



Parish of St. Gerard, Castle Vale

part of the Archdiocese of Birmingham—Registered Charity No. 234216

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Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Sunday 7th February 2021 Year B Volume 1 Page 134

Keep your family safe, O Lord, with unfailing care, that, relying solely on the hope of heavenly grace, they may be defended always by your protection.

Reflection

Lord, I thank you for this new day. I know that you love me, You look at me at this moment and want this day to be a brand new beginning with “a future full of hope”. Whatever I have to face today, one thing I know is that you will be there with me as my best friend, helping, consoling, strengthening, healing and guiding me.

Lord Jesus, I give you my hands to do your work. I give you my feet to go your way. I give you my eyes to see as you do. I give you my tongue to speak your words. I give you my mind that you may think in me. I give you my spirit that you may pray in me. Above all, I give you my heart that you may love in me your Father and all humankind. I give you my whole self that you may grow in me, so that it is you, Lord Jesus, who live and work and pray in me this day. Amen

A message from Fr Mathew

My dear Parishioners, during this difficult time I have noticed that the numbers at Mass have decreased a little. This, I realise, is mainly due the second lockdown and the new variance of the Corona virus. I do miss all of you very much but I feel relieved and pleased that you are protecting yourselves by following the government guidelines and staying safe at home within your family bubble. We can all stay together if we pray together. Try saying the reflection each day knowing that other parishioners are doing the same? There is a light at the end of the tunnel with the vaccine.

Homily-Fr Mathew -1st February 2020

“Listen to the voice of the Lord! Listen to him and his prophets! Do not harden your hearts”

On Sundays we gather here in Church to listen to the Word of God. We listen also to the sermon of the priest, if possible, because I am here to help you understand the Lord’s ways. I am meant to be like a prophet who speaks for the Lord and the prophet is supposed to speak only what the Lord tells him to say. If I preach on my own, I will be punished: that is what we heard in today’s first reading. Moses explains what the role of the prophet is: The Lord says; ***“I will put my words into the mouth of the prophet and he shall tell you all what I command. The man who does not listen to the words that he speaks in my name shall be held answerable to me for it. But the prophet who presumes to say in my name a thing that I have not commanded him to say, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.”***

Now, let us look at the second reading. When I was going through the second reading I was very much comforted. St Paul says a priest is the most fortunate man because he does not need to worry about anything of this world. St Paul writes; ***“An unmarried man can devote himself to the Lord’s affairs; all he needs to worry about is pleasing the Lord; but a married man (or you parishioners!), You have to bother about the world’s affairs”***. I was thinking how fortunate I am that I do not need to worry about worldly affairs. It is true in my case here in the parish of St Gerard’s. All the worldly affairs of this parish are the worries of the parishioners, parish administrator and officers of the parish. Our parish administrator continues to tell me, “Fr, we are at the top of our bank overdraft, we are not getting enough money on our plate each week to cover our costs, we have so many essential repairs that need doing, our heating system is not working properly, the church roof is leaking, the church centre roof is leaking, the presbytery wall has a crack that needs investigating and addressing”. Hearing all of these things, I remain silent. But I think St Paul permits to me to be silent because he says, ***“All I need you to worry about is pleasing the Lord”***. It is for parishioners to worry about the worlds affairs or in our case the endless list of repairs and diminishing income because it is your parish. The parish priest will come and go but the parish remains. I am sorry. I am not finding excuses to escape from my responsibilities but just to remind you that you do need to think seriously about the future of your parish. St Paul concludes saying; ***“I say this only to help you, not to put a halter around your necks, but simply to make sure that everything is as it should be and that you give your undivided attention to the Lord”***.

God Bless you all my dear brothers and sisters and your families. Stay safe and pray for me as I will pray for you.

Mass Times

Sunday 7th February

Mass 10.00am

For Agatha Maher RIP

Sunday 14th February

Mass 10.00am

For Catherine Tipper RIP

Confession on request.

Please continue to consider sponsoring the flowers each week in memory of a loved one.

Thank you



PASTORAL

Baptisms; A parent of the child to be baptised must be baptised, attend Sunday Mass regularly and undertake 2 preparation meetings. If you require your child to be baptised then please speak to Father for details of forthcoming preparation meetings.

Mass Intentions: If you would like to have a Mass celebrated for a particular intention: on behalf of a family member, a friend or a deceased loved one, to remember a birthday or anniversary, envelopes are available at the back of church or email Fr Mathew.

Communion to the Sick and the Housebound: Please speak to Fr if you know of anyone who is unable to come to Mass and would like to receive Communion.

Parish Mission Statement

We, the members of St Gerard's R.C. Church, are baptised in Jesus Christ, empowered by the spirit, nurtured in community and nourished by prayer, word and sacrament. Therefore, for the greater glory of God, we proclaim for all people the saving message of the Gospel, and joyfully share our time, talent and resources, in works of mercy and justice, both within and beyond our parish community.



St Gerard's Catholic Primary School

*'We Live, Love and Learn Together
with Jesus'*

Twitter: @StGerardsBham

School website:
www.stgerard.bham.sch.uk

Parish Administrator

I smiled as I listened to this homily this week as I thought of two things:

- When Fr remains silent, when I share all my worries, it is because he is permitted to, they are not his worries. He has a much bigger job to do.
- Although Fr remains silent, he is hearing my worries and willing to help me to deal with these worries by relating them back to the Word of God, very clever.

What Fr said in his homily is what I have wanted to say for a while now as I have tried to juggle the finances and maintenance of our parish over the last year or so. The current pandemic put a stop to a lot of plans that I had to increase income, increase mass attendance and in turn offertory collections, provide more mass opportunities and more opportunities for the school children to come into church but has also provided breathing space for us to look at our parish and understand how things have changed over time. This pandemic will end and we will return to some normality and we will need to see what scars we are left with!

Really only then can we start to make changes to secure our future. For now, I think, there are a couple of things we can do;

- Understand that the "worries of worldly affairs" in relation to our parish are in the hands of parishioners.
- Satisfy yourself that you are doing your bit for your parish in terms of giving, whether that be skills, time, money.
- Speak to your family and friends about the responsibility to secure the future of our parish. It may be that although family may not be attending St Gerard's at present they would still like to assist in some way to sharing the responsibilities in remembrance of a loved one.

Whilst Fr mentioned that I often talk about needing more money and needing to get things fixed, this is true, but I am very mindful that our current parishioners are very generous and we are in very strange times with this pandemic and many parishioners may have financial strain. It is for this reason that I ask you to look wider than yourselves and to have a conversation with family and friends. My main objective is to get more people attending our lovely church each week. Again, this is not easy at present with shielding and the like but I understand the need to provide a clean tidy space to attract people, hence the need to stay on top of required maintenance during these times.

Details of making regular contributions to our church by way of offertory envelopes, gift aid gifting and regular standing order can be found on the parish website: www.stgerardschurch.co.uk

Please remember in your prayers:

Recently died: Sue Close, Fr Patrick Joyce, Fr Giles Goward, Arline Millard and Georgina Hand: Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen.

The sick: Bernadette Parish, Janice Pidgeon, Kath Taylor, Stan Oliver, Frances Irwin, George Irwin, Jean Chambers, Debbie Johnson, Perry Desmond, Philip Fox, Kevin Hollis, Kathy Beatie, Tina Parkes, Father Gabby Maguire, & all the sick priests of the diocese. May the Lord grant them the healing they require.

And all those whose anniversaries occur at this time, may they rest in peace. Amen