

Saints Days this Week... 3rd- 8th February

MONDAY – St. Werburgh Daughter of a King of Mercia, a nun in the join monastery of men and women under St. Etheldra at Ely. She founded several monasteries in Mercia and was buried at Hanbury (Staffs), but due to Viking incursions her remains were translated to Chester where they were a focus for pilgrimage until the Reformation.

WEDNESDAY – St Agatha Was martyred in Sicily, probably during the reign of Decius (250-253). Devotion to her was widespread in the Church in the earliest times & she is mentioned in the Roman Canon.

THURSDAY – St Paul Miki & Companions The fertile missionary fields of Japan were first cultivated by St Francis Xavier in 1549. In 1597, the Japanese authorities, fearing foreign influence, began a campaign of persecution with the execution of Paul Miki, a Jesuit, & his companions.

PARISH PRAYER GROUPS AND PRAYER TIMES

Monday Exposition & Rosary ~ St Wilfrid's, 7.30–8.30pm

St Bede's Prayer Group ~ Meets in church, Tuesday 7.30–9.00pm

Mother's Prayers ~ Coming together in each other's homes to pray for families. Further details from the Parish 01606 42440

Divine Mercy Prayer Group ~ Praying for the sick & dying.

Morning Prayer ~ Is prayed each weekday 9.05am, prior to 9.30am Mass.

Eucharistic Adoration ~ Sunday at St Wilfrid's 4.15 – 5.15pm

Exposition & Reconciliation ~ Saturday at St Wilfrid's 11.00-11.50am

Web Sites ~

Parish: www.stjohnvianney.co.uk

Catholic Church in England & Wales: www.catholicnews.org.uk

Prayer Site: www.pray-as-you-go.org

Scripture Reflection: www.wednesdayword.org

Reading the Gospel of Matthew: www.godwhospeaks.uk

Preparing to hear God's word...

**Next Sunday's Readings:
5th Sunday in Ordinary Time Yr. A
9th February 2020**

Salt of the Earth, Light of the World - to the Glory of the Father



St Matthew wrote his gospel around 70-80 AD to a largely Jewish audience and he seeks to show that Jesus is the long-awaited Messiah, the fulfilment of the Old Testament. His gospel is woven around five great discourses given by Jesus, and in this, Matthew may have modelled his gospel on the Pentateuch - the first five books of the Old Testament. He may also be presenting the gospel as the new Torah (the Book of the Law), with Jesus as a new and greater Moses - the Law Giver. Unfortunately, the cycle of gospel readings was broken last week, with the Presentation of the Lord, but if it hadn't, we would have started reading the first great discourse of Jesus - The “*Sermon on the Mount*”, but don't worry, as we will follow this discourse over the next five weeks (chapters five - seven). Today's passage acts as an introduction to Jesus's teaching:- We, who are privileged, to hear the words of the Saviour, MUST live and share his words with everyone we meet. We must become salt to the earth, light to the world.

Spend a little time this week, reading the whole of the “*Sermon on the Mount*” – just three chapters: five, six & seven. Enjoy!

Isaiah 58: 7-10

Thus says the Lord: Share your bread with the hungry and shelter the homeless poor, clothe the man you see to be naked and turn not from your own kin. Then will your light shine like the dawn and your wound be quickly healed over. Your integrity will go before you and the glory of the Lord behind you. Cry, and the Lord will answer : call and he will say, 'I am here.' If you do away with the yoke, the clenched fist, the wicked word, if you give your bread to the hungry, and relief to the oppressed, your light will rise in the darkness, and your shadows become like noon.

As I settle to pray, I ask the Lord to be open to his word today.

Today's passage, coming near the end of the Book of Isaiah, is addressed to the returning exiles. They are seeking to shape and find meaning to their lives and to rebuild their communities through electing politicians and focusing on the observance of rules and regulations, but the prophet tells them, that they will only succeed and find life, when they seek to live God's love: share your bread with the hungry; welcome the homeless; clothe the naked. Living as God's children entails duties of justice. When we perform these, our lives and community will shine with God's glory.

Psalms 111 *The good man is a light in the darkness*

1 Corinthians 2: 1-5 It is God's message, not the preacher that matters. Paul comes amongst the Corinthians, not as one of the 12 Apostles, nor as a trained philosopher or polished speaker, yet he has been called & chosen by God, in his frailty, to preach the crucified Christ. The Gospel stands alone and is not changed or enhanced by philosophical argument or polished rhetoric. In fact, the weakness of the preacher enforces the gospel - the folly of the cross! We can only receive God's message through his grace. Let us welcome God's Word, especially when we feel far from him... in our sin, in our fear, in our weakness; then let us turn to him, for '*When I am weak, then I am strong*'. (2 Cor.12: 9-11)

Matthew 5: 13-16

Jesus said to his disciples: 'You are the salt of the earth. But if salt becomes tasteless, what can make it salty again? It is good for nothing and can only be thrown out to be trampled underfoot by men. 'You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill top cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on the lamp-stand where it shines for everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine in the sight of men, so that, seeing your good works, they may give the praise to your Father in heaven.'

I come to my place of prayer. I gently become aware of God's presence. When I am ready, I slowly read and re-read the Gospel.

In his opening discourse, Jesus highlights nine beatitudes or states of happiness that we must attain, if we wish to follow him. We learn that the heart of discipleship is openness to God.

With God reigning in our hearts, we will naturally seek his ways of truth & goodness & from this will flow peace, gentleness, mercy, longing for justice, concern for others. Those who are seeking to live these qualities, already possess the kingdom, although in a hidden manner. Now Jesus tells us, that we must allow his kingdom, his reign to break out in everything we say and do.

The images of salt & light are used by Matthew to inspire us as disciples, to give us a sense of our vocation. No one can call himself a disciple of Jesus, unless he is living the beatitudes, and in so doing, becoming a source of strength and light to his neighbour.

How can I bring light and strength to my neighbour today?

Christians are in the world for the world