

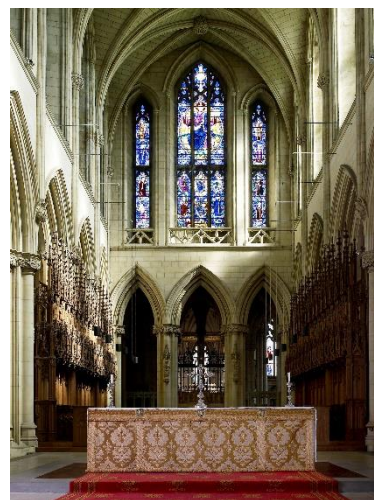
The Twenty-Fifth and Twenty-Sixth Sundays in Ordinary Time (A)

20 & 27 September 2020

IN THIS ISSUE we are publishing two weeks' news in one letter. This will facilitate Dom Leo's having a few days holiday with his family.

Weekday Masses in the Abbey Church. As part of our regular review of Covid19 arrangements, Abbot Nicholas has agreed that the daily monastic conventual Mass should be open to parishioners on Wednesdays and Fridays at the usual time of 8.35 a.m. The monks sing plainchant at these Masses but will be at a safe distance from the congregation. Would those who wish to attend please ensure that they:

- Enter through the porch at the west end of the Abbey Church
- Wear face masks
- Maintain social distancing as indicated in the Abbey Church
- Refrain from singing any part of the liturgy themselves
- Clean with the equipment provided the place that they have occupied
- Provide their contact details in case it should be necessary to inform them of Covid19 incidents linked to any Mass they have attended



The monks look forward to welcoming all who would like to join them at these Wednesday and Friday Masses.

Please pray for the following who are unwell or housebound: Jayne Afxendi, Brian Auty, Eileen Barrett, Detta Duggan, Arthur Haynes, Tony Porter and for David Smith from Keynsham, who is unwell in Paulton Hospital.

Last week's **collection for the Holy Places in Palestine** raised **£259.85**. This gift will be appreciated at a time of great hardship for Christians in the Holy Land.

Message from Lee Rodgers and the Maintenance Team:

I would like to thank personally and on behalf of many parishioners and the maintenance team the monks of Downside for all the love, help and support they have given. We are sorry that you have to move from your home and place of worship for the last 200 plus years. We will all miss you more than words can say and wish you all love and will be praying for you at this hard time and during transition to what is ahead. Please let us know of any help any of you need!



Martyrology: Monday 21 September is the Feast of St Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist. Because we have been listening to his Gospel during this liturgical year A, we are especially motivated to keep his Feast. He is mentioned in the Gospels of Mark and Luke under the name of Levi, but in his own Gospel he refers to himself as Matthew, a name that means 'disciple'. It is possible that the verse in his Gospel describing 'every scribe who becomes a disciple of the kingdom of Heaven is like a householder who brings out from his storeroom new things as well as old' is a self-portrait (Matthew 13, 52). He was the son of Alphaeus and a tax-collector for the Romans. His rapid response to Jesus' call is described in his own Gospel (Matthew 9, 9). The fact that several of the parables of Jesus that only he relates are concerned with money (e.g. The Labourers in the Vineyard (Matthew 20, 1-16)) is internal evidence from his Gospel that he was indeed a financier. Tradition tells us that he preached the Gospel in Judea and abroad, dying a martyr's death.



St Matthew and the Angel by Rembrandt, 1661



Gabriel, Michael and Raphael

Tuesday 29 September is the Feast of SS Michael, Gabriel and Raphael, Archangels. On this day was dedicated the Basilica of St Michael outside Rome on the Via Salaria. Because this Feast falls close to the autumn equinox it gives its name to this season, when the harvest has been gathered and university and legal terms begin. Night and day, the Archangels serve God and unceasingly glorify him as they contemplate his face. They remind us that our own great task is to praise God: *magnum opus hominum laudare Deum!* (St Augustine).

Mass Readings for the Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

First Reading

My thoughts are not your thoughts

Seek the Lord while he is still to be found,
call to him while he is still near.
Let the wicked man abandon his way,
the evil man his thoughts.
Let him turn back to the Lord who will take pity on him,
to our God who is rich in forgiving;
for my thoughts are not your thoughts,
my ways not your ways – it is the Lord who speaks.
Yes, the heavens are as high above earth

as my ways are above your ways,
my thoughts above your thoughts. **Isaiah 55:6-9**

Second Reading

Life to me is Christ; but death would bring me more

Christ will be glorified in my body, whether by my life or by my death. Life to me, of course, is Christ, but then death would bring me something more; but then again, if living in this body means doing work which is having good results – I do not know what I should choose. I am caught in this dilemma: I want to be gone and be with Christ, which would be very much the better, but for me to stay alive in this body is a more urgent need for your sake.

Avoid anything in your everyday lives that would be unworthy of the gospel of Christ.

Philippians 1: 20-24, 27

Gospel

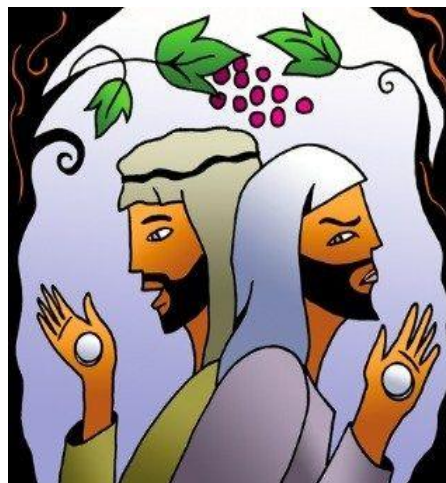
Motivation: *God calls us in various ways. The time in which we receive that joy of direction, of purpose in our vocation is not always a time that suits us: it comes, however, at a time when we need direction. How were you called? At what point in your life has the Lord chosen you? Think about the times in which his word pierced your heart and enabled you to listen to his voice.*

Have you at times envied the fortunes of others? The clarity in which they see their path, their direction in their lives? In this Sunday's Gospel, Jesus describes for us a keystone for our lives as Christians; a simple understanding that can transform our encounters with others. How will this encourage you in living out your faith this week, in the encounters you face? Incline your heart to the Word that comes!"

Why be envious because I am generous?

JESUS SAID TO HIS DISCIPLES: 'The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner going out at daybreak to hire workers for his vineyard. He made an agreement with the workers for one denarius a day, and sent them to his vineyard. Going out at about the third hour he saw others standing idle in the market place and said to them, "You go to my vineyard too and I will give you a fair wage." So they went. At about the sixth hour and again at about the ninth hour, he went out and did the same. Then at about the eleventh hour he went out and found more men standing round, and he said to them, "Why have you been standing here idle all day?"

"Because no one has hired us" they answered. He said to them, "You go into my vineyard too." In the evening, the owner of the vineyard said to his bailiff, "Call the workers and pay them their wages, starting with the last arrivals and ending with the first." So those who were hired at about the eleventh hour came forward and received one denarius each. When the first came, they expected to get more, but they too received one denarius each. They took it, but grumbled at the landowner. "The men who came last" they said "have done only one hour, and you have treated them the same as us, though we have done a heavy day's work in all the heat." He answered one of them and said, "My friend, I am not being unjust to you; did we not agree on one denarius? Take your earnings and go. I choose to pay the last comer as much as I pay



you. Have I no right to do what I like with my own? Why be envious because I am generous?" Thus the last will be first, and the first, last.' **Matthew 20: 1-16**

Mass Readings for the Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time (A)

First Reading

The word of the Lord was addressed to me as follows: 'You object, "What the Lord does is unjust." Listen you House of Israel: is what I do unjust? Is it not what you do that is unjust? When the upright man renounces his integrity to commit sin and dies because of this, he dies because of the evil that he himself has committed. When the sinner renounces sin to become law-abiding and honest, he deserves to live. He has chosen to renounce all his previous sins; he shall certainly live; he shall not die.' **Ezekiel 18: 25-28**

Second Reading

If our life in Christ means anything to you, if love can persuade at all, or the Spirit that we have in common, or any tenderness and sympathy, then be united in your convictions and united in your love, with a common purpose and a common mind. That is the one thing which would make me completely happy. There must be no competition among you, no conceit; but everybody is to be self-effacing. Always consider the other person to be better than yourself, so that nobody thinks of his own interests first but everybody thinks of other people's interests instead. In your minds you must be the same as Christ Jesus:

His state was divine,
yet he did not cling
to his quality with God
but emptied himself
to assume the condition of a slave,
and became as men are;
and being as all men are,
he was humbler yet,
even to accepting death,
death on a cross.
But God raised him high
and gave him the name
which is above all other names
so that all beings
in the heavens, on earth and in the underworld,
should bend the knee at the name of Jesus
and that every tongue should acclaim
Jesus Christ as Lord,
to the glory of God the Father. **Philippians 2: 1-11**

Gospel

JESUS SAID TO THE CHIEF PRIESTS and the elders of the people, 'What is your opinion? A man had two sons. He went and said to the first, "My boy, you go and work in the vineyard today." He answered, "I will not go", but afterwards thought better of it and went. The man then went and said the same thing to the second who answered, "Certainly, sir", but did not go. Which of the two did the father's will? 'The first' they said. Jesus said to them, 'I

tell you solemnly, tax collectors and prostitutes are making their way into the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you, a pattern of true righteousness, but you did not believe him and yet the tax collectors and prostitutes did. Even after seeing that, you refused to think better of it and believe in him.' **Matthew 21: 28-32**

