

Parish of St Winefride, Lymm

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Newsletter 4 June 2020

Greetings to my esteemed readers! As one accustomed to having my life ruled by the Liturgical Calendar, I have been preoccupied by with the change back to so-called 'Ordinary Time'. The Easter season is over, we celebrated the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at the first Pentecost, and apart from ceasing to cry 'alleluia' at every turn, we ponder with the apostles the reality of getting on with the job, the task entrusted to all believers to 'go and teach all nations'. It would be good to be able to think that after ten weeks upheaval because of coronavirus, the days of lockdown were nearly over, and everything was 'back to normal'. Even the weather seems to be back to normal.

The first tentative message came from Bishop Davies this week that plans have to be made for opening our churches again. As always his advice is careful and caring, and in practice it goes into detail about providing supplies of PPE, (face masks, gloves, and hand sanitiser, barrier tape and floor-marking tape), along with household disinfectant, disposable cloths and aprons, and 'marigolds' etc. He acknowledges that the demands of managing stewarding, maintaining social distancing and undertaking cleaning procedures, when we are told what Public Health England expects, will no doubt be burdensome. Furthermore he is conscious that parish clergy who are themselves self-isolating at this time (like yours truly) will not be able to be directly involved in the process of re-opening. Some bigger churches with 'young' parish priests, and plenty of available space, and worshippers under seventy who are available to volunteer their time and responsibility, may be able to try out the new measures first.

St Winefride's isn't rich in two-metre spacing despite it having most other fine features.

I have received medical advice that my own self-isolating must not cease for at least another fortnight. So watch with interest the progress made in some places, but please be patient and don't expect that 'return to normal' too soon, especially as the daily death toll isn't decreasing and the danger to health continues.

*That Liturgical Calendar tells us that it will be **Trinity Sunday** this weekend. I continue to offer Mass alone, through Christ, with Him and in Him, giving glory to God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, and unite all of you with me in togetherness amid the artificial aloneness. This time of year used to see lots of priestly ordinations. I sympathise with two Irishmen, Fr Paschal Byrne of Bebington, sixty years a priest on Friday, and still 'in harness', and Fr Jim Kenny of Frodsham, who has in recent years helped here with Confessions: he will be forty years ordained on Sunday. Their people and their relatives can't celebrate with them. The same is true of those who had planned actual weddings and anniversaries, and perhaps more significantly, people with family funerals taking place with restricted numbers. I have long realised that one can be comfortably miserable alone, but we do need other people to celebrate with.*

Apologies that the tone of this week's newsletter is perhaps more sombre than one would wish. Last weekend saw the most idyllic weather in living memory,

and now the rain has come to please the farmers and gardeners and people who have to wash cars. Like Pollyanna, we can always find something to be glad about, something to thank God for. May God bless and protect all of you.

Fr Tony Elder