

## Sunday Message from Fr William for the Twenty-Eighth Sunday of the Year 2023

Dear People of St Mary's, here's giving you a break from reflections on the 'other world' to give you a round up of recent news.

Ten young parishioners are enrolled on the latest preparation course for the Sacrament of Confirmation, leading up to the celebration of this sacrament early in 2024. We began on Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> October. This fifteen session course is a broad and in depth catechesis on the core of our faith, starting with the person of Jesus, then going into all three Sacraments of Christian Initiation, including a revisit of Baptism, and with a big focus on the role of the Holy Spirit in the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Also underway is our latest preparation course for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, leading up to the celebration of this Sacrament from December onwards for these nine young parishioners enrolled on this course. A big thank you to our catechists for leading them to this sacrament.

The new school year is well underway, in fact coming up to half term next week. We celebrated mass in school as always to mark the beginning of the new school year. This is one of six school masses throughout the year – also one in each of the seasons: Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter, and one to mark the end of the school year, with a special blessing for leavers conferred on them by the whole school together.

Throughout this month of October we're praying each Sunday with the whole worldwide Church for the Spirit's guidance during these days of the Synod in Rome. What's happening in Rome is the culmination of a two year consultation that has reached out to every member of the Catholic Church on Earth and asked for their input. The focus has been not on what many might consider to be the burning issues of the day, but specifically on the starting issue of how we can become a fully consultative church going forward, how we ensure full inclusivity in future consultations, and the mechanisms we need to get in place to facilitate this kind of universal consultation. This is widely regarded as the most important moment in the Church's onward journey since the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s. You'll find several links on the website homepage relating to the Synod, including our own contribution as a parish. As a parish we also started looking last month at how we've started to evolve, as parish, in response to the aspirations expressed in our contribution. We didn't quite finish that in September, so we'll have one more Sunday on this in due course.

There's lots else going on in the parish as always. Thank you for all you do. And at the heart of it all our celebration of Mass together each Sunday, online and in church. I usually go away for a couple of weeks holiday in October or November, but won't be this year. Instead I've just got back from the inside of a week away to visit friends in Lancashire, Cumbria, Cheshire and Wirral. I hope you're liking the reflections on the 'other world' in these Sunday messages, starting from 2<sup>nd</sup> July. To be continued next Sunday.



Sunday 15 October 2023