

Weekly Newsletter During the Covid-19 Pandemic 19th July 2020

Joint Parishes of St Joseph's and St Wilfrid's Gateshead

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Today is the 16<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

(OF) Readings for today are: -




First Reading	Wisdom 12:13, 16-19
Responsorial Psalm	Psalm 85
Second Reading	Romans 8:26-27
Alleluia	Ephesians 1:17,18 or Matthew 11:25
Gospel	Matthew 13:24-43

**"Where have the weeds come from? Shall we weed them out?"**



Jesus was a teacher of wisdom, and a master of the short story, especially the parable. A parable is a story about the Kingdom of God, how God rules his universe, how he achieves his ultimate plan for creation. That is why Jesus would often say at the end of a parable "He that has ears to hear let him hear." In the parables we learn how we must act to further his Kingdom of justice and peace.

Today we have the Parable of the *Wheat and the Weeds*.


**"Did you not sow good seed? Where has the darnel come from.? Shall we weed it out?"** The parable asks the question debated by philosophers and theologians for centuries, how could a good God create a world so full of weeds, the evil of sickness, suffering and death? The





problem of evil. Where does evil come from?





And in one short vivid phrase the parable gives the answer; "**An enemy has done this.**" God is **not** the cause of evil. All God's works are goodness and life. Sickness and death are **not** from God. Whether it is toothache or cancer or a tragic accident it is **not** God's doing. An evil power has entered creation. Satan is real. A fallen angel. The parable **also** teaches that evil is not as powerful as the good, and one day all evil will be overcome, because God is guiding creation to a fruitful and abundant harvest.





In the words of Julian Norwich "**All will be well; all manner of things will be well.**"





And now the second question: "**Shall we go and weed it out?**" The farm labourers were certainly zealous to improve things? But Heaven preserve us from moral reformers and zealots! "No! You could tear out the wheat as well. Let them be until harvest. Have patience! God is the judge, not you!





There is a further lesson here: beware of the zealot: the reformer who wants a pure Church, a perfect parish. The zealot is ready to excommunicate anyone who is not a hundred percent. Do not judge others. "What's **he or she** doing going to the Altar?" Church is not a community of pious goody-goodyes. We are a community of saints **and sinners**. Jesus came to call sinners not cut them off. He welcomed sinners and ate with them.





It seems that Jesus told this parable because he was criticized for the company he kept. He had meals with sinners. Galilean fishermen were not noted for their pious attendance at worship or the Synagogue; but they were hard working lovable people with a keen sense of justice and companionship and love of family. Just the people God needs, and Jesus loved their company.





DARNEL is a weed that mimics the real thing. Sometimes it is translated as Tares or Cockle. It is so like the real thing that you cannot tell the difference. Only when both the wheat and the darnel are fully mature can you distinguish them, and by that time they are ready for harvest. Also, they grow side by side and are often intertwined. Pull out one and you pull out the other. The great danger is to judge too soon.



We must never judge nor condemn the sinner, all we can judge and condemn is the sin. And if we cannot find the words to condemn the sin without hurting the sinner, keep quiet.





We condemn abortion, but NOT THE MOTHER. We must love her and welcome her with great compassion.
























Enthusiasm for God's cause must include a very tender compassion a love and patience for the sinner. We must learn to live with imperfection. The parable is a warning to anyone who thinks he can clean things up: the new boss at work for example. Enthusiasm for the job must be balanced with Patience. There is a human desire to change things "I'll sort them out: Zero tolerance from now on" "NO", the parable says. "that could be counterproductive." Try another way. Do nothing for 6 months. Show tolerance and understanding towards the less able. Encourage the weak. But do not overburden the strong.



So, we thank Our Lord for this short story,



God is not the author of evil. The church is home for sinners. Do not expect quick results be patient with your own faults and others: do not expect a perfect world; and never cut the sinner off from our friendship in the community of Faith.



Seventh Sunday After Pentecost  
(E) Readings for today are: -

Introit	Psalm 46:2
Epistle 1	Romans 6:19-23
Gradual	Psalms 33: 12, 6
Gospel	Matthew 7:15-21

Sunday's readings revolve around the imagery of *fruit*. Although it might be obvious, we should first be clear what fruit is: it is the *result* of some process of growth and development. An orange tree does not start with oranges—they come about as the result of the natural growth of the tree. If anything harms the growth of the tree, then fresh, healthy oranges will not be produced.

In Sunday's Gospel Our Lord uses the imagery of fruit to warn us about false prophets. False prophets are not men who are outside the community—they are fellow members of the Church, perhaps even legitimate leaders. They come "in the clothing of sheep," and to be trustworthy. They even call Jesus their "Lord" (cf. Mt 7:21). However, they are "ravening wolves" who bring about destruction.

How can we distinguish between true sheep and those who only appear to be sheep? Christ tells us it is through their fruit: the *result* of their teachings. Are people converted to Christ through them? Do people embrace the Cross through their preaching and example, or do they instead follow the wide road that leads to destruction? A false prophet may sound holy, may even have a short-term or shallow impact on the lives of people, but ultimately a bad tree cannot produce good fruit and so a false prophet will not produce Christian disciples.

In Sunday's Epistle we hear St. Paul also referring to fruit, but he is more concerned with the ultimate end for those who produce bad fruit: "the end of them is death." A life of producing bad fruit in this world will lead to spiritual death, or, as Our Lord says, the one who produces bad fruit and leads people astray will "be cast into the fire." But the one who stays close to Christ and produces good fruit will have a different end: "life everlasting" (Rom 6:22). The ultimate fruit that results from a life lived in conformity with Christ is eternal bliss and happiness in heaven.

It is no secret that there are many false prophets in today's Church. At every level of the Church are those who would lead people astray. Their words may sound beautiful, compassionate, and loving, but the fruit of following them is death. The way we can determine who is a false prophet is looking at their fruit: not how many may follow their words and example (for the path is wide that leads to destruction, as Our Lord says just before his warning about false prophets [cf. Mt 7:13]), but determining whether their words and example lead others to conformity to Christ, especially his suffering.

It is suffering from which the false prophet particularly recoils; he wants the Christian life to be easy and comfortable. As St. John Chrysostom preached, "The nature of this road upon which [Jesus] commanded us to walk is toilsome and hard. The false prophet would seldom choose to toil but would prefer only to make a show. For this very reason he is easily detected" (The Gospel of Matthew, Homily 23.6).

If a leader's teachings do not lead people to take up their cross and follow Christ in his Passion and Death, then we know that he is a false prophet and should be resisted. For only in embracing Christ's suffering will we one day be resurrected with him to eternal life.

Finally, we must not just look at the fruit produced by our leaders; we must also look at the fruit produced by ourselves. By my words and by my example, do I lead people closer to Christ? Does my life help others to love the Church more, or become disillusioned and angry? If we are not always striving to do the will of the Father in charity and love, then we too might join the false prophets and be cast into the everlasting fire.



## Churches Open for Mass

Please note that each individual parish priest can choose how to offer Holy Communion during Mass. You may find you are not able to receive Communion at all, or only on the tongue, or only in the hand, please respect the decision of each Priest, he is acting in everyone's best interests as he sees it and it is not fair nor helpful to anyone to judge.


### OChu

- Cathedral Church of St. Mary, Newcastle upon Tyne
  - Alnwick, St Paul's Church
  - Bedlington, St. Bede
  - Cramlington, St. Paul
- Durham, Our Lady of Mercy and St. Godric (from 26 July)
  - Durham, St. Joseph (from 29 July)
  - Forest Hall, St. Mary (from 25 July)
  - Hebburn, St. Aloysius (from 29 July)
    - Hexham, St. Mary
  - Newcastle, St. Charles' Church
  - Newcastle, St. Teresa (from 20 July)
    - North Gosforth, Sacred Heart
- North Shields, St. Cuthbert (from 24 July)
  - South Shields, St. Bede
- Stella, SS Mary and Thomas Aquinas
- Wallsend, Our Lady and St. Columba
- Washington, St. John Boste (from 23 July)
  - Winlaton, St. Anne

*It is Essential that you consult individual parishes for regulations to attend Mass at any specific church as each church has its own conditions. Please DO NOT just turn up for Mass - you WILL be disappointed if turned away, most churches are operating a booking system.*

## Churches open for private prayer

(please note no young person under age 16 may attend unaccompanied)

- St Mary's Sunderland
  - St Mary's Bishop Auckland
  - SS Joseph, Patrick, and Cuthbert Coxhoe
  - St Augustine's Darlington
  - Our lady of Mercy and St Godric Durham
  - Immaculate Heart of Mary Gateshead
  - St Charles Gosforth
  - St Aloysius Hebburn
  - St Teresa of the Infant Jesus Newcastle
  - St Bede's Newcastle
  - St Mary's Newton Aycliffe
  - The Sacred Heart North Gosforth
  - St Bede's South Shields
  - St Joseph's Ushaw Moor
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- Our Lady and St Columba Wallsend
- St John Boste Washington
- St Anne's Winlaton
- All Saints Lanchester
- St Bede's Jarrow
- St Peter's Gateshead
- St Agnes Crawcrook
- Sts Mary & Thomas Aquinas Stella
- English Martyrs Stockton
- St Patrick's Stockton
- St Osmond Gainford
- St Thomas Aquinas Darlington
- Our Lady Immaculate Crook
- St Andrew Newcastle
- St Mary Forest hall
- St Cuthbert North Shields
- St Edward Whitley Bay
- St Robert Newcastle
- St John Vianney West Denton
- St Joseph Sunderland
- St Joseph Durham
- St Cuthbert Durham
- St Michael Houghton - Le - Spring
- St Bede Sacriston
- St Joseph's Blackhall
- St Thomas of Canterbury Longhorsley
- Sacred Heart Amble
- St Elizabeth Minsteracres
- St Cuthbert Berwick
- St Aidan Seahouses
- St Ninian Wooler
- St Paul Cramlington



***Please refer to individual church websites for more information***

Opening our churches is no easy task, Parish Priests have been given detailed and complex guidance notes on how safe opening can begin to take place, the Bishop makes the decision about which church will be next to open, once the Parish Priest has been told it is his turn he will contact those who have volunteered to help. These volunteers along with the Parish Priest will attend a meeting, held by the Diocesan Property Department, to undertake a risk assessment and training. The opening of churches for private prayer is a pre-requisite to opening for Mass.

**VOLUNTEERING**


**Thank You to all those who have volunteered to help with cleaning and stewardship, you will be contacted about the meeting when Canon Brown is given a date by the Bishop.**

Your continued patience, support and understanding are very much appreciated, and we ask that you continue to pray for the absolute best decisions to be made.

**An Act of Spiritual Communion**

When we are unable to receive Holy Communion, it has long been the catholic tradition to make an Act of





Spiritual Communion. St. Thomas Aquinas defined a Spiritual Communion as "an ardent desire to receive Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament and lovingly embrace Him as if we had actually received Him. One composed by St Alphonsus Ligouri in 1870 is: -

*"My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen."*

### Act of Perfect Contrition

When we cannot get to confession the Catholic Church has made provision for our reconciliation with the Father through an Act of Perfect Contrition, Cardinal Vincent Nichols recently spoke these words, "What the Church teaches us, is that God in His mercy, forgives our sins when we are truly sorry for them. And when we turn to Him and express our sorrow in an Act of Contrition, it's called an Act of Perfect Contrition when its focus is on the mercy and the love of God rather than on the burden of our guilt. So to make an act of Perfect Contrition, we simply need to turn to God and be, as it were, overwhelmed by God's mercy, and then express in our own words or in the words of the traditional Act of Contrition, the sorrow we feel for our offences against the goodness of God. When we do that in all sincerity of heart, we may rest assured that God forgives our sins and that we come away from that Act of Perfect Contrition freed from those sins And, as I say, the only thing we have to remember is, when it is possible to make a Confession again, that we mention the grievous sins which were forgiven by this Perfect Act of Contrition.



### Our Lady of Lourdes

The 'Lourdes Garden' to the side of St Joseph's church is undergoing some long overdue improvements. The statues of Our Lady and St Bernadette have endured a great deal of weather beatings and sadly some vandalism, they need replacing or repairing (if this is possible). We are seeking quotes for the repairs and have sourced suppliers for new statues, the cost of replacing the statues will be about **£2,000**.

We need to raise funds to update this peaceful, prayerful area of our church grounds and are therefore appealing for donations large and small. If you could mark your donation 'Lourdes Garden' it would be helpful, and I will be able to keep you up to date with the amount raised. As well as the statues, and the garden area, the fence needs to be repainted and the wording along the top re-done, also the mosaic on the wall below the fence is falling to pieces and looks quite an eye-sore now. All this work is going to cost money and take time, we have set a target of **£5,000** and 10 months for the work to be completed, hopefully in time for Our Lady's Month of May.

Donations may be made in the same way as weekly/monthly offerings as set out below.

### Thank You

To all those who have continued to make donations to Our Churches throughout the pandemic, your generosity is invaluable.

### To donate via bank transfer:





Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle

Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle



Gateshead St Wilfrid's

Gateshead St Joseph's



Sort Code 40-34-18

Sort Code 40-34-18



Account Number 01164120

Account Number 31164066



Please use reference: - Weekly Income

OR

Donate using a cheque made out to either parish

'DHN St Joseph's Gateshead' or 'DHN St Wilfrid's Gateshead'



St Wilfrid's

St Joseph's



Ford House

Presbytery



Sunderland Road

High West Street



Gateshead NE8 3QR

Gateshead NE8 1LX



KEEP YOURSELF UPDATED AND INFORMED

- Parish Website and Facebook pages are updated regularly
- Parish Newsletter is available on our website each week
- Diocesan website [www.rcdhn.org.uk](http://www.rcdhn.org.uk)
- Bishops' Conference website [www.cbcew.org.uk](http://www.cbcew.org.uk)



**Keeping us updated with your contact information**

During this time of social distancing and self-isolation, Canon Michael Brown has tried to keep in touch with as many parishioners as he can to offer support and comfort. He has been able to do this only with those parishioners for whom he holds up to date contact details.



Please ensure your contact details are correct. Use parish email addresses or telephone to update your information.



**Access to the Newsletter**

If you know of anyone from either Parish who cannot access this newsletter via the website and would like to receive it by email, please ask them to give their email address to Canon Michael Brown email [michaelbrown6@btconnect.com](mailto:michaelbrown6@btconnect.com) or Shauna Devitt at [shaunadevitt@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:shaunadevitt@tiscali.co.uk)



Diocesan News

**Please see individual websites for information about Live Streaming of Masses**

live streaming may be in effect during Mass. If you do not wish to be at risk of being filmed, please inform your parish priest or designated person on visiting the church.



Pope Video

monthly [thepopevideo.org](http://thepopevideo.org)





### Community Support

Gateshead Council have a dedicated page on their website offering a network of support for those who need help: -

<https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/15181/coronavirus-COVID-19-Community-support>

Or phone 01914333000

Alcoholics Anonymous Call free on 08009177650 or email [help@aamail.org](mailto:help@aamail.org)

### Pastoral Care

As part of the pastoral care of parishioners and others during this time several qualified counsellors and listeners have generously made themselves available to anyone who may be troubled by the negative effect of the situation. These councillors and listeners can be contacted through St Mary's Cathedral Listening Service on 01912326953

### EU Citizens

All EU, EEA and Swiss citizens living in the UK MUST apply through its Settlement Scheme to continue living, working, and accessing services here. The deadline is **30 June 2021**. Details and links to the application process can be found at: [gov.uk/eusettledstatus](https://gov.uk/eusettledstatus) Assistance is available at: [gov.uk/help-eu-settlementscheme](https://gov.uk/help-eu-settlementscheme)

### Justice and Peace

Please visit the Parish and Diocesan websites for updated information about the Refugee Project helping those who need it most.

### New Apostolic Nuncio to Great Britain

The Holy Father, Pope Francis, has appointed Archbishop Claudio Gugerotti, until now Apostolic Nuncio in the Ukraine, as the Apostolic Nuncio to Great Britain. Bishop Byrne will write to welcome the New Nuncio to Great Britain and invite him to visit the Diocese.