

BRINDLE St JOSEPH'S

Chapel Fold, Houghton, PR5 0DE

Parish Priest: Fr Raphael Jones OSB

Telephone: 01254 852026 – Mobile (emergency) 07944 255541

Email: pp@brindlestjosephs.org.uk

Website: www.brindlestjosephs.org.uk

Ampleforth Abbey Trust – Registered Charity no: 1026493

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time 23rd February 2025

(Sunday cycle year C, weekday cycle year 1, psalter week 3)



“Love your enemies”

Lord, help us to follow Your example of love and mercy. Teach us to avoid judging others and to show compassion instead. Give us the strength to live like Jesus, spreading kindness and forgiveness. Amen.

THIS WEEK

Sat 22 nd	10.30am	Pope's intentions	The See of St Peter (feast)
	6.00pm	Christine Jamieson	Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time
Sun 23 rd	9.30am	For the Parish	
Mon 24 th	No Mass today		Feria
Tue 25 th	9.30am	Mary Schofield	Feria
Wed 26 th	9.30am	Margaret Mary Cowsley	Feria
Thu 27 th	9.30am	Vocations to the priesthood and religious life	Feria
Fri 28 th	9.30am	Holy Souls	Feria
Sat 1 st March	10.00am	Confessions	St David (feast)
	10.30am	Edmund Noblett (<i>Anointing of the sick during Mass</i>)	
	6.00pm	For the Parish	Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time
Sun 2 nd	9.30am	Alan Thompson	

First Saturday of the month: Confessions at 10.00am, Anointing of the sick during 10.30am Mass

This week		Reader		Eucharistic Minister		Bookshop	
Sat 22 nd		G Hopkinson		L Gardner		Not open	
Sun 23 rd		R Conboy		S Schofield		Not open	
Bidding prayers	C Snape	Children's Liturgy	A Fowler, B Gorrell		Collection counters	B Kellett & M Russell	
Next week		Reader		Eucharistic Minister		Bookshop	
Sat 1 st March		G Kellett		P Cook		L Gardner	
Sun 2 nd		B Cook		M Gardner		tba	
Bidding prayers	L Gardner	Children's Liturgy	L Worswick, C Curwen		Collection counters	tba	

Last weekend – attendance: 105, collection £309.45 – thank you!

Readings: 1 Samuel 26:2,7-9,12-13,22-23, 1 Corinthians 15:45-49, Luke 6:27-38

David is on the run from King Saul who, jealous of David's youth and popularity, intends to kill him.

But David catches Saul and his men sleeping and has the chance to slay him but *stays* his hand for – *who*, he asks, *has the right to slay God's anointed and remain guiltless?*

It is out of fear of God's judgement that David spares King Saul but he didn't spare those who eventually did raise their hand against Saul even though he had made himself David's enemy.

A tenuous link between our first reading and today's Gospel (at least as far as I can see) is in Jesus' teaching on the blessings, mercy, forgiveness and love that should be extended to those who hate us, even our enemies.

How on earth are we to apply such charitable thoughts to those who deliberately set out to inflict the most horrendous pain, suffering and death upon their innocent victims both past and present, especially those whom we have known and loved?

But the sun and the rain shine and fall upon the good and the bad alike Jesus says in Matthew's Gospel and then joins Luke: *if you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them* and he says the same about doing good ...

The sun shone on *Joseph Stalin* and *Adolph Hitler* with just as much force as it shone on *Mahatma Ghandi* and *St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross*.

The rain falls on President Putin no less than on the little-known health carer or aid worker in some remote poverty-stricken village somewhere in the Ukraine, who helps to bury the dead and slaves day and night to bring relief to the suffering caused by him.

These teachings of Jesus are a tall order if we are to be truly honest with ourselves. How will those parents who have lost their young children in recent acts of mindless violence ever find it in them to forgive?

Well, we do read and hear of those who have found a way to forgive: eg *Didler forgives his mother's killer after he was taken by a friend to church*, *Samerah Alinejad pardons the killer of her son moments before he was due to be executed*.

Joseph forgave his brothers who were going to kill him but sold him into slavery instead.

After 27 years in prison, 18 of which on Robben Island, Nelson Mandela forgave his oppressors, and we read that Stephen Lawrence's father forgave his son's killers as a way of coping with his loss though he could not forgive the Metropolitan Police for the way they treated the family during the investigations – while his mother, now a *Baroness*, would be prepared to forgive if they were to admit to the crime but, according to an old article, she said *they have never owned up and in their eyes, they've done nothing wrong*.

As Catholic Christians, we are taught that although we are not obliged to confess our lesser sins, it is nevertheless good practice in order to strengthen us against the more serious ones.

Perhaps Jesus' command to love, bless and extend mercy and forgiveness to those whom we least feel inclined to offer it, might be similar – for if we could get into the practice of forgiving the little things, maybe, with God's grace, we will be better able to forgive the greater things whether done to us or others.

If it doesn't sound too puerile, perhaps a good starting point, and with plenty of opportunities for those who drive, would be to extend forgiveness, even blessings, to those whose offensive *driving* really is capable of bringing out the worst in any of us – especially that tailgater on Hoghton Lane, so often right there in your rearview mirror when you are doing your best to stay within the speed limit.

And just in case we are thinking that Jesus' teaching on forgiveness was only for his own time and didn't extend beyond one's own family or community as was the case, we have his parable of the *Good Samaritan* who breaks all religious boundaries to extend charity to someone in need, for no other reason than that he was there and felt compassion.

However, **we** have a reason for offering love to all people if only because Jesus tells us to.

But he also leads by example through the Cross – the sign for all time of God's own love, mercy and forgiveness for **all** people.

Reflections

The love of Christ knows no limits. It does not shrink from ugliness and filth. (St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross)

Prayer for our enemies is the very highest summit of self-control. (St John Paul II)

With prayers,

Fr Raphael.

This week's feast

St David 6th century monk and bishop of St David's who founded 10 monasteries and known as Aquaticus for he drank only water, living a life of severe austerity where plunging into freezing cold water was seen as a penitential good. He was known for his works of mercy and his monastery became a major centre for pilgrimages.

We need another two people to join our team of **COLLECTION COUNTERS** – if you can help, please let me know. Thank you.

BOOKSHOP: It is with regret that the Bookshop will be closing soon – this is due to a lack of sales over the last two years. It will be open next weekend, and hopefully for the rest of March, and all stock will be half price.

There is a **FOODBANK COLLECTION THIS WEEKEND**.

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION MEETING this Thursday at 6.00pm.

REGISTRATION FOR CONFIRMATION at <https://liverpoolcalled.co.uk/confirmation> is open until 17th March.

PLEASE PRAY for Edmund Noblett and Jim Biggerstaffe who have died, for those who are sick or housebound including Pope Francis, Ann Green, Fr Laurence Mayne and Bill Warbrick, as well as for those who have died and whose anniversaries occur about this time.

100 CLUB: The winner for week 11 is number 66, Michael Cowsley. The next block of 10 weeks starts this weekend so **subs are due** unless you've paid for the full year.

BRINDLE ST JOSEPH'S PRE-SCHOOL NURSERY – limited places available. Open 8.30am-3.30pm. 15- & 30-hour government funding for 3- & 4-year-olds accepted. All local primary schools served. Contact: 07956242409 or email nursery@st-josephs-hoghton.lancs.sch.uk.

CYCLE OF PRAYER: During Ordinary Time (Winter), ie up to Lent, we are asked to pray for: Peace on Earth; Openness to the Word of God; Christian Unity; The Sick and Those Who Care for Them; Victims of Trafficking and Those who Work to Combat it; The Unemployed.

TEA AND COFFEE are served after Mass on Sunday mornings. Please come along – you'll be very welcome.

Bidding Prayers – 7th Sunday in Ordinary Time 2025

Priest: Heavenly Father, in trust and hope we offer our prayers for our needs and the needs of people everywhere.

Reader: We pray for the church: for our Bishops, Priests and all the faithful. May we all grow ever stronger in faith as we strive to do God's will. Lord in your mercy...

We thank you for the loving service of Pope Francis and the hope he has inspired in so many. Have mercy on him in his illness, we pray, and guide the medical staff who care for him. Lord in your mercy...

In these worrying times, let us pray that the leaders of the world can work together for peace and reconciliation among nations. Lord in your mercy...

We pray for our Parish community as we face changes later this year. May the Holy Spirit guide those overseeing the changes. Lord in your mercy...

Let us remember in our prayers all who are sick or suffering difficulties in their lives. May our prayers help and strengthen them and those who care for them. Lord in your mercy...

We ask Our Lady to pray with us as we remember all who have died and gone before us in faith, especially Edmund Noblett and Jim Biggerstaffe who died recently – may they rest in peace. Let us say together: Hail Mary...

In silence let us pray to God for our own intentions.

Priest: God of compassion, accept these prayers which we make through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE SICK

Priest: As we thank God for the gift of his Son in Holy Communion, let us remember those of our Parish who are sick or housebound.

All: May the body and blood of your Son, which we now send to them through our Eucharistic Ministers, bring them consolation and peace. We ask this in the name of Jesus, Our Lord. Amen.