

Parish of St Winefride, Lymm

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Newsletter 25 June 2020

Greetings to all once more. As I write, I rejoice that we are back to ‘Scorchio’ weather, which suits me perfectly. Sorry if it is not as comfortable for you. This coming Sunday is the day we honour those two pillars of the infant Church, Saints Peter and Paul. I have such affection for both these men – for their writings, their courage, their faith, and their example. St Peter made a mess of so many things, but had a love for and a trust in Jesus that enabled him to ask for and to accept forgiveness without losing confidence. St Paul had such an extraordinary experience enabling to discover the Messiah, and theologians continue to quote him as their leader and guide when trying to answer the most difficult and challenging questions, especially about Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Do read Peter’s letters in the bible, and Paul’s writings (especially those three written when he was in prison) if you have time. Their speeches and adventures make up most of the Acts of the Apostles.

Changes in the Government’s rules and guidelines come at us thick and fast. If you are needing guidance, there is a long but readable list which can be found and digested by yourselves at www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing-after-4-july Plans for reopening churches have received a stimulus by the latest relaxations of the rules, but it is so complicated. A major requirement is that the church buildings and furniture are cleaned before and after use, and I’m afraid I got NO volunteers for this task. I did a little examination of the possibilities in our church, using the most up-to-date scientific instruments I could find (i.e. a broom handle thirty nine inches long). With subtle geometric experiments, I calculated that with one metre social distancing (sideways and back and front) our chapel area could accommodate 40 people. So it is not impossible. Other local churches in Latchford and Appleton and Knutsford are not keen to put everyone at risk just yet. It is amazing to observe how our shops and our schools are working hard to comply, and to see the care those brave shop assistants use in making use of sanitizers. We would definitely need a supply of plastic aprons and cleaning liquid containing alcohol. (Advice welcome). People could bring their own face masks. It still looks as if I personally will be deterred from taking services, but I can see ways round that. Please bear with us as we make progress but not recklessly.

If my major vice was venality (grasping greediness) I would have worked out a plan for allowing people to come into our church to collect their planned giving envelopes. Thank you for a further £118 received last week – it has been banked. The bank account was in a fairly healthy state three months ago, so we’re not going bankrupt just yet. No one in the parish has expressed concern about their personal financial fears, but I do feel for anyone in a precarious situation. Most of all I pray that we don’t have to face a resurgence of the virus infection.

I have offered Mass for Pauline Slattery's intention and for the repose of the soul of Violet Bourke and for all our parishioners. Do keep the messages coming. And keep safe!

Fr. Tony Elder