

# *This Week at St Mary's*

31<sup>st</sup> MAY 2020

## PRAYING TOGETHER ON-LINE

Nearly ten years ago I was persuaded to be part of an 'online prayer group'. Joanna and I were both initially adamant, 'you need to be in same room to pray together!' Our experience since then says how wrong I was. Unless sleep or no internet prevents, each morning we join with 6-8 others (not always the same.) This combination of friendship and 'spirituality' has transformed my (our) prayer life.

I've been praying for opportunity to explore doing the same at St Mary's. I was, therefore, delighted when Charles Price suggested we find a way during Thy Kingdom Come to pray together, at this time on line, of course. Following the approach which has evolved in the Morning Prayer group.

- We selected 5 times we would pray together over the 10 days, **starting promptly at 6.00 and finishing within 30 minutes.**
- **Skype audio call** (we have not found using video helps!) with loudspeaker phone for one internet-less participant.
- Follow the **basic format of Compline**, with variations, ie not the same Psalm and reading each time and include short 'Examen', 'Lectio Divina' and **open prayer** (silent or spoken.)
- Make it as **participative** as possible, sharing round who reads, prays and who sings (distortion results if try do so together.)

*Praying together online has made it possible to connect meaningfully with others, to remind ourselves of God's goodness, and to collectively bring our requests to him. An invaluable reminder that we are not alone during this season of isolation and difficulty. (Grant Walton)*

*I've said compline in a lot of different contexts, most recently at the end of St Mary's Second Thursday monthly group meetings, and I've found that it's a service which asks you to reflect not only on the day that's just gone but on the whole of life. So I signed up for St Mary's online compline with a sense both of continuity and of fear for the unimaginable future. It's a modern compline for a modern distanced medium, but it's still a powerful opportunity for reflection, penitence and hope. (Margaret Wiedemann)*

*Tom Gillman*

## MILTON'S SACRED INFLUENCE OF LIGHT - Will Burn

To be honest, I don't often read Milton for pleasure. He's hard work and you either have to dodge between poem and footnotes every few lines or skip the notes and hope all the classical references make sense eventually. They often don't. Yet this passage is one I have read over and over. It is a masterpiece of scale, almost filmic as we follow Satan's gaze, moving from Heaven's colossal battlements to the tiny, fragile jewel hanging by a slender chain. Creation is a precious pendant, but also dependent, contingent.

These past eight weeks of isolation and separation have often seemed chaotic, dark and fraught with mischief, but as I read this passage again, there is consolation: the sacred influence of light will bring a glimmering dawn, we will make our way out of this dark time, with wandering steps and slow, and providence our guide.

*But now at last the sacred influence  
Of light appears, and from the walls of Heaven  
Shoots far into the bosom of dim night  
A glimmering dawn. Here nature first begins  
Her farthest verge, and chaos to retire,  
As from her outmost works, a broken foe,  
With tumult less and with less hostile din;  
That Satan with less toil, and now with ease,  
Wafts on the calmer wave by dubious light,  
And, like a weather-beaten vessel, holds  
Gladly the port, though shrouds and tackle torn;  
Or in the emptier waste, resembling air,  
Weighs his spread wings, at leisure to behold  
Far off the empyreal Heaven, extended wide  
In circuit, undetermined square or round,  
With opal towers and battlements adorned  
Of living sapphire, once his native seat;  
And, fast by, hanging in a golden chain,  
This pendent world, in bigness as a star  
Of smallest magnitude close by the moon.  
Thither, full fraught with mischievous revenge,  
Accursed, and in a cursed hour, he hies.*

**THE MEADOWS FOODBANK** - Thanks again to those who have already responded. Buy each week an extra (non perishable) item as an act of self giving love, for someone you don't know. Let Beth Mitchell 07775707855 0115 947 6736 tony.m1941@icloud.com know when you've got a few to collect. **Particularly needed now: SUGAR (small packets,) COFFEE, CEREAL, TINS OF SPAGHETTI, MACARONI CHEESE, POTATOES, TOOTHBRUSHES, WASHING UP LIQUID.**

## **LOCKDOWN REFLECTIONS - IOAN REED-ASPLEY**

One of the lowest points of the last couple of months was the day when I collected Huey (my son) from school not knowing when he would return. The realisation that the pandemic was going to be a game-changer for everyone made for a sombre moment of reflection. Arriving home, Huey went through his usual ritual of casually discarding his uniform on the stairs. My wife and I joked that it wouldn't fit him the next time he tried it on. Little did we know this is going to be the case.

On balance, I think the last couple of months have been some of the toughest in 6 ½ years of parenting. Huey is young enough to make up lost ground, but not quite old enough to always appreciate that we're trying our hardest to support him. It has made us acutely aware of how sensitive children are to change and how much they crave stability.

We have tried to stick to a daily routine and throughout, the school has been fantastically supportive. In some respects, we've been fortunate in that I was furloughed after week three of lockdown. My wife's work has been put on hold until later in the year and, while not ideal, it has allowed us both to focus all our energy on supporting Huey. On balance we have concluded that his welfare would benefit from some resemblance of normality, so he will return to school for two days a week from 8 June.

I'm sure, in time, we'll look back fondly on these days as it's unlikely we'll have many more opportunities in the future to spend such uninterrupted family time together. In some ways it has been quite liberating as the normal pressures of life have been put on hold. We, like everyone else, wait with intrigue to see what a post-Covid world will look like.

### **VIRTUAL COFFEE AND CAKE/PRE-LUNCH DRINK 7<sup>th</sup> June**

A chance for fellowship after the 1100 service, via a video calling software. Bishop Paul will be speaking that day and will be joining us. Please let Di know [admin@stmarynotts.org](mailto:admin@stmarynotts.org) if you'd like to join in.

**GIVING MONEY** - Best done online but cheque also welcome. Preferable from the church's viewpoint is a **Standing Order** (NatWest 560061 00834602) For **One-off donations**, use either the **QR code** or **Donate button** on the website. *Having to close the church has affected our rental income as well as donations: the need now is, if you can, please to increase your financial commitment to St Mary's.*

Wherever you are, we extend a very warm greeting to you, especially if you've recently discovered St Mary's

*We regret that in the current public health context, St Mary's has to remain closed.*

*The garden is open weekdays 10.00-3.00*

**11.00am SUNDAY SERVICE - livestreamed**

*(See our website and follow the link, including for Order of Service)*

LAST WEEK'S SERVICE - A small number have reported experiencing an interruption to last Sunday morning's service. Of course, we realise how unwelcome this will have been, but we have been reassured that for those concerned, the problem lay with their internet service provider, and not with the broadcast, which for the majority proceeded without issue.

~~~

**Please continue to pray for**

Estelle Barks  
John Bowers  
John Conway  
Harry Palmer  
Mike Ridley

~~~~~



~~~~~  
Email [admin@stmarynotts.org](mailto:admin@stmarynotts.org) Web [stmarysnottingham.org](http://stmarysnottingham.org)

Facebook Instagram Twitter @stmarysnotts

Office Mon-Fri 10-3pm 0115 958 2105 (infrequently being checked)

Rev'd Tom Gillum 07825 041 432 [tom.gillum@stmarynotts.org](mailto:tom.gillum@stmarynotts.org)