Pastoral Letter

Of

Terence Patrick Drainey



Bishop of Middlesbrough

# To the Parishioners of Our Lady of Mount Grace, North End, Osmotherley

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose ….. What, then, shall we say in response to these things?  If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all — how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died — more than that, who was raised to life — is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?  Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* (Roman 8.28-39)

What confidence St Paul shows us he has in the Lord’s providential care for him and all who have been called by the Lord! And this is in the face of great adversity; persecution, natural disasters, betrayal, and execution by beheading. This is blessed hope founded on deep faith – God is on our side, who can be against us?

In September this year, together with the other bishops of England and Wales, I have been called to Rome to meet with Pope Francis. This happens every five years or so. One of the tasks caused by this visit is to compile a report on the state of the diocese. You can imagine that there are so many statistics involved. One, however, stands clearly out in my mind. Since I made my last report we have had three priests ordained for the diocese of Middlesbrough, but in the same period 32 of our priests have retired or died.

I wrote to you last year at this time concerning pastoral provision for the Chapel of Our Lady of Mount Grace, North End, Osmotherley and its canonical status vis-à-vis All Saints, Thirsk. During the course of the year Canon Twomey, due to ill health, has found it increasingly difficult to fulfil his pastoral care for Osmotherley North End Chapel and very kindly, Father Michael Keogh, from Sacred Heart Northallerton stepped into the breach.

In order to continue provision in Northallerton and Thirsk during the holiday period – both priests will supply for each other when either is on holiday – after this Sunday, 24th June, there will be no further Mass celebrated at the North End Chapel until 7th October, and thereafter only on the first Sunday of each month, at 11am until the end of the year when the situation will be reviewed.

As a result of this, the Blessed Sacrament will not be reserved at Osmotherley North End Chapel and will be removed on the 24th June until further notice. The Cathedral will continue to celebrate the 4 p.m. Mass at the Lady Chapel Osmotherley every Saturday. All are welcome. If any Pastoral provision is required during this period, then it can be covered during the week from either Thirsk or Northallerton.

I know that this letter will bring sadness to some, but surely we must open ourselves to that same blessed hope founded on deep faith in God’s providential love and care for us that we heard in the Letter to the Romans at the beginning of this Pastoral. “*For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

Yours in blessed hope,



Bishop of Middlesbrough

# To be read and made available at Our Lady of Mount Grace, North End, Osmotherley on 17th June 2018.