



St John Boste Parish, West Durham
Esh, Esh Winning, Langley Park and Ushaw Moor

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Hospital
R C Chaplain Father Paul Tully Tel. (01388) 818544

Please telephone the Chaplain if you have someone in hospital who would like a visit.



Twenty fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A) : 20 September 2020

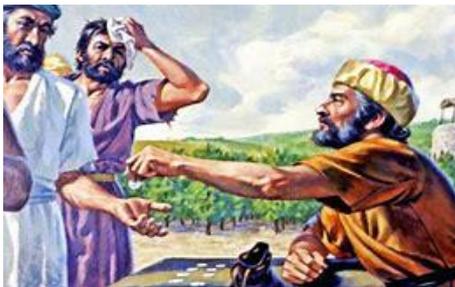
The Lord says, 'My ways are not your ways': Most of us, I suppose, see ourselves to be good people. Not perfect, admittedly, but still pretty okay. Certainly not 'bad' people. And we can think of God as rather like ourselves, but just a whole lot better: more patient, more understanding, more forgiving. Yet this, in many ways, is to create God in our own image and likeness - the opposite of how the bible portrays the situation. The bible often describes God with the Hebrew word *kadosh*. This is often translated as 'holy' but originally it meant 'different'. And so, the challenge is to 'be different, as the Lord your God is different'. Today, in the writings of Isaiah, the Lord says: '*my thoughts are not your thoughts, my ways are not your ways*'. Let's take a closer look:-

'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 are not your ways - it is the Lord who speaks. Yes, the heavens are as high above the earth as my ways are above your ways, my thoughts above your thoughts.'

(Isaiah 55: 6-9)

So, what sort of a person is God? Today's psalm, Psalm 144, is similar to last week's in its message when it says that '*the Lord is kind and full of compassion, slow to anger, abounding in love. How good is the Lord to all*'. That's the bit that strikes me: 'How good is the Lord to all'. Not just to *some* people, but to all.

In the gospel Jesus tells a story that presents God as so different from us that he might appear to be downright unfair. The story is about people eager to work, to earn money for their families, but they are dependent on someone wanting to hire them. But instead of reading this story from the point of view of the workmen who have toiled all day, read it instead from the perspective of someone who is desperate to work but has only just managed to find work at the eleventh hour. Then the story portrays God to be ridiculously generous!



'Jesus said to his disciples: "The kingdom of heaven is like a landowner going out to work at daybreak to hire labourers 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 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 around and he said to them, "Why have you been standing here idle all day?" "Because no one has hired us," they answered. He said, "You go into my vineyard too." In the evening, the owner of the vineyard

said to his bailiff, "Call the workers and pay them wages, starting with the last arrivals and ending with the first." So, those who were hired at 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 only done one hour's work, and you have treated them the same as us, though we have done a heavy day's work in all the heat." He answered them, "My friend, I am not being unjust to you; did we not agree on one denarius? 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)

- Have you ever felt that God's treatment of you was unfair? Can you identify why you felt this?

Anniversaries:

St Joseph's: Audrey Craggs, Derek Isles, Chris Duggan, John Dodds, Ellen McQuillan, Brenda McQuillan.

Our Lady, Queen of Martyrs: Jill Oliver, Sarah Raynor, Anne Tomlinson, Noreen Harrison, Joyce Towns.

St Michael's: Patrick Sands, Kathleen Ryan, Geraldine Bevenly, Norman Gowland, Mary Bailey, William McTear, Peter White, Ellie Lavelle, John Coulson, Agnes Cairns, Jack Penny.

25TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Gathering for mass: We have completed the 'deep clean' at our churches at Ushaw Moor, Newhouse and Esh and we are hoping to open up for masses soon. However, the re-opening of our churches does hinge upon our having plenty of people to assist with stewarding and cleaning. Opening up other churches means that our volunteer stewards and cleaners will now need to be split three ways so, to avoid having to ask the same people to serve each week, it would still be good to have more people volunteer their services. We currently have nine people who have offered from St Joseph's, five from OLQM and seven from St Michael's. It is not hard work so it would be good to share it out. For now, we will still have a mass at St Joseph's next Sunday at 10.00am but we soon hope to move to Saturdays at 6.00pm - our regular time. If you would like to come to our mass next Sunday, 27 September at 10.00am, please phone the **Parish Office** this coming **THURSDAY** on **373 0219 between 10.00am – 2.00pm, or phone Christine Brennan on 366 9465 between 5.00 – 6.00pm.** Please try to keep to these times if possible! Let us know if you are coming as an individual, as a couple, or as a household group. Please don't come to church if you have a cold or symptoms of flu. As the weather gets cooler it could be an idea to wear warm clothing too since we need to leave doors open. When you arrive at church you will be met by someone who will check your name against the booking list and ensure we have your phone number in case of a further virus outbreak locally. You will need to sanitise your hands on coming into the church and then be led to a specific seat by a steward (not necessarily your *favourite* seat, I'm afraid). Since some people have specifically asked, you may wish to leave your collection envelope/cash donation in a basket *before* sanitising your hands. It is great that we can meet again at church but do, please, try not to congregate in the narthex. Remember too that it is now obligatory to wear a face covering in all enclosed public spaces, including churches. Higher infections at present, any sense of vulnerability and the need to wear face coverings may well put some people off coming to church for now but please remember that, at present, the obligation to come to mass remains relaxed. You only need to come to church *if you feel comfortable in coming*. As I have mentioned a few times recently, each building needs a simple cleaning of benches and surfaces before every further opening for prayer, masses, baptisms, weddings and funerals. Since the initial deep clean has been done we follow a strict cleaning protocol which is straightforward, and the cleaning can now be done in less than 30 minutes. If **you** would like to volunteer to help with cleaning or with stewarding, please contact the Parish Office: you can phone 0191-373 0219 or you can email: stjosephs.ushawmoor@btopenworld.com

Retiring collection at mass today: It seems a little odd to be having special collections at present but we have been informed by the bishop's office that there are three coming up. I can't really imagine the donations will be spectacularly high when so few people are able to come to mass. Anyway, there will be a collection basket at the exit door this Sunday if you would like to contribute to a collection for 'the Holy Places of Palestine'. This money goes to support fellow Christians in Palestine whose daily lives can be far from easy.



Feast day: Monday: St Matthew, apostle and evangelist ('announcer of the message of Jesus').

Wednesday: St Padre Pio, the Italian priest renowned, among other things, to be able to 'see into people's hearts' when hearing their confession.

Thursday: Our Lady of Walsingham, England's shrine to Mary.

Hospital visits: If you know of a patient who wants a visit from the Catholic Hospital Chaplain, please inform Fr Paul Tully on 01388 818544 or frpaultully@outlook.com

'Northern Cross': This is the newspaper which gives news, comment and chat from parishes, partnerships and schools all over our diocese. However, because of the pandemic, the paper is struggling financially. The September edition is now available on-line. The main story mentions Pat Morton who attends St Michael's, Esh! You can subscribe to 'Northern Cross' by cheque for a postal delivery or seek to read it on-line. Further details on our parish website [wdrcp.org] or in the letter accompanying this newsletter. Could *you* support 'Northern Cross'?

Readings next week: 26th Sunday: Ezekiel 18: 25-28; Psalm 24; Philippians 2:1-11; Matthew 21: 28-32.

Church cleaning this week

(UM): Colleen Brown, Melanie Lee, Christine Brennan, Kevin Pugh.



Food Bank: should anyone be willing and able to give (on what would, in 'normal' times, have been a collection weekend in our churches) cash donations are still much appreciated. This allows the team to fill gaps in current supply, targeting shortages effectively. Please go to the website (durham.foodbank.org.uk) and click on the 'Donate Now' button, or you can send a cheque (made out to Durham Foodbank) to their Head Office: Mile House, Bridge End, Chester Le Street DH3 3RA.

