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NEWSLETTER

Sunday 7th February 2021

Fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time

Members of the Parish Council and I have decided that I will stop holding Masses in St. Augustine's Hall for a period, whilst the Coronavirus is at such high levels in our area.

We will continue to hold an online Mass every Sunday at 11am. For details of how to join the Mass, please email office@staugustines.org.uk

St. Augustine's Church will be open for Private Prayer each day Monday to Friday from 12.00 noon to 12.30pm. It is not open in the evenings.

Obligation to attend Sunday Mass has been suspended during this pandemic. Through the hard work of Anthony and Pamela, we have our online Mass and I would urge you to log in to it if you are able. It is a particularly good substitute at this time in helping us keep together as a Parish.

ASH WEDNESDAY: WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17th is Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent. We will NOT have live Mass on that day but will have **online Mass at 7pm**. After the homily, we will have a short, improvised ceremony that will reflect the meaning of the distribution of the ashes. An invitation to join the online Mass will be sent out on the evening of Sunday 14th February. We would ask that you log in for this Mass if it is at all possible for you to do so.

MASS INTENTIONS

Sat 6 th Feb	Private Intention	Wed 10 th Feb	Carolyn Ansell RIP
Sun 7 th Feb 11 am online	People of the Parish	Thurs 11 th Feb	Agnes McNamara RIP
Mon 8 th Feb	Walter Stanley RIP	Fri 12 th Feb	Corrie O'Connell RIP
Tues 9 th Feb	Malcolm Mingay RIP		

SICK OF THE PARISH: Please pray for the sick in the Parish, especially James Ansell, Dorrie Keating, David Mendes and Michael Torpey. Please pray also for those who are caring for them.

CORONAVIRUS: We remember those in our parish who may be suffering acutely from the effects of Covid. We think especially for those who are ill, those living alone - far from relatives, those whose jobs are at risk, those in Care Homes, those in difficult home environments. And let us not forget to thank God for the progress being made towards a vaccination programme for COVID. We pray for the scientists and the medical personnel who have worked so hard towards its discovery, and we pray that its distribution throughout the country will be speedy and efficient.

REOPENING FOR LIVE MASS: We had hoped to open the Hall for live masses as from Ash Wednesday. However, after discussing the matter with the Parish Council, I've decided that in light of the prevalence of the pandemic in this general area, it would be unwise to open for the present. We would hope we will be able to open safely in the not-too-distant future.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION: Please keep the children in your prayers.

FOODBANK: The Foodbank Centre in Slough have said that, at present, they have sufficient items for the poor in their warehouse. Because of the difficulty in finding volunteers to sort out the parcels and getting them to the poor, they would prefer not to receive any further donations at present. They will inform us when they are ready to receive further donations. Again, they wish to thank those who have already contributed so generously.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK

Nature: A Testimony to the Faithfulness of God.

God's Faithfulness

As well as Generosity, there's another quality in God which has great appeal for me - his *Faithfulness*. There are two elements, especially, that speak deeply of God's endless, unremitting faithfulness - the sun and the atmosphere.

We look firstly at the sun, and how faithful it is to its task of rising every morning, bringing to our lives not just beauty and pleasure but also the most basic elements we need for survival on this earth – light, heat and energy. In return, it never seeks repayment or gratitude; it's never petty or vindictive, even when its gifts are ignored or taken for granted. For over 4 billion years it has kept on doing the same thing each day, never bored with its work, never demanding recognition or gratitude - seeking only the reward of serving us humans whom it knows are so precious to its Creator! What a glorious testimony to God's faithful love!

An equally striking aspect of God's fidelity is the all-encompassing atmosphere (air) in which we live and move and exist. Even an elementary knowledge of its enormously complex nature tells us how statistically improbable it is that the atmosphere should be so fine-tuned as to support human life. Just the tiniest fluctuation in its chemical composition or density would make life on earth impossible for us humans. And yet how constant it remains; how silently and meticulously it obeys the law of its Creator. Wherever we move, it accompanies us as our unseen companion. Not for even a few seconds does it leave us, for it knows how much we depend on it for our survival. Despite our ignoring it, it keeps on being there for us, continuing to serve us faithfully over the millions of years since the origin of life on our planet!

And unlike the sun, which is so glorious and awe-inspiring, the air is so self-effacing. We never see it; it never shows itself to any of our senses. We are *in it*, encompassed by it. For that reason, it's taken so much for granted, and so often abused. But, like its Maker, it's so patient, overlooking the fact that we continue to pollute it.

Yes, the atmosphere has been very patient with us up to the present. But how long will it remain so if we continue to abuse it, to interfere with the extremely delicate balance of its gases, as we are now doing? Pope Francis in his 'Laudato Si', as well as virtually all the eminent scientists of our time, warn us of the catastrophic consequences of our wanton abuse of the atmosphere - and yet we continue to ignore their warnings!

We need to pray hard for those who ignore the reality of climate change, that God will rid them of selfishness, and bring them to respect and cherish our environment. In doing this, not only will they be engaging in an urgent humanitarian venture; they'll be doing an eminently *holy action*. They'll be collaborating with the Creator in ensuring that his Earth – and ours - remains a safe and wholesome place for all who come after us.

Fr. Frank