

Middleton Parish Newsletter (Covid Times)

14th February 2021 – Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Clergy in the Parish:

Priests: Rt. Rev. Msgr. Jim Killeen, P.P., V.G. 021-4631750
V. Rev. John Ryan, P.E., C.C. 086-2697503
Rev. Mark Hehir, C.C. 021-4621670
Rt. Rev. Msgr. Eamon Goold, P.E., 021-4633659
Deacon: Rev. Edward Mulhare

Priest on Duty: 087-246 8234 (For emergencies and also arranging wedding bookings)

The Parish Office: Monday to Thursday – ring between 10.30 and 11.30am. Any documentation and Mass Cards or Mass Bouquets required can be ordered and then collected on Friday at the office between 10.30 - 11.30am. Phone 021-4636508.

Parish website: middletonparish.ie Parish e-mail: middletonparishoffice@gmail.com and to access the webcam for Masses log on to www.churchservices.tv and enter 'middleton' in the search box.

Mass times

Sunday, Saturday Vigil 6.10pm
Sunday Morning 8am, 10am and Noon

Weekday Masses: Monday to Saturday 10am: Wednesday and Friday this week 7.30pm
Night Prayer at 8pm every evening.

Ash Wednesday: This Wednesday, 17th, is Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. Masses on Wednesday are 10am and 7.30pm (both on Saorview and Internet). Unfortunately, due to the present level of Covid19 restrictions, ashes will not be distributed on the day. It should still be observed as a day of fast and abstinence.

During Lent there will be a 7.30pm Mass on Friday evenings.

Lenten Station Masses will be organized after 5th March (depending on the regulations at that time)

Friday 19th February is World Day of Prayer for Survivors and Victims of Sexual Abuse.

Anniversaries: Mary O'Brien, Mary Lee, Tess Crowley, Cormac Ryan, Bill O'Driscoll, Tony McDonnell, Sheila Hurley, George Heaphy, James O'Shea, Dinah O'Brien.

Answers to last week's questions: (i) 2, Matthew and John; (ii) The missing book of the Pentateuch was Leviticus; (iii) Genesis and John's Gospel both begin with 'In the beginning'; (iv) The servants at the wedding feast in Cana; (v) St. Paul and he chose beheading by sword.

Pope Francis' Intentions for the month of February: "We pray for women who are victims of violence, that they may be protected by society and may have their sufferings considered and heeded."

Fratelli tutti: - After reflecting on the parable of the Good Samaritan during the week I returned to chapter two and picked out some points made by Pope Francis that struck me most – in n.76 he refers to the injured man. He says: *“There are times when we feel like him, badly hurt and left on the side of the road. We can also feel helpless because our institutions are neglected and lack resources, or simply serve the interests of a few, without and within. Indeed, globalized society often has an elegant way of shifting its gaze. Under the guise of being politically correct or ideologically fashionable, we look at those who suffer without touching them. We televise live pictures of them, even speak about them with euphemisms and with apparent tolerance.”* The phrase ‘we look at those who suffer without touching them’ struck me again when I was preparing to preach on this weekend’s Gospel about Jesus curing the leper.

One of the sub-headings in the chapter is *‘Neighbours without borders.’* This ties in with the fact that the parable of the Good Samaritan was told by Jesus to answer the question ‘Who is my neighbour?’ In Jesus’ time neighbour meant those nearest us. Jesus transforms the definition by asking us, as Pope Francis says, *‘not decide who is close enough to be our neighbour, but rather that we ourselves become neighbours to all.’* (n.80). Jesus

The last of the points that really hit me links n.82 and n.85. In n.82 Pope Francis says, *‘The parable, though, is troubling, for Jesus says that the wounded man was a Judean, while the one who stopped and helped him was a Samaritan. This detail is quite significant for our reflection on a love that includes everyone. The Samaritans lived in a region where pagan rites were practised. For the Jews, this made them impure, detestable, dangerous. In fact, one ancient Jewish text referring to nations that were hated, speaks of Samaria as ‘not even a people’ (Sirach 50:25);, it also refers to ‘the foolish people that live in Shechem’ (Sir 50:26). Jesus challenges the person who asked the question ‘Who is my neighbour?’ immediately with the different nationalities mentioned. We are challenged too and Pope Francis extends this to Christians who read this parable to get an answer to the question. In n.85 he says, ‘For Christians, the words of Jesus have an even deeper meaning. They compel us to recognise Christ himself in each of our abandoned or excluded brothers and sisters ‘.*

“Bible Corner” – Conscious of the fact that we cannot distribute ashes this Ash Wednesday, I decided to look at the Gospel reading for that day. It is the same one every year. Taken from Matthew’s Gospel, the passage sees Jesus giving some instruction to his disciples. It opens with Jesus saying, *“Be careful not to parade your good deeds before men to attract their notice; by doing this you will lose all reward from your Father in heaven”*. Then he speaks about three activities that we see as fundamental to our lives of faith: giving alms, praying and fasting. In relation to alms he says, *“when you give alms your left hand must not know what your right is doing”*. Regarding prayer he says, *“and when you pray, go to your private room and, when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in that secret place.”* Speaking of fasting he says, *“When you fast do not put on a gloomy look as the hypocrites do; they pull long faces to let men know they are fasting....But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that no one will know you are fasting except your Father who sees all that is done in secret.”* In describing all three activities Jesus finishes by saying the same thing: *“...and your Father who sees all that is done in secret will reward you.”*

Quote for the Week: *“Your true character is most accurately measured by how you treat those who can do 'Nothing' for you “ - Saint Teresa of Calcutta*

Diocese of Cloyne A Prayer Service at Home for Ash Wednesday



On Ash Wednesday we begin our Lenten journey of conversion and renewal. You might use this prayer-service with your household gathered around the sacred space in your home. Begin by making the Sign of the Cross and offering the greeting:

**In the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.
May the friendship of Christ find a place in our lives, now and always. Amen.**

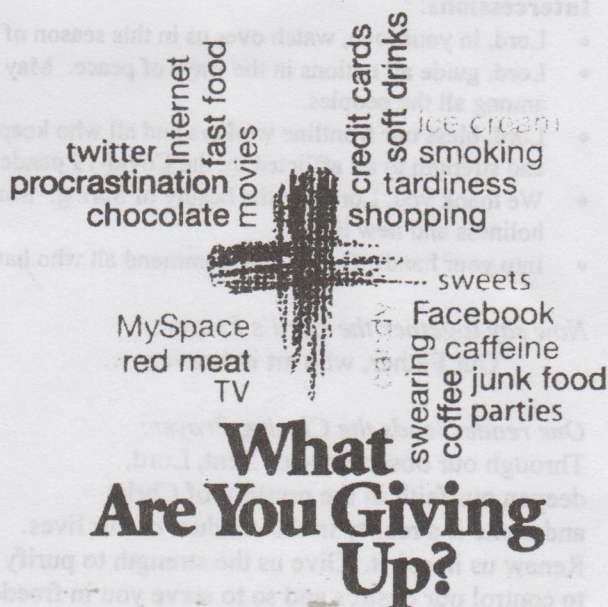
Lent is a season of repentance. We humbly acknowledge that we are sinners and ask forgiveness of God and each other:

**I confess to almighty God
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have greatly sinned,
in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done and in what I have failed to do,
through my fault, through my fault,
through my most grievous fault;
therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin,
all the Angels and Saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.**

Then one reader leads the Opening Prayer.

Let us pray:

Lord as we begin these forty days of Lent.
Grant us a change of heart
that we might turn away from sin
and be faithful to the Gospel.
By your grace,
make our lives more deeply rooted in prayer,
self-sacrifice and a willingness to share.
Let us walk with you this Lent
and seek to be your presence in the world.
This we ask through Christ our Lord. Amen.



**What
Are You Giving
Up?**

Take a moment to read the Word of God and reflect on its meaning

A Reading from the prophet Joel.

(2:12-16)

Now, now – it is the Lord who speaks –
Come back to me with all your heart,
Turn to the Lord your God again
For God is all tenderness and compassion,
Slow to anger, rich in graciousness,
And ready to relent.



A Reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke. (6:36-38)

Jesus said to the disciples, "Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give, will be the measure you get back."

Think about your Lenten commitments. Choose small, reasonable, daily actions, that will, in themselves, remind you that these forty days are a season of grace. Christian tradition invites us to consider these three practices.

Prayer: How will I make more time for prayer, meditation and reflection?

Fasting: What will I deny myself, to show solidarity with those who are sick or are deprived?

Almsgiving: What personal time, talents or wealth will I share with others?

You might note your commitments on a piece of paper, or share them with your family.

Intercessions:

- Lord, in your love, watch over us in this season of Lent and help us to walk with you in sincerity of heart.
- Lord, guide all nations in the ways of peace. May our leaders work for the common good and for justice among all the peoples.
- Lord, bless our frontline workers and all who keep us safe and well. May your loving care bring healing and strength to all afflicted by the Covid-19 pandemic.
- We thank you, Lord, for the beauty of Spring. May this Lent be a time when we answer the call to holiness and new life.
- Into your hands, O Lord, we commend all who have died. May they rest in your eternal embrace.

Now say together the Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven ...

One reader leads the Closing Prayer:

Through our observance of Lent, Lord,
deepen our faith in the mystery of Christ
and make it a reality in the conduct of our lives.
Renew us in spirit. Give us the strength to purify our hearts,
to control our desires and so to serve you in freedom.
We make our prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.
May the Lord bless us, keep us from all evil and bring us to
everlasting life. Amen
Let us bless the Lord. *All:* Thanks be to God!

