

The Parish of St. Edward the Confessor

Registered Charity no. 234025

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Newsletter for the week of 5th November 2023

Sunday Readings Cycle A

Weekday Readings Cycle I

Readings of the 31st Ordinary Sunday: Malachi 1:14-2:2,8-10;Ps. 130;1Thessalonians 2:7-9,13;Matthew 23:1-12

Saturday 4th Nov 5.30pm 1st MASS of the 31st SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME

Sunday 5th Nov 10.30am MASS of the 31st SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME

Monday 6th Nov

Tuesday 7th Nov (Optional: St. Willibrord, bishop)

Wednesday 8th Nov

Thursday 9th Nov FEAST: DEDICATION of the LATERAN BASILICA

Friday 10th Nov 11.30am St. Leo the Great, pope, doctor of the Church

Saturday 11th Nov 10.00am St. Martin of Tours, bishop *Mass for All Victims of War*

10.30-11am Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday 11th Nov 5.30pm 1st Mass of the 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Sunday 12th Nov 10.30am Mass of the 32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings of 32nd Ordinary Sunday: Wisdom:12-16;Psalm 130;1 Thessalonians 4:13-14;Matthew 25:1-13

NOVEMBER DECEASED REMEMBRANCE LIST

During November, the names of all the deceased of our families & friends, fellow parishioners are put together to pray for them at every Mass. Bring a list of their names & place the list in the boxes at the church entrance but don't put money. The lists are put in the 'Holy Souls' Folder & placed on the altar for remembrance at every Mass

CRAFT CLUB

Wed 8th Nov 12.15- 2.30pm *Craft Club* in the Community Room.

CRAFT CLUB ITEMS for SALE

The *Craft Club* are displaying their work for sale in the Community Room including low-cost but high quality decorations for your Christmas Tree. Put money in plastic container on table to go to 2 *Craft Club* chosen charities.

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

Wed 15th Nov. 6.30pm in the Community Room- note the change of date & day : Parish Pastoral Council meeting including election of new officers Any agenda items now to Fr. Peter by next Sunday 12th November.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GREAT GENEROSITY

Last Sunday Offertory £196.30

Final Total: Missio (World Mission Sunday) £216.40

REMEMBER, REMEMBER NOT the 5th of NOVEMBER but THE FOOD BANK

The *Silk Life Food Bank* continues to request help. Food prices are still going up & some people really struggle. See the list on posters or give: UHT milk, stewed steak, beef casserole, chili con carne, instant mash or chicken curry.

CARITAS at CHRISTMAS APPEAL

"Without the support, I simply wouldn't still be here."

We'll have a collection for *Caritas at Christmas Appeal* on Sat 2nd/ Sun 4th Dec. *Caritas Shrewsbury* & their clients are really grateful for your generosity & support. 100% of your donations go to those in the most vulnerable situations within the diocese ensuring they receive crisis food vouchers & practical support a.s.a.p. when it is most needed. You can find more information & donate online too at: <https://www.caritasshrewsbury.org.uk> If you are aware of someone in need of assistance, please speak to Trish Spencer, deputy Chief Executive.

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 EVENT

- Sun 19th Nov. Safeguarding Sunday & Retiring Collection for Clergy Education & Training Fund

- Sun 19th Nov 12noon Baptism of Alba Rose Ward

- Sun 26th Nov. Solemnity of Christ the King

- Sun 3rd Dec. 1st Sunday of Advent & Retiring Collection for Caritas at Christmas

- Sun 24th Dec 4th Sunday of Advent

- Mon 25th Dec Christmas Day: 1st Mass of Xstmas Night on Sun 24th & Xstmas Day Mass on Mon 25th

Synod Report: A Church that involves everyone and is close to world's wounds

28th October '23 XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops adopted the following Synthesis Report

The full report can be downloaded here: [General Assembly Synthesis Report](#)

Summary of the Synthesis Report

Listening to all, beginning with victims of abuse

As in the Letter to the People of God, the synod assembly reaffirms an “openness to listening and accompanying all, including those who have suffered abuse and hurt in the Church”, which “addressing the structural conditions that abetted such abuse, remains before us, and requires concrete gestures of penitence”.

The face of a synodal Church

Synodality is a first step. It is a term that the participants in the Synod themselves admit is “a term unfamiliar to many members of the People of God, causing some people confusion and concern” (1 f), including fears of a departure from tradition, a debasement of the hierarchical nature of the Church (1 g), a loss of power or, on the contrary, immobility and a lack of courage for change. “Synodal” and “synodality” are instead terms that “speak of a mode of being Church that integrates communion, mission, and participation”. So they indicate a way of living the Church, valuing differences and developing the active involvement of all. This begins with deacons, priests, and bishops: “A synodal Church cannot do without their voices” (1 n), we read. “We need an understanding of the reasons for resistance to synodality by some of them”.

Mission

The document continues explaining that synodality goes hand in hand with mission. Hence, it is necessary that “Christian communities are to enter into solidarity with those of other religions, convictions and cultures, thus avoiding, on the one hand, the risk of self-referentiality and self-preservation, and on the other hand the risk of loss of identity” (2 e). In this new “pastoral style”, it would seem important to many to make “liturgical language more accessible to the faithful and more embodied in the diversity of cultures” (3 l).

The poor at the centre

Ample space in the Report is devoted to the poor, who ask the Church for “love”, understood as “respect, acceptance, and recognition” (4 a). “For the Church, the option for the poor and those at the margins is a theological category before being a cultural, sociological, political or philosophical category” (4 b), the document reiterates, identifying the poor not only as those who are materially impoverished, but also migrants; indigenous peoples; victims of violence and abuse (especially women), or racism and trafficking; people with addictions; minorities; abandoned elderly people; and exploited workers (4 c). Among “the most vulnerable of the vulnerable, on whose behalf constant advocacy is needed, [are] the unborn and their mothers”, the document continues. “The Assembly hears the cry of the ‘new poor’, produced by wars and terrorism that plague many countries on several continents, and the assembly condemns the corrupt political and economic systems that cause such strife”. The most vulnerable of the vulnerable, for whom constant advocacy is needed, are the children in the womb and their mothers,” reads the text of the Assembly, which says it is “aware of the cry of the ‘new poor’ produced by wars and terrorism also caused by ‘corrupt political and economic systems’.

Commitment of believers in the field of politics and for the common good

In this sense, the Church is urged to be committed both to the “public denunciation of the injustices” perpetrated by individuals, governments, and companies; and to active engagement in politics, associations, trade unions, popular movements (4f & 4g). At the same time, the consolidated action of the Church in the fields of education, health, and social assistance, “without any discrimination or the exclusion of anyone”, must not be neglected (4 k).

Migrants

There is also a focus on migrants and refugees, “many of whom bear the wounds of uprooting, war and violence”. They “often become a source of renewal and enrichment for the communities that welcome them and an opportunity to establish direct links with geographically distant churches” (5 d). Faced with increasingly hostile attitudes towards them, the General Assembly says, “We are called to practice an open welcome, to accompany them in the construction of a new life and to build a true intercultural communion among peoples”. Fundamental in this sense is “respect for the liturgical traditions and religious practices of migrants” as well as respect for their own language. For example, a word like “mission”, in contexts where “the proclamation of the Gospel was associated with colonization, even genocide”, is laden with “painful historical memories” and “hinders communion today” (5 e). “Evangelising in these contexts requires acknowledging mistakes made, learning a new sensitivity to these issues”, the document states.

Combating racism and xenophobia

Equal commitment and care is required of the Church “to engage decisively in education, in the culture of dialogue and encounter, combating racism and xenophobia, especially through pastoral formation” (5 p). It is also urgent to identify “systems within the Church that create or maintain racial injustice” (5 q)

Eastern Churches

Remaining on the subject of migration, the Report looks to Eastern Europe and the recent conflicts that have caused the flow of numerous faithful from the Catholic East into territories with a Latin majority. It is necessary, the Assembly says, “for the local Latin-rite Churches, in the name of synodality, to help the Eastern faithful who have emigrated to preserve their identity and cultivate their specific heritage, without undergoing processes of assimilation is the request of the Fathers” (6c).

On the road to Christian unity

With regard to ecumenism, the Report speaks of a “spiritual renewal” that requires “processes of repentance and healing of the memory” (7c). It goes on to quote Pope Francis’ expression about an “ecumenism of the blood”; that is “Christians of different affiliations who give their lives for faith in Jesus Christ” (7d), and it mentions the proposal for an ecumenical martyrology (7o). The Report also reiterates that “collaboration among all Christians” is a resource “for healing the culture of hatred, division and war that pits groups, peoples and nations against each other”. It does not forget the issue of so-called mixed marriages, which are realities in which “it is possible to evangelize each other” (7 f).

Layty and families (Part II)

“Laymen and laywomen, those in consecrated life, and ordained ministers have equal dignity” (8b): this conviction is forcefully reiterated in the Synthesis Report, which recalls how the lay faithful are “increasingly present and active in service within Christian communities” (8e). Educators in the faith, theologians, formators, spiritual animators, and catechists, active in safeguarding and administration: their contributions are “indispensable to the mission of the Church” (8 e). The different charisms must therefore be “called forth, recognized and fully appreciated” (8 f), and not be ignored, underutilized, or “clericalised” (8 f).

Women in the life and mission of the Church

There is, then, a call for a strong commitment on the part of the Church to accompany and understand women in all aspects of their lives, including pastoral and sacramental ones. Women, it says, “cry out for justice in societies still marked by sexual violence, economic inequality and the tendency to treat them as objects” (9 c), adding “Pastoral accompaniment and vigorous advocacy for women should go hand in hand”.

Clericalism

Many women present at the Synod “expressed deep gratitude for the work of priests and bishops”, but “also spoke of a Church that wounds” (9 f). “Clericalism, a chauvinist mentality, and inappropriate expressions of authority continue to scar the face of the Church and damage its communion”. A “profound spiritual conversion is needed as the foundation for any effective structural change”; and the General Assembly noted that “we desire to promote a Church in which men and women dialogue together... without subordination, exclusion, and competition” (9h).

Opening the diaconate to women?

Various opinions on opening the diaconate to women were acknowledged (9 j): for some, it is “unacceptable because they consider it a discontinuity with Tradition”; for others, it would restore a practice of the early Church; still others see it as “an appropriate and necessary response to the signs of the times ... that would find an echo in the hearts of many who seek new energy and vitality in the Church”. Then there are those who are concerned that opening the diaconate to women would involve “a worrying anthropological confusion, which, if granted, would marry the Church to the spirit of the age”. Fathers and mothers of the Synod ask to continue “Theological and pastoral research on the access of women to the diaconate”, making use of the results of the commissions specially set up by the Pope, as well as the theological, historical and exegetical research already carried out: “If possible”, they say, “the results of this research should be presented at the next Session of the Assembly” (9 n).

Discrimination and abuse

In the meantime, the urgency of ensuring “that women can participate in decision-making processes and assume roles of responsibility in pastoral care and ministry” is reiterated, noting that canon law should be adapted accordingly (9m). Cases of employment discrimination and unfair remuneration must also be addressed, including those in the Church where consecrated women are often considered “cheap labour” (9 o). Similarly, women’s access to theological education and training programmes must be expanded (9 p), including promoting the use of inclusive language in liturgical texts and Church documents (9 q).

Consecrated Life

Looking at the richness and variety of the different forms of consecrated life, the Report warns against the “persistence of an authoritarian style, which makes no room for dialogue”. The Report notes, too, that “cases of abuse of various kinds experienced by those in religious life and members of lay associations, especially of women, signal a problem in the exercise of authority and demand decisive and appropriate interventions” (10 d).

Abuses

On the question of abuse, which “places many bishops in the difficult situation of having to reconcile the role of father with that of judge” (12 i), the Report supports the exploration of the “appropriateness of assigning the judicial task to another body, to be specified canonically” (12 i)

Formation (Part III)

A “synodal approach” is then requested for formation, with the recommendation that work be undertaken “on relationship and sexual education, to accompany young people as they mature in their personal and sexual identities and to support the maturation of those called to celibacy and consecrated chastity” (14 g). The Report emphasizes the importance of deepening “the dialogue between the human sciences” (14 h) so as to enable “careful consideration of matters that are controversial within the Church” (15 b) – that is, among other issues, matters “such as those relating to matters of identity and sexuality, the end of life, complicated marital situations, and ethical issues related to artificial intelligence”. Issues such as these are controversial precisely “because they pose new questions” in society and in the Church (15 g). “It is important to take the time required for this reflection and to invest our best energies in it, without giving in to simplistic judgments that hurt individuals and the Body of the Church”, the Report says, while recalling that “Church teaching already provides a sense of direction on many of these matters, but this teaching evidently still requires translation into pastoral practice”.

Deacons and formation

The Assembly then expresses gratitude to ordained ministers, who are “called to live their service to the People of God in a disposition of proximity to people, welcoming and listening to all, while cultivating a deep personal spirituality and a life of prayer” (11b). The Report warns against clericalism, a “distortion of the priestly vocation” that “needs to be challenged from the earliest stages of formation” by ensuring “close contact” with the people and those in need (11 c). The request is also expressed, along these lines, that seminaries or other courses of formation of candidates for the ministry be linked to the daily life of communities (11 e), in order “to avoid the risks of formalism and ideology that lead to authoritarian attitudes, and impede genuine vocational growth”.

Celibacy

Mention was made of the theme of celibacy, which received different evaluations during the assembly.” Its value is appreciated by all as richly prophetic and a profound witness to Christ”; the Report says, while noting that some ask “whether its appropriateness, theologically, for priestly ministry should necessarily translate into a disciplinary obligation in the Latin Church, above all in ecclesial and cultural contexts that make it more difficult. This discussion is not new but requires further consideration”.

Bishops

There is ample reflection on the figure and role of the bishop, who is called to be “an example of synodality” (12 c) by exercising “co-responsibility”, understood as the involvement of other actors within the diocese and the clergy, so as to lighten the burden of “administrative and legal commitments” which can hinder his mission (12 e). Coupled with this, the bishop does not always find the human and spiritual support he needs, while “a certain sense of loneliness is not uncommon” (12 e).

Listening

With the same concern, the Report renews the invitation to hear and accompany “people who feel marginalized or excluded from the Church because of their marriage status, identity or sexuality”. “There was a deep sense of love, mercy and compassion felt in the Assembly for those who are or feel hurt or neglected by the Church, who want a place to call ‘home’ where they can feel safe, be heard and respected, without fear of feeling judged”, the document says, while insisting that “Christians must always show respect for the dignity of every person” (16 h).

Polygamy

In light of the experiences reported in the Synod hall by some members of the Synod from Africa, SECAM (Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar) is encouraged to promote “a theological and pastoral discernment” on the topic of polygamy and the accompaniment of people in polygamous unions who are coming to faith” (16 q)

Digital culture

Finally, the Synthesis Report speaks of the digital environment: “It is up to us to reach today’s culture in all spaces where people seek meaning and love, including the spaces they enter through their cell phones and tablets” (17 c), bearing in mind that the internet “can also cause harm and injury, such as through intimidation, disinformation, sexual exploitation, and addiction”. The Report adds, “There is an urgent need to consider how the Christian community can support families in ensuring that the online space is not only safe but also spiritually life-giving” (17 f).



Preparing for the Mass of Sunday 5th November 2023 - The Thirty First 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 Sunday 5th November 2023 - The Scribes and Pharisees Denounced (Matthew 23:1-12)
Addressing the people and his disciples Jesus said, 'The scribes and the Pharisees occupy the chair of Moses. You must therefore do what they tell you and listen to what they say; but do not be guided by what they do: since they do not practise what they preach. They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders, but will they lift a finger to move them? Not they! Everything they do is done to attract attention, like wearing broader phylacteries and longer tassels, like wanting to take the place of honour at banquets and the front seats in the synagogues, being greeted obsequiously in the market squares and having people call them Rabbi. You, however, must not allow yourselves to be called Rabbi, since you have only one Master, and you are all brothers. You must call no one on earth your father, since you have only one Father, and he is in heaven. Nor must you allow yourselves to be called teachers, for you have only one Teacher, the Christ. The greatest among you must be your servant. Anyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and anyone who humbles himself will be exalted.'

3 Reflect

After spending a few minutes considering this Gospel, continue by reading Fr Henry Wansbrough's reflection.
This is the fiercest of all the hard things which the gospel of Matthew has to say about the scribes and Pharisees. It introduces a sevenfold curse upon them. The Pharisees were the party of the Jews most concerned about the exact observance of the prescriptions of the Law of Moses. The 'scribes' were lawyers to whom they would turn in the case of a clash between two laws. Their attention to detail and their fussiness often made them lose sight of the real purpose of the Law. However, Jesus was prepared to meet them on the Pharisees' own ground and debate with them on their own terms. In the gospels, and especially in Matthew (written towards the end of the first century), the hostility of the early Christians to the Pharisees has obviously become fiercer, no doubt because of their persecution of the followers of Jesus. As Matthew warns, 'They will flog you in their synagogues.' One of their concerns was obviously the status of the religious leaders. It looks as though they were almost turning themselves into little gods. So here the gospel stresses, by contrast, that all the disciples of Jesus are equal: in Christianity there is only one Father, only one Teacher for all.
What are the charges here levelled against the Pharisees? What qualities earn Christian leaders the respect of others?
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 5th November 2023

First Reading: *A Corrupt Leadership*

Malachi 1:14-2:2.8-10

I am a great king, says the Lord of hosts, and my name is feared throughout the nations. And now, priests, this warning is for you. If you do not listen, if you do not find it in your heart to glorify my name, says the Lord of hosts, I will send the curse on you and curse your very blessing. You have strayed from the way; you have caused many to stumble by your teaching. You have destroyed the covenant of Levi, says the Lord of hosts. And so I in my turn have made you contemptible and vile in the eyes of the whole people in repayment for the way you have not kept to my paths but have shown partiality in your administration. Have we not all one Father? Did not one God create us? Why, then, do we break faith with one another, profaning the covenant of our ancestors?

In the three-year cycle there are only two Sunday readings from the prophet Malachi. This prophet could perhaps be called anonymous, for 'Malachi' means only 'My messenger'. The book is printed at the very end of the Old Testament – conveniently, because it ends with a message about the coming of the final messenger of the Lord before the Day of the Lord; this leads on perfectly into the New Testament and the gospel of Matthew. The book was probably written soon after the return of the Jews from exile in Babylon. The prophets of this time show that the enthusiastic return was quickly followed by a period of disillusionment and slackness in the performance of religious duties: they could not even get started on rebuilding the Temple. Today's passage denounces the religious leaders for their failure truly to give glory to God, both by their sacrifices and by their failures in moral leadership. Are they really striving to give leadership in celebrating the covenant between God and his people? The reading is obviously chosen to pair with the gospel reading, where the religious leadership at the time of Jesus is also fiercely criticized. Slackness in religious observance is a danger in any age, even our own.

Is the Church in our day becoming slack and lukewarm?

Second Reading: *Paul's Care for his Converts*

1 Thessalonians 2:7-9.13

Like a mother feeding and looking after her own children, we felt so devoted and protective towards you, and had come to love you so much, that we were eager to hand over to you not only the Good News but our whole lives as well. Let me remind you, brothers, how hard we used to work, slaving night and day so as not to be a burden on any one of you while we were proclaiming God's Good News to you. Another reason why we constantly thank God for you is that as soon as you heard the message that we brought you as God's message, you accepted it for what it really is, God's message and not some human thinking; and it is still a living power among you who believe it.

This is the earliest of Paul's letters that we possess, and he stresses, as he often does later, his unremitting care for the churches he has founded around the eastern Mediterranean region. He seems to be defending himself, perhaps against a charge that he had neglected them. Certainly the urgency with which he moved from one city to another cannot have left him time to instruct these new congregations fully; this is why his letters to them are so rich in teaching for us! They supplement the rudimentary instruction which he gave to them when he was present. Elsewhere he underlines how heavily this anxiety for the well-being of these young communities weighs upon him. The vividness and excitement of his letters show how earnest and eager he was. Writing to the Corinthians, at the end of a recital of the persecutions, dangers and hardships he has undergone in the service of Christ and the gospel, he adds, 'Beside all the external things, there is, day in day out, the pressure on me of my anxiety for all the churches' (2 Corinthians 11:28). Paul's self-defence stands in sharp contrast to the first reading and the criticism of the slackness of religious leaders.

What do we expect from our pastors?

“His letters show how earnest and eager Paul was.”

The Wednesday Word: *Connecting Home, School & Parish through the Word of God* w:
www.wednesdayword.org e: info@wednesdayword.org