



St James - A shining light in Petts Wood



ST JAMES THE GREAT

Briefly

Weekly Newsletter

29th September 2024

Twenty-Sixth Sunday



Fr David Says....

Pope Francis wrapped up a three day visit to Singapore, a country with large pockets of at least five different religions, said that "all religions are a path to God". He also said "They are like different languages in order to arrive at God, but God is God for all" He set aside his prepared text and spoke largely off the cuff. "Since God is God of all then we are all children of God". Pope Francis made his remarks during an interreligious meeting with young people held at a Catholic junior college, just prior to departing Singapore for his return flight to Rome.

Who's in? And who's out? That is the question that cuts through so many areas in our lives. Who is entitled to be part of this club? We love to feel superior and feel that we are on the righteous path. Poor them the others. They have it all wrong. Some Catholics are busily concerned with "Who is a real Catholic and who is not? Some Fundamental Christians are busily concerned with "Who is going to hell and who is going to be saved?

Today we continue to read the Gospel of Mark. The disciple John questions Jesus about an unknown exorcist who was driving out demons in Jesus's name. John's question might have been motivated by jealousy. John's question is further evidence that the disciples have not yet grasped Jesus's word to them. They continue to compare themselves to others who seem to have greater healing powers and they do not want to share the power of Jesus's name with others. Today the demon described in the Gospels might be seen as a form of mental illness, but the need for healing these syndromes was as real then as it is now. Exorcism was a common practice in first century Palestine. Some people had the power to heal the symptoms of possession. One of the strategies used was to invoke the name of a person or figure who was believed to have the power to heal. The disciples observed that the unknown exorcist invoked Jesus's name and was successful in his healing efforts. The unknown healer recognised the power of Jesus's name, and yet he was not a follower of Jesus. In his reply to his disciples, Jesus acknowledges that deeds of faith can precede the words of faith. He also teaches that the disciples should not be reluctant to share Jesus's healing powers with others.

One of teachings today is that the reign of God is larger than the church. It is not too hard for us to recognise the workings of grace around us in the goodness and kindness of strangers, as well as the many community bodies and the range of movements seeking justice and equity in our society. Christ like deeds are carried out by those who do not believe in Christ. We are supported as church in our social and charitable outreach by a broad community of fellow travellers. They may at time rankle us, and not share all our values, but they are giving a cup of water to the thirsty, clothing and comfort to the homeless, strength and support to those suffering from

violence. Sometimes they find it challenging to recognise Christ in us. This first part of our reading of Mark today holds to us that our outreach in the name of Jesus situates the church in a collaborative relationship within the community and world.

The second half of the reading is more confrontational. Care of the little ones is a supreme value, and the evangelist wants to emphasise this point. It is an admonition to protect the little ones, and to ensure they are free from abuse and entanglement. The text is much more than personal sin. We cannot ignore that it is about our leadership and decisions as a church to protect and guide. More acutely to ensure that we guide those under our care well and that these little ones are protected from our worst behaviours, behaviours that set them astray. It is also a reminder that the care of the church goes beyond the congregation, extending to all little ones where children, victims of domestic violence, mental and physical abuse and spiritual abuse. It is here unfortunately that the church leaders have lost much credibility in the eyes of the faithful and in the face of society.

First reading it is an extraordinary passage that points a way forward. It involves the work of the Spirit, something not to be underestimated or restricted. The seventy had been selected set aside from the body of the community and gathered into a form of leadership camp. However our attention is drawn away from the seventy to two of the men remaining amidst the community. They were not chosen by the communal discernment process but rather were identified by the Spirit and given the same gift of prophecy. Moses is delighted and does not see this as an affront to his authority. Leadership is not about control. More pointedly prophetic leadership is about leadership which responds to the Spirit. The intention of presenting this reading is to support the Gospel admonishment of the disciples who were enthused to stop any acting in Jesus's name yet did not belong to the group. With the first reading and the Gospel we are getting closer to the foundations of Synodal leadership. It entrusts leadership broadly, identifies and supports those who work in the name of Jesus, and is ready to take up the surprises the Spirit presents outside the normative structures.

Does Pope Francis's statement that "All religions are a path to God" disturb you? Can you reflect on it and maybe have some conversations with others about it?

Thank you for taking the time to read my reflection for this week. God bless you all.



All the Masses being said at St James' will be live streamed
<https://www.churchservices.tv/pettswood>
For the protection of all attend St James we request that you do not video live Masses using your phone during services.
 You can also take part in Adoration and Benediction by live stream.
 All events for live streaming are listed on the streaming site.

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Confessions will be heard in the church on Saturdays, 5.00-5.45pm,
 or by appointment.

Twenty-Sixth Sunday Saturday 28th September Sunday 29th September	6:00pm David Carroll RIP (Pat & Tina) 09:15am Tony Finn RIP (Irwin Family) 11:00am Denise Robertson RIP (L O'Sullivan)
Saints Jerome Monday 30th September	10:00am Vocations (CWL)
Saint Therese of the child Jesus Tuesday 1st October	10:00am Marie France Gault RIP - 1st Anniversary (G Head)
The Holy Guardian Angels Wednesday 2nd October	10:00am Maureen Mulvey RIP (Her friends from the Memory Cafe)
Feria Thursday 3rd October Please note change of time	Whole School Mass 9.30am For the teachers, pupils and their families of St James School
Saint Francis of Assisi Friday 4th October	No Mass from St James' Please note that St Edmund of Canterbury, Beckenham will be live streaming their Mass at 10:00am. Click here for direct link to St Edmund's: https://www.churchservices.tv/beckenham
Twenty-Seventh Sunday Saturday 5th October Sunday 6th October	06:00pm Blake Family (J Blake) 09:15am Brenda Fuller RIP (m Morley) 11:00am Martin Jones RIP (P&T Troy)

Next weeks second collection will be for CAFOD (Harvest).



The current needs for this week are for:

- Long Life Desserts
- Sweets
- Adult Toothpaste
- Adultry Toothbrushes
- Ladies Deodorant

For more information go to: <https://bromleyborough.foodbank.org.uk/give-help/donate-food/>