; this week, he says, 'I am the True Vine'. Like so many of Jesus' pictures, they were forged 2000 years ago in a far-away land.

The vine, a plant of many branches, all full of fruitful grapes, had already been used for hundreds of years as a symbol of the nation of Israel in the Old Testament. Israel, as a grapevine, was meant to be one with God, and fruitful: bearing good fruit to bless others, but so often failed to do this, turning away from God or unwilling to share him with the outside world. Jesus was sent to the world to turn round this state of affairs as the True Vine!

We are the modern days' branches of this same vine. This is how we are to love one another: connected to Jesus' true vine. One with him, we are drawn into a life-giving relationship with him as branches bearing his good fruit: love that casts out fear, sin and anything that separates us from God. However, we do need to remain connected to him - a Christian branch separated from the source of life and love cannot produce good fruit, no matter how hard it tries. On our own, without being connected to Jesus, we cannot conquer fear. One with the true vine, we can conquer all in God's love. So, let's spend time regularly connected with him: in Prayer, Worship and Scripture, not only as we do today in church, but also at home and out in the world, confidently one with his love that can cast out all fear, wherever we are and whomever we are with.

Intercessions

Response: **R** Jesus, you are the Vine **All: Help us stay connected to you.**

Give thanks for Jesus's love, encouraging us to love one another. Keep us connected to you, Lord, empowering us to love. **R** Pray for all who feel fearful at this time, for the anxious and depressed, all fearful for the future and struggling with the present. **R** Pray for all church members at home, especially the vulnerable and sick, may they still feel connected to St Mary's. **R**

Pray for the government and parliament, especially as they discuss integrity in service. Pray for those in continued negotiations with Europe on fishing rights, remembering our fishermen who are currently greatly restricted. We also remember all restaurateurs who prepare for opening. **R** Locally, pray for the right choices to be made this week in voting for the local Mayor and Police Commissioner. **R**

Pray for the staff and pupils of local schools, all under pressure to catch up with time lost. **R**

In the wider world, we continue to remember India and Brazil and all countries devastated by the pandemic; Israeli families affected by many crushed in a religious festival; and for the United States embarking on enormous rebuilding and support programmes. **R**

Pray for the Sick, especially.... John Westwood, Alice Swann, Helen Shorthouse, Janet Vljajic, William, Linda Errington, Steven King, Hazel King, Michael Brailsford, Callum Shorthouse-Errington, Rev John Self, Christina Hanson, Belinda Quill, Susan and Doreen Draper, Muriel Cook, Roger Peckett, Maxine Powis, Jean & Denis Ward, Evie-Mai Flowers and others we call to mind.

And Recently Departed.....

And in our Year's Mind..... Rebecca Cooper, Charles Iball and Dennis Ashton

Organ Music: Cavatina: *Myers* Adagio: *Rink* and Offertoire: *Simper* Organist: David Streeter

Fr Andrew and Gillian will sing *Ubi Caritas* (Where charity and love are found, God himself is there) : Taizé

Test and Trace - *If you have not attended church before during this time of pandemic, you will need to fill in a consent form available from the stewards.*

****At the end of the service will we go outside to sing a hymn****

PLEASE DO NOT TALK IN THE CHURCH TO FOLK OUTSIDE YOUR HOUSEHOLD OR BUBBLE.

- Exit quickly via the South Door, use the hand sanitiser & keep 2m social distance –

Stand 2m from people around you using the markers facing the Warwick Road ready to sing the hymn

Singing outside – Today, weather permitting, we hope to end each service with a hymn sung outside. We will exit via the south door as usual and stand 2m from each other on the path and grass using the markers. *(please ask the stewards if you would like a chair).* **The first people out need to move to the end of the path or onto the grass so that the people behind them do not need to walk close to them to find a place.**

Birthdays – Val Corke 3rd May, Helen Shorthouse 4th May

The May Magazine is out this week – Please collect your copy



Christian Aid Week 10 - 16 May 2021 Envelopes will be available in church on Sundays 9th and 16th May (and with our deliveries on the 8th). Please give generously.

AGM – Sunday 23rd May at 12 noon after the morning services.

Cleaning - next Saturday 8th May - Please help clean the church from 10am, & let Fr Andrew know if you can come.

Next Sunday's Services –9th May at 10am & 11am – Please book your place.

Church Finances

*****Thank you for your continued generosity !!*****

Stewardship Envelopes - There will be a collection at church on Sunday *or deliver them to the Vicarage.*

Cheques are payable to 'St Mary's PCC' & ***paying online by BACS***, 'St Mary's Parochial Church Council' bank details are: **Barclays Bank, Solihull Branch Sort Code: 20-77-62 Account No: 53215512**

Please continue phone contact with your St Mary's friends and reassure them with your prayers

For further support, please ring Fr Andrew on 0121 706 9764 (answerphone available)