

Lockdown - restrictions on services

It is not just church regulations which now prevent public services being held but also Government legislation. The position is quite clear: only individual, private prayer is permitted in places of worship, and we are pleased to leave our doors open to facilitate this. However, if there is any abuse we shall have no option but to close the church or face the legal consequences.

Difficulties may have arisen while Br. George is in church for his private devotions; but, please, do not use his presence to entice any form of communal worship which is now against the law. This would put him in a most embarrassing situation and, potentially, put his PTO status at risk. There is CCTV, so we could not hide any breach of the law if formal enquiries were made.

LOCKDOWN II

Lockdown Two means that, although we are allowed to keep the church open every day for private prayer and meditation, we are not permitted to hold any public worship.

You are very welcome to call in to St Thomas' for some peaceful time in the presence of God.

If you know anyone who would like to be kept in touch during lockdown, please ensure Trevor has the details: preferably an email address but otherwise a postal address. Contact him via: warden@st-thomas-lewes.org.uk or by phone to 01273 937678 and he will ensure distribution.

STORAGE

We have been donated a most sturdy, lockable filing cabinet for the outer vestry, so can now store our archive papers away from dust and vermin.

PRAYERS

We pray for all those in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness or any other adversity at this time; including: . Pam Swabey, Joan Bishop, Ken Allbon, Jean Burges, Susan Larkin and Rosemary Burnett.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Parish prayer requests may be sent to Fr. Herbert or to Trevor.



Faith in Sussex

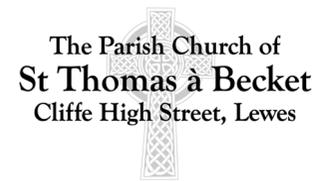
The new, Autumn issue of the diocesan magazine is now available online at: <https://www.chichester.anglican.org/>

LEAKING ROOF

Once the PCC has approved, formally, to accept the tender we can submit the faculty to the diocese. It is expected that work will commence in the spring because some of the materials used will need warmer weather.

PCC MEETING

Due to lockdown, the next meeting has been moved to Friday 11th December at 7pm in the Hall.



Sunday 15th November 2020
TRINITY XXIII



The Collect

O God, our refuge and strength, who art the author of all godliness: Be ready, we beseech thee, to hear the devout prayers of thy Church; and grant that those things which we ask faithfully we may obtain effectually; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Epistle – Philippians 3.17-end

Bretheren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose god is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.) For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.

The Gospel – St. Matthew 22.15-22

Then went the Pharisees and took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk. And they sent out unto him their disciples, with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us therefore, what thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? shew me the tribute-money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's. When they had heard these words, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.



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SERMON

FROM Fr Herbert:

Dear St Thomas Parishioners, my greetings to you and hopes that you are all managing under this current lockdown. I do miss seeing everyone but our prayerful hope is that we

shall all be allowed to resume public worship together, when permitted, and can then celebrate the beautiful season of Advent at St Thomas'. With very best wishes and blessings, Fr Herbert.

A prayer for the benefice at this time:

ALMIGHTY God, the giver of every good gift, look graciously, we beseech thee, on thy Church, and so guide with thy heavenly wisdom the minds of those to whom is committed the choice of a Rector for

this benefice, that we may receive a faithful pastor, who shall feed thy flock according to thy will, and make ready a people acceptable unto thee; through Jesus Christ, thine only Son our Lord. Amen.

AS WE CONTINUE in this latest national lockdown it seems issues still arise in worldly political circles involving authority, leadership, economics and taxes. This seems to be not a new scenario for in our gospel reading for this Sunday such issues appear to be present.

This chapter in St Matthew's gospel presents various questions put to Jesus by the Jewish leaders and the religious authorities of the day. Their aim is to catch Jesus out by the responses that He might give to their questions and in so doing that they might then have grounds for charges against Him and His authority.

The Pharisees together with their disciples and also the Herodians came to Jesus and began by speaking in a flattering way saying 'Master, we know that thou art true and teachest the way of God in truth..' so as to capture His attention. The Herodians were those who supported King Herod and therefore the Romans. The Herodians would have agreed to paying taxes to Caesar whilst the Pharisees would not have been.

They then launch their question to Jesus 'Tell us, therefore, what thinkest thou ?. Is it lawful to give tribute (or to pay taxes) unto Caesar or

not?'. That is to say, should they, the Jews, pay taxes to the Romans?. The Greek word used for 'entangle' is apparently a rare word and is only cited here in the New Testament. It implies to snare or trap.

However, Jesus, of course sees through their question the trap they launch upon Him, hoping that He will either side with those who do not pay taxes or with those who do pay taxes to the Romans. So Jesus simply replies 'Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?' and on being shown a coin, or penny, and they recognising the image of Caesar, emperor Tiberius, says 'Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's'.

However, Jesus goes further to emphasise that the Jews should give back to God what is His saying 'render....unto God the things that are God's'. We are reminded of this duty just a bit earlier in the preceding verses with the parable of the vineyard wherein the Jews were seen as being those tenants who had not rendered unto God the fruit of the Master's vineyard. The idea of rendering means giving back to God what is His in blessing to us.

In response we read that when they heard these words of Jesus in reply, they marvelled,

wondered in awe, and went on their way without further ado, such was the authority with which Jesus dealt with their mischief, similarly as did the chief priests and Pharisees when they heard Jesus speaking about the vineyard owner.

The essence of this encounter lies perhaps in those final words Jesus spoke 'render....unto God the things that are God's'. This command implies a general inclusion of all things. That is an acknowledgement that all blessings and benefits in life come from God's generous bounty and that we should always acknowledge this fact in aiming to give thanks back to Him. In that acknowledgment is also a recognising of authority in others, that due respect be given to them too in proportion.

This can of course be hard at times in life when we are confronted with difficulties, such as those in our world at the present time. However, we are reminded of those inspiring and comforting words in Romans which say 'And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God'. When we reflect we can see that God does bless us in so many ways and loving God in worship and thanksgiving is the way we render back to God that which is God's. Amen.

Fr Herbert.