

THE YEAR OF MATTHEW
ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN
SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER, YEAR A
LIVING WELL AND ENDING WELL

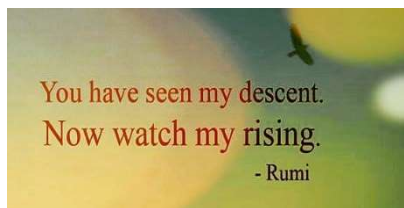
24 MAY 2020



Everyone loves a new beginning. A new love, baby, a new job, a new house, a new pair of shoes. When it comes to the 'middle time', our enthusiasm may lose some of its shine. Endings are to be avoided if it is possible to do so. Yet we need to ask the question - does avoiding endings leave us more vulnerable when they come to visit us. Perhaps if we engaged with them in a more robust way they might not have the same power over us. How can we learn to do endings in a better way?

The Gospel text for the Seventh Sunday in Eastertide reads like the last will and testament of Jesus. Notice how Jesus does not see his death as ending his life, or as a catastrophic loss for his disciples. He sees it both as a returning to the Father and as a new way of being with those that he loves. We watch him at prayer. There is no panic or desperation in his words. Instead his words reveal the depth of his relationship with the Father and they strengthen the mission which they share together. His prayerful heart expands to include and embrace those who see him clearly. Caught up in the intimacy Jesus enjoys with the Father, they are given their first insight into the gift of eternal life which is being given to them. Of course, this gift has to be continually unwrapped. This can only happen when disciples share the gift with others. When we hear Jesus praying in words, we are given a moment of grace in which we see who he really is, enter into his heart and begin to wonder what our own vocation will be as we embrace the Divine Plan.

The Gospels sometimes say that Jesus looks up to heaven as he prays. At other times his eyes are closed as he touches the Kingdom of God within. Either way is good because he teaches and reveals this profound truth. That prayer is not an attempt to make contact with God but a conscious celebration of the One who is always near us.



The death of Jesus is near at hand. He holds this ending within sacred space and time. For even though it looks like his death will happen at the hands of evil people, he sees so much more. The 'Hour' which has come, will in reality be a life giving and saving event for all who are able to receive it. "When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself" (Jn:12:32). This ending becomes a moment of 'Glory'. And it is glorious because those who stand at the foot of the cross with loving hearts receive life without end. God glorifies the Beloved Son by attracting people to Him and the Beloved Son

glorifies the Father by giving them the gift of eternal life. The flow of life between the Father and the Son, which was moving before creation was begun, is now gifted to his disciples whose only mission is to pass it on to others.

As we sit with this beautiful text it is becoming clearer that the best way to engage with the disruptive and painful reality of dying or ending is to be able to claim for ourselves these words which Jesus prays, "I glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do". (Jn 17:4). This is a much better interpretation of our lives. It trumps any ending which may be tarnished by regret for missed opportunities, failures in love or fear in the face of the unknown.

It is worth remembering here that, from a social point of view, the death of Jesus was a failure and a brutal interruption to a life lived in beauty and nobility. Betrayed, deserted, mocked, rejected and obliterated - He did not die at the right time. His life was taken from him.

And what about us? Even if we die after a ripe old age, our achievements behind us, our family and friends around us, we die incomplete from a purely social point of view. In this limited view there is no perfect death and there is no right time to die.

And yet we can talk about an accomplished life in spiritual language. If the mission of life is to be a vessel which pours Sacred love into the world, it can only be sustained by recognising that every person is a child of God, who dwells in their hearts, and reveals his face and his name to them. We cannot say that we believe in the Fatherhood of God and not believe that everyone is our sister and our brother. Whenever this identity emerges, whenever the Beloved Son and the Father are glorified by what love reveals is the 'hour' of our own lives where the work we are sent to do is accomplished.

This prayer of Jesus are the words our hearts are waiting eagerly to hear. Not only do they make his relationship with the Father crystal clear, they also evaluate life from a beautiful theological perspective. To nurture a steadfastly spiritual love of every person will help us to see what we might miss in the turbulence and noise of our social selves. What is it that he wants us to see? That you and I are a mission of Love, sent to stir love in others. When we do this, God is glorified and life is complete.

GLORY BE TO THE FATHER, AND TO THE SON, AND TO THE HOLY SPIRIT
AS IT WAS IN THE BEGINNING
IS NOW
AND EVER SHALL BE.
WORLD WITHOUT END. AMEN.

HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING



“Homeless Jesus” Sculpture by Timothy Schmalz (holes of the nails of the cross on the feet)

In March of this year, local councils were given £3.2m to provide emergency shelter for homeless people, as part of an ‘Everyone In’ scheme. The scheme has largely been seen as being successful, with about 5,400 people being given temporary accommodation and, consequently, despite widespread fears about Covid-19's impact on rough sleepers, it has been credited with mostly protecting the homeless. However, funding for the scheme in England is now not being extended, creating uncertainty about what will then happen to those housed under the scheme.

Below is a summary of some of the local agencies that can be contacted if you, or someone you know, is worried about where they are going to live or fear being made homeless.

BRACKNELL FOREST COUNCIL

If you feel are at risk of homelessness

It is a council priority to help anyone to avoid becoming homeless. They will work with you to make sure that you do not become homeless, wherever it is possible by:

- negotiating with landlords or the people lived with
- providing housing advice – including advice on rent arrears and affordability issues and any grants or benefits that may be available
- providing advice on housing related support which are not general health, social care or statutory personal care services to help people independently
- exploring alternative housing options such as adapting, swapping or downsizing homes to make it more affordable or - depending on age - sheltered housing

It is BFC's duty to help people avoid becoming homeless. If you are homeless or think you might be at risk of losing your home, please contact the council soon as possible so they can try to help by **phoning 01344 352010**.

If you find yourself homeless

If BFC have not been able to prevent someone from becoming homeless under the prevention duty, they will be owed the *relief duty*. During the *relief duty* the council must take reasonable steps to help a person to secure suitable accommodation. The *relief duty* lasts for up to 56 days and is available to all households who are homeless and eligible. In circumstances where the council has to provide emergency accommodation as a homeless household, where there is no other option, they may have to be placed in bed and breakfast accommodation. This accommodation may be outside of the Bracknell Forest area.

If the person has no local connection to Bracknell Forest, the assistance available is limited and they may be referred to the Borough they have a connection to.

Rough sleeping

If you are worried about someone sleeping rough, you can tell Bracknell Forest Council via the **Streetlink** website <https://www.streetlink.org.uk/> or call 0300 500 0914

or you can email the Rough.SleepersTeam@bracknell-forest.gov.uk

If you are homeless yourself, please call **BFC Housing Options on 01344 352010**. Out of hours you can call **01344 786543**.

OTHER LOCAL AGENCIES THAT MAY BE ABLE TO HELP

StreetLink is the national referral line, which we manage in partnership with Homeless Link. By using the **StreetLink** app, website or phone line, you can alert Local Authorities and homelessness organisations to people sleeping rough. **StreetLink** urgently connects people experiencing homelessness with the local support available to them. The details you provide are sent to the local authority or outreach service for the area in which you have seen the person, to help them find the individual and connect them to support.

<https://www.streetlink.org.uk/> or call **0300 500 0914**

If you think the person you are concerned about is either aged under 18 years or in immediate danger or needs urgent care, please call 999.

The Salvation Army - During the coronavirus pandemic many of their Life houses are remaining open with special measures in place. Alongside these, some salvation Army buildings are set up to be safe night shelters for homeless people, with space for healthy separation. Their homeless day centres are now offering doorstep health advice and food parcels for those who have been given temporary accommodation, while night time soup runs are delivering hot food at a safe distance from our emergency response vehicles.

Local Salvation Army contacts are:

Wokingham Salvation Army
Sturges Road, Wokingham
RG40 2HD

Email: wokingham.salvationarmy@hotmail.co.uk
Phone: 01189 894055

Slough Salvation Army
53 Stoke Road, Slough
SL2 5BW
Phone: 01753 525819

Lower Earley Salvation Army
Chalfont Close, (vehicle access via Durand Road)
Reading
RG6 5HZ
Email: susan.betts@salvationarmy.org.uk; Phone: 0118 931 0760

PARISH OF ST JOSEPH and ST MARGARET CLITHEROW, BRACKNELL

We are temporarily closed due to the COVID-19 Coronavirus

**Mass is livestreamed every Sunday at 10.30am
please join us via the following links:**

Facebook: <https://facebook.com/stjandstmcbrecknell/>

Website: <https://bracknellcatholicchurch.org>

**If you need to contact us, the details are in the
box below**

You are all in our hearts and prayers

**Look after each other
be kind, be safe be well**

Parish Office: 39 Braccan Walk, Bracknell, Berkshire, RG12 1BE

Telephone: 01344 425729

Email: stjb@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Pastoral Care: 07394 440938 email: pastoralcare@bracknellcatholicchurch.org

Website: bracknellcatholicchurch.org

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STANDING ORDER BANK DETAILS: Account Name: PRCDTR Bracknell St Joseph

Sort Code: 30-93-04; Account Number: 00875520

Bank: Lloyds Bank Plc, Palmerstone Road, Southsea

PLEASE MAKE CHEQUES PAYABLE TO (FULL NAME):

PRCDTR BRACKNELL ST JOSEPH

Parish Priest: Fr. Daniel McAvoy

Deacon: Rev. Aidan Lynch

Parish Secretary: Elizabeth Fisher

Pastoral Assistant: Mary McNab

Safeguarding Representatives: Sarah Birch, Marion McGuire, Paula Read

Safeguarding email: safeguarding@bracknellcatholicchurch.org