

PETERPOST

Parish of St. Peter and the Winchester Martyrs

Alresford • Stockbridge • Winchester

23rd January 2022

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year C

The Story of Your Life – Overcoming your Regrets with God's Strength

Fr Mark writes:

We have begun the New Year thinking about stories. We like stories. From the time we are children, we love stories. Your story matters... but... perhaps not the way you might expect. Your story isn't important because of you, it's important because of God, and his role in your story.

This weekend we want to look at part of our story that we don't like to think about or talk about. It is, though, essential to living a better story that we embrace it and run towards it instead of running away from it.

We are going to look at this passage from the Old Testament book of Nehemiah. It is a great story in and of itself...Nehemiah is a Jew, living in Persia at the palace, when one day he learns the real story about his native land. Jerusalem has fallen into disrepair, her walls are ruined. Nehemiah hears about the situation and it really bothers him, throwing him into a kind of depression, so much so that the king noticed the change in his personality.

So one day, Nehemiah takes a great risk and asks the king if he can take a sort of sabbatical to lead a rebuilding effort and, in addition, if the king will give him the supplies and military resources to get the job done. Unexpectedly, the king says yes, appointing Nehemiah governor of Judah. Eventually Nehemiah rallies the people of Jerusalem to rebuild the walls, and despite all kinds of obstacles and adverse conditions and critics and the threat of conflict, they get the job done with exceptional speed!

At the end of the project, the people gathered for a celebration, which begins with a worship service. The first thing they do is listen to Scripture: *Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, consisting of men, women, and children old enough to understand. (Nehemiah 8.3)*

So the priest is reading from the Bible, specifically the first five books of the Bible which are called the Torah, or the 'Law of Moses'. The people had probably never heard the word of God before because it had been forgotten and neglected, like the city walls. This was new to them and they listened attentively.

The Bible goes on to say,

In full view of all the people – since he stood higher than all the people – Ezra opened the book; and when he opened it all the people stood up. Then Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people raised their hands and answered, 'Amen! Amen!' Then they bowed down and, face to the ground, prostrated themselves before the Lord. (Nehemiah 8.5-6)

Nehemiah then tells us:

the people were all in tears as they listened to the words of the Law. (Nehemiah 8.9)

As the law of God was read and people heard it, they realised in their ignorance that they had broken so much of it. They began to recognise this huge gap between their lives and God's standard. Essentially they had abandoned their faith and walked away from God. This recognition fills them with regret. They come to see how God had wanted them to live and the beauty of his commands. They simply did not know the good news of the great life God wanted for the people of Israel. They're genuinely sorry for that. But, that is not the end of the story.

'Go, eat the fat, drink the sweet wine, and send a portion to the man who has nothing prepared ready.' (Nehemiah 8.10)

In other words, let's have a party. What's the occasion? Nehemiah tells them...

'For this day is sacred to our Lord. Do not be sad: the joy of the Lord is your stronghold.' (Nehemiah 8.10)

Don't dwell in your regret, he urges them, move beyond it to celebrate what God is doing in your life now. All our stories include regret, which is a consciousness of something negative, a sadness and sorrow for something wrong. If you don't have anything you regret you either don't know you're story very well or you're not being very honest about it. No one gets it right all the time. Inevitably we get something, somehow, somewhere wrong and that is regrettable, and ought to lead us to regret.

- ❖ Maybe your regret is about a friendship that was lost. You had a close friend and you allowed that friendship to fall apart and you regret you didn't work harder at it, and give more to it.
- ❖ Your regret might be at work. At one point, you felt like you should take a stand, you knew without question that what was happening was wrong, but instead of saying anything, you quietly took the path of least resistance.
- ❖ Or maybe there was someone you could have helped and you didn't, and as a result, things went badly for them.

When we come to the places of regret in our story, the temptation is to pretend as if they never happened. And that's understandable, but it's also unhelpful. For one thing, those regrets are part of your story, they are what make you human and real. Denying them and just trying to forget them is mixing up your story.

But there's another reason too.

It is the very things we regret that God wants to redeem. The failures and mistakes that we regret are exactly where we come to know God as our Saviour, as our redeemer. Your relationship with God will grow immeasurably if you face those regrets and bring them back to him. And then you will grow immeasurably too.

God will give you a chance, he will give you an opportunity to redeem those regrets and use them for good.

God can take any of our regrets and rebuild, just like Nehemiah built the city walls from the ruins of the past mistakes of the people.

God can take any regret and rebuild. He can use your regrets for greater purposes, but we have to face them first. We have to recognise them as part of our story and offer them back to him and say,

God, I'm sorry. I apologise for that part of my story. And I thank you for redeeming my regrets.

Better yet, go to confession and say it there.

The people we meet in Nehemiah feel regret. But notice what Nehemiah says:

'Do not be sad: the joy of the Lord is your stronghold.' (Nehemiah 8.10)

Nehemiah is saying, "OK, you've acknowledged your regret and you've apologised. Now, focus on God, find your strength in God and find your joy in that strength."

Don't live in the sadness of your regrets, live in the joy of God's strength.

Whoever you are, whatever station or state of life you're in, whatever your story has been, you can write a different story, a better story.

With God's strength, you can write a better story.

Welcome..... If this is your first time reading the newsletter, then you are particularly welcome. Please get in touch - we'd love to tell you about everything that's going on here, and invite you to join us. Just to start you off, elsewhere in the newsletter you will find our services and other activities. Look at our website <https://www.catholicwinchester.org.uk/>, or our [Facebook page](#) or email office@stpeterswinchester.org.uk

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year C) – 23rd January

Entrance Antiphon:

O sing a new song to the Lord;
sing to the Lord, all the earth.
In his presence are majesty and splendour,
strength and honour in his holy place.

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia!
The Lord has sent me to bring the good news to the poor,
to proclaim liberty to captives.
Alleluia!

First reading: Nehemiah 8:2-6, 8-10

Gospel: Luke 1:1-4,4:14-21

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 18:8-10,15.R. Jn6:63
Your words are spirit, Lord, and they are life.

Communion Antiphon:

Look toward the Lord and be radiant;
let your faces not be abashed.

Second reading: 1 Corinthians 12:12-30


Second Collection this weekend – Our Cathedral This weekend we take the annual collection in support of your Cathedral in Portsmouth. This collection is the only support our Cathedral receives from the wider Diocesan family. Appeal envelopes are available at all Masses for those who do not have gift aided planned giving envelopes for second collections. During the previous lockdowns and with some of the other additional precautionary measures taken, a 'Give as you Live' page was also created: <https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/fundraising/cathedral-annual-appeal-1> Understandably, we all are aware that these are difficult times for us all, but please give generously to support your Cathedral, gift aiding your donation wherever possible.



Welcome – We welcome and thank Fr Peter Codd who will be celebrating the 8am Mass and Fr Laco Sulik who will be celebrating the 10.30am and 5.30pm Mass at St Peter's on Sunday 23rd January.

Churches Together in Winchester There will be an ecumenical service of evensong at the Cathedral at 3.30pm on 30th January 2022 when our very own Father Mark will be preaching. Please note that this replaces the previously planned Unity Service on Sunday 23 January at 6.30pm.

Acorn Groups The new season of Acorn Groups has started and we would love you to join! We meet once a fortnight. As the number of groups increases, we will have additional meeting times available so please do register and choose a day that suits you. If you would like to register, please use the link <https://forms.office.com/r/A1p3TR5jKE> Or for more information, please email acorn@stpeterswinchester.org.uk

 **The Alpha Course** – starts **Monday 31st January at 7.30pm** in the Pastoral Centre
This season of Alpha will run for 9 weeks until 11th April. Alpha is a space for conversations about faith, life and God conducted in an informal and relaxed manner.
Whether you know very little about God, are unsure what you believe, need a spiritual re-boot or simply wish to foster faith-based friendships, Alpha is the place for you!

YOU ARE INVITED. YOU ARE WELCOME...

Each session begins with a delicious cooked meal. To register, visit www.catholicwinchester.org.uk/alpha or email alpha@stpeterswinchester.org.uk

Mass with Prayer for Healing and Sacrament of the Sick – 3pm Saturday 12th February Anyone who is sick and suffering in any way, emotionally, physically or spiritually, is invited to attend this mass with family and friends. Please register your interest online at <http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/st-peter-and-the-winchester-martyrs/t-lydrnk> If you, or someone you know would like to attend but will need transport to the mass, please contact the parish office on 01962 852804 by 1st February.

Pope Francis invites us to be a Listening Church

The whole Church throughout the world, at every level, is being invited by the successor to St. Peter to enter into a deep process of listening – to one another and to the Holy Spirit. We too, here in the parish of St. Peter and the Winchester Martyrs, are asked to play our part. The Pope would like us all to reflect deeply on what it is to be Church – and to participate in the early stages of a process that will culminate in a "Synod on Synodality" in 2023 (the word 'synod' comes from a Greek word meaning the 'walking together' (syn-) on a 'particular way' (-hodos)).
The overall theme is "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission" and the starting point is a listening exercise: in parishes, schools and beyond. We would very much value hearing from as many voices as possible – both from within our parish community and from the wider community. We certainly want everyone who wishes to participate to be enabled to do so. This isn't about convening a parliamentary delegation or a lobby group but rather the start of a process of mutual listening, with humility and love, and discerning the voice of the Holy Spirit together.
Fr Mark has asked the parish Evangelisation Strategy Group (ESG) to take a lead on this and he is enormously grateful for the energy and passion with which they've taken up the challenge. Preparations are well underway. **Please look out for announcements and invitations to participate in a Listening Session next month, in person or online.**
Please pray for our parish as we embark on this journey, and please pray for the whole Synod process, and indeed for the Universal Church.

Discovering More...About our Care for God's Creation We are told by media reports and politicians, in ever more urgent tones, that we are experiencing an environmental crisis. We have received on this subject an encyclical from the Pope, Laudato Si, and a recent pastoral letter from our Bishop. We are told that this is a pressing moral issue. Join with us in discovering more about what the Church teaches on the beautiful mystery of Creation and our place in it, why we are called to care for it, and how we can respond. The sessions will take place on Tuesday 8th, 15th and 22nd February, starting at 7.30pm and will be held in the Pastoral Centre. If you would like to book a place, please use the following link <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/st-peter-and-the-winchester-martyrs/t-yrzkmoor> email office@stpeterswinchester.org.uk.



PRAYER CORNER: Each week, this section will contain an intercession that I hope every parishioner will pray for during the coming week. In this way, we will all pray to the Lord for the parish's mission, because "*if the Lord does not build... in vain do the builders labour*" (Ps 127:1) **Fr. Mark**

This Week's Intention: We pray for the Alpha course starting soon in the parish. May God anoint the team with the gifts they need as they prepare for the new season and may the Lord open the hearts of those who have been invited to take part.



PLEASE PRAY FOR the repose of the souls of those who have died recently:

Kate Gunner RIP
Bernard Groves RIP
Pamela Henry RIP
Antoinette Thomas RIP



Big Garden Birdwatch

Heads Up! Next weekend, **28th to 30th January**, is the great Big Garden Bird Watch. The RSPB website has all the information you need to take part and this can be fun for all the family.

Simply count the birds you see in the garden or balcony or park for one hour. We lost 38 million birds from our skies in the last 50 years so it is vital we do all we can to look after our birds. The RSPB website is full of ideas for making your bit of the outdoors bird friendly. Let us know how you got on by contacting Kathy at Keast@stpeterswinchester.org.uk

New Year Climate Pledge Many people signed pledges for actions to protect our planet in line with Pope Francis' encyclical Laudato si'. Thank you for your support! Many of you brought your pledge to one of our churches; here is one of the boards with your post-it note pledges. If you weren't able to bring your pledge to church then please complete a Pledge Survey online by copying this link into your browser...www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/LL9YKNF



CWL Soup Lunches – CWL soup lunches for charity will recommence on **Friday 4th March, 12noon-1.30pm** in the Pastoral Centre, and on the first Friday of the month thereafter. All welcome!

Tuesdays – Coffee, Cake and Chat Come and enjoy a coffee, cake and chat in the Pastoral Centre on Tuesday mornings between 10.30am and 12noon. All welcome after Mass, before or after shopping or just call in. Starting on **Tuesday 25th January**.



Monday Movers – NEW CLASS There's a new, gentle but thorough, Monday Movers class at 11.15am in the Pastoral Centre. It is perfect for men and women over 65 who haven't exercised for a while or have lost confidence in their balance and stability. For more information and to book your place, contact Julia on 07964 361598.



Introducing Our Parish In this corner of the newsletter we'd like to let you know more about what's going on, how the parish runs, and who the people are that you see in church! Let us know if there's anything or anyone you'd particularly like to hear about.

The new candle system in St Peter's church

Have you noticed the new candlestand in St Peter's? Take a look next time you are in there. The old candles, the long slim votives, were beautiful - as anyone who looked out for our candle Facebook posts knows - but they were hazardous, and not popular with insurers. So we're trying something new - with these advantages:



- No smoke damage
- No more plastic or aluminium cups or sand to deal with.
- No more unprotected flames
- Environmentally friendly (they recycle the wax that collects in the water vessel below the candles)
- No more wax spillage on the floors
- Low maintenance
- Self-extinguishing candles (there is a hole in the bottom of the glass holder cup and once the candle has burned down low and liquefied it drops through the hole into the bath of water concealed below)

The St Killians system is used all over the country including over 20 stands in Westminster Cathedral. It's very safe and solid, no chance of setting the church on fire, no more scorch marks on the carpet in the Lady Chapel! The blue glass bases look beautiful when the candles are lit. And - of course - we will always light a candle for you if you send us your intention.

Getting to know you...

Name: Fergus Lyons

Favourite saint: St Jude

Favourite hymn or worship song:
I Watch the Sunrise

How long have you been connected with our parish? 5 years

Which ministries are you involved in? St Vincent de Paul Society

What drew you to this particular ministry? To connect and support people in our community

Which Mass would we usually find you at, in case other parishioners would like to chat to you about your ministry?
Sunday 5.30pm

Tell us something you are grateful for: Friendly, caring people

Tell us an unusual/little-known fact about yourself:
In 2007, I appeared in the Hampshire Chronicle as a gorilla in a suit running to raise funds to save mountain gorillas.



Mass Timetable	22 nd January – 29 th January 2022			
Date	Mass Times & Intentions			Livestream/Public
SATURDAY – January 22nd Our Lady on Saturday	9.00AM	Mass	Patrick & Annie Smith RIP, Phil Smith & the Smith family, Mary Nolan RIP & Josie Smith	Livestream, public
	5.30PM	Mass	Thanksgiving for Sr Cecilia & Sr Antonietta	Livestream, public, booking reqd
SUNDAY – January 23rd THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME	8.00 AM	Mass	Intentions of Carmela Kelly	Livestream, public, booking reqd
	9.00 AM	Mass at St Thomas More's	People of the Parish	Public, booking reqd *
	9.15 AM	Mass at St Stephen's	Dr Anna Wilson RIP	Public, booking reqd
	10.30AM	Mass	Deceased members of the Blessed Sacrament Guild	Livestream, public, booking reqd
	11.00 AM	Mass at St Gregory's		Public, booking reqd
	5.30PM	Mass	Margaret Gardiner RIP	Livestream, public, booking reqd
MONDAY – January 24th St Francis de Sales, Bishop, Doctor of the Church	12.15PM	Mass	Soul of William Meader	Livestream & public
TUESDAY – January 25th The Conversion of St Paul	10.00AM	Mass	Tom O'Donoghue RIP	Livestream & public
	10.00AM	Mass at St Gregory's	Soul of Jacob Cook	Public
WEDNESDAY – January 26th St Timothy & St Titus	10.00AM	Mass	Soul of Eleanor Meader	Livestream & public
THURSDAY – January 27th	10.00AM	Mass	Soul of Patrick George McCall & family	Livestream & public
FRIDAY – January 28th St Thomas Aquinas, Religious, Doctor of the Church	10.00AM	Mass at St Gregory's		Public
	12.15PM	Mass	Neil intentions	Livestream & public
SATURDAY – January 29th Our Lady on Saturday	9.00AM	Mass	Angela MacManus RIP	Livestream & public
	5.30 PM	Vigil Mass		Livestream, public, booking reqd

All at St. Peter's, except where stated.

FOR ALL ONLINE BOOKINGS please use website homepage - [The Parish of St Peter & the Winchester Martyrs](http://www.stpeterswinchester.org.uk) - or call office 01962 852804. Or you can email office if any issues: office@stpeterswinchester.org.uk

*To book mass at St Thomas More's Stockbridge, email: stm@stpeterswinchester.org.uk If you would like a phone number to call, please ring the office 01962 852804 to ask for it.

Confessions every Saturday 11.00am till 12.00noon and 4.30pm-5.00pm at St Peter's Church – booking not required.

Adoration every Monday and Friday 11.00 till 12.00noon.

Morning Prayer (livestream and open to public) every weekday, Monday to Friday, 8.00am at St Peter' followed by Adoration till 9.00am

Night Prayer (livestream) **Monday to Thursday this week**

To participate online or see the recorded services for Morning Prayer & Adoration and Night Prayer & Adoration, go to our [YouTube channel](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC...)

ALL SERVICES (INCLUDING MORNING PRAYER, NIGHT PRAYER & ADORATION) FROM ST PETER'S ARE LIVESTREAMED

Parish Safeguarding Representative - Any safeguarding concerns or requests for advice can be discussed with Michaela Waterfield in the Parish Office or routed through to the central diocesan safeguarding team via this email address safeguarding@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk or telephone number: 02394 216486. Email is probably best as, with current restrictions etc, the office is not always resourced. If there is a concern that someone is at immediate risk of harm, people should be advised to contact 999 for the emergency services. In the meantime, please use the safeguarding@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk address for any queries or contact Ruth Attfield, our diocesan safeguarding coordinator on 02394 216486.

YOU'RE INVITED

Fr Mark is going to the **Big Church Day Out** and he'd love you to go with him! Join him and fellow parishioners on the 3rd and 4th June 2022 with over 30,000 people from across the UK and beyond to worship together in the jaw-dropping surroundings of the Wiston Estate, in the company of some of the best Christian artists in the world., including Catholic Contemporary musician, Matt Maher. There really is something for everyone, of all ages and all tastes (well most tastes!)

HOW DO I BOOK?

Follow the unique group plus link below. You will then be taken to your Group homepage where you can order your tickets. You will then need to create an account or login to your existing account with us. Your card will be charged at midnight on the day of the Group Registration Deadline.

GROUP DISCOUNT

The cheapest way to go to the Big Church Day Out is in a group; the price will keep dropping as our Group grows! Your payment will be taken when our Group closes and we have the lowest price for our Group.

For more info please email the parish office.

This is your unique group plus link: <http://bcdo.group/2022/spwm>

Please click this link to join our group and purchase your tickets to the Big Church Day Out. We hope you will be able to join us!





Dear Parents

Junior Road Safety Officers – special lunch!

Our Junior Road Safety Officers, Emily, Fleur, Khyan, Nicholas and Leanne, organised a special school dinner menu on Thursday 20th January:

“We put some work into making school dinners a bit more interesting on Thursday. We are trying to introduce road safety to help keep the school more safe. We organised for a special menu based on road safety. We had Stop Dog, the stop and look hot dog, or Road Safety Pizza – red tomato, amber cheese and green salad, and a Be Seen sponge. We encouraged people to have school dinners on Thursday and to be safe on the road.”



If you have pre-school children and like the sound of St Peter’s School then why not contact us to find out about the application process? Telephone 01962 852820 or email admin@st-peters.hants.sch.uk.

Best wishes

Louise Buxton (Miss)
Headteacher

Little Fishes Pre-School

We are now taking applications for Little Fishes Pre-School for September 2022-July 2023. Children can attend Little Fishes from when they are 2 years & 9 months old, subject to place availability and we offer opening hours around the school day, during term-time.

You will find full Little Fishes information on the school website, www.stpetershants.co.uk including details of parent visits, a virtual tour and the application form. Or contact the school office on 01962 852820 for any queries.

