

The Thirty-Second Sunday of the Year (B)

St Benedict's Parish Newsletter
Stratton-on-the-Fosse
7 November 2021

TURNING VALUES INTO VIRTUES (PART 4): Over the past three weeks we have used British Values as a springboard for thinking about the four cardinal virtues, the logismoi or negative thoughts that attack us, most obviously when we try to pray, and some counter-measures we can take. The early Fathers emphasized the powerful counter-measure of stillness. Abba Arsenius (c.369-449) once heard the words. 'Flee, keep silence, be still, for herein lie the roots of sinlessness.' In our day we especially need to flee from constant bombardment by the media. These assaults create distracted and neurotic disturbance in us and prevent us from reaching the constant and loving attention to God that can be given in us prayer.

Faith, hope and charity (love) are the Theological Virtues. They are the crown of all the virtues because they enable us to participate in the divine nature, to be perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect (Matthew 5: 48). By faith we commit ourselves entirely to God, seeking to know and do his will. We are called not only to live by faith but also to profess it. Jesus says, 'Everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father in heaven (Matthew 10: 32-33). By Hope we desire the Kingdom of Heaven and eternal life as our happiness. Hope is expressed and nourished in prayer, and especially in the Our Father, the summary of everything that hope leads us to desire. In hope we pray for all humanity to be saved (1 Timothy 2: 4). Charity it the virtue by which we love God above all things for his own sake, and our neighbour as ourselves for the love of God. Jesus has made this love his new commandment. 'this is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you' (John 15: 9. 12). The fruits of charity are joy, peace and mercy.



To enable us to grow in these virtues we need God's direct help, which is given to us through Jesus Christ. God is never absent and is everywhere present, but his help is given to us most fully in the Sacraments of the Church, which ensure that our whole life is directed and drawn to eternal fulfilment in the Trinity.

The British Values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance for those of different faiths and beliefs can be a starting point, but they are an impoverished diet by comparison with that fullness of life in God that Jesus has come to bring us (John 10: 10). We can end our reflections with words of encouragement from St Augustine: 'Love is itself the fulfilment of all our works. There is the goal; that is why we run; we run towards it, and once we reach it, in it we shall find rest.'

Dom Leo Maidlow Davis

Elections for the Parish Pastoral Council: In our last issue we announced that the annual general meeting of the Parish Pastoral Council will be held in the Abbey Visitor Centre after the 11 a.m. Mass on 21 November, the Solemnity of Christ the King. At that meeting, there will be elections for new members of the Parish Pastoral Council. Six members are to be elected by open election to serve for two years before standing down or being re-elected, and six are nominated by the Parish Priests to serve for two years. Peter Beaven, the current chair, will have to stand down because he is moving out of the parish; we are immensely grateful to him. Parishioners will appreciate how important a strong Parish Pastoral Council is going to be over the coming years. To help this process we are preparing a list of the roles needed to enable the parish to flourish. This list will be distributed at Mass this weekend, and we invite you to tick the boxes against roles that you could offer to fill. The list is also attached to this newsletter (See the 3 concluding pages), to enable you to look it over in advance. Please consider how you will vote at the AGM and be ready, if you can, to accept a role if you are elected or invited to be a member.

Doris Matthews, RIP: Doris's funeral will take place in the Holy Ghost Church, Midsomer Norton, at 11 a.m. on Friday 19 November.

Remembrance Events: A series of events is taking place from 10th to 19th November to commemorate Remembrance Day. There will be an exhibition in the abbey church of items from the heritage collections relating to Downside and the impact of both World Wars, an online talk about the Great War Memorial in the abbey church and special tours of the abbey exploring the many memorials and the stories behind them. To find out more and book onto an event visit www.downside.co.uk/shop/events or email sparsons@downside.co.uk



Martyrology: Tuesday 9 November is the Feast of the Dedication of the Lateran Basilica. The Lateran is Rome's cathedral church, which tradition says was dedicated on this day by Constantine. The basilica is called the Mother and Head of all Churches of the City and the World, and is celebrated as a sign of unity and respect towards the Holy See, which, as St Ignatius of Antioch wrote, 'presides over the whole assembly of charity'.



Wednesday 10 November is the Memorial of St Leo the Great, Pope and Doctor of the Church.

Leo was elected Pope in 440 at a time of civil and doctrinal disorder. His letter to the Council of Chalcedon of 451, known as the Tome of Leo, was a brilliant and beautiful statement of the doctrine of the Incarnation. Leo died in about the year 461. Here is a memorable statement of Leo's: 'No one, however weak, is denied a share in the victory of the cross. No one is beyond the help of the prayer of Christ.'

Readings for the Thirty-Second Sunday of the Year (B)

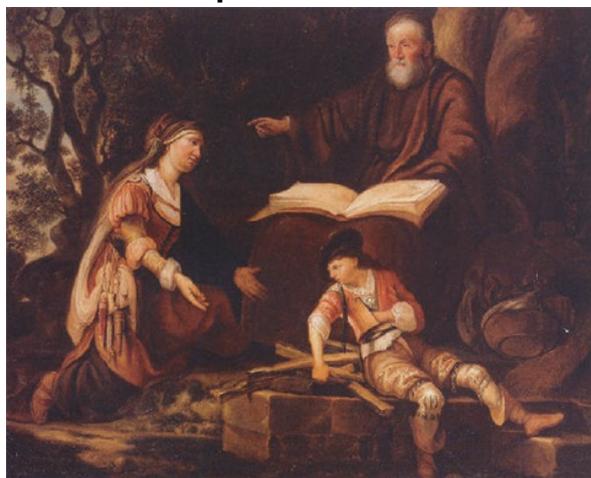
First reading

'Jar of meal shall not be spent, jug of oil shall not be emptied'

Elijah the Prophet went off to Sidon. And when he reached the city gate, there was a widow gathering sticks; addressing her he said, 'Please bring me a little water in a vessel for me to drink.' She was setting off to bring it when he called after her. 'Please' he said 'bring me a scrap of bread in your hand.' 'As the Lord your God lives,' she replied 'I have no baked bread, but only a handful of meal in a jar and a little oil in a jug; I am just gathering a stick or two to go and prepare this for myself and my son to eat, and then we shall die.' But Elijah said to her, 'Do not be afraid, go and do as you have said; but first make a little scone of it for me and bring it to me, and then make some for yourself and for your son. For thus the Lord speaks, the God of Israel:

“Jar of meal shall not be spent,
jug of oil shall not be emptied,
before the day when the Lord sends
rain on the face of the earth.”

The woman went and did as Elijah told her and they ate the food, she, himself and her son. The jar of meal was not spent nor the jug of oil emptied, just as the Lord had foretold through Elijah (1Kings 17: 10-16).



Gerrit Willemisz Horst 1612-1652

Second reading

Christ, our high priest, has done away with sin by sacrificing himself

It is not as though Christ had entered a man-made sanctuary which was only modelled on the real one; but it was heaven itself, so that he could appear in the actual presence of God on our behalf. And he does not have to offer himself again and again, like the high priest going into the sanctuary year after year with the blood that is not his own, or else he would have had to suffer over and over again since the world began. Instead of that, he has made his appearance once and for all, now at the end of the last age, to do away with sin by sacrificing himself. Since men only die once, and after that comes judgement, so Christ, too, offers himself only once to take the faults of many on himself, and when he appears a second time, it will not be to deal with sin but to reward with salvation those who are waiting for him (Hebrews 9:24-28).

Gospel

Motivation: *Today's readings tell of God's generosity towards each of us, a generosity that is an expression of his unconditional love for us. As you read or listen to the Gospel, think how God's generosity has manifested itself in your life; it is God after all, who is the source of all that is good, beautiful and true. Ask: 'How can I respond to that same generosity – in what areas of my life particularly is the Holy Spirit prompting me to be more spontaneous, more loving, more open to living the Gospel message?'*

This will need courage – do not be afraid! In this encounter with God through his Word, Our Lord is ready and waiting to walk with you, on this journey, just as he himself has walked this same journey of loving obedience to his Father's will. It will be deeply humbling and also transformative as you learn with him how to be spontaneously and lovingly generous in your life. The Lord loves a cheerful giver and he is never outdone in generosity.

This poor widow has put in more than all

In his teaching Jesus said, 'Beware of the scribes who like to walk about in long robes, to be greeted obsequiously in the market squares, to take the front seats in the synagogues and the places of honour at banquets; these are the men who swallow the property of widows, while making a show of lengthy prayers. The more severe will be the sentence they receive.'



He sat down opposite the treasury and watched the people putting money into the treasury, and many of the rich put in a great deal. A poor widow came and put in two small coins, the equivalent of a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, 'I tell you solemnly, this poor widow has put more in than all who have contributed to the treasury; for they have all put in money they had over, but she from the little she had has put in everything she possessed, all she had to live on' (Mark 12:38-44).

St Benedict's Parish, Stratton-on-the-Fosse

For many years, as a result of the willingness of its parishioners to share their talents, St Benedict's has been regarded as an excellent example of an active community of faith. As the pandemic now appears to be receding, and given the reality of a shortage of clergy, if St Benedict's is to continue its mission of Catholic practice and Christian witness, we need to strengthen the involvement of individuals in the work of the parish. Each of us has God-given gifts and talents which could contribute to one of the ministries below. Please reflect on your gifts and talents and indicate where you might be able to do your bit! No contribution is too small.

Parish Ministries	Please enter tick, or preferably, several ticks
ADMINISTRATIVE	
Parish Pastoral Council. Contributing to the oversight of the parish's mission and its pursuit. Meetings approximately 3 months apart, 4 per year	
General Parish administration. Undertaking a variety of office/IT based tasks to meet legal and other regulations.	
Communications. Helping to ensure good communications regarding parish life eg. editing parish bulletin/newsletter, Facebook page, etc. Update and maintain parish contact lists	
Church maintenance. Helping, as one of a group, to ensure that the fabric of the church is maintained in good order.	
Church opening. On a rota of people opening & closing the church prior to and following services.	
Church cleaning & flowers. On a rota of people helping to clean the church also obtaining and arranging flowers in the church.	
Financial Management. Helping, as one of a small group, to ensure the parish remains financially viable. e.g., counting, banking, Gift Aid, book keeping, etc.	
PASTORAL	
Welcomers. On a rota of people who welcome people before services, give them mass & hymn books, etc, and collect and tidy these away afterwards.	
Hospitality. On a rota of people to prepare, serve tea/coffee after main masses, and to wash up afterwards.	
Catechist. Helping children & adults new to the Church to understand it and its teachings and sacramental preparation. Now an 'official' Church ministry. (Diocesan training provided).	
Special Events. Organising one-off events: eg Retreat days, Pilgrimages, Scripture Courses, etc.	
Visitors. Visiting the housebound and the ill**. Helping with transport to Mass	

Outreach. Helping to reach out to Catholics who are no longer involved in the church and to others. Fostering links with other denominations in the locality and promoting joint witness.	
Taking communion to the housebound and sick. Undertaken by Eucharistic Ministers.** See in LITURGICAL below.	
Safeguarding. Overseeing and monitoring policies and procedures to ensure the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. (Diocesan training & support available)	
Social. Helping to organise social events to draw the parish together, and sometimes raise money for good causes	

NB Guidance, support & training are available, as appropriate, for all these roles.

**** These roles require DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) clearance to meet the requirement to safeguard children and vulnerable adults. This can be obtained. Please Turn Over**

Parish Ministries (continued)	Please enter tick, or preferably, several ticks
LITURGICAL	
Readers. On a rota to read at masses and other services.	
Children's Liturgy. To prepare and lead a children's liturgy of the word during mass.** (Resources are readily available)	
Eucharistic Ministers. On a rota to distribute communion at masses. Can also help in the taking of communion to the housebound and ill.** (Requires training and annual commissioning)	
Musicians. To contribute to the selection and accompaniment of music & hymns during services	
Bidding prayers. To prepare and provide bidding prayers to be read at main masses	
Altar servers. To recruit and train individuals to be altar servers.**	
Sacristans. To prepare vestments and books for Mass and other services and to return them afterwards; to wash and maintain linen and other necessary items.	
CHARITABLE	
Promoting and helping to organise fund-raising activities, such as Mary's Meals	
Acting as the parish contact for the APF (Association for the Propagation of the Faith) and Missio red boxes appeal	
Acting as the parish contact for one of the official agencies of the Bishops' conference: CAFOD.	
Helping to encourage support for the work of the local Food Bank.	
Assisting in our support of Fr Reddy, a diocesan priest in India.	

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NB Guidance, support & training are available, as appropriate, for all these roles.

**** These roles require DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) clearance to meet the requirement to safeguard children and vulnerable adults. This can be obtained.**

Please add below any contribution you think you could make which is not covered above:

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Your name (please print)

Your address

..... Postcode

'Phone number Email address

Please complete this form and place in the box in the Abbey Church porch.

Thank you.

St Benedict's Parish Pastoral Council

November 2021