

Elements of the Mass

Bidding Prayers

The Bidding Prayers are also often known as the Intercessions or the Universal Prayer of the Church. They are the prayers when we pray as a church community for the needs of all people. Prayer is at the centre of Christian life and so the way the bidding prayers are prepared and delivered is very important. In most cases they follow a set pattern of praying for the universal church, local church, the world, the local community, the sick, and the faithful departed. They are properly introduced by the priest celebrating the Mass and then read by someone else. Traditionally this was done by the parish deacon, as one of the deacon's roles is to collect together the names of those in need of prayer. Very often the bidding prayers are now written and read by lay people in the church. This is an important ministry and perhaps something you feel called to do?

Saints and Heroes: 24th September Our Lady of Walsingham

Most participants at the National Pilgrimage to Walsingham used to find, among the afternoon events, the singing of the Walsingham Pilgrim Hymn profoundly enjoyable. It tells us again – albeit through *rosa mystica* tinted spectacles – the story of the great shrine, and (even in times of suppression) its continuing significance in England's devotional life. Singing about enslavement by the 'secular power', and the destruction of the image, is of course an act of modesty on the part of Walsingham itself. The devotional cost was profoundly damaging, but the cost in terms of human tragedy was massive as well. The canons and friars of Walsingham were not known for their good order or observance of their rule, and many tried to placate King Henry by acknowledging in writing his supremacy. The 1537 resistance – organised by a duo of lay clerks – resulted in the execution of eleven men – others would follow. Not long later in 1538 the shrine and abbey were suppressed, and the images taken, with those of other famous shrines, to London to be burnt by the Lord Privy Seal, the infamous Thomas Cromwell. Protestants there continue to be at the gates of Walsingham, though they remain but a footnote in the long list of aggressors that have stalked England's Nazareth.

19th September 2021

Sixteenth Sunday after Trinity

Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Receiving Jesus



In today's Gospel Jesus urges us to receive him 'as a little child.' At Christmas we rejoice to receive Jesus as newborn baby; babies make simple demands on us; a household with a new baby finds itself centred day and night on the baby's physical needs. Babies are dependent, a baby's first weeks are one of receive, receive, receive – especially from the mother. To accept a child into a house and home is an entirely different dynamic. A home with children in is a house in constant exploration and learning, each moment is punctuated with questions; 'Why? What's this? What's this called? Who's that? Children have a mind of their own 'I don't like that,' 'I don't want to,' 'Can't I stay here?' Adults in a house with children find themselves learning and looking at the world differently. Everyone in a home with children has to change, adapt and grow. To welcome Jesus 'as a child' means to be open to questions and a willingness to see everything in a new way.