

Parish of St Wilfrid, Widnes

*Incorporating the churches of St Bede, St Michael,
St John Fisher and St Basil*



5th Sunday in Ordinary Time (B)

Next Week Second collection for SVP

4th February 2024

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Responsorial Psalm

R. 'Praise the Lord who heals the broken-hearted.'

A few days ago, a parishioner emailed me to suggest that a reflection might look at the Israeli/ Palestinian situation, how we arrived here and where we might go from here.

The present situation is simply horrendous. The Israelis see the deaths of civilians, mainly women and children, as collateral damage. Twenty-five thousand. And the great powers, especially the United States and, to a much lesser extent of influence, the UK, seem to be helpless, or unwilling, to stop it. And all sorts of other Middle East threats are gathering around it.

Besides the killing of civilians, a community of two million has had its water cut off, most of its hospitals destroyed, its sewage systems put out of action and a very large part of the population are now internal refugees as they are warned to move away from Israeli strikes of various sorts.

The immediate trigger for all of this was the appalling Hamas attacks against the Jewish communities close to Gaza. But the deep-down reason has much deeper roots, and many of them.

My sabbatical at the ecumenical institute Tantur, founded by Pope Paul VI, was designed to open the eyes of its participants to the incredible variety of religious life in the Holy Land, especially in Jerusalem, but very much to the Palestinian / Israeli situation. So, we met and listened to all shades of opinion on both sides, though there seemed to be far more shades on the Israeli side. To oversimplify, from the ultra-orthodox to the extremely liberal Jewish position. And it is important to remember that not all Jewish people are religious.

To prepare for the experience at Tantur, we were sent reading lists which tried to cover all aspects of the situation. If we thought the Northern Ireland situation was complicated and insoluble, and rooted in history, this seemed to be even more complicated, rooted in history and insoluble. So my heart sank at the thought of trying to say something that might help us understand a little more clearly the terrible present. Definitely Holy Spirit territory. It will need more than one week, I fear.

There are a number of key aspects that need to be understood, and it will be impossible to do real justice to any of them in this space, but it is important to signal them. Among them will be political Zionism, the Balfour Declaration, how did Gaza come to be Gaza, the Holocaust, and so on.

Until next week...

Bishop John

Belle Vale Passion Play

There is an amazing opportunity for anyone who wishes to get involved in the Belle Vale Passion Play. This community project will bring the Easter Story to the local community and build friendships and nurture talents and skills. The Passion Play will take place on Easter Saturday, 30th March at 12noon.

Please visit the website: www.bellevalepassion.co.uk for more information or see the poster at the back of Church.

Article removed

Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes Mass

On Saturday the 10th February we shall have the diocesan celebration for the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes and World Day of Prayer for the Sick.

The Mass will be celebrated at Christ the King, Queens Drive at 12noon and +Tom Neylon will be the principal celebrant. All are welcome to attend!

Our Lady of Lourdes – pray for us!

St. Bernadette – pray for us!

Parish Choir

We will be preparing for the Easter Services at our next gatherings which will be on:

**Monday 26th February,
Tuesday 5th March & Monday 18th March
All at 7pm, St. Bede's.**

As usual, everyone is very welcome, even if you have not sung before, or been part of this group previously, or are only able to come along occasionally. All are welcome!

Lent Newsletter

In your newsletter this week you will find a timetable of events happening throughout the season of Lent. Please keep this newsletter and refer to it.

Lent is such a wondrous time of spiritual renewal for Christians; so, when you are thinking of what you can do for Lent, think about joining your brothers and sisters and committing to the many opportunities offered in your own parish community.

Requiescant in pace

Mgr George Mooney,
Colin Parry, Anita C'ailceta,
Hilda Mary Ogburn,
Violet Ann Williams, Marie Fitzpatrick,
Eileen Doan, John O'Brien
Peter Glynn & Thomas Rolt.
May the Angels lead them into Paradise!

Sanctuary Lamp

The sanctuary lamp burns for 7 days for your intentions.

St Bede	Anthony Austin
St Michael	Mgr George Mooney
St John Fisher	Peace in the Holy Land
St Basil	Sick and Housebound

Pastoral Statistics

Each year every parish in the Archdiocese must report the statistics of their individual parish so that the central offices can have a picture of Catholic life across the Archdiocese. These figures are then sent onwards and upwards to Rome. I thought it would be interesting for you all to see them.

2023 Statistics for St Wilfrid's Parish, Widnes

Baptisms – 157

First Holy Communion – 178

Confirmations – 19

Marriages – 8

Funerals – 102 (*not including Services at the Crematorium or Burial of Ashes*)

Communion at Home – 68

Sunday Mass Attendance – Average 688

Warrington and Widnes Deanery Synodal Council

Next Saturday, 10th February, the members of the Deanery Synodal Council will meet at St. Benedict's in Warrington to continue discussions around the call to synodality. Please pray for all the deanery representatives as they work for the good of us all.

Welcome Archbishop Malcolm McMahon O.P.

Next weekend Archbishop Malcolm will be joining the members of the Neo Catechumenal Way for Mass. The Neo Cat community use our churches and meeting spaces and are a big part of our community. I am sure they will make Archbishop Malcolm very welcome!

Eucharistic Ministers Retreat

Each Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist are expected to attend a retreat or be given specific training every few years to give them the time and the space to reflect upon their wonderful ministry. We have approached the Irenaeus Ministry in Waterloo and they have agreed to lead a day just for St. Wilfrid's Parish Ministers.

Saturday 24th February

Leave St Bede at 9.15am and return at 4.30pm

Irenaeus Centre, Waterloo.

LAST CHANCE to book onto the retreat as we must give names to Irenaeus this week.

A coach will be provided to take you to the Irenaeus Centre and then bring you back to Widnes, **you will need to bring a packed lunch.** Names to Parish Office asap!

Parish Liturgy

Sunday	4th February	Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time	
09.00	Holy Mass	St Bede	Mike Lyle
09.30	Holy Mass	St Michael	Audrey Fallon (Ann)
10.30	Holy Mass	St John Fisher	Eddie Burke (26 th Ann)
11.15	Holy Mass	St Bede	Florence Rogerson (Ann)
16.00	Holy Mass	St Bede	Sean Geelan (LD)
Monday	5th February	Memorial of St Agatha, Virgin and Martyr	
09.00	Exposition and Morning Prayer		
09.30	Holy Mass	St Basil	Honor Evans
11.00	Funeral Service	St Bede	Damian Joseph Percival
Tuesday	6th February	Memorial of St Paul Miki and Companions, Martyrs	
11.30	Exposition and Rosary		
12noon	Holy Mass	St Bede	Doris Davies
Wednesday	7th February	Ferial	
11.30	Exposition and Rosary		
12noon	Holy Mass	St Bede	Peter Kelly
Thursday	8th February	Ferial	
11.30	Exposition and Morning Prayer		
12noon	Holy Mass	St Michael	Patricia Conlon (LD)
Friday	9th February	Ferial	
09.00	Exposition and Morning Prayer		
09.30	Holy Mass	St John Fisher	Deceased Members of The Batty Family
Saturday	10th February	Memorial of St Scholastica, Virgin	
10.00	Holy Mass	St Bede	Pat Ayers (Remembrance)
10.30	Confessions		
17.00	Vigil Mass	St Bede	Parishioners
17.00	Vigil Mass	St Basil	Joan & Arthur Wilcox (Wed Ann Rem)
Sunday	11th February	Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time	
09.00	Holy Mass	St Bede	Paddy Ruth (LD)
09.30	Holy Mass	St Michael	John McGillicuddy (LD)
10.30	Holy Mass	St John Fisher	Terry (Sam) Ellis (LD)
11.15	Holy Mass	St Bede	Katrina Bonnon (LD)
16.00	Holy Mass	St Bede	Natividad (Naty) Nituum