

	<p style="text-align: center;">The Order of St James (UK) Newsletter</p> <p style="text-align: center;">June 2022</p> <p style="text-align: center;">www.orderofstjames.info</p>	
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For those who worship at home:

+David OSJ (Wales)

‘God has made us one in Christ.

He has set His seal upon us and, as a pledge of what is to come, has given the Spirit to dwell in our hearts.’ Alleluia.

HYMN -To be read or sung

Alleluia sing to Jesus, His the sceptre, His the throne,
 alleluia, His the triumph, His the victory alone,
 hark the songs of peaceful Sion thunder like a mighty flood;
 Jesus out of every nation, has redeemed us by His blood.

Alleluia, not as orphans are we left in sorrow now;
 alleluia He is near us, faith believes not questions how;
 though the cloud from sight received Him when the forty days were o’er,
 shall our hearts forget His promise, “I am with you evermore”.

Alleluia, bread of angels, Thou on earth our food, our stay;
alleluia, here the sinful flee to Thee from day to day;
intercessor, friend of sinners, earth's redeemer, plead for me;
where the songs of all the sinless sweep across the crystal sea.

Alleluia, King eternal, Thee the Lord of lords we own;
alleluia , born of Mary, earth Thy footstool, heaven Thy throne,
Thou within the veil hast entered, robed in flesh, our great High Priest;
Thou on earth both priest and victim in the Eucharistic feast.

William Chatterton Dix 1837 – 1898

NEW TESTAMENT: Reading - Paul and Silas in prison.

One day, as we were going to the place of prayer, we met a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners a great deal of money by fortune-telling. While she followed Paul and us, she would cry out, "These men are slaves of the Most High God who proclaims to you a way of salvation". She kept doing this for many days.

But Paul very much annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I order you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her". And it came out that very hour. But when her owners saw that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the authorities.

When they had brought them before the magistrates they said, "These men are disturbing our city; they are Jews and are advocating customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to adopt and observe". The crowd joined in attacking them and the magistrates had them stripped of their clothing and ordered them to be beaten with rods. After they had given them a severe flogging, they threw them into prison and ordered the jailer to keep them securely.

Following these instructions he put them in the innermost cell and fastened their feet in the stocks. About midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God and the prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was an earthquake so violent that the foundations of the prison were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened.

When the jailer woke up and saw the prison doors were wide open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, since he supposed that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted in a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself for we are all here".

The jailer called for lights, and rushing in he fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them outside and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, you and your household". They spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.

At the same hour of the night he took them and washed their wounds; and then he and his entire family were baptised without delay.

He brought them up into the house and set food before them and he and his entire household rejoiced that he had become a believer in God.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

HOLY GOSPEL: Jesus Prays for His disciples. St John 17 verses 20 to end.

Glory to you O Lord

“I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you Father are in me, and I am in you, may they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

The glory that you have given me, I have given them so that they may be one, as we are one. I in them and you in me that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

Father, I desire that those also that you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory which you have given me because you have loved me before the foundation of the world.

Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me. I made your name known to them and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.

This is the Gospel of the Lord

Praise to you O Christ.

ADDRESS

In the Name of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Amen

Extreme events like the one in our first reading, often make people think about their eternal destiny. A new birth can prompt a person to wonder if there is a Creator. A severe illness can prompt a person to ask whether there is a Saviour.

In Philippi, a jailer survived a dramatic earthquake but thought that his life was over. He assumed that his important prisoners had escaped and that his execution was inevitable. But what drew him to faith was not extreme at all. It was the obvious integrity of Paul and Silas. They chose not to flee and in spite of the gross injustice they had suffered, to await justice to be seen to be done.

You and I in our different lives need to demonstrate the same truth. Integrity is noticeable to our families and our neighbours and through integrity, people of Christian faith are distinctive, they stand out.

We can choose to do this by showing dignity to outsiders, by taking responsibility for each other, recognising and responding to needs around us.

These things are observed. Out of the storage vessels, the jailer took water to bathe the disciples' wounds.

Out of the same vessels came water to baptise the jailer's family. These simple acts of love were the response to the actions of Paul and Silas.

No drama here, just simple actions that led to transformation. The Gospel reading is a unique insight into the personal prayer of Jesus. He prays that those who believe in Him, will be united as one family.

He prays for a unity that will mirror the Trinity of God, the complete equality of care and attention between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We sometimes struggle to understand this mystical relationship. We often think in terms of hierarchy with the Father as the head, with the Son doing as He is told, and the Holy Spirit obeying them both.

But here in Jesus' prayer He says that all three are One, in perfect unity with each other.

This unity of the Holy Trinity of God breaks down the barriers that we might construct. Intimacy of relationship and mutual care gives us the example of how to live with one another in a mirror image of the One God we worship.

Just as the jailer of Paul and Silas was a separate and different person, so with the example of the disciples, he brought his own care to cleanse them and to accept the baptism of Jesus Christ. So we with all of our differences, come together in the unity of our distinctive actions of love and care for each other as we worship the one true God.

Amen

PRAYERS

Heavenly Father, who through your great love, raised your Son into new life, help us to know that we are not alone, to know that we live in you and you in us, to know that the ascended Lord is with us always, and that your Spirit comes to guide and strengthen us. Lord as we come before you today, grant us a glimpse of your glory.

Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

Faithful God, as we come before you, help us to know the power of the Holy Spirit within each of us.

We pray renew our vision of your care for us, restore our faith and refresh your church. Lord we pray that the whole church will wait upon you to hear your words for us and to strengthen our unity with one another.

Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

Lord we earnestly pray for the leaders of the nations, that in our country and across the world they will lead with integrity and justice. We pray that they will know that their gifts and power are God given.

We pray for unity and peace in the world as in the kingdom of God.

Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

Lord in our homes we pray that we will listen to your word, and you will make us sensitive to each other. As you give us heavenly gifts, may we share them with one another. Lord teach us to be generous givers.

Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

Lord we pray that your presence will transform our lives. We pray that those who are dis-spirited will be awakened to the Holy Spirit always with them to comfort and restore them. We bring before you all those who are down at heart, those who are distressed, those who are weak and discouraged, We pray for those we know who are struggling at this time.

Lord in your mercy, Hear our prayer.

Lord we thank you that when we face death we have the hope of everlasting life in your presence.

We pray that in this life you will cleanse and restore us and we pray for all who have passed through death and those who now rejoice in the truth and peace of eternal life.

Merciful Father, accept these prayers for the sake of your Son our Saviour Jesus Christ.

THE LORDS PRAYER then follows

THE BLESSING.

May we all rejoice in the Lord, give thanks to His Holy Name, for He is with us this week and for all our days, and the Blessing of God, Father Son + and Holy Spirit touch your hearts and minds now and always. Amen

Prayers and Meditations:

+David OSJ (Wales)

A MOTHER'S THREADS.

One day, I received a phone call from my sister, that my dear late mother was exhibiting a loss of communication skills. It seemed this behaviour was the onset of Alzheimer's.

I felt it was vital we secured a power of attorney for Mum simply because many within the legal profession and especially the Courts system would seek to secure her assets in other words 'asset strip her'. This is something I had witnessed so many times over so many years.

It was, in part, further evidence that dementia has a communal effect. The ripples circle outwards and wash over many of us. The threads that bind us together get tangled and twisted, sometimes they become broken or at least frayed to a breaking point.

Sometimes we say and do things, even to those whom we love, that have nothing to do with them.

But the threads have us so tangled up that we don't know where the pain is coming from. All we know is that we hurt and wish it would stop.

And every question feels like an accusation, every comment like a threat. It isn't logical; it isn't rational; it isn't even right; but unless we are some kind of alien, we rarely respond purely to logic. Those threads that bind us to others, our family and friends and members of the body of Christ, get us so tangled up we don't always think straight.

You know that to ignore our mother on Mothering Sunday morning is like committing something akin to blasphemy in the minds of many people. You will have your ear bent by passionate souls on that score.

Mothers are certainly due all the honour we can give them. I know I always wished to honour my mother; I honour my wife as the mother of children. And there are so many mothers who occupy pews who deserve a little thank you, a little symbol that we know how important they are to us and to the community as a whole.

What's wrong with giving a little honour?

At the same time, I know that an emphasis on saintly mothers would grieve those who suffered with a mother who didn't epitomise the kind of love that Hallmark and Clinton sells to us on their cards. I know that calling motherhood the desire of God for every woman would wound those who have chosen to be childless or who suffer from infertility, or who lost their children in some heart-rending tragedy.

And because within our community there are some from all those categories, a Mother's Day celebration in worship is a tricky proposition. The threads that bind us together make us want to be sensitive to those to whom we are bound.

It's hard to navigate among all these competing themes, hard to bring a word of hope in every situation. But there it is. And the more you wrestle with it, the more the only sensible response is the Monty Python Holy Grail response: "Run Away!" Cut loose those binding threads, shake off those relationships.

"I am a rock, I am an island," sang Simon and Garfunkel many years ago. Except . . . I don't want to live as an island. And rocks are just too . . . hard.

I don't want to cut the threads that tangle me into the lives of those I love. If anything, I want them to be stronger, tighter, more binding. I know it doesn't make sense; it is potentially too painful. But oh, how I want those threads to stay connected.

The threads from my mother that were growing so thin they were almost transparent— how I wish they were strong and vibrantly coloured with her love and her teaching and her reproof and her forgiveness.

The threads from my children that are stretching longer and farther with each passing day it seems, how I wish they were shorter and younger and so full of the life we used to share.

The threads that bind me to a congregation and are strained to the breaking point, how I wish they were like it was before so many mistakes, so many decisions, so many choices were made putting us in different places. How I wish we could hold on to what was.

Like the members of a little church on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, Joppa lost one of the pillars of the church; no, of the whole community. And they decided to grab a desperate hope. You know their story.

The threads that bound Tabitha to the community were many and they were strong.

And when the illness and death came to sever those threads, the community was bereft. Their hearts were broken, so they reached out to one who might be able to retie those threads, to reweave the tear in the tapestry of their community. They sent runners to Peter the apostle, who had just performed a miracle. And they thought maybe . . . possibly . . . But you notice they didn't ask for anything in particular—just that he come, and quickly. It wasn't like that father who hoped Jesus could get there before his little girl died. No, Tabitha was dead.

They washed her and laid her out in the upper room. They just wanted Peter to come.

They washed the body but didn't prepare it for burial. They didn't anoint it, didn't wrap it.

Maybe they did hope, a wild desperate hope. Maybe they hoped for something they couldn't even bring themselves to speak out loud, or the sheer ridiculousness of it would ring in their ears and cause them to lose heart. Just come quickly, they asked. And, well, just come.

He did. Drawn by their threads, Peter came, quickly. And they fell all over themselves trying to tie him to her. She was a servant, they said, a devoted servant, lived in two communities, didn't just care for us in the church, but for folks in the wider community.

They called her Dorcas, 'cause that means "gazelle" in Greek, just like Tabitha does in Aramaic. They called her gazelle, the folks out there, the ones she clothed. "Like this," they pointed to the clothes that they wore, proudly pointing out the straightness of the stitch and the line of the seam and the perfection of the fit.

They did a twirl like they were on a Paris catwalk. Peter smiled at their love for their sister and friend.

But then they stopped twirling as they caught sight of the body lying on the table in the middle of the room. How dare they smile; how dare they take pleasure in anything, even the work of her hands, in a moment like this. Peter felt the mood change, and he sighed, then shooed them out of the room and got to work—on his knees.

He prayed. What did he pray for? Who knows?

He prayed for the threads to be binding. He prayed for the sake of the community who loved her so much. He prayed for her lying there washed and cold and ready for what might be next. He prayed for the will of his Lord to be done. Then he stood up and remembered another room with a body laid out. He was there with Jesus that day, saw him reach out his hand to the dead girl and whisper, “talitha coum – little girl rise.”

So, Peter reached out his hand and said, “Tabitha rise.” And her eyes opened and locked with his, and the smile on his ruddy fisherman’s face caused her to sit up at once.

He opened the door to their joy and disbelief and thought to himself with a wry smile, “Now where have I felt that before?” Nobody seemed to notice when he left. He just passed by them, hugging and crying and laughing; and he smiled when he heard Tabitha say, “That seam is coming undone; where is my needle?”

And he walked down to the seaside and knocked on the door of a man he hadn’t seen since they were boys. He never would have made this re-connection before, against the law, you know, because of the business that took place in this house.

But he shrugged and thought, “Things are changing everywhere,” and he made himself at home with Simon the Tanner. And somewhere a face familiar to Peter lit up with a massive smile and then thought, “He has no idea. No earthly idea. Yet.”

Sometimes miracles happen, and those we thought gone are returned to us.

More often, the miracle is that the threads remain, but they grow and change and become something new, something holy. And we find we can continue on after all. I am who I am because of my mother a disease can't take that away, can't undo the threads of my being. And whatever the future holds, I will honour her for what she has stitched for me, stitched into me. We are the lives we touch and that touch us. We are the threads we wear.

Thanks be to God.

PRAYERS:

Heavenly Father, we lift up the victims of this senseless shooting and murder in Texas, and the families, friends, and loved ones left behind. Our hearts are truly broken, Lord, by these evil acts we see being committed seemingly every day.

How long, Oh Lord? How long will the evil be permitted to destroy the lives of the righteous and innocent? How long until we finally stand up and protect the weakest, most precious among us? How much longer must the evil heart of man be given such free reign? We cry out in anguish, Oh Lord!

Father, we continue also to lift up the brave and suffering people of Ukraine.

Again we see man's evil nature destroying that which is good and decent. End this pointless conflict, Oh Lord, we beg you.

Send this belligerent and brutal enemy scurrying back to their own territory and their own homes. Restore Ukraine to peace and prosperity.

Father, give comfort and peace to those who have suffered such terrible losses in that conflict, and spread your balm on their deepest wounds. Be with them as they seek to go on with their lives after losing so much, and may they have returned to them many times much more than that which they've so painfully lost. Amen

Heavenly Father, we lift up all the members of our Order of St James, all clergy, and faithful to St. Luke's Oratory, and ask your strength and guidance as they each seek to serve you in their own ministries, as you have seen fit to call them to serve.

Remove any obstacles in their way, physical, spiritual, emotional, governmental, whatever may be a hindrance in their service to you, we ask you to lift, push it aside, make it vanish as though it were never there.

Open our own hearts and minds to You that we may better serve our brothers and sisters in Christ, even before they come to know Christ, for what is the work of an evangelist except to share Christ with those who don't know him?

Give us each the right words to say, the right emotion to respond with, the right guidance to offer when we ourselves are asked to guide. And be with us always as we seek to better serve you despite our own shortcomings and failures.

Lastly Lord, thank you for enabling me to compose and type out the Sunday Services and Newsletters, and inspiring the words and prayers within them. Amen.

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Unity in the Love of God:

Fr. David Startup

The first thing that should be said I think, is that if there was Unity in the Love of God the world would be a much happier and peaceful place. The Lord has provided us with all the ingredients of Unity and all we have to do is mix all the ingredients that he has provided together, to bake the perfect cake of global unity.

Looking at this passage, to say that Jesus is the “middle man” is not a respectable” or “acceptable” thing to say - but perhaps the younger people of today’s fast moving and materialistic world might understand.

We know, Jesus appeared on earth as a human, as the Son of God.

A follower of Jesus - becomes sanctified, set apart for sacred use cleansed and made holy, through believing and obeying the word of God. We have already accepted forgiveness through the sacrificial death of Jesus. But daily application of God's word has a purifying effect on our minds and hearts. Scripture points out sin, motivates us to confess renews our relationship with Jesus and guides us back to the right path.

Jesus did not ask God to take believers out of the world but instead to use them in the world. Because Jesus sends us into the world, we should not try to escape from the world, nor should we avoid all relationships with non Christians. We must remember that “God is with us” When presented with Conflict or Confrontation the Christian must neither capitulate, condescend nor compromise – but in the confidence of Christ find common ground.

We are called to be salt and light and we are to do the work that God sent us to do.

Well, that’s all well and good BUT we may say to ourselves that we perhaps can't do it, we're not capable or, we haven't the confidence. Perhaps we are afraid of what others may think – being bold and open will make others think. God will do the rest. God through Jesus, has given us all the ingredients, it's whether we mix and use them or not that is the challenge. We must also remember that we were commanded to spread the Good News – it was n’t just a suggestion.

The gifts of the Holy Spirit are nowhere more relevant and meaningful in our lives than in the area of witness to others. The Holy Spirit not only gives us the power to speak but through his gifts of wisdom and discernment he shows us when and how to speak, in any particular situation. We all live in the shadow of the Great Commission to go and make disciples in all nations, but we are not left to do this ourselves. Jesus promised his first disciples that he would always be with them and he is always with us, and always will be, giving us power and guidance through the Spirit - whom he has sent to dwell in each and everyone of us, enabling us each and every day in our witness for him.

We are all in this together. Our whole life is the body of Christ and is an opportunity. If we will open ourselves to the possibilities of the Holy Spirit, we will be surprised at how many opportunities we will be given to share what our faith in Jesus means to us.

Witness means so many things. Sometimes it will mean making a clear statement about what we believe and why we believe it. Other times it will mean that we are the outlet for God in a situation - it is not a witness to ourselves but to the living power of the Lord Jesus

Jesus prayed for all who would follow him, including you me and others we know. He prayed for unity, protection from the evil one, and sanctity. Knowing that Jesus prayed for us should give us confidence as we work for his Kingdom.

He wants us unified as a powerful witness to the reality of God's love.

Jesus prayed for unity among His believers based on the believer's unity with Him and His Father. Christians can only know unity amongst themselves if they are living in union with God. For example, each branch living in union with the vine is united with all other branches doing the same. This is where Fruits and Gifts of the Spirit come in.

More ingredients – Fruits of the Spirit. Patience, kindness, self control, lack of envy, not boastful, humility, honourable, slow to anger, protective, trusting, hoping and persevering. Forgiving. There are more - we know. Fruits of the Spirit – described in Ephesians- together they produce LOVE. God's Love.

Gifts of the Spirit – More ingredients – wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord - as described in the book of Isaiah. God has all these ingredients.....Jesus has them..... the Holy Spirit has them..... Jesus prays for each and every one of us to have them... WE have the freedom of choice whether or not to receive and use the Fruits. However, we are blessed with Gifts.....different and varied. Gifts combined with fruits then make the Body of Christ.

We must remember that there is only one Body of Christ. Jesus' prayer is a plea to his Father that we are blessed with unity in that we realise there is only one body and that we must not seek making a body of our own. (Then there would be at least two and it wouldn't work.) We must all work together, as One.

Clearly we will continue to pro - actively practise our Fruits and Gifts always accepting that parts of the body are more productive and better at things than other parts. When "push comes to shove" we are all valued by the Lord and all have a part to play in maintaining and enlarging God's Kingdom on earth.

It is the love of Jesus that compels us to be his witnesses. We are not driven by fear guilt or condemnation as all these have been removed for us through the forgiving power of the love of God. It's because we have come to know the reality of God's love in our hearts and lives we want as many other people as possible to share this same gift.

Each and every one of us, playing our part - we remain a substantial representation of the Body of Christ.

In closing then, the great desire of Jesus for his disciples was that they would become one - and of course, to this day it still is, and will be.

Let us then, with all these divinely inspired ingredients, mix and bake the heavenly cake of –

Faith, Hope and Unity in the Love of God and each other.

Amen.

-oOo-

To Love or not to Love: Matthew 22 36-40 NIV

Fr. David Startup

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest *commandment*. And the second is like it. 'Love your neighbour *as yourself*.'

In handing ourselves over to Jesus when we first acknowledged Him as Lord and Master, most of us perhaps had gone from being downcast, downtrodden, and lacking in something which we could not identify...to immediate relief and feeling an overwhelming sense of love, belonging and security. Perhaps that a slight exaggeration..we are all different and this relief and love comes swifter to some than others.

From that first realization of just how much God loves us, we try to do our best to have this great love ourselves, and find ways of meeting God's exacting and exemplary standards.

It's a slow learning process for us all, as we tear ourselves away from our previous lives, with its deeply engrained selfishness and self-centeredness.

We try to love and like in all the right and proper ways, as many people as we can – that should be everybody. That doesn't mean we have to always 'like' the people we love.

What it does mean is that we have to set aside our own prejudices so we can love *as God intends us to love*. God freely and equally loves us all, each and every one of us, in spite of who we are and the things that aren't so lovely about us. He sees not just the problems but the *potential*. This kind of 'love' is beyond the limiting constraints of 'like'.

The problem is we find it easier to like people who are more like us and we tend to be more forgiving towards them, and spend time in their company. This action ends up in creating 'exclusive' and often quite self-righteous groups – our minds becoming increasingly closed and judgemental towards those not like us.

This is not the kind of love God has in mind.

Equally there is no place for not 'liking' oneself – if it is good enough for God then it should be good enough for us. God judges us perfectly and sees what we cannot because of our limited and less than open minds. It is no wonder that Jesus warns us about judging others, and even judging what we think we are.)

We had begun a personal relationship, through Jesus, with God who loves each and every one of us, very very much.

However, the point needs to be made.....how many of us, as individuals, LOVE ourselves or even like ourselves?

BEARING IN MIND GOD MADE US AS WE ARE.....

This Gospel reading from Matthew, forms the very basis of a 'Jesus-like' life. As long as we obey those instructions we shall undoubtedly grow more and more like Jesus. And the more willing and faithful we are in our obedience, something based on our love for God rather than any sense of threat or disapproval, the nearer we get to where God wants us to be.

Just think what the world would be like now if everyone obeyed God. Love is all around and is all we need.

Let's look a little closer at the text:

It's interesting to see that the NIV and New King James' version says

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest *commandment*. And the second is like it. 'Love your neighbour *as yourself*.'

The Good News Bible however takes it a bit further:

'The second most important commandment is like it.

Love your neighbour *as you love yourself*.'

The Life Application Bible, is different still, the interpretation being:

Love your neighbour **as much as you love yourself.**

(as you yourself would be loved by God.)

We have to be careful that we and others do not get the wrong slant on this instruction, particularly where the non-believer is concerned. Anyone on the outside looking in would not waste time labelling us perhaps as totally caught up in one's self, perhaps too self-righteous or too self-seeking to help to others - being far too heavenly to be any "earthly good. How these Christians love one another" is a well know phrase used by non-believers "not in the know".

This imagery is unhealthy and is as *we know* not what is meant by love for oneself. Many an outsider has the wrong impression of what "loving oneself as a Christian, today, really means".

Well, in the same way as Jesus, *we are to love others sacrificially*. Jesus gave the parable of the Good Samaritan as an example of sacrifice for the sake of others, even for those who may care nothing at all for us, or even hate us, as the Jews did the Samaritans.

Sacrificial love then - is not based on a feeling, on emotion, but is an act of will, a lifestyle, a determination *to put the welfare of others, in every way, above our own*. But this type of love does not come naturally.

I think any one of us would say that it's certainly not in any way easy.

Because of our fallen nature, we are incapable of producing such a love. If we are to love as God loves, that love—that AGAPE—can only come from its true Source. This is the love which “has been poured out in our hearts through the Holy Spirit given to us by God” when we became His children (Romans 5:5).

Because that love is now in our hearts, we can obey Jesus who said, “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. As I have loved you, you should also love one another” (John 13:34).

This new commandment involves loving one another as He loved us sacrificially, and in HIS case even to the point of death. Only God can generate within us the kind of self-sacrificing love which is the proof that we are His children. “By this we have known the love of God, because He laid down His life for us. (1 John 3:16).

Because of God’s love toward us, we are able to love ourselves and one another.

Let’s not lose sight of the fact that the words of Jesus here were not suggestions, advice or just food for thought – they were commandments.

No options here, we were and are expected to put His words into practice.

How do we react when we read this passage

“Love your neighbour as much as you love yourself”

*The Christian's love of oneself means that, **more than anything else, save for loving God**, we are anxious and passionate for our personal salvation and to grow more like Jesus every day.*

To love our neighbour as ourselves means to do and wish him or her, in as much as we possibly can, those good things we wish for ourselves and the avoidance of any evil or wrongdoing. Apart from that God first loved us and we therefore should love ourselves. God made us in his own image.

But do we love ourselves as individuals? Do we practice the fruits of the Spirit to enable us to love ourselves. Put your own name in.

1 Corinthians 13.4 says:

Love is patient, Love is kind, Are we patient with - and kind to ourselves?

If we seem to be patient and kind with others and not with ourselves – is our patience and kindness genuine? Or done to satisfy the expectation of others?

Love does not boast it is not proud. Do we as individuals do things for the recognition of our peers, or for the glory of God and the support of other people less fortunate in any and every way to ourselves?

Love is not rude, it is not self seeking, is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

Do we as individuals get upset quick and bear grudges? Do we like to be in the spot light all the time?

It's very annoying to see your good idea come to fruition and then see someone else take the admiration for it.....but then again, as long as it gets done where's the problem?

Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. Sin is evil, we are all sinners, but do we **always** strive not to be? Do we **confess** and move on? Do we like to hear the truth about ourselves? How do we deal with it when we do?

Love always protects. How do we protect ourselves, say from temptation that is in our faces every day. The type of temptation does not need to be voiced, we all have our own challenges in this respect. Do we *trust* ourselves? Can we *trust* ourselves? Do we always demonstrate *hope* within ourselves?

These attitudes and behaviours *are just some* of the Fruits of the Spirit, that if used properly are part of Love and the building bricks of the Kingdom of God.

Yet it is said by many that we cannot love others unless we first love ourselves.

Clearly we must love ourselves, *we must practice the fruits of the Spirit on ourselves*, so that we know how to love others.

For those of us that do not love ourselves – where do we begin?

For those of us that already love ourselves, is it the right love?

For those of us who have that “right love”, do we pass that love on to others?

Our self- worth or love of oneself comes directly from the totally unconditional love of God who gave Jesus, His only Son, for us in order that we might live for Him, by living for others.

Our reading illustrates Selfless, Sacrificial, Unconditional Love

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We do it not necessarily because we want to, but because we can, because we should.

God has instructed us to do it.

Looked at in any other way it diminishes the riches of God's Grace and grieves the Holy Spirit. We do not need to spend an inordinately long time trying to love ourselves first and getting our self image right, before we do anything for Jesus. That's just an excuse.

Agape...It's not an emotional state, *it's a doing thing*. We cannot afford to waste time not practicing sacrificial love because we do not love ourselves. *We must forgive ourselves, understanding that God has forgiven us. How we feel emotionally about ourselves doesn't matter.* It is by *doing* acts of love, acts of Agape - helping others and doing what is right, that we gain and improve in the love that God wants us to have for ourselves.

We need God... and each other. Let us all, severally and together just continue putting "Agape" into practice. Amen.

A wedding incident:

+Ian

I recently celebrated a wedding with a lovely couple and their families which began with an unplanned and amusing incident.

It is my practice to begin marriage services with a prayer for absent family and friends, and during the saying of this prayer the groom's father will have been asked to step forward to the communion rail to light a candle as a reminder of the warmth and love which should not be forgotten but recalled and appreciated.

Usually it goes without any problems but on this occasion the prayer had come to an end, the fifth match had been struck and the candle remained unlit. There were a few giggles from family and friends as they witnessed the growing frustration on the groom's father's face.

The sixth match did the job and the groom's father turned towards family and friends with a smile on his face.

'Sorry folks. As a serving fireman, my job is to put out fires, not start them....'

There was a spontaneous round of applause along with some gentle and appreciative laughter, and it was well deserved too.

I also believe it helped make everyone relax and feel a little more at home in what for many might appear a formal and even daunting event in unfamiliar territory. Not everyone goes to church these days and knows what to expect.

Emergency Measures, OSJ (UK):

It has been decided that given the protracted situation regarding Covid 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 the cannot receive communion from a priest or Eucharistic Minister because they are unavailable or because they are self-isolating.

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

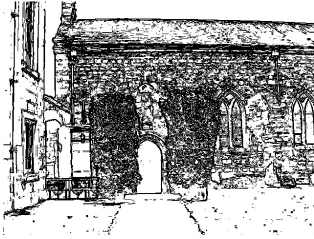
Suggested forms of approved service are available (with instructions) to download from our website downloads page:

1. Self-administered Communion

2. Last Rites (Emergency Measures)

Regular services at St Leonard's remain temporarily suspended until repair and redecoration is completed. It is envisaged that these will be completed during June and regular services can resume.

+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.

Regular services will restart when repainting and repairs have been completed but the chapel remains open for private prayer.

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.	TBC
Midnight Mass:	24th December 11.20 p.m.	TBC