

St. Mary's, Stoke D'Abernon

Christ the King
Sunday Next before Advent



22nd November 2020

A Message from our Rector

Today the Church celebrates the feast of Christ the King which is always the last Sunday of the Church year as the new church year begins next Sunday, Advent Sunday. The reading in today's gospel from St Matthew tells the story of the sheep and the goats. To sum the story up in a nut shell- the sheep are the good people who are invited to sit on the right hand, the good side while the goats are the bad people who are invited to sit on the left hand.

I have always been fascinated to discover exactly what the goats had done wrong to deserve this eternal damnation!

Historically, the left side, and subsequently left-handedness, was considered negative in many cultures. The Latin word sinistra originally meant "left" but took on meanings of "evil" or "unlucky" by the Classical Latin era, and this double meaning survives in European derivatives of Latin, and in the English word "sinister".

Meanings gradually developed from use of these terms in the ancient languages. In many modern European languages, including English, the word for the direction "right" also means "correct" or "proper", and also stands for authority and justice.

Perhaps this goes some way to explain the plight of the poor goats! Our understanding of a gospel passage can often be influenced by the translation or version that we read. I came upon this somewhat different interpretation of today's gospel recently.

"Then, the King said, "I was hungry and you told me that it was my own fault for being lazy and believing that I was entitled to help from hard working families and that I'd probably spent all of my money on alcohol, cigarettes and drugs anyway.

I was thirsty and you assumed that I was desperate for gin or vodka, rather than water.

I was naked and you said that I would have more chance of a job if I took more care of my personal appearance, even though I wore all I could afford. I was poor and you told me I was a scrounger who just wanted to sponge off the state and put stories about me on the TV and newspapers, despite knowing nothing about my circumstances. I was sick and you denied me any help, told me to go back to work and assumed I was faking illness in order to scrounge.

I was in prison and you demanded that the key was thrown away and that I was kept away from all respectable, law-abiding members of society because I was a bad person who could never change.

I was a stranger and you ran, scared of me and told me to go home, that your country was full and that I was only there to steal your money, possessions and jobs.

For I tell you, whenever you did this for one of the least of these brothers or sisters of mine, you did it to me.

³¹ “When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. ³² All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³³ and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left.”

There is one word that should be in that opening passage but is not there and that is the word judgement which is a very unpopular word in modern Christianity. We would rather talk about being reconciled rather than being judged. This is the concept of Christ the King sitting in glory and, presumably, judgement over the world at the last day.

The background to today's gospel is that it was the last of three discourses from the Mount of Olives prior to the final days of Jesus' earthly ministry. It was a warning to the disciples about the future.

Warnings do not come any more clearly than that. The story is told of a preacher on this text, having read that section to his congregation asked them to indicate if they had given regularly to the food bank, to stand up if they had given clothing to the homeless, to stand up if they had been helping out at a soup kitchen or volunteered to be a prison visitor or help with young offenders. He reminded them that;

'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' ⁴⁶ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." Matthew 25: 45-46.

I am not going to ask you that question but it must have caused some uncomfortable moments. Perhaps as we approach the end of one year and look forward to another year in our church life this might be a time to look again at our lives and how we deal with and contribute towards helping those who need help. The stark reality of this story is that no matter how we dress it up, no matter what spin we put on it, the problem of need in our world will not go away and we will be judged not only for what we do but also for that which we did not do.

Thoughts and prayers

Godfrey

Bible References

Year A	Psalm	First reading	Second reading
Sunday Next Before Advent November 22 nd	Psalm 95 : 1-7	Ephesians 1 : 15 - end	Matthew 25 : 31 - end
Monday, November 23 rd	Psalm 24 : 1-6	Revelation 14 : 1-5	Luke 21 : 1-4
Tuesday, November 24 th	Psalm 96	Revelation 14 : 14-19	Luke 21 : 5-11
Wednesday, November 25 th	Psalm 98	Revelation 15 : 1-4	Luke 21 : 12 - 19
Thursday, November 26 th	Psalm 100	Revelation 18 : 1-2, 21-23; 19: 1-3,9	Luke 21 : 20 - 28
Friday, November 27 th	Psalm 84 : 1-6	Revelation 20 : 1-4, 11- 21:2	Luke 21 : 29 - 33
Saturday, November 28 th	Psalm 95 : 1-7	Revelation 22 : 1-7	Luke 21 : 34 - 36

Hyperlinks to Guildford Cathedral Services :

<https://www.guildford-cathedral.org/worship/services>

Collect

Eternal Father, whose Son Jesus Christ ascended to the throne of heaven that he might rule over all things as Lord and King: keep the Church in the unity of the Spirit and in the bond of peace, and bring the whole created order to worship at his feet; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever

Amen



Parish Notices

As a direct consequence of the new Covid-19 national lockdown measures starting on Thursday 5th November, it is with regret that again we are obliged to close St. Mary's Church for public worship.

There will be no communal services or concerts until further notice.

The church will be opened for Private prayer only from 10:00 -12:00 am on Sundays and Thursdays.

Similarly, all exercise classes and other group activities which normally take place in the church hall are suspended until further notice and the hall will be closed.

Post, emails and telephone calls to the Parish office will be monitored and responded to. Please address any general enquiries, in the first instance, to: admin@stmarysstokedabernon.org.uk or Tel. 01932 866005

The weekly Parish leaflet will continue and be sent out on regular email distribution to those on the electoral role and others who have specifically requested it. Similarly, the St Mary's website will be updated to advise of any changes from the current situation.

The St Mary's Chat WhatsApp Group, which was established during the first lockdown, will continue to allow people to share their prayers and thoughts. I will continue to post my personal messages, including my Sunday message.

For those unable to access WhatsApp, my video messages are also available on this Website Home page and my Sunday messages also appear under **Sermons** on the **Quick Links** on this page.

We will continue with our regular postings of my video clips on Twitter and Instagram, so do follow us on **@StMarysstokedab**



Easy Fundraising and Amazon Smile

Thankyou to everyone who has signed up to Easy Fundraising & Amazon Smile and nominated St Mary's as your chosen charity. Lockdown 2.0 means many of us are doing more online shopping than ever, and particularly with Christmas shopping looming you can help raise money for St Mary's at no cost to yourselves with Easy Fundraising and Amazon Smile.

EasyFundraising



If you haven't signed up yet, it's easy and completely FREE. 4,400 shops and sites (including John Lewis, Marks and Spencer, Argos, Boden, Sweaty Betty and many others) will donate to us when you use easyfundraising to do your everyday online shopping - at no extra cost to you! Every donation you raise makes a difference to us so please sign up & share today, just click on the following link.

https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stmaryschurchsd/?invite=A75X3B%26referral-campaign=c2s%26utm_campaign=admin-trigger%26utm_content=srt

Amazon Smile



AmazonSmile customers can now support The Parochial Church Council Of The Ecclesiastical Parish Of Stoke D'Abernon in the Amazon shopping app on iPhones and Android phones! Simply follow these instructions to turn on AmazonSmile and start generating donations.

Open the Amazon Shopping app on your device

Go into the main menu of the Amazon Shopping app and tap into 'Settings'

Tap 'AmazonSmile' and follow the on-screen instructions to complete the process (nb you will need to enter The Parochial Church Council Of The Ecclesiastical Parish Of Stoke D'Abernon to search for St Mary's as this is what is entered on the Charities Commission)

It is important to note that you will always need to go into Amazon via <https://smile.amazon.co.uk> when you are shopping, (not your usual Amazon website), however it does seem to recognise any saved wishlists.

Hey! Don't forget the ...

These items are particularly needed by the Foodbank at the moment :

- **TINNED MEAT**
- **TINNED FISH**
- **PASTA SAUCE**
- **SUGAR 500G (SMALL PACK)**
- **NAPPIES SIZE 7, 6+ AND 6**
- **BABY WIPES**
- **TOILET ROLL**
- **MALE DEODORANT**
- **SHAMPOO**
- **CONDITIONER**





Lunchtime concert by Yehudi Menuhin pupils

The concert organised for 26th November with YMS pupils is being rearranged for January 2021. The final date to be confirmed.

If you have registered for the concert we will transfer your name across unless we hear from you. If you have not registered and would like to come, please contact Polly on 01932 866005 or email her at admin@stmarysstokedabernon.org.uk



Please don't forget the Church is open for Private Prayer every Thursday and Sunday between 10am and midday. No need to book.



Saturday 5th December

(Weather permitting)

2.30-4pm at St Mary's

BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL USING THE LINK BELOW

The International Community Church have invited us to join them to celebrate the start of the Christmas season!

Come ready for an outdoor (socially distanced) 'walk through' Nativity. Each family bubble will get a chance to experience the Nativity story come to life with real characters on our journey to Bethlehem.

Order a take-away coffee/hot chocolate at our festive coffee truck and say hello to a furry farm yard friend at our farm animal petting pen

This event is free but places are limited to secure your spot by signing up to this event.

-Wrap up warm!

-Bring a card to purchase your refreshments.

-Masks required should you need ablution facilities inside

-This event meets all government Covid guidelines and will only take place if government advice allows.

<https://www.facebook.com/events/3250353621740129/>