

BRINDLE St JOSEPH'S

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Sixth Sunday of Easter 5th May 2024

(Sunday cycle year B, weekday cycle year 2, psalter week 2)



“Love one another, as I have loved you”

Creator of the universe, you made the world in beauty and restore all things in glory through the victory of Jesus Christ. We pray that wherever your image is still disfigured by poverty, sickness, selfishness, war and greed, the new creation in Jesus Christ may appear in justice, love and peace, to the glory of your name. Amen.

THIS WEEK

Sat 4 th	10.00am	CONFESSIONS	The English Martyrs (feast)
	10.30am	Abbot's intentions (<i>Anointing of the sick during Mass</i>)	
	6.00pm	Tony and Barbara Phelan	Sixth Sunday of Easter
Sun 5 th	9.30am	For the Parish	
Mon 6 th	No Mass today		Monday of Easter 6
Tue 7 th	9.30am	Abbot's intentions	Tuesday of Easter 6
Wed 8 th	9.30am	For vocations	Wednesday of Easter 6
	6.00pm	The sick and housebound of the Parish	The Ascension of the Lord (solemnity)
Thu 9 th	9.30am	Hilda Martindale	
Fri 10 th	9.30am	Holy Souls	Friday of Easter 6
Sat 11 th	10.30am	Bob Moffatt	Saturday of Easter 6
	SECOND COLLECTION: WORLD COMMUNICATIONS		Seventh Sunday of Easter
	6.00pm	For the Parish	
Sun 12 th	9.30am	Margaret Atherton	
	11.00am	Baptism: Harley Snape	

First Saturday of the Month: Confessions at 10.00am, Anointing of the sick during 10.30am Mass

This week		Reader		Eucharistic Minister		Bookshop
Sat 4 th		L Gardner		L Gardner		Open
Sun 5 th		C Snape		S Schofield		Open
Bidding prayers	B Kellett	Children's Liturgy	A Fowler, B Gorrell	Collection counters	P & J Kitchen	
Next week		Reader		Eucharistic Minister		Bookshop
Sat 11 th		L Lomax		J Hothersall		Open
Sun 12 th		K Slater		M Gardner		Open
Bidding prayers	The Music Group	Children's Liturgy	L Rigbye, J Kitchen	Collection counters	L & M Gardner	

Last weekend: attendance: 113, collection: £421.91 – thank you!

Readings: Acts 10:25-26,34-35,44-48, 1 John 4:7-10, John 15:9-17.

I shall not call you servants anymore because a servant does not know his master's business; I call you friends because I have made known to you everything I have learnt from my Father.

You are my friends not servants, Jesus tells his disciples, which puts in mind the story of St Teresa of Avila who, with her companions was on an arduous journey doing the work of God. On a very narrow flooded path, she lost her footing and fell into the river and was nearly lost.

She cries to God asking: 'when will you stop scattering obstacles in our path'. The Lord replies: 'Do not complain daughter for it is ever thus that I treat my friends' to which she replies: 'Ah Lord, it is also on that account that you have so few'.

Do we want to be friends of Jesus or just his servants ... what is the difference?

Throughout the bible, and we only have to look around us to see people who might be described as servants of God, or if you like *Instruments* of God, such as the pagan king of Assyria about to invade Judea described by the prophet Isaiah as the *rod of God's anger*, likewise the Persian pagan king Cyrus who, many years later, liberates the exiles from captivity in Babylon. Cyrus' title is seen as conferred by God and is God's anointed even *though you do not know me* he says. (Is 45: 5)

These kings, then, did not know God or his business, they just carried out his will as would be expected of servants – indeed as they would expect of their own servants.

All around us, by God's grace, all kinds of people are carrying out God's will which some recognise as his will while others do not.

For example, one might ask two surgeons working side by side, why they are doing what they are doing.

An atheist might say: to save a life because I feel it's the right thing to do and make the world a better place, while the other may say: to save a life because Jesus teaches me to love my neighbour who is made in the image and likeness of God and therefore has infinite value, and this is how I choose to love her/him.

By Jesus' own definition in today's Gospel, which of the two is a friend of God – and this is no character judgement, for that we leave to God who alone can read the heart.

But if, as St Teresa found, God is to make his friends' earthy pilgrimage so difficult, who would want to be his friend?

Well, whether or not we are friends of God, there will be obstacle for all. For some, the Christian calling to holiness might involve greater obstacles and challenges – the greatest being persecution and martyrdom – though, of course, they would see these obstacles as the gateway to eternal life.

The person who would be a friend of God ... the friend of Jesus ... is the person who knows that, whatever the pitfalls and obstacles God permits to be strewn along their way, should they trip and fall, however far they may fall, they will always fall into the saving hands of God – and that is why death, for the friend of God, should really not be a prospect of terror for them.

But apart from the love of God, what **must** mark out the friend of God from the servant of God, is **their love for one another** if for no other reason, for that is what he has commanded them to do.

Let us pray that we too may be counted among the friends of God.

Reflections

This, in short, is the difference between us and others who know not God: that in misfortune they complain and murmur while for us, adversity does not call us away from the truth of virtue and faith, but strengthens us by its suffering. (St Cyprian)

With Prayers,

Fr Raphael.

Ascension Thursday

In the Office of Readings for this Solemnity, St Augustine says *Today our Lord Jesus Christ ascended into heaven; let our hearts ascend with him.*

Is it possible for our hearts to ascend to heaven with him?

Yes, and he quotes the following: *If you have risen with Christ, set your hearts on the things that are above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God...*

He goes on: *Christ is now exalted above the heavens but still suffers on earth all the pain that we the members of his body have to bear.*

How do we know? Is there any scriptural evidence?

Yes, Augustine replies; when Christ called from above *Saul, Saul why do you persecute me?* And when he said *I was hungry and you gave me food.*

St Augustine then asks why do we on earth not strive to find rest with him in heaven even now through the faith, hope and love that unites us to him. For while in heaven he is also with us and we while on earth are with him. *For we cannot be in heaven, as he is on earth, in his divinity, but in him we can be there by love.*

He did not leave heaven when he came down to us; nor did he withdraw from us when he returned to heaven. Augustine continues; the fact that he was in heaven even while he was on earth is borne out by his own statement: No one has ever ascended to the Father except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man, who is in heaven.

St Augustine explains that this is all possible because we are part of the Body of Christ who is its head.

He concludes:

Out of compassion for us, he descended from heaven and although he ascended alone, we also ascend, because we are in him by grace. Thus no one but Christ descended and no one but Christ ascended; not because there is no distinction between the head and the body, but because the body, as a unity, cannot be separated from the head.

MAY IS THE MONTH OF THE ROSARY and we will say a decade after weekday Masses throughout the month.

THIS THURSDAY (9th May) is the Solemnity of the Ascension, a Holyday of Obligation. There will be Mass at **6.00pm on Wednesday** and **9.30am on Thursday**.

Also **THIS THURSDAY**, there will be a **SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION PROGRAMME** meeting at 6.00pm.

NEXT SUNDAY IS WORLD COMMUNICATIONS DAY when we are asked to pray for, and support financially if possible, the work of the Catholic Communications Network. More information at www.cbcew.org.uk/world-communications-day/. You can find Pope Francis' message for today in the "Downloads" section of our website.

Have you heard of NFP? It stands for **NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING** and is one of the best-kept secrets in the Catholic Church. If you are a newly-engaged couple, newlywed couple or a married couple who have not learned about NFP, there is a new video-based programme that introduces couples to NFP called "Natural Plan". It's a little over an hour and will change how you think about faith and fertility. Natural Plan is a video series featuring doctors, scientists, clergy, fertility coaches, NFP teachers, couples who practice NFP and newlyweds, who came together to share their insights about fertility awareness from a Catholic perspective. The videos are lively and interesting. You can sign up for an in-person session or watch it together as a couple in your own home. To find out more, go to: www.naturalplan.org.

In the **BOOKSHOP**, there is new stock of cards and gifts for **FIRST HOLY COMMUNIONS**.

SUMMER FAMILY FUNDAY at the Parish Hall on Saturday 15th June from 2.00 to 5.00pm. More details soon!

GRAVEYARD: As the growing season begins, please could we avoid planting shrubs or any other plants or placing any items in front of graves which might prohibit the passing of a lawn mower and to remember with thanks our volunteers who try to keep the graveyard in good order for you.

PLEASE PRAY for Kathleen Bamber who has died, for those who are sick or housebound including Maureen Spencer, Isaac Wilson, Fr Laurence Mayne and Bill Warbrick, and for those whose anniversaries occur about this time.

DURING EASTER we are asked to pray for: New Members of the Church; Human Work; Vocations; Survivors of Abuse; The Right Use of the Media; the Church.

100 CLUB: The winner for week 21 is number 11, Helen Bleasdale. The next block of 10 weeks starts **THIS WEEKEND** when subs are due unless you've paid for the full year.

Leeds Male Voice Choir will perform at **BROWNEIDGE ST MARY'S** on Saturday 18th May at 2.00pm – entry by donation. See the poster on the noticeboard for more details.

ESCORTED TOUR TO WESTPORT, KNOCK AND CO MAYO, 16th June. £899pps. Price includes flight, 10kg hold luggage, 5 nights in 4* Castlecourt Hotel, Westport with Dinner, Bed and Breakfast. Lunch on three days. All entertainment, excursions and transport included. Visit Knock, Galway City, Kylemore Abbey, Croagh Patrick and Ashford Castle. Single supplement on Enquiry. Contact Patricia or Natali on 01268 762 278 or 07740 175557 or email knockpilgrimages@gmail.com.

Bidding Prayers – Sixth Sunday of Easter – 5th May 2024

(Priest) As children of God, we recognise that God lives in our midst. Help us to keep God's word in our hearts as we make our petitions to you in the firm belief that our prayers will be answered.

(Reader) We pray for the Church, for the Pope and all the leaders of our church that they may be guided by the Holy Spirit to lead us carefully in our faith and bring us closer to you. Lord in your mercy...

We pray for all those who have power in world affairs. May they seek not only to avoid war between nations, but, through laws based on human rights and dignity, lay the foundations of lasting world peace. Lord in your mercy...

For migrants and refugees. We ask that all who have fled violence, starvation or persecution may find places of safety and welcome. Lord in your mercy...

For all who are sitting or preparing for exams, we ask that the Holy Spirit will inspire them and guide them to use their gifts wisely. Lord in your mercy...

We pray for the people of St Joseph's, especially our priest, teachers, parents and all those who work in the parish community and dedicate their lives to the service of God. Lord in your mercy...

We ask Mary, our mother to help us during our daily lives. We think of her as we say: Hail Mary, full of grace...

We pause for a moment to present our personal petitions before God.

(Priest) Heavenly Father, your Son called us his friends and taught us to love one another as he loved us, grant us the conviction to follow his call, as we humbly ask you to hear the petitions we bring before you through Christ, your Son. Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE SICK

Priest: As we thank God for the gift of his Son in Holy Communion, let us remember those of our Parish who are sick or housebound.

All: May the body and blood of your Son, which we now send to them through our Eucharistic Ministers, bring them consolation and peace. We ask this in the name of Jesus, Our Lord. Amen.