

	<p style="text-align: center;">The Order of St James (UK) Newsletter</p> <p style="text-align: center;">January 2022</p> <p style="text-align: center;">www.orderofstjames.info</p>	
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SURROGACY:

Fr Ed Elsey OSJ (Wales)

Happy New Year to you all. New Year resolutions may be a bit different this year. You might want to do something respectable or honourable innovative or revolutionary, something that a shadow of guilt has haunted you and you are determined to put it right. How long do new year resolutions really last? How deep is your intention? How flexible is your lifestyle to be able to change?

New Year - new opportunities. We face revolution in AI, [Artificial Intelligence] which I find both exciting and terrifying: its power, its invasiveness challenges its opportunity to speed up our lives and our organization, our inventiveness and our creativity. Its force for good battles with its force for evil as with all worldwide inventions we have witnessed in our lifetimes.

My bottom line is to enable everyone to to move forward and benefit from what is available. In a recent lecture I mentioned Louise Brown. I wrote this: On July 25, 1978, Louise Joy Brown, the world's first baby to be conceived via in vitro fertilization (IVF) is born at Oldham and District General Hospital in Manchester, England, to parents Lesley and Peter Brown, Voices were raised on 'the tampering'.

Letters to The Times, no less. But IVF gave birthless couples the happiness and, appropriately with the baby's middle name, the JOY of family life, they deserved as well as those who found it easier, so many of whom lacked the love which should always attend birth. Good genes are nice: joy is better.

The ethical arguments abound. Christians are divided on the whole issue of IVF and surrogacy. I have been asked to air the subject for OSJ. A task. Here goes.

Surrogacy literally means 'standing in for someone else'. A surrogate carries a foetus and bears a child for a person/couple - the commissioning person - surrendering that child to the commissioning parent or couple at birth or soon afterwards.

We know that 10% of couples are infertile medically. Yet they dearly want to 'parent' a child. Pharmacological manipulation, IVF - in-vitro fertilisation - or GIFT - gamete intra-fallopian transfer - can sometimes help, but not always. That is seen by some as 'natural selection, by others 'God's will'.

My jury is out on both of those. Not a parent myself I recognize the deep desire of a loving couple, hetero or gay, in today's society, have the opportunity either to adopt, or use surrogacy to achieve their dream and love intentions. The pain of permanently trying, often with miscarriage, stillborn birth, or just failure to produce, needs alternative opportunities, surely.

Would you deny them that chance? I am simply airing the subject to engage your thinking and prayerful consideration. Come back to me by all means.

Unavailability or shortage of babies for adoption., though more older children fall into this category, enables re-thinking of surrogacy. Adoption numbers fell from 21,299 in 1975 to 6,533 in 1990. Rise in abortions from 139,702 to 186,912 over that period and increasing acceptance of single parent families - dependent children in 1-parent families rose from 1.3m to 1.9m in this time frame. I would need to access more recent figures to test any other change.

My bottom line as a liberal Christian, open to all new gifts the Holy Spirit and Almighty God offer to us as a developing society - and too much scientific time has already been wasted with wars, injustice and corruption, is that our Lord and Master was He who beckoned:

'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.'

As Christians we have a hope: that all things will work out for good. It's a promise. Claim it. Whatever situation, no matter how painful, whether we are married or single, have children or are childless, were conceived naturally or by IVF, we are all equal before God. Each of us is equally in need of his grace and equally able to enjoy his rest and a relationship with him for eternity.

Four pieces of legislation given surrogacy. The Warnock Report (1984), the Surrogacy Arrangements Act (1985), the Human Fertilisation & Embryology Act (1990) and the Parental Orders (HF&E) Regulations (1994). They seek to ensure that:

Surrogacy is not illegal in the UK and arrangements are not enforceable in law. A child born via this method is the legal child of the surrogate mother, not its genetic parents. So a commissioning couple has no legal right to the child they commissioned if the surrogate mother refuses to relinquish the baby after birth - even if genetically their child. Any commercial deal by the commissioning couple, the surrogate mother or a third party is illegal. The surrogate may however, receive payment for the necessary expenses of the pregnancy.

Once the surrogate has given up the child to the commissioning couple they must go through an adoption procedure to become legal parents. However, if either is genetically related to the child they can instead apply for a court 'parental order' between six weeks and six months after the birth, this taking far less time than an adoption.

At first sight surrogacy can seem a simple ethical issue: a mother agrees to bear a child for an infertile couple as a response to their need. But is it so straightforward? What are the ethical issues involved?

Traditionalists and fundamentalists will hold that: God created humankind male and female, instituting the marriage bond for companionship and procreation. [Cynics point out that God's command to 'be fruitful and multiply' is the only one we willingly obey!] In Holy Writ children are seen as a blessing and a gift from God, neither right nor consumer object. Then, mankind's rebellion against God's 'order' - the Fall - affected spiritual, social, psychological and physical parts of life, including fertility and child bearing.

The Fall doesn't change God's commands. We are to 'fill the earth and subdue it'. Many see science as part of this subduing. If science can aid fertility and help infertile couples, in accordance with the ethical principles God has revealed in his word, can we not accept it thus?

It seems to me, as a celibate confirmed bachelor, I hasten to warn you, from Scripture, that there is a real sense of continuity between the adult person and the 'embryo person' from the time of conception. The Bible makes no distinction between a born and an unborn child as illustrated by the Greek word, *brephos*, used to describe both the intra-uterine baby Jesus [Lk 1:44] - the babe 'wrapped in swaddling clothes' [Lk 2:12]. Biologically we could claim that what marks a human as different from other living things is possession of a human genome. An embryo is thus a human being with potential and a foetus is a human being. Abortion is another subject for another time.

An article in 'The Bulletin of Medical Ethics' insists that 'In all cases the interests of the potential child must be paramount'. A danger could arise that a child's wellbeing be confused with a commissioning couple's desires. As with AI, safeguards need to be considered. The effect of gamete donation also needs consideration. Many have a strong desire to know who their genetic parents and family are/were, especially during adolescence when identity issues are worked through. I am, at this stage, only opening out to you the whole issue. Come back to me. Things can of course go wrong. I am unwrapping the basic ethics as I see them.

There are, of course, surrogacies in the Bible, distorting family relationships and the society of the time. Genesis 16 introduces childless Abram and Sarai.

Sarai gives her servant Hagar to Abram and says to hubby: 'Sleep with my maidservant; perhaps I can build a family through her'. In Genesis 30 Rachel says to her husband Jacob, 'Here is Bilhah, my maidservant. Sleep with her so that she can bear children for me and that through her I too can build a family'. Family discord resulted. After Ishmael's birth, Hagar began to despise Sarai who sent her away. Ishmael would 'live in hostility towards all his brothers'. He became the father of the Arab nations and enmity between them and the Jews lives on today. In Genesis 30 Bilhah gives birth to Dan. Jacob has other children: four sons by concubines, six sons and a daughter by his wife Leah and only two sons, Joseph and Benjamin, by his favourite wife Rachel. Ten of the twelve brothers are jealous of Joseph, puffed up with the pride of being 'favourite' so sell him into slavery, the result familiar.

It seems there were two issues. Firstly, not waiting on God, and to trust Him, leading to the second: a challenge to the marriage bond. Jacob and Abraham were within their legal rights - Jesus told us - and the epistles that one man and one woman in a lifelong exclusive sexual relationship is God's desire for his people. ...the ideal if there can ever be such a thing with a developing society. Remember all human life is loved and known by God, however that life was conceived. God loved Hagar and Ishmael, sending an angel to guide them and promising descendants through him, too numerous to count. God also loved Joseph's brothers enough to save them from starvation and Egyptian rough justice, to bring about a family reconciliation and ten of twelve tribes securely rooted. All are equal in God's sight and God loves all equally. In Him we find our true identity, our true value and life. Under all remains the love of God for His people. God chose Mary as surrogate for the Son of God, to visit us, in His Name.

Fr Ed Elsey January 2022

Theology, religion and faith:

I'm not a big fan of 'academic theology' and see most of it really has little to do with daily life and all of its problems and worries. I agree it has its place and its uses as it tries to provide hypothetical solutions to questions for which there is or maybe no answer, at least not in this life.

Interesting as any resulting discussions may be, there is a point at which they become an end in themselves and serve no useful purpose, and possibly worse still, add to the unnecessary division that constantly undermines the church and the Word of God.

I remember attending lectures given by some wonderful Jesuits, some of the very best theological minds in the UK and learned many important lessons from them.

The one that had the most impact on me was given over the course of a week by Gerald O'Mahoney SJ, a wonderfully warm hearted man who used to borrow my guitar and sing the most delightful folk songs to entertain us all in the evening.

He suffered clinical depression and when things were bad he reduced all the many years of academic theological training he had received into a few simple key words, 'God loves me as I am'.

Those few and simple words were enough.

To me that is real theology, practical, easy to understand, and speaks deeply of the love that exists between God and us, even in the darkest of times.

This was very much in contrast to other lectures I attended although some caused great amusement, particularly those concerning the development of

canon regarding the Eucharist. Questions like, if a mouse eats a small piece of the consecrated host, does it become holy and is it lawful to kill it? Questions that apparently troubled the medieval church deeply as it sought to fully understand the nature of the elements.

One thing leads to another in such discussion and it takes a wise person to judge whether such deliberation has begun to become ridiculous or pointless.

It takes a very wise person to say 'I don't know the answer but I completely trust in God and His Word.'

Part of the problem of faith is that it is full of 'don't know's' and is full of trust, but that is ok. There is nothing wrong with having some of the inexplicable mysteries of God in our lives. Most of us cope with this 'not knowing' quite comfortably in the same way we don't have to know how a computer works when we use it. All we need to know is it works and can be trusted to work when we need it. Similarly, we may not understand the nature of God or be able to explain it but we know from experience He can be trusted.

But that is at a personal level. What happens when we start to organise our collective faith and create 'religion'?

Part of the problem with religion is that we want it to provide all the answers to all the questions. In this respect the answers start to become more important than individual faith. (Why do you need faith or God if you have all the answers?) That isn't ok.

Neither are the club rules. If you want to belong there are club rules to follow and obey, ways of thinking and behaving. Dissent is not tolerated because 'we speak for God, the final adjudicators and authority on what God actually meant to say. Only we will determine what is right in God's eyes. Our word is final'.

A dangerous position to hold given the absolute authority of God. Since when did the servant have authority over their master?

The fact is the 'church' has no power or authority other than that given by God, and it cannot rightly take ownership of what is not theirs to take.

In spite of the church's long standing traditions and canons, fine vestments and rituals and beautiful buildings, the best the church can do is teach, encourage and bring someone into the presence of God. Then it is a matter between that person and God. Salvation and faith is God's gift, not the church's.

Whilst the church may claim to be God's representative, there are two things that are certain, and that is the church is not God and is no substitute for God.

It would be interesting to see how the church would react knowing God was about to pay them a visit..... I'm sure we would see a lot of sudden changes and panic. But actually, that is what Holy Scripture warns us about – none of us know when we will get that visitation and we need to be prepared so no fault is found or condemnation given.

I could allude to the book of Revelation being the final written warning but I believe that the coming of Christ in human form is sufficient. Jesus spoke quite plainly about what was required of each of us and of the religious authorities – their hypocrisy and overburdening ways were frequently challenged.

Take this from Mark 12 as a good example:

The Parable of the Vineyard and the Vinedressers

12 He (Jesus) began to speak to them in parables. "A man planted a vineyard, and set a hedge around it, and dug a pit for the winepress, and built a tower, and rented it to vinedressers, and went to a far country.

² At harvest time he sent a servant to the vinedressers to receive from them some of the fruit of the vineyard. ³ But they seized him and beat him and sent him away empty-handed.

⁴ Then he sent another servant to them. They threw stones at him, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled. ⁵ Still he sent another, and they killed him. And there were many others. Some they beat, and some they killed.

⁶ “Having yet his one well-beloved son, he sent him last to them, saying, ‘They will revere my son.’

⁷ “But those vinedressers said among themselves, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.’ ⁸ So they took him and killed him and threw him out of the vineyard.

⁹ “What then will the owner of the vineyard do? He will come and kill the vinedressers and give the vineyard to others. ¹⁰ Have you not read this Scripture:

‘The stone which the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone.

¹¹ This was the Lord’s doing,
and it is marvellous in our eyes’?”

¹² Then they tried to seize Him, but feared the people, for they knew that He had spoken the parable against them. So they left Him and went their way.

Just how plain does the warning need to be?

I am interested in the fact Jesus chose not to be a part of the Temple hierarchy or great religious groups like the Pharisees and Sadducees. Maybe he already knew that strength of faith was something that lay predominantly outside the formal religious structure. That old conflict of 'religion' and 'faith' perhaps.

I certainly have found that there are far more good Christian folk outside the church than are in it. That is something that doesn't seem to have changed.

Fortunately OSJ (UK) is less concerned with organised religion and whilst we do have some of the trappings of religion, we do know that is all they are.

Vestments, church buildings, rites, ceremony, liturgy, canon and tradition are all just part of the theatrical nature of 'church'. These are things that should be shown due respect but only where appropriate and deserved, and not overstated. They are intended for use for 'the common good', not for personal use, profit, prestige or power, but they are not intended to be an end in themselves.

What matters is our personal relationships expressed in terms of our own relationship with and understanding of God. In spite of everything, only two things are formally required, to love God as best as we understand, as we can, and to love our neighbours (those who need our help and support) as best as we are able, as we would like to be treated in that situation.

As Jesus said, in these the law and prophets are completely and perfectly fulfilled.

Jesus certainly simplified things without taking a single atom away from their importance, but he made enemies from the big organizations that had a vested interest in maintaining the status quo and their power over people. My personal belief is that that is the real reason he was crucified.

He was simply a dangerous threat to organised religion that needed to be silenced.

That takes us back to Mark 12. Jesus knew what the score was and how it would play out, but to do nothing was not acceptable.

What mattered was the long term outcome, not the short term personal cost.

We need to learn from that. It certainly changes the implications of the words 'follow me' (Matthew 4 v 19).

Discipleship has responsibilities and they always have a cost.

See Luke 14:

²⁵ Large crowds went with Him. And He turned and said to them, ²⁶ "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate (i.e. put in second place) his father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.

Being a member of OSJ (UK) always comes with problems even though we try to be as faithful to the integrity of the Gospels and put into the practices and principles Jesus taught.

Established churches will always look on us as a threat and troublemakers because we don't fit in with the things they understand. Organizations like 'Churches Together', a contradiction in terms in my opinion if ever there was one, will always reject us because of what we represent.

These are the very same things Jesus experienced and, therefore as his disciples, why should we be exempt from the same treatment. But the key thing is our ministry is not to those who are already members of churches and religious organisations, but to those disenfranchised Christians who are not.

The sheep without a shepherd. We can be there for them if they want, but we don't go where we are not invited.

We are not interested in membership numbers but we are interested in getting people back in touch with their own faiths and God.

We don't want financial support either or have secret political or religious agendas. What you see is what you get.

I'd like to go back to Gerald O'Mahoney, SJ, and consider who he was as our exemplar.

God shone through his being and whilst he was a committed and highly trained Jesuit, it didn't change things. He was a lovely uncomplicated person to be with who loved God so much it coloured his whole being.

To meet him was in a sense to simultaneously meet both him and God. The fact he was a Jesuit or was highly educated and qualified didn't matter. He had experienced great personal suffering and that made him very accessible and he spoke with great humility. He knew what he was talking about and spoke in easy and uncomplicated terms.

There is no doubt his faith was severely tested but somehow, in the midst of all the pain and suffering he endured, he could sense God's hand reaching out to him to pick him up, and he was incapable of not being drawn to it.

Gerald O'Mahoney was without doubt a wonderfully engaging and accessible person. He allowed God to shine through him but the essence of his personality and character was ever present. You simultaneously saw both God and him, conjoined and yet distinctly separate.

I would imagine had I met Jesus I would have seen something similar.

My hope is that all members of OSJ (UK) have this quality.

On reflection, I owe a great deal to not just him but to others in the Jesuit community, in particular to people like Billy Hewitt SJ, and Robert Murray SJ (who personally tutored me regarding writing prophetic poetry and correctly and unexpectedly prophesied I would be made bishop). Their mark on my life is indelible.

I was greatly saddened by the fact I was denied communion with them by the then Pope's isolationist anti-ecumenical encyclical. It was a moment of great personal tragedy and I was deeply hurt by this act, inflicted by another, but have to respect, as hard as it is, the 'club rules'. Such is the effect of 'religion' taking precedence over 'faith' when it comes to the communion of the saints.

My hope is that the Christian community will prevail in spite of the best efforts of the denominationally based churches.

So in summary, what can I say?

Love God and your neighbour.

Follow your conscience and do not compromise your faith.

Be true to what you honestly believe

Be faithful to God first in all things, your family secondly, and thirdly your church.

Remember only God can save you so trust Him in all things first.

Our faith is not complicated even if others would make it so.

+Ian OSJ (UK)

Ten Lepers and a Samaritan's Faith Luke 17:11-19 "It's nice to be thanked"

Audrey, my Stepmother for ten very happy years, was 71 when she died. As it did with her Mother and Father, cancer finally caught up with her. For ten years Audrey had been to me the sister I had never had - and she felt similarly about me as a brother.

But this was it - I was at her bedside in a hospice - we both knew what was to happen and we were praying together.

"Thank you for everything" Audrey said to me quite out of the blue.....

"I should be thanking you" I said. To which she replied, "It's nice to be thanked".

That comment is something that I have never forgotten and has given much food for thought ever since, as to what exactly was meant by this lovely woman.

The new testament passage that we have read this morning appears at first glance to be a straightforward account of Jesus healing poorly people. It does seem more than reasonable to draw the conclusion that it's all about healing. This particular miracle of Jesus however, is not like most of the miracles described in the Bible.

Looking closer, it's the reaction of others to His miracle is that is highlighted by Jesus. Not what took place - but how it was received and dealt with by those healed.

The miracle is less important than what happens next. Jesus heals as he continues his journey to meet his fate in Jerusalem.

At this stage of his journey Jesus is passing between Samaria and Galilee.

Moving east to west, his journey of destiny continues. Jesus not only meets lepers on this journey, he also meets a Samaritan.

The lepers of old, as we know, were rejected by society - treat as outcasts.

Required to live outside the city in leper camps (Num 5:2-3) they were to cry out and warn others to keep away from them, as they walked the streets (Lev 13:45-46). Samaritans suffered an almost similar fate as they were not accepted as fully Jewish, by Jewish people. Luke here, records a most unusual encounter between people who had been divided for centuries. The Jews and Samaritans had no dealings with one another - and were openly hostile whenever their paths crossed.

In this gospel story we witness a rare exception - nine Jewish and one Samaritan leper - walking together. Sometimes difficult circumstances force us to drop our barriers and to forget our personal prejudices.

When this group of lepers come across Jesus, they cry out to Jesus, not for Him to avoid or heal them - but grant them His mercy. The lepers realised that merciful acts made up a major part of Jesus' ministry.

They call out to Jesus as "Master" (Luke's way of saying that Jesus has authority). Luke uses it in his text whereas Matthew and Mark use "Teacher" or "Rabbi" (Lk 5:5; 8:24, 45; 9:33).

Will Jesus' show mercy and do something, bearing in mind all the abuse and rejection that he is having to cope with?

Jesus *as always*, has an answer, and it comes swiftly.

Jesus tells the men to go to the priests to show that they have been healed, it is clear that Jesus has already done the healing. (Lev 13:1-8; 14:1-11; Mk 1:44; Lk 5:14).

Jesus mentions going to the *priests*, using the plural, as there are so many of them. The priests will be busy receiving testimonies about Jesus' work! This request from Jesus calls for **faith**, since the men must turn and go to the priests without having experienced the healing first.

As they leave, they are cleansed. Jesus does not touch them as he did the leper in Luke c5 *Here, Jesus heals from a distance (7:1-10, 22).*

Normal life whatever "normal" is, has been given back to the lepers by the mercy of their Master, Jesus.

*What is surprising is that ten men's lives have been turned around, following a request for mercy, yet **only one** of them - and a **Samaritan at that** - returns to thank Jesus for healing him. Jesus goes on to compliment the Samaritan by saying v.19*

"Rise and Go; your faith has made you well".

So, what can we learn from this story then?

Certainly that God works through Jesus (v. 15).

Getting closer and closer to God is a matter of trusting him, of having **faith**.

Hebrew's 11

The God who seems far away *can* be really near.

As the outsider, the Samaritan, is the most sensitive to Jesus.

Those who respond to God may not be the ones we expect to.

God's blessing can be appreciated, taken for granted or ignored.

God's grace and mercy deserves a "Thank you".

It is this last point that Jesus picks up on - He asks,

"Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?"

Only the foreigner, the Samaritan, perhaps the one least likely to - has returned to Jesus to give thanks and Jesus praises the Samaritan's initiative. Jesus had instructed the men to go to the priests. All of them turned to do so - apparently. But only one took the trouble to thank Jesus first. The Samaritan - on the face of it the "lowest of the low" - was the only one to say "thank you".

God's graciousness and mercy is too often ignored and unappreciated. In addition, often those who have blessed others, in whatever way, forget to take time to thank God *for being used by Him*. There is one more lesson to be learnt from this exchange between Jesus and the Samaritan. God's grace, even though it is offered to all of God's people, *does not mean that all gain salvation*.

God blesses all of humanity in a general way, but only the responsive who appreciate what he has done through Jesus receives his full blessing and acceptance. Among the ten former lepers, only the Samaritan hears the comforting words "Your faith has made you well." His gratitude has revealed his faith in God. Jesus commends him for his response and assures him that the "Thank You" is appreciated.

Quite often perhaps, we ourselves, our families and friends are all underappreciated, taken advantage of or just totally ignored - not that it should bother *us*, but it should bother those that are doing the ignoring.

Are we perhaps, sometimes guilty of that too?

Whether it relates to our personal relationship with God, our families and friends or just people in general:

How often **should** a "Thank you" be said - but isn't?

How often is a "Thank You" **deserved** - but not received or delivered?

How often is a "Thank You" said **insincerely**?

How often is a "Thank You" **deliberately** not said because the "deed" was **taken for granted**.

How often is a "Thank you" not said - out of **envy**?

Some people deliberately adopt a policy of not saying "thank you" or "sorry" for that matter, in order to keep control/maintain "the upper hand" over others.

To some, remaining aloof, not too close and appreciative, is vital in order not to lose ground in the battle for supremacy.

Nowadays, even the word "please" seldom seems to accompany a request or favour.

How many times is a prayer offered to God and when it's answered a "Thank You" is often overlooked?

Young children don't say thank you because they perhaps have not been taught yet...but what's an adult's excuse?

Perhaps in lots of little ways *we know* how Jesus feels?

Back to the Samaritan then. He approached Jesus with respect and reverence and Thanked Him for being healing.

Should mercy and blessings *shown* or *given* by God, or anyone else for that matter, not be recognised and acknowledged with a "thank you", and bad manners are revealed and relationships can begin to suffer.

How often do we consider others have been ungrateful to us? How often have we been ungrateful to others? How do we feel? How do they feel?

Ingratitude is seldom "forgetfulness" - it is, in truth, wilfulness - and a very poor return for kindness and blessings received in whatever form. Far too easily, this leads to a lack of charity and in some cases, a growing intolerance and dislike of each other. Discontent, dissatisfaction, disappointment, pride and presumption all develop over time - resulting in a *lack* of understanding- *and ultimately - a lack of **Unity**.*

How does our Lord Jesus feel if we are ungrateful towards Him....very sad I suspect. But merciful and forgiving, as always.

To say "thank you" and to be thanked, leads to a better understanding of each other and closer relationships. The result:

Unity- union, in The Body of Christ. Unity- being in union, in harmony with our neighbour - whether Christian or not.

Unity does *not* mean being the same. Unity is a oneness based on the respect of each person as an individual by the other, accepting their right to think and respond differently to different situations, but always protecting, strengthening and encouraging the relationship. Just like Jesus does.

Fr. David Startup, OSJ (UK)

Intercessions:

Dear Lord we ask that you continue to help us to know you even better, to bless, worship, and praise you for all your works and for all that comes out of them, particularly your almighty power, wisdom, kindness, justice, mercy, truth and your unending love for all mankind. Help us to practice self - control in the way we live - what we think, say, and do—so that your name will never be spoken irreverently because of us but always honoured and admired.

Manage and direct us by your Word and Spirit in such a way that we become more and more knowledgeable...keep your church strong Lord, with our help, in spreading the good news. Overpower the work of the evil one and every force which revolts against you and especially all those who try to conspire against your Word and your very being. Do this until your kingdom here on Earth is so complete and perfect Lord, that in it you are everything to everyone.

Help us and all people to reject our own wills and to obey your will without doubt and disbelief. Your will alone, is more than sufficient. Please help us all to carry out the work we are called to do as willingly and as faithfully as the angels in heaven.

Lord in your mercy, *Hear our Prayer*

We ask that you make us comfortable with what we have instead of striving for

more of what we want rather than need. Help us realise that you are the only source of everything good, and that neither our work and worry nor your gifts can do us any good without your blessing. Help us give up our trust in those you know to be untrustworthy and to place our trust in you Lord.

We realise Father God that Jesus suffered for our sakes, bearing our sins to make us acceptable to You. How then can we respond to such love? How will we respond to you Lord Jesus – our Saviour? We are still sinners Lord and ask that you will continue in your goodness to forgive any of the sin we do, or the evil thoughts that constantly cling to us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one . . . on our own, we can be easily swayed, influenced and mislead. Our sworn enemies—the evil in the world, and indeed our own selves can make a relentless attack on our senses. We pray for your strength and wisdom so that we are not led into temptation.

Lord in your mercy, *Hear our Prayer*

Forgive us Lord, and as you forgive us, help us to forgive our neighbours and be more Jesus - like...We find it particularly difficult to forgive those who deliberately and without cause take the lives of others. We yearn for peace, hope, and love for each other. With the strength of your Holy Spirit, help us to be the champions in this spiritual struggle, firmly resisting our enemies until the final victory is completely won - with you leading the way.

Lord in your mercy, *Hear our Prayer*

Lord we now pray for the sick.....and as always ask that you refresh them, give them your joy and peace and return them to good health as you will.

We remember at this time.....

Please give those who look after them energy, comfort and a continuing passion to care.

We pray for all those who have died, that they may rest in peace.
especially.....

Please comfort all those bereaved and grant them courage to look forward to holding very fond memories of their departed.

Lord we implore you to give wisdom and understanding to all mankind, so that we can work together to restore your beautiful creation and prevent unintended consequences from misusing and desecrating *your* earth on which we live. Amen.

Merciful Father, *Accept these prayers for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ*
.Amen.

Fr. David Startup, OSJ (UK)

It makes you think....

Sir Billy Connolly, the Scottish comedian afflicted with Parkinson's Disease since 2013 and now aged 79, admitted that he often thinks about death death and sees it as 'a necessary part of life's journey'.

He explained: "I think about death a lot, not in an excessive amount, but every day. I've seen people die and it's OK. It's not painful. You just go away and it's gone. You exhale. It's nothing to be frightened of. It's just the next step.

"It's better to be bright and optimistic and have a laugh. You pass this way but once.

"I sound like an end-of-the-pier preacher, but be thoughtful and kind and it'll come back to you. There's only one love. That's all there is."

OSJ (UK): Website Visitor Information 2021:

Total page hits from 1st January 2021 to 27th December 2021 are as follows:

January	17,267	average - 557 per day
February	17,314	average - 558 per day
March	30,217	average - 975 per day
April	45,111	average - 1,455 per day
May	56,415	average - 1,820 per day
June	44,393	average - 1,478 per day
July	47,566	average - 1,534 per day
August	54,160	average - 1,747 per day
September	66,984	average - 2,166 per day
October	78,366	average - 2,611 per day
November	68,226	average - 2,274 per day
December (to 27 th)	50,932	average - 1,886 per day

Total visitor hits since 03/09/2013 from 242 countries recorded worldwide

Counter 1: 4,481,256 visitors Counter 2: 5,175,605 visitors

(We run two counters for comparison purposes as they record hits differently.

We publish the lower figures as a matter of course on a regular basis but show the higher figures on this occasion to show that there are statistical discrepancies.)

Emergency Measures, OSJ (UK):

It has been decided that given the protracted situation we find ourselves in currently that two new temporary measures have been implemented for all members of OSJ (UK), whether in the Ministry Team or the Ministry Support Team.

Any member of OSJ (UK) may self-administer communion using the form suggested, and that includes to their families and all who are in need if they cannot receive communion from a priest or Eucharistic Minister through unavailability.

The same applies to the giving of last rites (viaticum).

Suggested forms of approved service are available (with instructions) to download from our website downloads page:

1. Self-administered Communion
2. Last Rites (Emergency Measures)

Also to be noted, regular services at St Leonard's have been temporarily suspended until further notice.

This is particularly regretted.

+Ian, Executive Bishop, OSJ (UK)



**St Leonard's Chapel,
Hazlewood Castle,
Yorkshire,
LS24 9NJ**



OSJ (UK) Services, 2022.

Unless otherwise stated:

Services usually take place on the FIRST and THIRD Sundays of each month at 6.00 p.m.

Services take the form of a short and very gentle communion service, lasting 20-30 minutes.

Covid-19 precautions: **St Leonard's will remain closed until restrictions are fully lifted.**

2nd January, 2022	16th January, 2022
6th February, 2022	20th February, 2022
6th March, 2022	20th March, 2022
3rd April, 2022	17th April, 2022
1st May, 2022	15th May, 2022
5th June, 2022	19th June, 2022
3rd July, 2022	17th July, 2022
7th August, 2022	21st August, 2022
4th September, 2022	18th September, 2022
2nd October, 2022	16th October, 2022
6th November, 2022	20th November, 2022
4th December, 2022	18th December, 2022

We use a non-alcoholic communion wine so children may take part.

There is no requirement to be baptised or confirmed, only to treat with due respect.

All are very welcome and all may receive regardless of tradition or denominational background.

Additional Services:

Remembrance Sunday: 7th November 10.35 a.m.

Midnight Mass: 24th December 11.20 p.m.