



parish newsletter

Third Sunday of Lent (Year B) | 3 March 2021

Reflecting on the Gospel



guideposts to effective living. We live on “relativism island” where only a possible suggestion to “love and do not harm” may be the only standard able to be preached. While Jesus most certainly emphasised love above anything else, it was never about warm fuzzy feelings or halfhearted humanitarian efforts. The love of which Jesus spoke establishes an intimate connection with God, neighbour, self, and creation. Because this love, who is God Himself, is at the foundational core of our lives, it demands actions and attitudes that serve to build up, increase, and free up those relationships. Love requires proper conduct. Preserving and enhancing these love centred relationships is at the heart of the Ten Commandments (and the Beatitudes) and the reason for Jesus’ display of anger in the temple.

ance and always remind us of our relationship with God and the freedom God offers. Our faith preserves these jewels of truth that we often look beyond, dismiss altogether, or seek to remove from public view. Human beings can be so arrogant at times. Our Lenten journey, especially when embarked upon with sincerity and resolve, can restore all of our essential relationships. When we get absorbed in life’s preoccupations and demands, things can quickly get distorted and we can find ourselves way off track. In short, we find ourselves in sin. Humanity is losing a sense of both grace and sin. We need both to understand what is real and true. Until we do, the oppressive systems and ideologies that hurt so many will never change. We will never change. We are grateful for those courageous souls who willingly embrace the conversion and hard work Lent demands and stand against antiquated systems and ideologies. They give us hope that all is not lost.

The Ten Commandments can save the world from turmoil and conflict by instilling basic moral and relational principles within us. They also hold a healthy sense of sin in bal-

Many prefer a “create as you go” approach to life where laws and protocols primarily exist to secure and protect liberties rather than dictate and outline proper and right behaviour. There are no

real benchmarks for acceptable ethical and moral behaviour, with a “you can’t tell me what to do” attitude prevailing. Parents are even limited in what they can request of their children, and dealing

with threatening behaviours, especially from adults, are a challenge as well. Acceptable and expected conduct seems to amount to safeguarding each others space rather than increasing awareness

of necessary relationships that require a more refined and higher response.

We have lost our axis to the world of “anything goes” and no longer see the Ten Commandments as practical and wise

Everyday Stewardship

Tracey Earl Welliver, MTS

Anybody remember the old rap song by the Fresh Prince, aka Will Smith, “Parents Just Don’t Understand?” As we grow up, it is sometimes a struggle for us to imagine that our parents understand us. It can seem impossible that Mom and Dad remember the stress of exam week or peer pressure. We never saw them as children; we never saw their disappointed faces when they weren’t invited to a party, or their dashed hopes at a bad test grade. We never saw them homesick their first week of college or nervous to ask their crush to Homecoming.

We’re often the same way about God. We gripe about what He asks of us. “He doesn’t understand sin — he’s all-good,” we think. “He doesn’t understand temptation

— He is perfect.”

In Scripture, God can be very much a father, telling us what we can and cannot do. And yet, in His divine genius, He is sometimes simply a man at a well, asking for a drink.

For me, it turns out I didn’t need to tell my parents anything about what I was going through as a kid — they knew already. What I needed was for them to tell me what to do, and how to do it.

Similarly, we don’t need to tell God about human nature. We need God to tell us about His nature. He’s good enough to ask us for a drink, to enter into our humanity. But we have to remember, for our own sakes, to have the humility to ask Him for something, too — the water that will quench our eternal thirst.

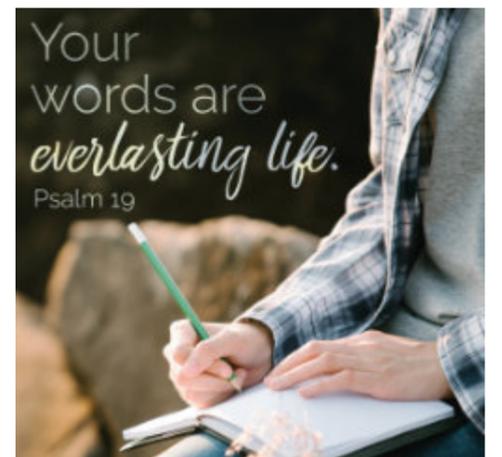


Live the Liturgy

Inspiration for the Week

With our world in such constant turmoil and conflict, it makes such good sense to return to the simple directives given in the Ten Commandments. God’s unassuming guidelines provide the perfect recipe for ordering our relationships with God, others, and even ourselves. But yet, we are so quick to glance beyond them and even remove them from public view because we foolishly believe we can create something better. Arrogance runs far deeper in the members of our society

than we can ever imagine. Lent is a perfect time to call ourselves back to our foundations and the basic relationships that comprise our lives. It is also a time to remember that Jesus is the true sign of God’s presence. Everything he says and does, including his suffering and death, is a sign of the God who sent him. The anger we witness when Jesus exhorts those in the temple to stop making his Father’s house a marketplace can equally be seen in his anger and frustration over humanity’s constant mission to turn God’s creation into a secular world. We have a lot of work to do for sure.



My house shall be called a house of prayer for the nations.



First Reading

In six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them; but on the seventh day he rested. (Ex 20:11)

Psalm

I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living. (Ps 115)

Second Reading

For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength. (1 Cor 1:25)

Gospel Acclamation

Glory and Praise to you! From the bright cloud the Father’s voice was heard: “This is by Son, the Beloved, Listen to him.” Glory and praise to you!

Gospel

“Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up.” (Jn 2:19)

Masses this Week

7	THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT	Ex 20:1-17 or 20:1-3, 7-8, 12-17/Ps 19:8, 9, 10, 11 [Jn 6:68c]/1 Cor 1:22-25/Jn 2:13-25 10.30 Mass St Mary's Intentions of Dave & Linda Gibson 17.00 Mass St Mary's People of the Parish
8	Monday St John of God	2 Kgs 5:1-15ab/Ps 42:2, 3; 43:3, 4 [cf 42:3]/Lk 4:24-30 12.05 Mass St Mary's Isabella & Christopher Burns (RIP)
9	Tuesday St Frances of Rome	Dn 3:25, 34-43/Ps 25:4-5ab, 6 and 7bc, 8-9 [6a]/Mt 18:21-35 12.05 Mass St Mary's C. J. Thomas (RIP)
10	Wednesday Novena to St Joseph	Dt 4:1, 5-9/Ps 147:12-13, 15-16, 19-20]/Mt 5:17-19 12.05 Mass St Mary's Vera Ratton (RIP)
11	Thursday	Jer 7:23-28/Ps 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9 [8]/Lk 11:14-23 12.05 Mass St Mary's Stella Close (RIP)
12	Friday	Hos 14:2-10/Ps 81:6c-8a, 8bc-9, 10-11ab, 14 and 17 [cf. 11 and 9a]/Mk 12:28-34 12.05 Mass St Mary's Intentions of Canon Alex Barrass
13	Saturday	Hos 6:1-6/Ps 51:3-4, 18-19, 20-21ab [cf. Hos 6:6]/Lk 18:9-14 11.00 Mass St Mary's Leonora Conroy (RIP) 18:00 Vigil Mass St Cecilia's Leonora Conroy (RIP)
14	FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT	2 Chr 36:14-16, 19-23/Ps 137:1-2, 3, 4-5, 6 [6ab]/Eph 2:4-10/Jn 3:14-21/ 10.30 Mass St Mary's Intentions of Anthony, Alice & Edward Wallis 17.00 Mass St Mary's Intentions of John Hepple

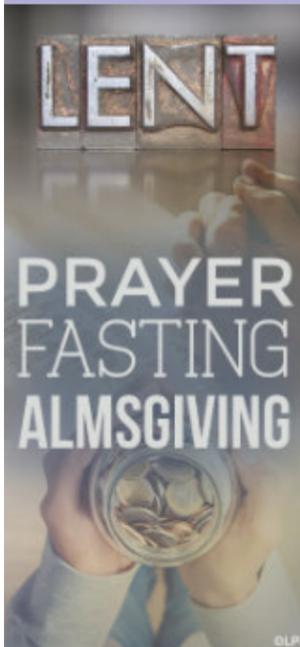
MINISTRY TO THE SICK

Christopher



Sr M Cyril
Dora Tye
John Whelan
George Felton

If you would like a name added to our prayer list, please email or call the parish office.

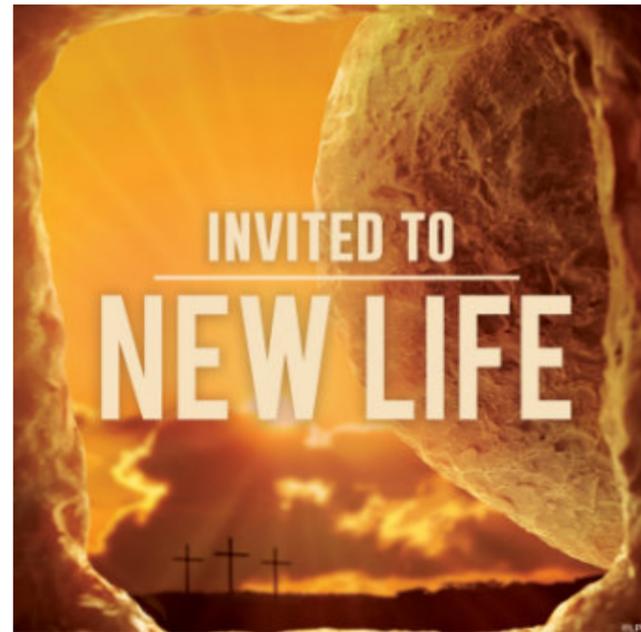


Questions for the Week

First Reading: In God's revelation to Moses of His "10 Commandments," seven of the ten Commandments regulate how we are to relate to each other. Which of these seven Commandments challenges you most?

Second Reading: Paul speaks of Jesus as both the "power of God and the wisdom of God." How could you prove Paul's assertion to a non-believer?

Gospel: John connects Jesus' cleansing of the Temple in Jerusalem to Jesus' bodily resurrection from the dead with a quote from Psalm 69: "Zeal for your house will consume me." During this season of Lent, how passionate is your faith?



Why do we do that?



Question: What's the difference between priests and brothers, friars, etc.?

Answer: The distinctions titles and categories used for priests and the male members of religious communities can be confusing,

especially since the categories can sometimes be intertwined as a man can be both a priest and a monk, or a brother and a friar. So, to help to piece the puzzle together, it's important to begin by noting some basic distinctions:

The distinction between priests (who are ordained for sacramental ministry) and brothers (who are non-ordained members of religious communities and who are committed to lives of prayer and service).

Priests: A priest is a man who has been ordained for sacramental ministry and these fall into two categories: A) Diocesan (or Secular) Priests can either be attached to a diocese and who serve under a bishop. Their ministry is usually oriented toward pastoral service. B) Religious Priests are members of religious communities (like the Franciscans, Jesuits, Salvatorians, or Carmelites) and their lives are guided by the special mission and charism of their community. While both kinds of priest practice sacramental ministry, their spirituality and how they live out their priesthood can be very different.

Brothers: Brothers are non-ordained members of religious communities (such as those mentioned above) who live lives committed to prayer and service. Religious priests and brothers serve together in their communities and their ministries include much more than the care of parishes.

Monks, Friars, and Canons: These are broad categories that include religious priests and brothers, and each of these is connected to specific ways of life and spiritualities.



News & Announcements

Lent 2021

Join us online every Tuesday, Thursday and Friday for the Rosary, Adoration and Stations of the Cross. See our parish website for details and to download the booklets so you can pray along with us.

Rewiring of St Mary's

Work has now begun on rewiring the St Mary's Church. You'll notice some disruption, especially on weekdays. Until the work is completed in about six weeks' time, all funerals will be held at St Cecilia's.

Additionally, because of the requirement to keep the church clean and COVID-safe for both worshippers and the electricians, certain areas might be blocked off and you may have to sit in different places. Please follow the guidance of the stewards when visiting the church.

Flock Notes

Today's gospel of Jesus clearing out the Temple can made us feel uncomfortable for a number of reasons. Perhaps the most discomfoting is that Jesus appears to be angry. Jesus... angry?! That can't be right, can it?

We can try all sorts of psychoanalyzing and strange theories to explain that perhaps he wasn't really angry, he was just pretending because he wanted to make a point. Or we might try and split hairs and say it wasn't real anger it was just burning zeal.

At the heart of our discomfort and our efforts to understand and excuse Jesus is the belief that anger is a sin. Jesus, we know, didn't commit

any sins, therefore he can't have been angry, therefore our need to justify and explain what was going on in the Temple.

Is anger a sin, however? Not according to the Bible. At cursory glance we see the Old Testament is not at all squeamish about God being angry and God doesn't sin. St Paul is more nuanced, but no less clear. In his letter to the Ephesians he says, 'Be angry but do not sin (4:26). He clearly distinguishes between anger and sin; therefore, they can't be the same.

Anger is neither a good emotion or a bad emotion: it is simply an emotion; like other emotions it's moral value comes from what we choose to do with it.

Anger can be a source of great power that can be harnessed and fo-

Wear Walking in the Light of God

Download our prayer walk from our parish website or on our Facebook page. We also have some printed copies available at the back of church and invite God for a walk with you from the sculpture of the sun to Roker beach stopping for prayer at each of the planet markers.

Novena to St Joseph

Every year, Mill Hill Missionaries across the world celebrate a novena of prayer to St Joseph in the days before his feast on 19 March. Fr Christopher and Emmanuel invite you to join them in invoking the prayers and protection of St Joseph on our parish, on our families and on ourselves.

We'll be praying a daily novena prayer to St Joseph after each Mass. Booklets will be made available so that you can join us and pray along at home or in church. Look on our website for more details.

cused into a tirade of vitriol aimed at the unfortunate person who slighted us. It can manifest itself in acts of violence, large and aggressive or small and petty. It can also be slow burning, smouldering, consuming, coming out as passive aggression: passive but nonetheless aggressive.

Anger can also be harnessed to empower great acts of justice, acts of self-sacrifice and as a motivation for acts of kindness.

The anger is the same, but the outcomes are very different.

Of course, behind anger is often a story of hurt and pain that must be acknowledged. Healing, however, often depends on what we choose to do with it.



Our Lady of Mercy Parish • 27 Bridge Street, Sunderland, SR1 1TQ • (0191) 567 5354 • sunderland.ourladyofmercy@rcdhn.org.uk
www.sunderlandcatholic.com

St Mary's Church • 27 Bridge Street • Sunderland • SR1 1TQ • **St Cecilia's Church** • Ryhope Road • Sunderland • SR2 7TG

Fr Christopher Hancock MHH JCD, Parish Priest • christopher@sunderlandcatholic.com

Fr Emmanuel Nuh Mbeh MHH, Assistant Priest • emmanuel.mbeh@diocesehn.org.uk

Rev Eddy Barker, Parish Deacon

Canon Alexander Barrass, Priest in Residence



A parish of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle
Reg Charity 1143450

