



Dear Friends,

I do hope that everyone continues to remain safe and well. These last few weeks of lockdown have been tricky times for many, and it has often seemed difficult to know which direction our lives are taking. These coming weeks may be equally difficult to navigate too. In last Sunday's reading Jesus said, 'I am the way, and the truth and the life' (John 14: 6). All we need to know is that whatever path lies ahead of us, Jesus is our guide. If we follow him then we will find the right way to go wherever we find ourselves to be. I offer this prayer from Thomas Merton.

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so. But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me on the right road though I may know nothing about it. Therefore will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone. Amen

Do please keep checking the church website ([www.stmaryshadlow.org.uk](http://www.stmaryshadlow.org.uk)) for news and services, and the church Facebook page.

Every blessing,

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## Parish News

**ASCENSION DAY** – Please note that there will be an Ascension Day service of Holy Communion livestreamed on Thursday 21 May at 9.30am. Therefore, the Wednesday service will be Morning Prayer at 9am

**CONGRATULATIONS** to Lea and James on the birth of their daughter. Lyanna was born on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> May at Pembury Hospital.

**Zoom Coffee.** We are planning to have coffee 'virtually' between 11.00am and 12.00pm again this Sunday after the service, via Zoom. If you would like to join us, please contact me via email so I can send you a link.

**Financial giving.** Thank you to all who are continuing to give to St. Mary's at this time. Your contributions are vital. While saving money on heating, lighting and salaries the church still needs funds for ministry and ongoing costs. With the church closed we are losing income from fund-raising events and collections. If you can and would like to give on a regular basis, a standing order with your bank would be much appreciated. Equally one-off donations can be made by bank transfer too. Please contact me on [mhmassy@btinternet.com](mailto:mhmassy@btinternet.com) or 07725 603952 for further details, or if you would like to give by cheque or have your envelopes collected. Martin Massy – Treasurer

**Materials still needed.** Many people in the village are sewing scrubs etc. for the NHS. They require more sheets, duvet covers, elastic or tape. If you have anything to donate, please ring Rev. Nicky on 01732 852564 to arrange collection. Thank you.

### Collect for the 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter

God our redeemer, you have delivered us from the power of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of your Son: grant, that as by his death he has recalled us to life, so by his continual presence in us he may raise us to eternal joy; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen

### Prayers for the Week

**We pray for all those living and working in:**  
Blackmans Lane and Hadlow College.

### We pray for those who have recently died:

Bill Green, Joan Ball, Rodney Mannell and Helen Hibbs

### At the anniversary of his death this week we pray for

Sidney Arthur Tuxford

### From our Book of Remembrance, we pray for:

George Daniels (21<sup>st</sup>)

Norman Bubb (21<sup>st</sup>)

Michael Mitchell (22<sup>nd</sup>)

Kenneth (K/A Peter) Piper (22<sup>nd</sup>)



## **Homily from Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> May 2020** – John 15: 1-8

I am no gardener I have to confess and ‘hack it back and see’ has often been my motto! At a previous house we had a very leafy plant growing up a trellis in the back garden. It just produced abundant leaves and nothing else. One day I just went in and pruned it right back, stripping away branch after branch till it was almost bare. Little did I know that this is what it needed. For the first time since we had lived there it went on to produce the most amazing purple blooms. I now know it was wisteria.

In today’s reading, Jesus uses the image of the vine and the branches. Jesus tells his disciples that he, Jesus, is the “true” vine and his Father is the vine grower. And if his Father is the vine grower, He is responsible for growing good grapes that will make good quality wine. Jesus also says that the vine grower will prune us. Painful as this seems, this pruning will enable us to bear more fruit.

However, who wants to be pruned? Do you? Many of us don’t like to be pruned. We prefer to be left alone. However, if we are not pruned, the consequence is that we will not bear good fruit.

Yet life prunes us all the time. And most often, we do not like the pruning. Being pruned is typically painful and difficult. Yet, after a period of time, we come to realize that this pruning has enabled us to bear fruit in new and different ways. We may also begin to experience the new life that has come from our pruning. We may have grown and changed for the better!

The vine grower recognizes when the vines need to be pruned. And the vine grower also realizes that better fruit will grow because the vine has been pruned. Do we trust our “vine grower?” Do we trust that God only desires goodness, happiness, and abundant fruit for us? Hopefully, our answer is yes even though it does not take away the pain and difficulty of being pruned. However, if we trust our vine grower and believe that growth and plenty will come from the pruning, we will bear abundant fruit in our lives.

Today and always, may we trust our Vine grower for he only desires what is best for us. And He will prune us in a gentle and loving way! Amen