

St George's Newsletter

No.153

Lent 2

Sunday 5th March 2023

10.00am All Age Mass

Next Wednesday, March 8th, is International Women's Day which is celebrated in many countries around the world. It is a day when women are recognized for their achievements without regard to divisions, whether national, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic or political.

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Dear Friends,

Our Gospel today paints a striking scene of face-to-face encounter that unfolds in the dark of night. Nicodemus has come to Jesus in humility. He is a religious leader and teacher. He has been struck by the signs and miracles he has witnessed Jesus perform, and desires to know more. Yet Nicodemus struggles to open his heart and mind fully. He clings with a certain literal-mindedness to his familiar categories and achievements: 'How can anyone be born after having grown old?' he asks. No doubt this incredulity is tied to his religious position. He is used to having the answer, to being right. But through the dialogue, Nicodemus is led into a different kind of knowing that must have felt to him like a darkness. Jesus gently but firmly challenges his, and, indeed, all of us, to break free from our earthly measures and need for certainty and trust in the truth of the love of God revealed in Jesus' very own person.

This encounter between Jesus and Nicodemus, in fact, offers a rather surprising notion of truth itself. Instead of a sense of abstract truth that demands our assent, that many rightly perceive to restrict individual freedom and, consequently, leads them tragically to claim there is no such thing as truth only what the powerful force upon us, here we see how Jesus shows truth to be a matter of freedom, commitment and relationship, or better still, friendship.

This has ancient roots as revealed in the word philosophy. Philosophy does not simply mean the love of wisdom (Sophia) but refers to the specific kind of love associated with friendship. Jesus shows how this applies not only in philosophy but even more so in theology. Theology is not to be seen as a subject that some study in university. It is rather the discipline, the way of life, thought and prayer, that belongs to those who seek to be friends with God's truth and wisdom, who come to know and be known by God after the manner of friends, and who live this truth out in the world according to the pattern of self-giving love revealed in Jesus. Truth, in other words, can never simply be about abstract propositions but, like friendship, is more fundamentally a matter of the transformation that comes from relationships bound together in pursuing the greater good. If we do sometimes find it difficult to discern the truth of any given matter, this may have less to do with the fact that we can never know the truth about anything, and more about the fact that truth in its fullest sense comes to us more like a gift, an event, a person, as a relationship of commitment and trust that takes us beyond ourselves, than some abstract concept we can possess with certitude.

And this is what Jesus tells us in the Gospel. Through the gift of the Spirit, which is given freely from above to all who trust in Jesus, we are brought into relationship with the truth that sets us free. And this truth is the eternal life that shines out defiantly even from the darkness of the cross and which is nothing less than our being given a share even now in the life of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Friendship with God is nothing sentimental or superficial. It will demand everything of us and transform us with the living truth of love, a truth which we are called to embody in our relationships and friendship with others in the world. But can we let go of our narrow measures and certainties and open ourselves to God's truth; the God who is always greater than we make him out to be? The God who came, in truth, not to condemn the world, but to save it through the gift of friendship offered to all in Jesus Christ.

With my prayers and blessings,
Fr Angus

Friday is my day of rest unless the matter is very urgent.

The Rite of Reconciliation (also known as the Sacrament of Confession) is available to anyone by appointment with Fr Angus.

It is now possible to donate to St George's using your smartphone by scanning the QR Code shown on the right. If you are unsure on how to use it, please seek advice from our Treasurer, Alison Davis, or Fr Angus.



This Week's Diary – March

Sunday 5th - All Age Mass

Events Committee in Lady Chapel, after Mass

Monday 6th - St George's Tots in the Centre – 10:30am to 12:00pm

Tuesday 7th – St George's Church Choir rehearsal in the Centre @ 6pm

WRAP Community Choir meet in the Centre @ 7.30pm

Wednesday 8th - Said Mass in the Lady Chapel - 11.30am

Lent Group in Centre 7.30pm

Thursday 9th - Said Mass in the Lady Chapel - 9.30am

Stations of the Cross with Adoration – 2.00pm

Saturday 11th Friends of St Mary's Churchyard launch in the Centenary Centre - 2 p.m.

Sunday 12th – Lent 3 Parish Mass with Confirmation service with Bishop Martin at 10am.

Wednesday Lent Group: Psalms of Lament and Praise – Our Lent Group this year will be exploring the Book of Psalms. The psalms transform every human experience into an expression of profound prayer. During each session, we will be delving into the rich and challenging language of psalms and connecting it to our own experiences. Participants will need to bring a copy of the bible (copies also available in church). **There will be four sessions held at 7:30pm each Wednesday from 8th March to 29th March, meeting in the Centenary Centre.** Fr Angus will lead the sessions, but group participation will be essential! Sign-up sheets are available at the back of church.

Stations of the Cross with Adoration - At 2pm on each Thursday during Lent, 2nd March to 30th March, there will be a service of the Stations of the Cross followed by a short period of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the Lady Chapel. Everyone is welcome to this meditative service in which we follow the way Christ walked through suffering into the fullness of the life of the resurrection.

Friends of St Mary's Churchyard: This newly formed group has the aim of maintaining the churchyard and managing it for wildlife as well as raising its profile as a treasure house of local and family history. It will seek to draw in members and volunteers both from the church congregation and wider community. **The group will have its official launch on Saturday 11 March at 2 p.m. in the Centenary Centre.**

In order to be entitled to attend the Annual Parochial Church Meeting and to take part in its proceedings you must be enrolled on the **Parish Electoral Roll**. The Annual revision of the roll takes place from March 5th until April 23rd and the new roll is published for at least 15 days before the APCM which this year is on Sunday May 14th. If your name is not on it and you wish it to be please speak to Rosemary Lay, or Lesley Valerio who is to take over the post of Electoral Roll Officer following the APCM

Come and Sing! We are looking for new people to join the church choir at St George's. Whether you are a confident singer or not, we invite anyone who is interested to come along to choir rehearsal every Tuesday evening at 6pm. You and your voice will be warmly welcomed. For more information, please speak to Sue Howell-Evans, our Director of Music.

Events Committee – A meeting of the Events Committee will be taking place this **Sunday, 5th March** after Mass, in the Lady Chapel. The committee are looking for more members and helpers to provide support when holding events for the church. Please just go along.

Another Appeal – We are looking for new members to join our group of hospitality folk who provide support in the kitchen, whether on Sundays after mass or at church social functions, including the soon to return Last Friday in the Month concerts. We are also looking for an individual prepared to be the 'Go To' in co-ordinating the small teams, per event. Also, someone to take on the preparing of the Sunday Tea & Coffee rota. Could you take on one of the above roles? Please do have a word with Fr Angus, Geraldine or Jenny.

WRAP-CHAT - Very sincere thanks to Ken Green who gave a most entertaining talk on Chichester Cathedral, historical and at times amusing, particularly regarding those who had made their mark over the centuries. A well-attended event. St David's Day was celebrated with vases of daffodils on the tables and everyone joining in to sing Land of our Fathers. Next meeting, **April 5th 3pm** when our Edward Gray will entertain us with stories of his life in the hospitality world. All are most welcome to attend, just £2 at the door.

THANK YOU to Louise Gibbons for organizing the Happy Café breakfast which took place on Saturday 25th February. Thank you also to everyone who helped and came along on the day. It proved a great success. Everyone seemed to enjoy the food and social occasion. The breakfast raised £246.00 towards church funds.

Contact details:

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Rector: Revd. Fr. Angus Reid Tel. 01243 533112 Email: frangusreid@outlook.com

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