

ST ETHELBERT'S CHURCH, LEOMINSTER
& ST JOSEPH'S, BROMYARD

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12th July 2020: 15th Sunday of the year

In the readings at today's Mass we hear the parable of the sower who went out to sow his seed. It is the only occasion in the Gospel where the meaning of the parable is explained in great detail. In the story Jesus speaks about the sower who sows his seed and in many cases the seed fails to mature due to poor soil, or being choked by thorns or eaten by birds. In the Gospel we are told that the seed represents the word of God and the story illustrates the fact that although we hear the word it often fails to bear fruit in our lives because we fail to understand it or are distracted by worldly affairs.

As we read the Gospel today, perhaps we need to remember that we are celebrating the Year of the Word, a year when we are asked to reflect on the word of God and allow the Word to touch our lives in some way. If we are really open to the Word of God it can be challenging and may cause us to change our ways or our outlook on life.

The challenge of today's Gospel is to 'hear' the Word of God. It is a very scriptural word and contains essentially four elements:

- to listen to the word with a totally open and unconditional mind
- to try to understand what one hears
- to accept and take on board what one understands and, finally,
- to allow the word to challenge our way of living and behaviour.



'Thus says the Lordso the word that goes from my mouth does not return to me empty, without carrying out my will and succeeding in what it was sent to do.'

(First Reading Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Isaiah 55:11)



Masses for this week

Although we cannot gather to celebrate the Mass, I will continue to pray for you all as I celebrate a private Mass each day. The mass intentions for this week are:

Sunday	15 th Sunday of Ordinary Time	People of our parishes
Monday		Oliver Condon
Tuesday		Private Intention
Wednesday	St Bonaventure	Rebecca Mulrine (sick)
Thursday	Our Lady of Mount Carmel	
Friday		Holy Souls
Saturday		

St Joseph's Bromyard will be open for private prayer and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament on Thursday from 10am until 12 noon. Please follow the instructions at the church door.

Unfortunately, we are not yet in a position where we can celebrate Mass at Bromyard in a way which complies with current legislation. Hopefully the situation will change in the not too distant future.

Mass at St Ethelbert's

I am delighted to say that we have finally been given permission to open St Ethelbert's for the celebration of Mass as long as this is in line with government, diocesan and Bishop's Conference guidelines. Next Sunday, I will celebrate Mass at 9.00am and 5.30pm, the change in time in the Sunday evening Mass is to allow time to sanitise the church after the Mass.

There will be a number of requirements and restrictions that will have to be strictly adhered to:

- The number of individuals/ household units that can be accommodated at each Mass will be 14.
- Those attending Mass will be required to sanitise their hands on entering the church and wear a face mask throughout the Mass (this is essential to comply with the reduced 1 meter plus social distance inside the church.)
- A reminder that outside the church the social distance of 2 meters should be adhered to
- For the time being, the ministries of reader, Eucharistic ministers and altar servers will be suspended.
- Anyone feeling unwell or showing symptoms of COVID-19 should not enter the church.
- Also, anyone who is shielding or living with someone who is shielding should not attend Mass.
- In order to comply with the Government's Track and Trace system, a register has to be kept of all those present at Mass. These details will be kept for 21 days as per Government requirements.

As the number of people attending Mass is restricted I would ask that those wishing to attend contact the presbytery, preferably by email leominster@rcadc.org or phone if you do not have email, stating which Mass you wish to attend and the number of people if you are attending as a household unit. If more than 14 individuals/household units apply I will let you know that we have already reached capacity.

Hopefully, we will be able to increase the number of Masses as time goes on but this will depend on the availability of Stewards and people who can help to sanitise the church after each Mass.

Supporting Your Parish Financially.

I would like to thank those who have been concerned about how our parishes can keep going financially without the regular income from the collection. I am very grateful to those of you who have continued to donate by standing order, those who sent cheques and those who have put a donation through the letterbox.

The Archdiocese has now created a way that card donations can be made online to individual parishes through the Archdiocesan website. This online giving can be accessed from the homepage of the diocesan website under the heading: Support your parish during COVID-19 lockdown or from the main donations page at rcadc.org/donations

The instructions should be straightforward to follow and by clicking on the relevant parish you will be able to make an offertory donation via Virgin Giving.

I know that these are difficult times when many are experiencing financial difficulties and I do thank you for thinking about our parishes at this time.

ST. MARY MAGDALENE

On 22nd July we celebrate the Feast of St. Mary Magdalene but who was she? Pope Francis declared her as the *Apostle to the Apostles* and elevated her role in the life of the Church. Read our article on who she was, and why her identity is so complex here - www.godwhospeaks.uk/the-god-who-speaks/focus/scripture-and-saints/apostle-to-the-apostles-reclaiming-st-mary-of-magdala/

How has Mary Magdalene been portrayed in art? We've selected 6 paintings to show different facets of her character and life here - www.godwhospeaks.uk/the-god-who-speaks/focus/scripture-and-saints/st-mary-magdalene-in-art/