



THE CATHOLIC CHURCH OF CHRIST THE KING

THE PRESBYTERY, 4 LORDS CROFT, AMESBURY, WILTS., SP47EP

PARISH PRIEST: Rev Saji Mathew
saji.mathew@cliftondiocese.com

Parish Office Telephone: 01980 622177
Website: Amesbury.cliftondiocese.com
PARISH MOBILE 07412604880

WELCOME TO CHRIST THE KING

We welcome visitors, family and friends to our Mass today.
We are glad you are joining us today.

THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME YEAR- A-2023

FROM THE DESK OF FATHER SAJI: TRANSITIONAL LEADERSHIP Our gospel starts this weekend with the news that John the Baptist has been arrested. Jesus then begins to pick some disciples and picks up the theme that John has been using for his preaching. "Repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand." John has certainly made it clear that he is not the expected Messiah, but is simply preparing the way for the coming of the Promised One. Jesus now takes up the leadership role that John the Baptist had been filling until that point, and he begins to make public and clear what he is about and what he is calling other people to do. When we say this weekend, that "the Lord is my light and my salvation", that should certainly be more than just familiar words and a phrase that's easy to sing. It is an attitude, or a way of living that reflects our belief that the kingdom of heaven is at hand. My favourite question is, "So what?" How many times have you come to church in your lifetime or read the Scriptures and then completely forgot what you read or heard within minutes or hours? If the Lord is your light and your salvation, what difference does that make in the way that you live? Saying that in church or singing it with the Cantor does not make it real. If the Lord is our light and our salvation then his words, teachings, and actions should be a centre and focus of how we make decisions and how we live. If Jesus is our salvation, then we have a solid foundation of trust to act out of. It's within the context of that promise of salvation, that we are then freed to move about in our world, and to do the prophetic things that Jesus asks us to do. If Jesus is our light, then, even in the most confusing and dark times, we can look to him for what to do at each moment.

This week as you leave church or leave your homes to do whatever is needed, what will it look like for you to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom of God? How will our mission to be the presence of Christ in the world today affect your use of your financial and physical resources, as well as your inner attitudes and beliefs? How might the relationships in your life be purified and made whole by the work of your discipleship? As you might imagine, when Jesus heard that John was imprisoned, he could've easily stopped his public teaching and run for the hills. Instead, he picks up where John left off and continues to preach about the kingdom of God. In whatever fears you might be encountering in yourself, in your family, or in the world, does it give you permission to run for the hills or do you take up where Jesus left off and continue his mission in the world today?

On Thursday this week we began a week of Prayer for Christian unity. The theme for the week which ends on January 25 is, "Do good; seek justice." The theme is inspired by Isaiah 1:12-18, which laments a lack of justice among the People of God, but promises redemption by encouraging acts of justice. This Sunday is the celebration of the Lunar New Year, which is also known as the Chinese New Year. It is a day when people say "goodbye" to the year of the Tiger and usher in the Year of the Rabbit. Typically it is celebrated by approximately by two billion people worldwide anytime between January 20 and February 21. As always, let's pray for each other this week. Have an enjoyable week ahead. BE BLESSED AND BE A BLESSING

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON: O sing a new song to the Lord; sing to the Lord, all the earth. In his presence are majesty and splendour, strength and honour in his holy place.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: The Lord is my light and my help.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Alleluia, alleluia! Jesus proclaimed the Good News of the kingdom, and cured all kinds of sickness among the people. Alleluia!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON: Look towards the Lord and be radiant; let your faces not be abashed.

THE WORD OF GOD SUNDAY: He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures. [Lk 24:45]. Today is the Sunday of the Word of God. In 2020, Pope Francis designated the Third Sunday of Ordinary Time as Sunday of the Word of God. Remember that at Mass, the Liturgy of the Word is connected to the Liturgy of the Eucharist. God speaks to us, and then God's saving event in Jesus occurs in the Eucharist. A pastoral suggestion: Sometime during the week, sit down with your Bible and read the Scripture readings for the upcoming Sunday. In this way, you are already thinking of the Word of God that you will hear at Mass. The Holy Spirit is able to touch your mind and soul to make these words "living and effective." Questions of the Week: Can I commit myself to studying scripture daily in 2023, making it central in my life?

PARISH DONATIONS: Generosity is at the heart of the Gospel and the Christian life. We really appreciate your weekly giving at Mass. Donating a regular amount of money is the best way of supporting your parish financially. It enables us to plan ahead knowing that we have a reliable source of income, especially in these uncertain times. Your giving allows us to do everything we do here in this Parish, including enabling our Masses to take place, sacramental preparation, work with children and youth and their families and much more. All of this is made possible by your prayers, serving and giving – we couldn't do it without you. If you would like to send in a cheque, please make it payable to "Catholic Parish of Christ the King. If you would like to give regularly but do not want to give online then please use the Standing Order Form, as well as the GiftAid declaration form, if you are a UK tax payer. You can collect the forms from Jeff Coy, our parish treasurer and please return the forms to him. Jeff will help you to process the Gift Aid Form and enlighten you more about it A big thank you for all your generous donations, which are greatly appreciated. Should you wish to transfer to standing order or bank transfer, the Parish bank details are: Name: Christ the King Church Amesbury: Natwest Sort Code 52-10-03 Account Number 66286638. If you wish to remember the Parish in your Will, further information is available from the Parish Office. Thank you and God bless you.

WELCOME TO CHRIST THE KING! We would like to extend a warm welcome to all our parishioners and visitors attending public Mass. Whether you are just passing through or looking for a spiritual home, we pray you find Christ the King inviting and spiritually uplifting. If you are attending Mass on a regular basis, we encourage you to register with the parish. Please call our parish office and start the conversation! To our visitors, we hope you enjoy your stay here in Amesbury. Our church is always open to you, your family, and friends. pax et bonum (peace and all good)

CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD: Children's Liturgy of the Word is an extension of the Liturgy that provides young children with a worship experience shared in ways understandable and engaging to them. The Children's Liturgy of the Word includes the First Reading, Responsorial Psalm, Alleluia, Gospel Reading, Gospel Reflection, Creed and Prayer of the Faithful. Children participate by joining the group as it gathers in the hall when invited by the celebrant after the Opening Prayer. They are sent forth with the team of volunteers and return during the Offertory. In order to continue this task on a regular basis we need committed volunteers. We are looking forward to recruiting new members who are able to lead children's liturgy. If you are interested, please contact Father Saji. Children's liturgy materials will be supplied for the programme.

FLOWER COMMEMORATIONS If you are looking for a way to help beautify our worship in our church, you may want to consider donating money to purchase a floral arrangement that may be placed in the sanctuary. This is a lovely way to remember a loved one who has died or to commemorate a special birthday or anniversary of a family member. If you are interested placing a floral arrangement, please contact Anne Larke at 07485423471 or please contact Father Saji.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED! We would once again like to be able to hold our Children's Liturgy Program during the 11:00 Mass, each week. We're searching for 4 to 5 adults to rotate Sundays to work with the children, during Mass to explain the Sunday's liturgy to them in ways they can understand and participate. Interested adults should contact Father Saji Mathew.

WORLD YOUTH DAY, LISBON (31st July - 7 th August 2023): The diocese of CLIFTON is taking a group of young people (aged 18-35) to World Youth Day in Lisbon summer 2023. Booking process now open; the price is £1,295, which includes flights, 3* accommodation (shared room), transfers,

WYD registration fee & meal vouchers. If you are between 18-35 you can book to join the Diocesan group online.

DO YOU KNOW: HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN HOLY MASS? Recently, I have been rereading God Who is Rich in Mercy—Meditations and Prayers to The Divine Mercy. As the living members of the Mystical Body of Christ, we participate in every Eucharistic sacrifice offered by any priest anywhere in the world. Thus, we constantly stand before our Heavenly Father, praising Him, thanking Him, begging His pardon, and asking for favors through Christ, the everlasting High Priest. This is why we partake of the fruits of every Holy Mass. If we want to share fully in the fruits of the Eucharist, we should participate in the Mass in person, as the Church requires us to do every Sunday and every Holy Day of Obligation. Our participation should also be active. Participation in the Eucharist consists of reliving the saving passion, death and resurrection of Christ. In order to share in the mystery of divine salvation, man is required to cooperate actively: to strive for a clean heart, offering on the altar the fruits of his work, sufferings, daily joys, and difficulties of life. That is, an individual should offer himself/herself, together with Christ, to God the Father. The Church, therefore, earnestly desires that Christ's faithful, when present at this great mystery of faith, should not be there as strangers or silent spectators. They should be instructed by God's word and be nourished at the table of the Lord's Body. They should give thanks to God. Offering the immaculate victim, not only through the hands of the priest, but also together with him, they should learn to offer themselves. Through Christ, the Mediator, they should be drawn day by day into ever more perfect union with God and each other, so that finally God may be all in all." (Vatican II, Sacrosanctum concilium, 48) "Since the Eucharist is the highest good, it is difficult to talk about the duty to participate in Holy Mass. To the individual who has recognised Christ as present in the Mass, there is no duty; there is only love. Therefore, for this person Holy Mass is an immovable element in the plan every week, if not every day." This is truly the Good News. The Eucharist is the Source and Summit of our faith! Learn it, Profess it and Live it.

MASS SCHEDULE STARTING FROM 21ST JANUARY 2023
SATURDAY 21ST JANUARY MASS AT 6.00PM STEPHEN AND CRESS MORTIMER (HEALING)

SUNDAY 22ND JANUARY 11.00AM MASS

MONDAY 23RD JANUARY MASS AT 10AM IRENE PIKE (HEALING)

TUESDAY 24TH JANUARY MASS AT 10.00AM CAROL DRENNAN (INTENTIONS) ST FRANCIS DE SALES

WEDNESDAY 25TH JANUARY MASS AT 10.00AM EMILY AND ROSS YOUNG (INTENTIONS) CONVERSION OF ST PAUL

THURSDAY 26TH JANUARY MASS AT 10.00AM PRIVATE INTENTIONS STS TIMOTHY AND TITUS, BISHOPS

FRIDAY 27TH JANUARY ADORATION AT 9.00AM AND MASS AT 10.00AM JO CHAMBERS AND HER FAMILY (INTENTIONS)

SATURDAY 28TH JANUARY MASS AT 6.00PM FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE PARISH

SUNDAY 29TH JANUARY MASS AT 11.00AM MASS

Lord Jesus, who went about doing good and healing all, we ask you to bless our friends who are sick. Give them strength in body, courage in spirit and patience with pain. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

HE OPENED THEIR MINDS TO UNDERSTAND THE SCRIPTURES (Lk 24:45). In 2019, Pope Francis instituted in his letter *Aperuit Illis* (He opened to them) that the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time would be celebrated as Sunday of the Word of God. This Sunday gives us the opportunity to better learn the Word of God and engage God in scriptural prayer. I am reminded that St. Jerome once said, "Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ". We certainly don't want to be ignorant of Christ for we cannot love whom we do not know. Pope Benedict XVI said in his encyclical *Verbum Domini*, "The word of God draws each of us into a conversation with the Lord: the God who speaks teaches us how to speak to him" (par. 24).

To help your prayerful Scripture reading to bear fruit in your life, allow me to share with you 10 points. These points come from Mary Sperry. 1. Bible reading is for Catholics. The Church encourages Catholics to make reading the Bible part of their daily prayer lives. Reading these inspired words, people grow deeper in their relationship with God and come to understand their place in the community God has called them to in himself. 2. Prayer is the beginning and the end. Reading the Bible is not like reading a novel or a history book. It should begin with a prayer asking the Holy Spirit to open our hearts and minds to the Word of God. Scripture reading should end with a prayer that this Word will bear fruit in our lives, helping us to become holier and more faithful people.

3. Get the whole story! When selecting a Bible, look for a Catholic edition. A Catholic edition will include the Church's complete list of sacred books along with introductions and notes for understanding the text. A Catholic edition will have an imprimatur notice on the back of the title page. An imprimatur indicates that the book is free of errors in Catholic doctrine. 4. The Bible isn't a book. It's a library. The Bible is a collection of 73 books written over the course of many centuries. The books include royal history, prophecy, poetry, challenging letters to struggling new faith communities, and believers' accounts of the preaching and passion of Jesus. Knowing the genre of the book you are reading will help you understand the literary tools the author is using and the meaning the author is trying to convey. 5. Know what the Bible is – and what it isn't. The Bible is the story of God's relationship with the people he has called to himself. It is not intended to be read as history text, a science book, or a political manifesto. In the Bible, God teaches us the truths that we need for the sake of our salvation.

6. The sum is greater than the parts. Read the Bible in context. What happens before and after – even in other books – helps us to understand the true meaning of the text. 7. The Old relates to the New. The Old Testament and the New Testament shed light on each other. While we read the Old Testament in light of the death and resurrection of Jesus, it has its own value as well. Together, these testaments help us to understand God's plan for human beings. 8. You do not read alone. By reading and reflecting on Sacred Scripture, Catholics join those faithful men and women who have taken God's Word to heart and put it into practice in their lives. We read the Bible within the tradition of the Church to benefit from the holiness and wisdom of all the faithful. 9. What is God saying to me? The Bible is not addressed only to long-dead people in a faraway land. It is addressed to each of us in our own unique situations. When we read, we need to understand what the text says and how the faithful have understood its meaning in the past. In light of this understanding, we then ask: What is God saying to me? 10. Reading isn't enough. If Scripture remains just words on a page, our work is not done. We need to meditate on the message and put it into action in our lives. Only then can the word be "living and effective." (Hebrews 4:12).

Please keep these points in mind when you take time to spend with the Word of God and to be taught by Him. We have to be careful not to tell God what to say to us, but rather to listen and receive what God desires to teach us. We do not seek to justify ourselves before God, but rather approach Him with docile hearts to be transformed by Him. I like to recall those words of the Carmelite Saint Teresa of Avila who said that Jesus himself revealed to her that "all the evil in the world is derived from not knowing clearly the truths of sacred Scripture" (*Verbum Domini*, par. 48).

UNITY AMONG CHRISTIANS There is a story about a young Catholic sailor who hesitates to speak to the military chaplain when he discovers that the chaplain's faith is different than his own. "Chaplain", he stammers, "I hope you won't try to change my faith." "Don't worry, friend," the chaplain answers, "together we can understand how our faith and religion can change us." Last Thursday, January 19, initiated a Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The Book of Exodus 15:6 presents ways people experience God through acceptance of others aware that the prophets repeatedly reminded Israel that their covenant with God demanded relationships to be characterized by justice, compassion and mercy. Christian Unity Week, which concludes Wednesday, January 25, invites us to bond with people of different faiths letting go of personal prejudices; and, work to mend racial, ethnic and religious divisions throughout the world. Some of the greatest disputes, wars, and quarrels developed due to the lack of tolerance toward people who take different paths to express belief in God. All Christians are called to discover unity in Christ; yet throughout history religion has been used by some for short-sighted political ends or to promote violence rather than search for mutual understanding within the dominant religions. In most cases, these individuals or groups of people live with the conviction that they are "right" whenever issues surface about religion, which engenders lack of respect for the convictions of others. Personal beliefs lead me to feel that if religion instills God's love into an individual, it is a positive experience. There is also a lack of tolerance in us for those who do not respect people of different faiths with assurance that broad-minded people are not compelled to agree with those in other faiths on issues where there are strong opposing viewpoints, but, respect the rights, opinions, and lifestyles of others. Verbal slurs and off colour comments to people of different religions, races, economic backgrounds, or political affiliations often set sub-par examples for children to imitate. Unfortunately there are some who do these things so naturally without thought that remarks, emails, and the use of social media may allude to personal prejudices. Forgotten is the sensitivity that must be exhibited aware that bigotry is not funny or excusable. Even in faith communities there are contrasting theological viewpoints that give birth to walls of controversy that cluster people around an issue or interpretation that renders division. The history of the Catholic faith gives evidence to this anytime worship style, prayer, music, traditions, and liturgical gestures are outside the mindset of some who believe that there is only one way to pray or celebrate liturgy. Others hold onto a belief that it is wrong or even sinful to take part in worship services outside of the Catholic faith, or see little value in interfaith gatherings. Christian Unity Week highlights the respect that is to be maintained for people of other faiths; therefore, this week steers Christians to de-emphasize divisions, and bring forth praise to God for the unity that is commonly shared in that all Christian traditions can learn from each other. (Continued on next page)

THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION is available on Saturdays from 5.00pm-5.40pm in the Church. Reconciliation is also available by appointment. Contact Fr. Saji directly through email or by phone.

Mutual acceptance and understanding toward other religions paves the way for people to be well-rounded in their religious beliefs. Catholic people frequently forget that Catholicism evolved out of Judaism; hence, Jesus did not give us a blueprint for a new religion. Countless prayers in the Catholic mass stem from Judaism. Building blocks toward unity are generated whenever emphasis is placed on the common things that unify religions in that it helps people to understand the faith of others, as well as bring people together. Some go through life putting down people of different faiths; yet religious traditions that admit to be fallible, imperfect, and human strive to love neighbour as oneself. As Christian Churches take flight in the annual celebration of Christian Unity Week, it is advantageous to use time to step forward and ponder the good among all faiths that lead people closer to God. Faith in God is not meant to change others, but to change ourselves to be more lovable, kindhearted, tolerant, and open minded.

CHRIST THE KING 200 CLUB- NEW MEMBERS ARE VERY WELCOME! The 200 Club has been set up to raise funds for our Church and School, with half the money raised given out in three cash prizes each month, and the other half divided equally between the Church and School each December. During 2022 we had 82 members, with more members, monthly prizes will increase, but more importantly we will raise more funds for the church and the school. The cost is £12 per year for one number in the draw each month. Carol Crossland will be collecting money after masses throughout January, alternatively this can be placed in an envelope, clearly marked 200 Club, with your full name and telephone number, and left with Father Saji at Church, or posted. We also will accept bank transfers (please state Name, and Church or School when making your payment) Sort Code 52-10-03 Account No 66287715 Please note this IS NOT the same as the account used by Fr Saji for donations each week. Thank you to everyone for taking part. Carol Crossland.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION PROGRAMME 2022/2023 The first session will be on Sunday 21 January at 12.30am in our Church for the children. It is very important that all sessions are attended.

APPLICATIONS PLEASE FOR CONFIRMATION IN 2023. For young people in school Year 9 or above please apply NOW as we will soon be finalising the programme.

THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION is available on Saturdays from 5.00pm-5.40pm in the Church. Reconciliation is also available by appointment. Contact Fr. Saji directly through email or by phone.

DEAR PARISHIONERS, Among the lineaments of a man of refinement that St. John Henry Newman includes in his "Definition of a Gentleman" are the following traits: He never speaks of himself except when compelled, never defends himself by a mere retort; he has no ears for slander or gossip, is scrupulous in imputing motives to those who interfere with him, and interprets everything for the best. He is never mean or little in his disputes, never takes unfair advantage, never mistakes personalities or sharp saying for arguments, or insinuates evil which he dare not say out. . . To my mind there is no saint who fulfils that description was well as the saint whose feast we celebrate this week on January 24: St. Francis de Sales. Francis was born into a family of the lesser nobility of France in 1567, the eldest of 13 children of devout Catholic parents. He was expected to go into the legal profession and inherit the family holdings, but he felt the call of a vocation and somewhat to the disappointment of his family was ordained a priest in 1593. The late sixteenth and the early seventeenth centuries were a time of great social unrest and religious ferment. Europe had been ripped apart through the 1500's by successive "Wars of Religion." The Catholic Church, having weathered the

ravages of the Protestant Reformation, had just embarked upon her own Counter Reformation, exemplified in the Council of Trent. One particular concern of the Church was the French Calvinists living along the Swiss border, and one specific centre of missionary endeavour was Switzerland. Francis began his ministry as a travelling preacher, trying to win back souls who had abandoned their Catholic heritage; and typical of his imagination, one tool that he employed with particular success was the printing press. He published tracts and pamphlets presenting, in practical, easy-to-understand language, the traditional doctrines of the Church, as well as the catechetical teachings of the Council of Trent. But converts were won as much by the gentle and joyful personality of the preacher as by the compelling force of his arguments. Eventually Francis was sent to Geneva, a Calvinist stronghold, to continue his labours as the bishop of that diocese.

All his biographers highlight Francis' kind and gracious manner. While preaching uncompromisingly against heresy and error, he did so with a charitable and polite approach that won him the admiration even of his opponents. He would challenge the position, condemn the fault, and correct the error, but always treat the individual with courtesy and respect. A Calvinist minister in Geneva said of the Roman Catholic bishop, "If we honoured any man as a saint, I know of no one since the days of the apostles more worthy of it than this man." In his *The Introduction to the Devout Life*, Francis propounded his view that holiness of life is the calling of every Christian. "It is a mistake, a heresy, to want to exclude devoutness of life from among soldiers, from shops and offices, from royal courts, from the homes of the married." Sanctity is for everyone, not just for the ordained, the vowed, or the cloistered. And a constant in his ministry and his temperament was his spirit of gracious and gentle manner. Perhaps the life, ministry, and spirituality of Francis de Sales is worthy of our reflection because his virtues of civility, courtesy, and respect are often sadly lacking in contemporary civil discourse. Negative campaigning, replete with innuendo, backbiting, and personal defamation, has become an accepted staple of politics. Condemned loudly by all, to be sure, but nonetheless used regularly because it seems to be so successful in turning the electorate's heads. Personality seizes centre stage so easily that we can easily lose sight of the issues. Slogans can eclipse content in debate; controversy can too easily substitute for veracity; confrontation replaces dialogue. Discourtesy and insult can be the last resort when truth and accuracy are abandoned. Francis de Sales once declared, "I hate duplicity as I hate death." He would never cheapen his mission and the message of faith with dubious method or unworthy misrepresentation. He didn't have to. He was confident of the power of truth to win minds and of charity to transform souls. This urbane, cultured humanist, this man of letters and social graces, conversant in matters of art and of world affairs, this devout Catholic priest, this consummate Christian gentleman, is the saint we honour this week. A man of his times, to be sure. Perhaps a man for our times as well.

EVERY WOUND HAS THE ABILITY TO HEAL You need to allow the time and space for healing to happen. When we are wounded, most of us keep thinking about it over and over again. We try to dig out every little detail of that event. The more we try to dig into the wound, the more pain we suffer and the wound closure takes more time. Learn from that painful experience but don't hold yourself back in time. Spend some quiet time with yourself to create a deeper connection with the divine, and allow time, so the broken layers of the wound to join. Prayer, silence and time are great healers. Silence initiates the healing, time coupled with prayer closes the wound.

EMAIL FOR CONTACTING ME: My temporary email: joseph.sajimathew@gmail.com