



*Drawing by John R Hume,
courtesy of Scotland's Churches Trust*

St Mary Magdalene's Church

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PARISH MOTTO - 'THE BEST IS YET TO COME'

25th Sunday of the Year 24th of September 2023

Dear Parishioners and Friends of our parish, we are so happy that you could join us today to celebrate the 25th Sunday in Ordinary Time.

From our earliest years, we have been brought up to value justice. Play fair, is part of our earliest training in life. That's why when we hear today's Gospel, the Parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard, we immediately think, "That's just not right. The guys who worked all day have a good argument. They should have been paid more." But the parable is not about who should get paid what. The parable is about God. He is the Good Employer, the Divine Employer.

This parable is not about the workers, it is about God who offers His grace to people at various times in their lives. The story of John Newton certainly illustrates this. John Newton was born in London in 1725. His father was the captain of a merchant ship that sailed the Mediterranean. When John was just 11, he went to sea with his father. After six voyages, his father retired. John had attained the rank of a junior officer, but he decided to seek another life.

However, the British navy had another idea. He was impressed, forced into service on a warship, the HMS Harwich. John hated it. He particularly hated the demeaning way he and everyone on board was treated. So, he deserted, but was quickly captured. For that he was flogged, demoted, and treated even worse. His only way off that brutal ship ended up being traded to the worst possible ship. John requested to be exchanged to a ship that was a slave trader, working the waters off of Sierra Leona, Africa. He was brutally abused there also, but his luck changed when he was rescued by a captain of another slave ship who had known John's father.

For today's Mass

Responsorial Psalm

The Lord is close to all who call him

Gospel Acclamation

Blessings on the King who comes
in the name of the Lord!

Peace in heaven

and glory in the highest heavens!

John had merchant in his blood. He saw the money being made off of slaves. He didn't care about their suffering. They were profit and only profit. He worked his way up and helped that slaver make even more money. Eventually, John became the captain of his own slave ship. Now, he really prospered. John had little to no religious convictions.

He did not care whether God approved or did not approve of his business. If some of the Africans died in those cramped, stinking storage bins, to John that was just part of the business. Then on one homeward trip, everything changed. John Newton found religion. Or religion found him. He was attempting to steer the ship through a violent storm. He was convinced that all would be lost. Just as he thought the ship would sink, he surprised himself by calling out, "Lord, have mercy on us."

The storm started to abate. John reflected on this and was convinced that God had spoken to him through the storm. He changed his life and gave himself to God. He quickly got out of the slave business.

After marrying, he immersed himself in the study of theology and was ordained an Anglican priest and named as pastor of Olney, in England. There he met a poet named William Cowper. The two collaborated on writing new Church hymns, known as the Olney hymnal. You know his work very well, at least his most famous hymn.

As you read these words that we sing so often, think of them as coming from a former slaver who was called away from cruelty, away from the great profit to be made on other people's lives, and called to the Lord. The hymn I am referring to is, of course, Amazing Grace: Amazing grace! (how sweet the sound). That sav'd a wretch like me! Now, is there anyone that feels that God had been unfair? After all, God saved the life of this slaver.

How many hundreds died on Newton's ship? How many thousands more wished they had died. How many tens of thousands of their descendants would be treated as chattel? Yet, God reached out and brought conversion to a person who had ignored Him for years.



Would any of us dare tell God that he was unjust? Or, would any of us say, "How about me, Lord? I have worked hard to serve you from the very beginning of my life. Surely, my reward will be greater than John Newton's." No, we wouldn't say that. We have all received Grace from God. We are not going to begrudge John Newton his opportunity to grow in God's love. Nor would we question God for being so generous to Newton, and expect him to be even more generous to us. It is not up to us to determine how God rewards those who serve him.

That is what the parable of the labourers in the vineyard is really about. God's grace comes to different people at different times and in different ways. Look at some of the amazing ways that God has changed people we know. You are judging by human standards, not by the standards of the Love and Mercy and Compassion of the Lord. God never gives up on us. Even if we are well advanced in age, and the day is drawing to a close.

He still has work for us to do. He wants us to work for Him, no matter what our pasts have been. What Mercy! What Grace! Amazing!

Have a wonderful week – stay well. Please keep me in your prayers as you all are always in mine.

Fr Bogdan SDS

PRAYERS

Please prayer for the repose of the soul of

Emily Butler Strathaven
who died recently
and for Christopher McAninch
and all whose anniversaries
occur about this time.

**Eternal rest grant unto
their souls, O Lord.
May they rest in peace. Amen.**

Thank you

We thank you for your spectacular generosity. Your generous support of our Parish and your help with the needs of our community is greatly appreciated!

Sunday Collection

17th September 2023 – £670.00.

Votives Candles: 32.00

**Today's second collection will be
for the Organ Fund.**

Priest's musing

A new employee stood before the paper shredder looking confused. "Need some help?" a secretary asked. "Yes," he replied, "How does this thing work?"

"Simple," she said as she took the fat report from his hand and fed it into the shredder. "Thanks, but where do the copies come out?" he asked.

Healing Service / Blessing of the Sick

It is proposed that a quarterly Blessing of the Sick should be held during the 10am Sunday Mass, with the date being announced in the bulletin for about one month prior to the actual date to enable people to plan their attendance. The first Blessing will take place during Mass on 1st October.

The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick

The Sacrament of the Sick has been known by four different names throughout history: Last Rites, Extreme Unction, Viaticum, The Sacrament of the Sick. A Sacrament is a visible sign of God's presence, God's activity in our lives, in the Church and in our world. But it goes beyond that!

Last Rite

If we call the Sacrament "The Last Rites," this captures one important aspect of the Sacrament. It is often one of the last rituals celebrated with a person as he or she nears death. But if we focus on this alone, we kind of get the lens out of focus, don't we? If we focus only on this Sacrament as a "Last Rite," we miss the fact that it is meant to be celebrated with any person facing serious illness, a change in health or surgery. The Sacrament is a healing one, and can affect body, mind and spirit. Any Sacrament is meant to tell us something about God. In this Sacrament, God's particular care for the sick and vulnerable is revealed and celebrated by the Church. Therefore, it is much more than "the Last Rites," although this is one way that this Sacrament is celebrated.

Extreme Unction

If we call the Sacrament "Extreme Unction," this also captures one aspect of the Sacrament, for the Sacrament does involve anointing. "Unction" means "Anointing." In the Sacrament of the Sick, the person who is ill or suffering is anointed. Anointing with oil is intended to strengthen the sick person. The person may be strengthened to face the illness or surgery. The person might also be strengthened to face death. Anointing is also often a healing act, and, once again, that can mean healing of body, mind or spirit. What God wants to accomplish in this Sacrament is strengthening and healing.



NORMAL MASS SCHEDULES

Monday
No public Mass

Tuesday – Saturday
9am

Friday
7pm (Polish)

Sunday
8.30am (Polish)
10am (English)
12noon (Polish)

CONFESSIONS

Saturday
9:30am (after Mass)
or call to make an appointment.

SAINTS DAYS and SPECIAL OBSERVANCES THIS WEEK

Monday 25th September
25th Week of the Year

Tuesday 26th September
25th Week of the Year

Wednesday 27th September
Memorial of St Vincent de Paul

Thursday 28th September
25th Week of the Year

Friday 29th September
Feast of SS Michael, Gabriel
and Raphael, Archangels

Saturday 30th September
Memorial of St Jerome

ARE YOU GOING TO BE IN HOSPITAL? DO YOU KNOW OF SOMEONE WHO IS IN HOSPITAL?

Name _____ Hospital _____ Ward _____

Please complete/ tear off and hand it to Fr Bogdan after Mass