



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.

TWENTY FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME-YEAR- A-2023

FROM THE DESK OF FATHER SAJI-IT'S TIME TO LET GO Have you ever wondered why it's so difficult for us to believe that God is as merciful and forgiving, as Jesus has shown us? You might allow the gospel this weekend to answer that question for you. Most of us depend, for our eternal existence, on the absolute mercy and forgiveness of God. We count on the fact that the depth of that love expressed in Jesus, with his willingness to show his love on the cross, and in the resurrection. We count on the fact that the stories that were told about Jesus are true. That Jesus did forgive people who were caught publicly in sin. Instead of stoning them and shaming them and killing them, he instead asks others to examine what it is that makes them so different from themselves. Are they sinners too? I would invite you to take the opportunity to remember your favourite healing or forgiveness story in scripture. Wherever Jesus went, people crowded around him to be able to be healed and forgiven. In his day, disease and suffering was seen to be a punishment for sins, either from past generations, or the individual who is sick. As people crowd around Jesus, they might simply want to touch his cloak or have him look their way, or call out their name. They gladly receive healing and forgiveness, but oftentimes walk away without a thank you, or even an ability to speak about the one who had given them this gift. In the gospel this weekend, it is probably the worst circumstance that we could think of, but not unknown to each of us. A person who is forgiven so much turns around and fails to forgive another who has hurt them in such a minor way. We've all done this, even though we're not proud to claim it. Is it true that we might not put the forgiveness that God has given to us on the same level as the forgiveness we're asked to give others? Is God's forgiveness seen as some sort of supernatural thing to which we are not called? When Jesus responds 70x7 is how we are to forgive, he is equating our willingness to forgive, with God's willingness to forgive. We are not excused from being godly in our way of forgiveness and mercy. Oftentimes we don't forgive another human being because we don't think they deserve it. We withhold forgiveness because we think it punishes someone else. After a moment of honest reflection, is it true that you believe that you deserve God's forgiveness every time God gives it to you? The honest answer is we might think that, but it is certainly not true. There is nothing in us that earns or deserves God's generosity and the fullness of his forgiveness. It is a pure gift to us.

Our challenge is to take that pure gift of forgiveness, and to give it to others, in the same way, that we have been given, without condition, and without judgement. Giving forgiveness does not erase the consequences of the hurt that happened among us. Those consequences will need to be faced and healed, but we cannot move on if we have not first forgiven and let go. We won't have to look far to be able to find circumstances in which we are involved in a lack of forgiveness or mercy. It could be, as we look in the mirror. Do you still hold something against yourself that you did in the past? Do you still punish yourself, even though God has forgiven you? Is there someone in your family whom you love but who has also hurt you in the midst of that love? Do you still hold that against them and refuse to forgive them? We always have to look at our inherited brokenness. Do you still hold something against another person because of the colour of their skin, the language they speak, their country of origin, their sexual orientation, or their affiliation with a certain group? Are you still holding it against an entire group of people, because of what one individual or a few people from the group have done? We have plenty of evidence that all that creates is divisiveness, hatred and disunity. All of those are precisely against the dream and promise of God, that all may be one. It is time to quit pretending. Rediscover the places where you hold grudges and lack forgiveness and act as God has already acted toward you. **BE BLESSED AND BE A BLESSING**

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON: Give peace, O Lord, to those who wait for you, that your prophets be found true. Hear the prayers of your servant, and of your people Israel.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: The Lord is compassion and love, slow to anger and rich in mercy.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: Alleluia, alleluia! Speak, Lord, your servant is listening: you have the message of eternal life. Alleluia!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON: How precious is your mercy, O God! The children of men seek shelter in the shadow of your wings.

EVANGELII GAUDIUM (SECOND COLLECTION 23rd and 24th Sept) Sunday 17 September formerly known as Home Mission Sunday. On this day we support the work of the Catholic Church in evangelisation and liturgy, taking care of our beautiful buildings and dialogue with other denominations & faiths. There will be a retiring collection after the Sunday Masses next weekend 23rd & 24th September.

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)

PARISH CONTRIBUTIONS AND GENEROSITY A big thank you for all your generous donations, which are greatly appreciated. If anyone would like to transfer to standing order or bank transfer, this would help to simplify our banking procedure. The Parish bank details are: Name: Christ the King Church, Amesbury, Bank: NatWest Account number 66286638 and Sort code-52-10-03. If you wish to remember the Parish in your Will, further information is available from the Parish Office.

DO NOT FORGET THE HOLY SPIRIT Come and pray for a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit Following the Holy Spirit evening with Father Matt Anscombe occurring this evening (Friday 1 September) there will be a series of Life in the Spirit seminars which will then take place on the following 6 Friday evenings after the evening Mass at St Osmund.

EDUCATION SUNDAY (10th September) is when we commemorate our predecessors of the 19th century, many of whom were living in poverty, who paid for our schools to be built. Our parishioner forebears and their Bishops rightly saw education as the principal means of handing on the faith and improving the spiritual, moral, social and cultural lives of children and young people. Their sacrifices helped re-establish the 2,175 Catholic schools and four universities. Established by the Bishops in 1848, Education Sunday is one of the oldest Days of Special Prayer in the liturgical calendar of England and Wales. Catholic schools continue to be true to their mission: they educate more pupils from the most deprived backgrounds; outperform national GCSE English and Maths averages by five percentage points; and are more ethnically diverse than other state-funded schools. For this success to continue, however, the help of the whole Catholic community remains essential. As throughout history, all Catholics need to be prepared to support, promote and defend Catholic education. **You can do this by becoming a school Foundation governor or Trust Director.** Please contact Bill McEntee at Clifton Diocese via bill.mcentee@cliftondiocese.com or on 07710094976 if you would like to be a governor or director. In this way, we can hand on to the next generation the great educational legacy of those poor and immigrant Catholic communities of the Victorian era who built our schools and universities.

CONFIRMATION - If you have a child that has just completed Year 8 (going into Yr 9 or above in September) and you wish to enrol them in the next programme, the deadline is February 2024.

TOP 10 REASONS FOR A CATHOLIC EDUCATION (Continued) 6. Service for the Common Good-Catholic schools promote service as an essential component of their curriculum. Many Catholic schools have service programmes from kindergarten through twelfth or A Level. Higher education programmes such as the Jesuit or Dominican Volunteer Corps promote service at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Diocesan organisations such as Catholic Family Services provide resources and help to people from all walks of life. Catholic School students learn that they are in fact "their brother's keeper," and have a responsibility to respond to the needs of those around them. 7. Discipline as a Faith Expectation-Catholic schools

promote self-discipline through clarity of moral vision that is based on the Gospel. Students are challenged to be Christ-like in word and action. They are asked to examine their choices and actions in light of the Ten Commandments and the Gospel law of love. They are given a theological foundation for ethical behaviour. Students are not good because they act in accord with rules and expectations. Rather, because students are good, i.e. sons and daughters of God, they are expected to act and make choices that are in keeping with this dignity. 8. The Centrality of Arts, Ritual, Drama, Music to the Life of Faith Through Catholic education, students are exposed to the richness of the religious Tradition. Music, Art, Literature, Drama, and Ritual are rooted in the rich history of the Church, and find their truest glory as an expression of divine praise. 9. The Fullness of the Catholic Identity at the Heart of the Church-Catholic education has always been at the heart of the Catholic Mission. Catholic education, and the students who are the product of it, have been called the "greatest work of the Church." They have been entrusted with the fullness of faith and have been charged with the mission of evangelization. They are to go out into the world and share the gifts they have received, as doctors, lawyers, policemen, firemen, businessmen and women, teachers, priests and religious; as Catholic school graduates. 10. Personal Excellence as a Spiritual Goal- Catholic school students learn that excellence is a response to God's blessings. Academic excellence is not a gospel value in and of itself. The Sermon on the Mount doesn't say "Blessed are you who get all A's." Education must have an altruistic orientation. Students learn so as to help others, and make a difference in the world around them.

MASS SCHEDULE STARTING FROM 16TH SEPTEMBER 2023

SATURDAY 16TH SEPTEMBER MASS AT 6.00PM FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE PARISH

SUNDAY 17TH SEPTEMBER MASS AT 11.00AM

MONDAY 18TH SEPTEMBER ADORATION AT 9.00AM AND MASS AT 10.00AM ANN LARKE (INTENTIONS)

TUESDAY 19TH SEPTEMBER ADORATION AT 9.00AM AND MASS AT 10.00AM CAROL DRENNAN (INTENTIONS)

WEDNESDAY 20TH SEPTEMBER ADORATION AT 9.00AM AND MASS AT 10.00AM) HOLY SOULS

THURSDAY 21ST SEPTEMBER ADORATION AT 9.00AM AND MASS AT 10.00AM PRIVATE INTENTIONS

FRIDAY 22ND SEPTEMBER ADORATION AT 9.00AM AND MASS AT 10.00AM JO CHAMBERS (INTENTIONS)

SATURDAY 23RD SEPTEMBER MASS OF AT 6.00PM FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE PARISH

SUNDAY 24TH SEPTEMBER MASS AT 11.00AM LOLLETA JONES (HEALING)

STAYING POSITIVE HELPS US IN DIFFICULT TIMES

Being positive does not mean that life's circumstances do not affect a person, but rather that he does not lose hope in any situation. Every day in life, we have to face some challenges. If we look at any challenge from a negative perspective, even a small one becomes bigger, and our life becomes more difficult. But, when we look at it positively, we can easily overcome even the biggest challenges. Be optimistic, look on the bright side, trust and believe in your strengths. With positive thinking, you will find solutions; with faith, you will remain hopeful; and with inner strength, you will overcome the situation. Positive thinking may not change the situation, but it makes you hopeful in every situation.

FAITH FORMATION AND CATECHESSES- Mary, a Sunday School Catechist was giving a lesson on the Old Testament. She asked one of her students, Tommy, this question, “who knocked down the walls of Jericho?” Tommy said, “It wasn’t me”. Worried about his lack of Biblical knowledge, the catechist called Tommy’s mother, his mother said, “Look, my son ‘s a good kid. If he says he didn’t knock down the wall, he didn’t knock the wall down.” More worried, the catechist called Tommy’s father. He listened to her story and said, “Well look, I don’t want any trouble. Just tell me how much this wall costs, and I’ll take care of the payment.” This weekend, I would like to highlight on the paramount importance of Faith formation and Catechesis. Faith formation and Catechesis offer each of us the opportunity to recognise and add prayers for those who volunteer their time to pass on the faith through education sessions. According to the church, “Catechists impart to others an initiation or a deeper formation in those realities that they themselves follow and celebrate in liturgy. A catechist is one who teaches in the name of the Church.” Catechists play an important role in every parish in that they help share and implement the parish’s vision for lifelong growth in faith for those seeking God in their lives. Catechist’s or faith formators renders an opportunity for all to rededicate themselves in the mission of the church as members of a community of faith. It must not be forgotten that catechists include people who teach religion classes in Parish Schools as well as in adult faith formation sessions such as the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults. All who participate in articulating the presence of God through lived faith must be applauded in that these efforts require patience, preparation, dedication, and commitment since the lives of people searching for God are at stake.

In addition to the quest to pass down church tradition, teachings, and belief in Christ to future generations, an important component of faith formation is to instil a healthy image of God into people since most mimic their image of God through prayer, emotions and actions. An unhealthy image of God is often based on fear, guilt, and legalism, which may lead to anxiety and religious scrupulosity. Faith formation gatherings meet regularly at the diocesan level during the academic year to steer those seeking God into an intimate relationship with Christ through knowledge of God that comes from the scriptures and religious experience. This shines forth through constant exposure to Christ through the gospels which transforms the mind and will of individuals to live out the values of Christianity in a lovable way. Joseph Cardinal Tobin C.Ss.R., Archbishop of Newark once stated, “Faith tells me that my life with God is not simply about me and Jesus, because if it’s just me and Jesus, then it’s mainly about me. Faith impels me to have the vision to see other people not as objects or people who will do things that will meet my needs, but as fellow daughters and sons of God, as brothers and sisters, as fellow pilgrims. I ask Catholics to reflect: Do we identify predominantly with a political school or a personality or a label? Or primarily as disciples of Jesus?” Faith Formation sessions require sacrifice in that without a strong willed commitment religious education takes a back seat to sports and other social activities. All successful people make sacrifices to attain a goal. If hard work and sacrifice are not cultivated within a religious education programme, a child may get through a course, but be spiritually hallow.

This is so evident in those who lack presence at Sunday liturgy. Some parents may easily forget that attendance in Faith Formation classes or in Catholic School religion classes does not fulfil promises made at a child’s baptism. This is a common concern of the church in the West as it takes little effort to see many children in Faith Formation gatherings or Catholic Schools absent from Sunday liturgy.

Our catechists and teachers of religious education are to respond to the call that all of us have: to share the gift of faith with others, even as we deepen our own faith. This call can come to us in different ways, but, ultimately, this call comes from God, through the Holy Spirit working in us, guiding us, and inspiring us. Our catechists and teachers of religious education have a responsibility is also to reach out to their faith community. Pope Francis said that they are to be “shepherds with the smell of their sheep.” They are to be with their sheep and to grow in faith with their sheep. Catechists must be like shepherds who invite everyone to celebrate the sacraments. The lost, the disgruntled, the confused, and those who are hurt or in pain need someone to ask them to meet Jesus in the sacraments so that they may lay down their burdens and rest. Our catechists need to be ready to explain why they have hope in their midst of their challenges and struggles. We all need to share our stories with others, to share our hurts, our struggles, and our burdens.

DEAR PARISHIONERS, This Thursday, September 21, the Church celebrates the Feast of St. Matthew the Evangelist. I am reminded of the conventional wisdom of real estate: Location, Location, Location! For Scripture it would be Context, Context, Context! Especially for the gospels. Each has its own context and perspective, though which it is most effectively understood. Mark’s Gospel (which was actually the first written) is essentially a passion account, written to encourage the Christians of Rome as they endured persecution. It is the shortest of the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) and concentrates on Jesus’ active ministry, his healings and miracles, more than his discourses and preaching. As such, it is a tightly written work, more attentive to action than to words, concluding with Mark’s narrative of the passion and death of Jesus. Luke’s Gospel was written for an audience of mostly Gentiles. As such, it stresses the theme of Universal Salvation – that God wills ALL people to be saved. Luke’s genealogy traces Jesus’ heritage back to Adam. The declaration on Calvary, “Truly this man was the Son of God,” is spoken by the Roman centurion – a Gentile. Matthew’s Gospel is, I believe, the most accessible and probably the most familiar. For example, most of us could easily quote his Beatitudes from the Sermon on the Mount, while we would struggle with Luke’s Beatitudes, from Jesus’ Sermon on the Plain. The Sermon on the Mount has been the source of lasting proverbs for the spiritual life: “An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth . . . Turn the other cheek,” or “Consider the lilies of the field,” or “Love your enemies, Pray for those who persecute you,” or “Store up treasures in Heaven; where your treasure is, there your heart will be,” or “No man can have two masters . . . You cannot serve God and mammon,” or “Stop judging and you will not be judged,” or “Ask and you shall receive, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened to you,” and finally, “Here is how you are to pray: Our Father, who art in heaven, etc.” All these familiar sayings of Jesus – all found in chapters 5, 6, & 7 of Matthew’s gospel.

Matthew wrote for a Jewish audience – his purpose to demonstrate that Jesus is the fulfilment of the prophecies of the Jewish scripture. To that end, it is a frequent technique of his, after recounting a particular event, to conclude with, “That was to fulfil what was said through the prophet . . .” (That would mean very little to Luke’s Gentile readers who had no acquaintance with the Old Testament. When Matthew traces Jesus’ genealogy in the first chapter of the Gospel, he traces it back to Abraham, again, to show a Jewish readership Jesus’ as the Promised Messiah, and in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is clearly the new Moses, delivering a New Law: “You have heard it said . . . but I say to you . . .” and “I have not come to abolish the Law and the prophets, but to bring them to fulfilment.” The message in all this? That we must meet people where they are. The gospel is a timeless message of God’s love and a guide to discipleship.

But it is not abstract philosophy. It must be applied to different circumstances and preached in the language of the people. We are all evangelists, to preach the gospel and make it relevant by the way we live. We make the gospel of universal salvation credible by our acceptance of all people of all cultures. We make the gospel of mercy convincing by our kindness, our willingness to let go of past hurts and be willing to forgive those who have wronged us. (Not to say that if someone has been cruel or has cheated us or has gossiped about us to say, “Oh, that’s alright.” It is NOT alright. What was done or said was wrong and hurtful. We can’t abandon or relativise our moral principles in the name of forgiveness. But we have to get beyond it and to wish ill in return. When someone apologises for a wrong, instead of saying, “That’s all right,” we might better say, “It’s all over. Let’s let it go.” It keeps things in the proper perspective.) We proclaim the gospel of life and dignity when we are committed to every human person, at all stages of life, for the innocent unborn child and the vulnerable elderly, as well as for the ungrateful and the guilty, regardless of “quality of life” or appreciation for our efforts. The different gospels demonstrate the all-encompassing message of salvation – for all people, of all times and places, in all circumstances.

ON THE WAY- CATECHESIS ON THE EUCHARIST: **Eucharistic Hints-** Our Lord institutes the Eucharist at the Last Supper. But that is not the first inkling we have of this great Sacrament. Just as the Old Testament contains prefigurements, so the New Testament contains hints and images of what our Lord accomplishes in the Upper Room and consummates on the Cross. In a sense, the Eucharist casts a light back upon our Lord’s life and reveals that everything had been leading up to it. The Eucharist is not just another event but the summit of his life, containing as it does the Paschal Mystery. The infancy narratives of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke contains several such hints. As we know, Jesus is born in Bethlehem, in fulfilment of the prophet Micah’s words. The name of the town also teaches us something about him, for Bethlehem is Hebrew for “house of bread.” That Jesus is born in the house of bread indicates something about his reason for coming into the world. He has come to be our nourishment, our bread of life. Saint Luke tells us that Jesus was placed in a manger. One translation renders it clumsily as “feedbox.” What that word lacks in poetry it at least makes up for in slavish literalism. “Manger” sounds beautiful to us precisely because we associate it with the Christmas narrative. But it comes from the Latin word for eat. Its original meaning would indeed be something like “feedbox” or “trough.” Jesus is born into the world as food, humbles himself to become our nourishment. And then the shepherds arrive. These men, whom we typically depict as very pleasing, clean cut, rustic figures, were in fact the outcast of society. They lived in the fields, among the sheep (not the cleanest of animals) and bathed little. But they were essential for the life of Israel because they kept the sheep that were necessary for the daily sacrifices in Jerusalem. When the shepherds arrive with their sheep at the stable in Bethlehem, they provide a twofold sign of the Christ-child’s purpose.

First, as shepherds they proclaim that he has come to shepherd us, to bring us to where we can eat and be nourished safely. “The LORD is my shepherd; there is nothing I lack...” Second, by their bringing sheep the shepherds proclaim that the Christ-child himself will become a lamb of sacrifice. Indeed, the Good Shepherd nourishes his flock by becoming the sacrificial lamb and giving his life. Which brings us to that crucial event 30 years later, another hint of the Eucharist. When Jesus appears at the Jordan River, his cousin announces, “Behold, the Lamb of God.”The title, so familiar to us, would have been shocking to the first hearers. It refers, of course, to the Passover Lamb, which signified their freedom from slavery and, indeed, their identity as a nation. It was by eating the sacrificed lamb at Passover that they were incorporated into their fathers’ experience.

The Passover Lamb made them participants in the Exodus. But now John the Baptist proclaims that Jesus of Nazareth is the Lamb of God. That man is the fulfilment of all that they awaited. Now we in turn are to look at Christ in terms of the Passover Lamb, and thus comprehend these two realities about him: he was to be sacrificed and his flesh was to be eaten – for our salvation. The eating incorporates us into his sacrifice and makes us sharers in the exodus he accomplishes from this world to the next.

CHILDREN’S LITURGY We will begin children’s liturgy in September. On Sundays at the 11.00am Mass we have a children’s’ Liturgy of the Word. This is designed for children of primary school age so that they can hear the scripture reading for Mass in language which is accessible to them. Please see newsletter for dates. The children leave the church after the opening prayer and return in time for the offertory. This is a special time for our children to learn about their Faith, the Gospel and to make new friends. Children take part in prayer, song, story time and activities. A time to encourage and grow in the love of Jesus; to enhance sacramental preparation and RE taught in primary school.

CONFESSIONS/SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION In the Sacrament of Penance, the love and mercy of the Lord Jesus is made manifest in the forgiveness of sins, thereby reconciling the penitent with God and with his Church. Like all the sacraments, Penance is received by Catholics, or those about to become Catholics. In this sacrament, a penitent confesses their sins to the priest, and, with an expression of contrition on the part of the penitent, the priest is able to grant sacramental absolution, the forgiveness and reconciliation of God. Confession is every Saturday from 5.00pm-5.40pm or by appointment.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION - If you have a Child that has just completed Year 2 (going into Yr 3 or above in September) and you wish to enrol them in the next programme, the deadline is October 2023.

LISTENING WITH THE HEART - The department of Adult Education and Evangelisation are offering an opportunity for parishioners to develop the skills of small group facilitation in the context of Parish Pastoral Councils, RCIA, Prayer Groups etc., The first of these sessions across the Diocese is at St Osmund’s at 7pm on Tuesday 19 September.

SANCTUARY AND OUR LADY’S BIRTHDAY FLOWERS Last week, flowers for Our Lady and for the Sanctuary were donated by Jo Chambers and Carol Drennan. respectively. Jo Chambers offered flowers to honour Our Lady on her birthday and Carol Drennan offered the flowers in memory her late husband Sam’s heavenly birthday. Thank you and God bless you.

TALK ON THE SHROUD OF TURIN - Tuesday 3 October, 7pm St Osmund’s Parish Rooms - The Tomb was not empty. The mysterious cloth known as the Shroud of Turin, held by many to be the shroud in which Christ’s body was wrapped and buried, is the most scientifically studied artefact from antiquity in the world. Is it true that the latest research points most compellingly towards its being authentic? Fr Robert Stewart, parish priest of Aldershot in the Diocese of Portsmouth, is coming to St Osmund’s to give a presentation on the scientific study of the Shroud, from the 1980s up to the most recent developments which hit the headlines this year. All are invited.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY at Christ the King will occur at 11am Masses commencing on Sunday 17th September. The liturgy is for children in Year 3 and below, please note children younger than school age need to be accompanied by an adult.

VISIT TO WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL Salisbury Catenians have arranged a coach trip to Westminster Cathedral on Friday 6 October. The cost is £25 pp. Please book via email: carvrick79@gmail.com or phone 07887 988123.