
The power of a mother's prayers

On Friday this week we celebrate the memoria of St Monica, the mother of St Augustine of Hippo. Augustine is one of the great saints of the Church and has perhaps had a greater influence on the Church's thought than anyone else since Apostolic times, but he wasn't always a great saint. Early in life he abandoned his Christian faith and led a disordered life, believing many things contrary to the Gospel and living in an immoral way. His mother, Monica, prayed fervently for him over many years, and in the end her son came to faith and was baptised at Milan by St Ambrose. Monica died at Ostia, not far from the city of Rome, where she told Augustine that she was at peace going to the Lord because her prayer for him had been answered. She also said to him and his brother: "All I ask of you is that you remember me at the altar of the Lord, wherever you may be." Her feast day reminds us to pray for our mothers at the Lord's altar, whether they are in this world or the next, and to be thankful for all they have given us. Augustine went on to be a bishop and a doctor of the Church. His feast is celebrated on Saturday.

Today's Readings

The idea of choice is strong in both the Gospel and the first reading today. Jesus' disciples must choose whether to continue to follow Him, or to leave Him as so many others have done. In the first reading, Joshua tells the people to choose whom they wish to serve: the true God, who brought them out of Egypt, or the false gods of the land in which they now dwell. We all face this same choice in our lives: do we follow the true God, who has revealed Himself in Jesus, or do we serve false gods of idolatry, celebrity, wealth, status, power? Today's second reading reminds us that the choice for Jesus is the choice to enter into a relationship of love, a covenant like a marriage. He uses the image of the relationship between husband and wife to teach us about the relationship between Christ and the Church, and in doing so reminds us that marriage is a sacrament in which God's grace is offered and His goodness shown forth.

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MASSES THIS WEEK

Office: Psalter week 1; Sundays: year B; Weekdays: year 1, week 21

The first Mass each day is livestreamed and will be available for viewing later in the day on our YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/user/StClaresChurch>

Date	Time	Occasion	Intention/Details
Saturday	6pm (vigil)	TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	Mary-Alice Kelly RIP
Sunday 22 nd	9:30am		People of the Parish
	11:30am		Holy Souls
	6pm		Holy Souls
Monday	9:15am		Holy Souls
Tuesday	7pm	St Bartholomew	Mary-Alice Kelly RIP
Wednesday	9:15am		Thanksgiving (CS)
Thursday	9:15am		Dominic RIP
Friday	12noon	St Monica	Amose Masilamani
Saturday	10am	St Augustine	Holy Souls
	6pm (vigil)	TWENTY-SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	Ints Richard Cockburn
Sunday 29 th	9:30am		People of the Parish
	11:30am		Holy Souls
	6pm		Jeff Poole RIP

LATELY DEAD: Please pray for all who have died recently.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION: Saturday 11am-12noon and by appointment.

ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT: Monday-Friday 5pm-6pm, Saturday 11am-12noon. The church is also open Monday-Friday morning-6pm; Saturday 11am-5pm and Sunday 1-5pm.

ROSARY: After 9:15am Mass and before 12noon Mass on Fridays.

ANNIVERSARIES: Rev. Donald Parsons, John Battersby, Andrew Lyons, Joyce Wilcox, Richard Singleton, Clare Therese Southworth, Teresa Kirby.

POPE'S PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR AUGUST: Let us pray for the Church, that she may receive from the Holy Spirit the grace and strength to reform herself in the light of the Gospel.

DAY OF PRAYER FOR REBUILDING OUR PARISH: On Friday 10th September we will have a day of prayer for the renewal of our parish, following the disruption of the last 18 months. There is much rebuilding to do, and prayer is the only possible foundation. After 12noon Mass there will be solemn Exposition until 10pm; the church will be open throughout for people to come in and pray. Please try to keep a little time free on that day, to come and ask the Lord to grant us the renewal we need. More details to follow, but please make a note of the date.

FIRST COMMUNIONS: Please keep in your prayers Jessica, Kian and Maddie, who will receive Holy Communion for the first time at Mass last Sunday.

HOLY LAND PILGRIMAGE: Due to the uncertainty and added travel requirements resulting from the pandemic, the Holy Land pilgrimage has been postponed by twelve months, so that we will now travel in October 2022. This is at our request and has been agreed by the pilgrimage firm. Hopefully next year we will be able to travel with greater ease and more confidence, and more people will be able to come.

COVID SAFETY MEASURES IN CHURCH: You are welcome to sit in groups if you wish, but please be mindful of those who would like to keep a safe distance from others. Face coverings should be worn when you are in church for any service, unless you are exempt. They are not needed when visiting for silent private prayer. It is no longer necessary to book for any services.

AUGUST 200 CLUB WINNERS: £144 no. 35 Joe and Mary McCambridge; £87 no. 105 Roma Birtles; £58 no. 61 Paul McNeela. Congratulations!

FOOD BANK COLLECTION: The next collection is on the weekend 4th/5th September.

FOLLOWING JESUS – TEN INVITATIONS: Copies of this new book by Philip McParland are now available in the narthex, priced £5. Please sanitise your hands before taking a look, and leave money for copies taken in the CTS/books wallbox.

ORGAN RECITAL: Sean Maxwell plays works by Bach, Hadyn and other Baroque composers at St Walburge's, Saturday 21st August 6:30pm. For full details and to get tickets, visit: <http://www.goldengiving.com/e/sw-organ-recital-2021>

CLEATOR PILGRIMAGE: The annual diocesan pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady at Cleator will go ahead on Sunday 12th September, with Mass and blessing of the sick from 3pm. Bishop Paul will preside. All welcome. See poster for details.

LAUDATO SI' ZOOM RETREATS: 3rd-6th September or 15th-18th October, organised by Boarbank Hall. For more details, see poster in the narthex.

LAST SUNDAY: At Mass: 302 (figures for individual Masses: 50/82/98[First Communions]/52 (NCW 20)) Collection: £471.96 (excluding online giving – the figures for standing orders etc. will be published monthly, from the beginning of September). Thank you for your generous support.

Sunday Mass – a statement from the Bishops of England and Wales

We are mindful of the certain fact that the Covid-19 virus is still circulating in society. Vaccines provide genuine protection against the worst effects of the virus, yet we recognise the legitimate fear on the part of some who otherwise desire to gather for Holy Mass. It is our continuing judgement, therefore, that it is not possible at the present time for all of the faithful to attend Mass on a Sunday thus fulfilling their duty to God.

It is hoped that it will be possible for all Catholics in England and Wales to fulfil this most important Church precept, that of the Sunday Obligation, by the First Sunday in Advent 2021.

In the meantime, all Catholics are asked to do their best to participate in the celebration of the weekly Sunday Mass and to reflect deeply on the centrality of Sunday worship in the life of the Church.

“Unlocking” the Parish: our plan

The plan below gives some sense of how the parish may move towards normality in the coming months. It is subject to change!

Before the autumn (most dates to be confirmed):

- We hope to have an outdoor parish social event.
- Some visits to housebound parishioners and care homes are now resuming.

From September/October

- Further steps back towards normality at Mass, including an offertory procession and intercessions.
- Children’s liturgy and all our youth groups should resume.
- A normal year of sacramental preparation is planned, including for children whose confessions, first Communion and Confirmation have been delayed.
- A full programme of parish social life will take place, if permitted.
- Other parish groups should be able to resume.
- We hope to be able to hold some events to mark the 50th anniversary of our parish and school, in November 2021.

We plan to continue to livestream Mass each day, for the benefit of those who are housebound; everyone who can is strongly encouraged to attend Mass and rebuild our community. We will also continue with some other online output to assist with catechesis, evangelisation and outreach work in the parish.