

Parish of St Winefride, Lymm

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Hello everyone. The bangers are going off all around as I write, ostensibly commemorating a day when some Catholics were thwarted in their attempt to blow up the houses of Parliament. We are not so desperate in 2020, and anti-Covid laws are not actually hostile to religion, but one is tempted to sympathize. Our Bishop was measured in his language in announcing the new closure of churches, but you could see he was not very pleased. It was good to celebrate Mass with about 85 of you each week, while it lasted, and again I can't thank enough those volunteers who acted as stewards and wipers-up for the rest of us each week. Now I'm back to enforced idleness. That Thomas Hood poem (No sun, no moon, no morn, no noon, no dawn, no dusk...November) could now be re-written with a whole new list of negatives for the month of lockdown. Now everyone can return to streamed Mass and perhaps enjoy their virtual trips round the world on Sundays.

The two remaining 'ordinary' Sundays of the year chime in to the November/end of the year theme, with parables about the last judgement, and St Paul's cheerful remarks about the end of the world. What sort of a year in your life has it been? Many people have been forced to slow down and rethink about where they are and where they are going. Perhaps you too have been made aware of the closeness of death, by the daily broadcasts about the number of people worldwide who have been summarily called by God to give a final account of themselves. Maybe you too have been just that bit more mindful of what the psalms call 'the shortness of life', and have striven to let yourselves be drawn closer to God and more aware of his command to love the people around you.

I have to announce the sad news of the death last weekend of Mrs Mary Lofthouse of Stage Lane. Her funeral is on Friday. Our sympathy goes out to her husband and family. May she rest in peace. On the other days I shall continue to offer Mass on my own, and this week I did so for Bernard Roges, Tony Edwards, John Wright, Jack Hargreaves, and Alma Shuttleworth's intentions and for David Jones and family. I humbly give thanks for the fact that I can still pray in this way for people, and that so many of you have requested me to do so.

I recently received a transcript of a message given two years ago by Pope Francis, on being happy, and it is very inspiring. Please look for it on this web site, either as an extension of the newsletter page or under a separate heading. One cannot fail to find among the verses some uplifting lines that apply to oneself, and I am delighted to be able to share it with you. I trust that all of you will be able to find some rays of happiness in your own lives, and I hope that all our young people at school or at university can enjoy the everyday moments especially those that are almost normal (the moments, not the young people!). I keep getting messages on the phone that are not just booking a place at Mass, but over and over again sharing some good news in the life of the person phoning, or of their friends. Thank you, and may God bless you all. **Fr Tony Elder**

