

Thought for the week

21st May, 2023

Seventh Sunday of Easter

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**FAMILY BOARD GAME AFTERNOON
THIS SUNDAY**

**ST MICHAEL'S CHURCH HALL 2 - 5PM
21ST MAY, 2023**

PPC MEETING

5TH JUNE

**PLEASE PUT SUGGESTIONS IN
THE SILVER BOX AT THE BACK OF CHURCH**

**FIRST COMMUNION SERVICE
10.30am, Sunday, 18th June**

**CONFIRMATION SERVICE
12 noon, Sunday, 9th July**

**THE THAMES CLEAN UP
THE BIG PLASTIC BLITZ
September**

On Monday I went to the National Gallery to visit the St Francis exhibition. It was like entering a treasure box and seeing one jewel after another, lifting one beautiful piece of cloth to the light, and then another, and another. The pictures, artefacts and commentary brought this favourite saint vividly to life. As we were led around the paintings, the curators' panels told us about St Francis's life. We learnt about his radicalism, his option for the poor, his care for creation and his travels. The pictures of him discarding his beautiful clothes showed his father looking angry and upset, a stark reminder to all parents of how difficult it is when your child chooses a very different path from the one you imagined for them.

There is a glass case holding what are thought to be the relics of St Francis's sackcloth habit and rope belt, right beside a haunting abstract painting by Alberto Burri which layers old sacking over a glistening, sore red blob of stigmata painted blood, reminding us how St Francis's life was not all friendly wolves, birdsong and Umbrian sunsets.

I expected to see beautiful works to show St Francis's relationship with the natural world and there were some of those, celebrations of our earth and its creatures. After all it was St Francis's prayer Laudato Sí that framed the Pope's encyclical and shaped our climate debates – jolting the whole world, not just Christians, into action.

There's even a tiny scrap of a letter from St Francis to one of his followers; it is full of kindly advice and care for the younger friar. Its tone and voice reminded me of how Pope Francis talked, in the film the Thoughtful Living group of this parish showed a few weeks ago, full of understanding, good humour and love.

My friend and I played a game: which painting would we take home if we could? I think my choice would be the little gem-like square painting by Fra Angelico showing St Francis's meeting with the Muslim Sultan of Palestine, Syria, and Egypt: al-Malik al-Kamil. According to reports from the time, the two men grew to respect each other hugely, both of them keen to listen to what the other said. Dialogue between people who do not hold the same views is as important as ever in the fractured world we inhabit in 2023.

As we left the gallery and stepped into noisy Trafalgar Square with its music and crowds and traffic, I knew St Francis would be quite at home here, perhaps stretching out his arm for a few pigeons to land on, and looking out to the trees just coming into leaf in St James's Park, then crouching down to have a conversation with someone who was trying to sell copies of The Big Issue. It felt good to have been reminded of our calling to work for God's Kingdom, a world Francis knew we were worthy of and hoped we could achieve.

Katie (Livesey)



We ask you please, to pray for the following people who continue to ask for your prayers;

Please Pray for Jim Hardiman.

Please Pray for Maria McNamara's niece who is undergoing chemotherapy. Her name is Alison Flynn née McNamara.

Please pray for Reuben Muston aged 17 (Theresa and Mike Muston's grandson) who has had his stem cell transplant to treat the Aplastic Anaemia. He still needs our prayers please for a successful outcome.

Please pray for Father Paul Rowan who continues to recover after chemotherapy.

Please pray for Beth Selwood.

Please pray for Savanna Clark (aged 2 with eye trouble).

Please pray for Shirley Trollop.

Please pray for Isobel Messenger (Vera Bird's great granddaughter) she has now had her operation to improve her hearing.

Please pray for Simon Keen who is recovering from an operation.

Please pray for Mary Haggar.

Please pray for Vivien Kear (Krissie's friend) who has cancer

Vera Bird has asked for our prayers for her Great, Great Grandson Harry.

Prayers please for Antonita's nephew Peppin who has long covid.

Please pray for Peter Halter's sister Jean who has macular degeneration and for her great grandson Rogan who is 10 and whose Leukaemia has returned. Rogan has to have 3 months chemo so he continues to need our prayers.

Please pray for the residents and staff of Abbeycrest and St Luke's.

Please pray for the pupils, teachers and parents of St Martin's school.



Please remember in your prayers those whose anniversaries occur at this time including;

Julia Pearce, Mary Smith, Margaret Andrews, Aisling Earley, Jack Graham, Maria O'Connor, Brian O'Dowd, Dan Mulrooney, Raymond Hughes, Nancy Keogh, Joan Selway, Rita Worklex.