

~ Notices ~

Church services - Sadly due to Level 5 Covid restrictions in-church services are suspended for the next six Sundays. You are prayed for everyday and our online services will continue.

Prayers - Prayers are said daily for the welfare of our community, our nation and the world. If you have any particular issue that you would like to be prayed for, do please email me on frkevinobrien@me.com or call me on 065 672 4721.

Website - Our website <https://clareanglicans.ie> has significantly developed, so please do scroll down the opening page to explore the new sections and information.

- Worship - a number of videos of services
- Pray - leaflets and resources on ways of praying
- Explore - videos of some inspiring speakers
- Think Question Believe - a parish podcast
- Viewpoint - videos on the basics of Christianity
- Rector's Blog - articles, thoughts, opinions

Rector: Email: frkevinobrien@me.com Tel: 065 672 4721

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ooOoo

Poem

Emily Dickenson

“Hope” is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul
And sings the tune without the words
And never stops - at all

And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard
And sore must be the storm
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm

I've heard it in the chilliest land
And on the strangest Sea
Yet - never - in Extremity,
It asked a crumb - of me.



5th Sunday Before Advent (Year A)

Collect

Merciful God, teach us to be faithful in change and uncertainty, that trusting in your word and obeying your will we may enter the unfailing joy of Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

Suggested Hymns - For the online service you might like to view these hymns with lyrics on YouTube.

- 1) I give unto you a new commandment
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rtcNwJWldrA>
- 2) Immortal, invisible, God only wise.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=spE-BE23qxA>
- 3) O thou who camest from above.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R3JUYbc7Xa0>
- 4) Brother, sister, let me serve you.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ttW9oQ-yiuU>

Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying:
Speak to all the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them: You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy. You shall not render an unjust judgement; you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great: with justice you shall judge your neighbour. You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not profit by the blood of your neighbour: I am the Lord.
You shall not hate in your heart anyone of your kin; you shall reprove your neighbour, or you will incur guilt yourself. You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself: I am the Lord.

Psalm 1

Blessed are they who have not walked in the counsel of the wicked, ♦
nor lingered in the way of sinners,
nor sat in the assembly of the scornful.
Their delight is in the law of the Lord ♦
and they meditate on his law day and night.
Like a tree planted by streams of water
bearing fruit in due season,
with leaves that do not wither, ♦
whatever they do, it shall prosper.
As for the wicked, it is not so with them; ♦
they are like chaff which the wind blows away.
Therefore the wicked shall not be able
to stand in the judgement, ♦
nor the sinner in the congregation of the righteous.
For the Lord knows the way of the righteous, ♦
but the way of the wicked shall perish.

1 Thessalonians 2: 1-8

You yourselves know, brothers and sisters, that our coming to you was not in vain, but though we had already suffered and been shamefully maltreated at Philippi, as you know, we had courage in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in spite of great opposition. For our appeal does not spring from deceit or impure motives or trickery, but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the message of the gospel, even so we speak, not to please mortals, but to please God who tests our hearts. As you know and as God is our witness, we never came with words of flattery or with a pretext for greed; nor did we seek praise from mortals, whether from

you or from others, though we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children. So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us.

Matthew 22: 34-46

When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. 'Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?' He said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.'

Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them this question: 'What do you think of the Messiah? Whose son is he?' They said to him, 'The son of David.' He said to them, 'How is it then that David by the Spirit calls him Lord, saying, "The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand,

until I put your enemies under your feet' "?

If David thus calls him Lord, how can he be his son?' No one was able to give him an answer, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

Commentary

Leviticus

The Book of Leviticus is the third book of the Torah and of the Old Testament; scholars generally agree that it developed over a long period of time, reaching its present form during the Persian Period between 538–332 BC. Most of its chapters (1–7, 11–27) consist of God's speeches to Moses, which God commands Moses to repeat to the Israelites. This takes place within the story of the Israelites' Exodus after they escaped Egypt and reached Mt. Sinai (Exodus 19:1). The Book of Exodus narrates how Moses led the Israelites in building the Tabernacle (Exodus 35–40) with God's instructions (Exodus 25–31). Then in Leviticus, God tells the Israelites and their priests how to make offerings in the Tabernacle and how to conduct themselves while camped around the holy tent sanctuary. Leviticus takes place during the month or month-and-a-half between the completion of the Tabernacle (Exodus 40:17) and the Israelites' departure from Sinai (Numbers 1:1, 10:11). The instructions of Leviticus emphasize ritual, legal and moral practices rather than beliefs. Nevertheless, they reflect the world view of the creation story in Genesis 1 that God wishes to live with humans. The book teaches that faithful performance of the sanctuary rituals can make that possible, so long as the people avoid sin and impurity whenever possible. The rituals, especially the sin and guilt offerings, provide the means to gain forgiveness for sins (Leviticus 4–5) and purification from impurities (Leviticus 11–16) so that God can continue to live in the Tabernacle in the midst of the people. (sources - Wikipedia)

Psalms 1

This psalm is an introduction to the book of Psalms; it contrasts the fate of the godly and the ungodly. Vv. 1-3 speak of the happiness of the godly. They do not live as the ungodly do; rather they constantly ("day and night", v. 2) and joyfully study and observe Mosaic law; their well-being is like trees which bear fruit. They are prosperous. But, on the other hand, the ungodly are "like chaff" (v. 4): in manual threshing, the crushed sheaves were tossed into the air, where the wind blew the chaff away. So, say vv. 5-6, their fate will be disaster: they will be excluded from the fellowship enjoyed by

those who follow God's ways, and will suffer – unlike the godly, over whom God keeps watch.

1 Thessalonians 2:1-8

Paul picks up on 1:5, read last Sunday: "... you know what kind of persons we proved to be among you for your sake." The Christians at Thessalonica are well aware that Paul's founding visit there was very fruitful ("was not in vain", 2:1); "we" (v. 2, perhaps including Silvanus and Timothy), in spite of physical and moral mistreatment at Philippi, and in spite of "opposition", had the "courage", confidence, to preach the good news. This was possible, he says (v. 3) because "we" (v. 4) were authorized by God ("approved") to preach the gospel, in accord with God's will rather than seeking popularity, i.e. motivated (as popular philosophers and charlatans were) by "deceit" (v. 3, erroneous thinking) or "impure motives" (including deviant sexual practices) or "trickery" (cunning extraction of money from people); our objective was not to give people short-term pleasure. Further (v. 5), "we" did not resort to making people feel self-important ("flattery") nor to the kind of egotism that seeks to turn everything to our own advantage ("pretext for greed") – God, who alone is able to detect such deceits, is "our witness".

Then v. 7: as "apostles" (messengers or emissaries) of Christ, "we" could have insisted on the dignity and authority due to our office, but rather we were "gentle", as your equals, like a "nurse" (or nursing mother) giving of her self without expectation of repayment, and not coercing you. Our care went even further (v. 8): we shared everything we had and are, not just the good news. Religious and philosophical charlatans were common in the city. Paul may be defending himself against a whispering campaign by such people; perhaps they claimed he was a quack. His conduct among the Thessalonians clearly shows that he is genuine.

Matthew 22:34-46

Some Sadducees (who believed that life ended with physical death) have argued with Jesus; they have tried to show him, by quoting from the Pentateuch, the absurdity of belief in resurrection. He has told them that they neither understand the "power of God" (v. 29, to transform us into a new way of being alive when risen) nor the purpose of the Scriptures.

The Pharisees now "test" (v. 35) Jesus by asking him a question often debated (v. 36): of the 613 laws in the Torah, which is most important? Jesus' answer would not have surprised them, but his "second" (v. 39) of equal weight ("like it") would, for it was considered unimportant. Developing a right relationship of actively loving God and fellow humans is the key to the Scriptures. Now Jesus asks the Pharisees (who considered themselves experts in biblical interpretation) some questions (v. 42). People expected a political "Messiah" descended from David, "the son of David". In vv. 43-44 Jesus asks: "How is ... that David" (inspired "by the Spirit" to write Psalms – as was then thought) refers to "him" (the Messiah) as "Lord" (overlord), in writing "The Lord" God (Yahweh) "said to my Lord" (i.e. David's overlord, whom Jesus takes to be the Messiah) "sit ..." So (v. 45) how can the Messiah be both David's son and his overlord? (While in English and Greek, "Lord", kurios, occurs twice, Jesus would have quoted Psalm 110:1 in Hebrew; there the words are different. He was probably not unique in taking "my lord" there to be the Messiah, for a political Messiah would defeat his "enemies".) The Pharisees too do not understand the Scriptures. © 1996-2016 Chris Haslam