

The Parish of St. Edward the Confessor

Registered Charity no. 234025

Father Peter Cryan

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Newsletter for the week of 31st July 2022

Sunday Readings Cycle C

Weekday Readings Cycle II

Readings for 18th Ordinary Sunday Ecclesiastes 1:2, 2:21-23; Psalm 89; Colossians 3:1-5,9-11; Luke 12:13-21

Saturday 30th July 5.30pm 1st Mass of the 18th SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME

Sunday 31st July 10.30am 18th SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME

Monday 1st Aug 9.30am Mass *St. Alphonsus Liguori, bishop, religious founder, doctor of the Church*

Tuesday 2nd Aug (optional: *St. Eusebius of Vercelli, bishop*) (optional: *St. Peter Eymard, priest*)

Wednesday 3rd Aug 11.30pm *St. Oswald, ruler, martyr*

Thursday 4th Aug *St. John Vianney, priest*

Friday 5th Aug 11.30am Mass

Saturday 6th Aug FEAST: THE TRANSFIGURATION of the LORD

Saturday 6th Aug 5.30pm 1st Mass of 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Sunday 7th Aug 10.30am Mass: 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings for 19th Ordinary Sunday Wisdom 18:6-9; Psalm 32; Hebrews 11: 1-2,8-12; Luke 12: 32-48

A face mask/ covering is **not essential** but is **recommended** in the church & community Room while the present surge of Covid19 abates sufficiently. Hand sanitizing continues to be **desirable**. Care for **safe physical distancing** for oneself & fellow worshippers -especially not placing oneself directly behind another worshipper is needed!

PROPOSED RENEWAL of MEMBERSHIP of the PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

PPC's proposal provide a balance between continuity and newness is that *the number of elected PPC members are reduced this year to 6: then 3 would be open to new nominations for a 3 year term and the other 3 would be drawn from the existing 6 remaining members by their mutual agreement.* Let the present PPC know what you think of this proposal as we look to the end of August & PPC renewal.

SATURDAY MASS TIME WARNING

As a result of probable increased attendance at Macclesfield Town FC matches this new season, it likely to force putting back the Saturday Mass time to 6.00pm. The first indication to whether to change or not will be the season's first home match on Sat 13th August.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS GIVING

Last Sunday's Offertory £192.50

DIOCESAN LOURDES PILGRIMAGE

This weekend the Diocesan is at Lourdes after a two year absence. If you would like wish to join them via the livestream for the International Mass on **Sun 31st July** at 8.30am BST & for their Mass in the Grotto on Mon 1 Aug 9am BST, go to the Sanctuaries website www.lourdes-france.org & click the link.

RESOURCES from the ANSCOMBE BIOETHICS CENTRE

The Anscombe Bioethics Centre has new website that has resources to benefit parishioners especially, doctors, nurses, or others who work or study in fields related to health & social care. Take advantage & access their work through their website & social media: <https://www.bioethics.org.uk> You can also sign up to their monthly digest for the latest news, events, and accessible briefings on moral matters in medicine, here: <https://bit.ly/ABC-Subscribe>

FOOD BANK

The Food Bank is asking at the moment for help especially for tinned peaches, tinned custard tinned, rice pudding, biscuits, bagged rice, instant mashed potatoes, cordial & toilet rolls.

GET IN TOUCH QUICKLY –IF YOU ARE SICK If you or your relative enters Macclesfield Hospital let Fr. Peter know as soon as possible tel: 01625 423576 or by e-mail st.edmacc@gmail.com

DIARY of EVENTS

- Next Sun 7th Aug 12noon Baptism of Rueben Proctor
- Sun 14th Aug Holyday: the Assumption of the B.V. Mary
- Sun 28th Aug Start of nominations for new PPC members
- Mon 29th Aug Late Summer Public Holiday
- Mon 5th Sept New term start of Christ the King Pr. Sch / All Hallows College (whole school)

“Very Likely”: Dead is not Dead Enough

There has been another court case in which doctors have wanted to withdraw life sustaining treatment from a child over the objections of the parents. As with most cases of this kind, in the case of *Archie Battersbee*, the judge has sided with the doctors rather than with the parents and has ordered ventilation to be withdrawn. Decisions of this kind are strongly influenced by ethical, religious and cultural attitudes and, in the United Kingdom, these attitudes include a deference to the medical profession (“doctor knows best”), an understatement of the role and rights of parents, and a prejudice that unconscious and minimally conscious patients are incapable of deriving any benefit from life. The first prejudice would be questioned in the United States and the second and third would be questioned both in America and in continental Europe and the Middle East. The combination reflects a peculiarly British form of medical and judicial paternalism.

While these features are sadly familiar from cases such as that of Charlie Gard, Alfie Evans, Pippa Knight, and Alta Fixler, there are other elements of the present case that are novel. In this case, the doctors argued that Archie was in fact dead, and asked the court for permission to carry out the tests for “brain stem death” to demonstrate this. If he were dead clearly then there would be no point in ventilating his body. Only as a secondary consideration did they argue that, if the tests showed he was still alive, then ventilation should be withdrawn on the basis of Archie’s best interests. The parents objected to the tests for “brain stem death” because of the risks involved.

The court-appointed guardian sided with the doctors and the judge’s order that doctors perform the standard tests for “brain stem death” as laid out in the Code of Practice. However, these tests could not be carried out because a preliminary test showed that there would be a danger of a false positive. The judge nevertheless decided, on the “balance of probabilities”, that it was more likely than not that Archie had died. Justice Arbuthnot also declared that, even if Archie were not dead, withdrawal of ventilation would be in his best interests because of the burdens of treatment⁸. This was despite a previous statement from Archie that, if he were unconscious he would want to be given life-sustaining treatment so as to remain with his mother.

There are several issues of concern in this judgement. In the first place it seems extraordinary that questions of life and death should be matters of a balance of probability rather than determination beyond reasonable doubt. No one would suggest burying someone who was “more likely than not” to be dead! “Very likely” dead is not dead enough. The judge in this case stated that “the law is settled” and that the Court should decide on matters of fact in such cases based on the balance of probabilities. However, if this is the law, it is not so much settled as unsettling and in clear conflict with Catholic medical ethics. For example, the Catholic Church requires moral certainty of death – certainty beyond reasonable doubt – before unpaired vital organs can be taken from a body. It should be noted that the concept of brain death was developed in the context of the practice of organ transplantation and the family of *Archie Battersbee* were upset that the doctors had started talking about organ donation within three days of his admission to hospital, long before the date that the judge subsequently gave as the date of Archie’s death.

A second reason that this decision is unsettling is that the tests for brain stem death, as set out in the Code of Practice, were never completed. Death had not been established by the standards of the Code. The judge based her decision not on best practice but on the opinion of doctors that it was “likely or very likely” that *Archie* was dead. However, what is “very likely” is not certain, and one source of doubt is the fact that Archie’s heart continues to beat. According to the Code of Practice “There is evidence to show that for a patient with severe structural brain damage, if all the brain-stem death criteria are satisfied, asystole will inevitably follow within a few days despite continued ventilation”. The Code quotes a study of over a thousand patients diagnosed with brain-stem death which gave the median time to asystole of 40 hours, with over three quarters losing heart function within hours. Archie has been on a ventilator for 57 days and, according to the judge, has been brain-stem dead for 14 days. Such an extended period of ventilation is compatible with a diagnosis of brain-stem death, but the Code notes that “evidence [that asystole will follow in a few days] was considered important in the development of the concept of brain-stem death in adults”. Extended continuity of heartbeat is a reason for requiring that all tests for brain-stem death be completed before declaring the patient dead.

More concerning still is the fact that the judge regarded it as in the best interests of Archie to have ventilation withdrawn, even though he was not in pain and even though he had expressed a view that he would wish to receive life-sustaining treatment. The reason for overruling both the legal presumption in favour of sustaining life and his express wish was speculation as to “what Archie’s view might be of the treatment as it is being administered to him today”. Now it is true that views stated in advance are not necessarily a good guide to the views of people who have become disabled through injury. However, research on people with locked in syndrome suggests that people often underestimate the degree to which they would want to live, and furthermore that doctors also tend to underestimate this. In one study, only 25% of Accident and Emergency doctors could envisage themselves living with quadriplegia; in contrast 90% of quadriplegics say they are happy to be alive. The speculation that someone who expressed a prior wish to live would actually want to die is a projection of the doctors’ and the judge’s views without any basis in evidence. Like the RS case, it shows that doctors and judges do not take expressions of a wish to receive treatment and live with the same seriousness as they take expressions of a wish not to receive treatment. It was this double standard that led to Leslie Burke taking the GMC to court for its guidance on withholding and withdrawing treatment and fifteen years later this double standard is still with us. Far from a strong presumption in favour of sustaining life there seems to be a strong presumption in favour of withdrawing life-sustaining treatment, even in the face of express previous wishes to the contrary. Regrettably it seems that only a formal statement or lasting power of attorney can now protect people against the tender mercies of doctors and the judiciary. This is a pressing need and one that the Anscombe Bioethics Centre plans to address in the coming months. ©



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 31st July 2022 - The Eighteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

1 Relax & Remember

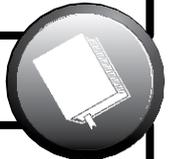
Set aside 10 -15 minutes and create a suitable environment by removing any distractions. Make sure that you are comfortable. Perhaps light a candle. Make the sign of the cross † and remain still for a minute of settling silence. Call to mind the love that God has for you. Remember that through this scripture our Lord is truly present. Then read the Gospel, preferably aloud and slowly, and pay attention to any words that stand out. If any do, meditate on them for a few minutes and be invited into a dialogue with God.



2 Read

Taken from the Gospel for 31st July 2022 (Luke 12:13-21): The Dangers of Wealth

A man in the crowd said to Jesus, "Master, tell my brother to give me a share of our inheritance." "My friend," he replied, "who appointed me your judge, or the arbitrator of your claims?" Then he said to them, "Watch, and be on your guard against avarice of any kind, for a man's life is not made secure by what he owns, even when he has more than he needs." Then he told them a parable: "There was once a rich man who, having had a good harvest from his land, thought to himself, 'What am I to do? I have not enough room to store my crops.' Then he said, 'This is what I will do: I will pull down my barns and build bigger ones, and store all my grain and my goods in them, and I will say to my soul: My soul, you have plenty of good things laid by for many years to come; take things easy, eat, drink, have a good time.' But God said to him, 'Fool! This very night the demand will be made for your soul; and this hoard of yours, whose will it be then?' So it is when a man stores up treasure for himself in place of making himself rich in the sight of God."



3 Reflect

After spending a few minutes considering this Gospel, continue by reading Fr Henry Wansbrough's reflection.

Luke's language and style make it clear that he comes from a reasonably privileged background. In his stories he refers to far larger sums of money than Mark does. He also understands about investment banking and rates of interest. This makes it all the more striking that he continually warns against the dangers of wealth. Jesus brushes aside a dispute about inheritance. The parable of the Rich Fool is perhaps the most condemnatory of all the parables; nowhere else in the gospels is anyone called outright a 'Fool'! Luke tells us that salvation came first to the poor, to the shepherds of Bethlehem, through a baby cradled in a cattle-trough. Only Luke says that the apostles left 'everything' to follow Jesus. The guests invited to the Great Supper refuse the invitation because they are distracted by their new purchases. In the ideal young community of the early Church in Jerusalem Luke insists that everything was held in common. The only hope for the rich (for example in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus) is to use their wealth to make friends in heaven.

What challenge does Jesus offer me in this Gospel, particularly about where I find my true 'treasure'?

Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB

4 Respond & Request

Now slowly and prayerfully read the Gospel once again but this time in silence. Consider how this Gospel could apply to your life in general. Then thank God for any insight you may have received. Conclude by asking God to bless you with one of the following spiritual gifts to help you act on any resolution you have made: love, understanding, wisdom, faithfulness, peace, self control, patience, or joy. Please remember to pray for the Church and particularly our school families. Then conclude by requesting the prayers of Our Lady & St Joseph.



*The Wednesday Word is under the patronage of St Joseph, Patron Saint of Families and Protector of the Church
Within the tradition of the Catholic Church, each Wednesday is dedicated to St Joseph*

WEDNESDAY WORD PLUS



Fr Henry's reflections on the first and second readings of Sunday 31st July 2022

First Reading: *Vanity of Vanities*

Ecclesiastes 1:2; 2:21-23

Vanity of vanities, the Preacher says. Vanity of vanities. All is vanity! For so it is that a man who has laboured wisely, skilfully and successfully must leave what is his own to someone who has not toiled for it at all. This, too, is vanity and great injustice; for what does he gain for all the toil and strain that he has undergone under the sun? What of all his laborious days, his cares of office, his restless nights? This, too, is vanity.

This is the only Sunday reading from the Book of Ecclesiastes. The Book is attributed to King Solomon (whose dates are traditionally given as c.970-931 BC), but it must have been written several centuries later, even after the time of Alexander the Great in the 4th century BC. This late book of wisdom is full of disillusionment and restless questioning of all the old certainties, not even sure about the after-life. It queries whether happiness is anywhere to be found - certainly not in hard work! In this our passage partners the gospel reading about the rich fool, though the rich fool is condemned for his selfish hoarding, while the author of Ecclesiastes despairingly thinks that no toil can win any worthwhile result. Why is this book included in the collection of the revealed truth which is Sacred Scripture? Perhaps because it is always useful to question our certainties, and to make up our minds afresh. Certainly it blows away the assumption made in earlier biblical traditions that happiness is to be found in wealth and distinction, and that wealth is a sign of God's blessing.

Where do you find your security and your happiness?

Second Reading: *Risen with Christ*

Colossians 3:1-5. 9-11

Since you have been brought back to true life with Christ, you must look for the things that are in heaven, where Christ is, sitting at God's right hand. Let your thoughts be on heavenly things, not on the things that are on the earth, because you have died, and now the life you have is hidden with Christ in God. But when Christ is revealed -and he is your life - you too will be revealed in all your glory with him. That is why you must kill everything in you that belongs only to earthly life: fornication, impurity, guilty passion, evil desires and especially greed, which is the same thing as worshipping a false god; and never tell each other lies. You have stripped off your old behaviour with your old self, and you have put on a new self which will progress towards true knowledge the more it is renewed in the image of its creator; and in that image there is no room for distinction between Greek and Jew, between the circumcised or the uncircumcised, or between barbarian and Scythian, slave and free man. There is only Christ: he is everything and he is in everything.

This final reading from Colossians is full of the hope of the Resurrection (indeed, it is prescribed for reading also on Easter Sunday morning). The Pauline theme of being baptized into Christ and so sharing his risen life is familiar from Paul's earlier letters. Adopted into sonship with Christ, we have cast off all the old ties, and there is no room for all the old vices. But there is a fascinating and inspiring change of viewpoint in this epistle. In the earlier letters Paul said that we were already reconciled to God but not yet saved; our salvation is still to be completed in the future. The later letters to the Colossians and Ephesians state that we have already been raised with Christ, but this risen life in Christ is still hidden in God and merely has yet to be revealed. Once we have been baptized into Christ we have been taken on as his own, and can securely address God with intimacy as 'Father'. This gives us confidence in our continuing struggle to shake off all evil and allow Christ to take control of every aspect of our lives. We still are 'being transformed into Christ', but the battle is already won.

If my natural dwelling-place is now with Christ 'at the right hand of the Father', what difference does this make to the way I lead my life and to my priorities?

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Allow Christ to take control of every aspect of our lives.”

The Wednesday Word: *Connecting Home, School & Parish through the Word of God*

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