Parish of St Wilfrid, Widnes

14th February 2021 **SIXTH SUNDAY OF ORDINARY TIME (B)**

"Listen!

I am standing at the door knocking."

Rev 3:20



Fr Bill Murphy	0151 495 1854
Fr Mark Moran	0151 513 0024
Fr Carl Mugan (PP)	0151 424 6641
Fr Tom Neylon (PP)	0151 424 2738
Bishop John Rawsthorne	0151 424 4021

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Bishop John's Reflection.

In the first section of his book "Let Us Dream", Pope Francis looks, and invites us to look, at the reality the world and its people. His starting point are the two overwhelming crises of the present moment, the corona virus pandemic and the environmental situation. Both are such serious threats as to threaten to paralyse us. To look at their consequences for us all unflinchingly really does call for the gifts of the Holy Spirit, especially of courage and trust in the Lord. And he speaks of going to the periphery in order to properly understand their effects.

He begins with the Rohingya people, 600,000 of them driven in the most appalling way from their homes in Myanmar and into refugee camps in one of the poorest countries on earth, Bangladesh, where they met others who had been driven out over the years. And he speaks of the disaster of COVID rampant those camps.

And he takes the Uighur, another Muslim community, this time in China and treated abominably by their Government.

And Christians in Pakistan and Egypt, killed by bombs while they prayed in church.

Real people, fellow children of God. And we have to let the horror of their situation speak to us. Francis speaks of feeling overwhelmed but never hopeless before the challenges. It is a moment of crisis, but we can come out of it better.

But he warns of three things that can block a true appreciation of the situation.

The first is the attitude that news is only good if it is good for me personally. If it is bad, it is because I am its chief victim. The second 'discouragement', that leads to complaining about everything and not seeing what is around us or what others offer. And then there is 'pessimism', a door you shut on the future and the good things it can hold, and the possibility of finding something new.

And then he takes a hard look at the real lives of the poor and underprivileged in our own wealthy countries, their living conditions, their educational difficulties, their significantly shorter life expectancy.... he speaks of the pandemic of indifference, of looking away lest we begin to feel for them.

There is another theme in all of this, that our awareness of these things does not usually come as a blinding flash of light, but through a gradual drip of reality on our perceptions.

Francis is very personal to himself in all of this. He speaks of three COVID moments in his own life, one of an illness when he was a student and almost died, ……

…….. another when he was in Germany studying and experienced great loneliness, and the third after he had been Provincial and then Rector. He was sent away to a Jesuit house in Cordoba. He says that this was because of his way of exercising leadership, 'I'm sure I did a few good things, but I could be very harsh. In Cordoba they made me pray and they were right to do so.' He prayed and read and wrote. He developed new ideas and learnt to live life anew. And, and he cannot explain what possessed him to do it, he read the thirty-seven volumes of Pastor's History of the Popes. He adds: once you know the papal history, there's not much that goes on in the Vatican Curia and the Church today that can shock you....

I apologise to Pope Francis for reducing thirty-five wonderful pages down to this...But one last quotation, speaking of frontline workers who have died as a result of their work: 'Whether or not they were conscious of it, their choice testified to their belief that it is better to live a shorter life serving others than a longer one resisting that call'. They are the saints next door.

We pray for those who have died:

Marie Teresa Quirk *Thomas Coady* *Joseph Wright (Ted)*

Frances Tillyer-Andrews *Christopher Gaskell*

Those whose funerals take place this week:

Beryl Wright *Josephine Gorman*

Margaret Yates *Mary Lewis*



You Tube Mass from St Wilfrid's Widnes will be available on Sunday morning. You will also have the opportunity to see the Mass for the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes.
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC52K27EaYwySzRmeP3f3eA

Across the Archdiocese:
New resources now available include:

- Reflection for the 6th Sunday in Ordinary Time (also available as an audio download).
- Sunday readings.
- Week 23 in the series of 'Armchair Retreats' with Fr Denis Blackledge SJ.
- Rite of Acceptance during lockdown... Should we or shouldn't we?



This Lent, **CAFOD** invites you and the whole Catholic community of England and Wales to join the ***Big Walk for Water*** virtual event. Help give the boot to water poverty across the world by walking a 5-mile route on **Saturday 20th February at 2pm.**

Could you ***Walk for Water*** as a personal Lenten challenge by walking 10,000 steps a day, every day, for 40 days? Find out more at **cafod.org.uk/walk**

ASH WEDNESDAY

Ash Wednesday 17th February 2021 – we will be opening each of our churches to offer a 'walk through' option to receive the ashes.

St. Bede's 7:30 -8:30 St. Basil's 10-11am St. John Fisher 12-1pm St. Michael's 6-7pm

Stewards will invite you to enter the church, where the priest will ***scatter*** the ashes ***on*** your head. You will then be directed to leave by another door. You will receive a prayer card.

You will have to maintain strict social distancing of 2 meters at all times. There will not be any opportunity to stop and sit in the churches.