

Weekly Message from Fr William for Twenty-Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time 2022

Dear People of St Mary's

I'm back and looking forward to celebrating Mass with you this Sunday.

Also this Sunday I invite you to our parish Service of Anointing at 3pm. All are welcome to join us for this service, and anyone who feels called to may come forward to receive the Sacrament of the Sick, sometimes called the Sacrament of Anointing, or the Anointing of the Sick. We used to say that a person needs to fulfil certain criteria before administering this sacrament to them: serious illness, in danger of death, etc. But since the Year of Mercy declared by Pope Francis in 2016, I for one see the church's role as making the grace of the sacraments as fully and as widely available as possible. And I'll never forget those beautiful words of Pope Paul VI in what is probably the church's best known papal encyclical *Humanae Vitae*. He wrote: 'While the Church hands on to her children the inviolable conditions laid down by God's law, she is also the herald of salvation, and through the sacraments she flings wide open the channels of grace through which man is made a new creature.' (*HV* 25). He wrote this of the Sacrament of Marriage. But they are words that can be said of all the sacraments of the Church.

Thank you for standing with me for the Eucharistic Prayer these last 12 months or so, as we offer together the sacrifice of the Mass. With this Sunday we return now to kneeling for the Eucharistic Prayer, or at least you do. I'll still be standing! This return to kneeling I explained in my last weekly message of the 25th September 2022 which you can still find on the website from the link at the top of the homepage. At the same time I encourage you to maintain that same awareness, even when kneeling, that this is not me alone offering the sacrifice of the Mass and you just watching, but all of us exercising our priesthood together, all of us offering together the sacrifice of the Mass.

As for the Liturgy of the Word, the question was asked in the Synod 2021-2023, 'How might I be better able to participate in Mass?' Four people in the parish recommended reading the readings before the Mass, maybe in the week leading up to Sunday. I agree. I try to do it every time. You can find the Sunday readings on the parish website from a link on the home page – 'Next Sunday's readings'. Yes, a good way to prepare for mass. But note that the website gets updated between Friday 9pm and Saturday morning, so you'd need to access it in the week leading up to Sunday, before Friday 9pm.

God bless you

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William". The script is cursive and somewhat stylized, with a large initial 'W'.