

Saint Mary's Newsletter: August

Vicar: David Smithson 027 4213200 Fridays

07 8492761 Afterhours

Lay Minister: Charles Clark 021 02691764

Peoples Warden: Sally-Ann Riddell 022 107562

Vicars Warden: John Heaton 021 702871



SERVICES FOR AUGUST

Sunday 4th:

10am Holy Communion Service

Refreshments: Majella

Prayers: Majella

Sunday 11th:

10am Holy Communion Service

Refreshments: Trish

Prayers: Trish

Sunday 18th:

10am Holy Communion Service

Refreshments: Melanie

Prayers: Melanie

Sunday 25th:

10am Holy Communion Service

Refreshments: Karen

Prayers: Karen



Parish Giving

If you are not already doing so, please also consider giving to the parish via Automatic Payment. St Mary's has to pay for our vicar and all other costs of running a Parish, as well as giving a proportion to the Diocese. Please help us to be sustainable by giving via Automatic Payment. It is an easy way to give and is useful for the parish in running its budget. The Parish Bank Account is:

02 0410 0103053 00

Calf Fundraising Scheme:



Donate a calf (if you are a farmer), or townies can donate \$ which will cover the costs of purchasing a 4 day old bull old calf and rearing costs. It is an easy and low maintenance fundraiser that has the potential to raise over \$450 per calf sold. The better the calf, the higher the price we get for it. Forms and info are on the Welcome table

Blessings and Cursing's

In James 3:10, the apostle highlights the contradictory nature of the tongue. He says, "From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so" (ESV). James is presenting a case for why believers should only use their tongues to "bless our Lord and Father" rather than "curse people who are made in the likeness of God" (verse 9).

The tongue is difficult to tame, even for believers. James says, "For we all stumble in many ways. And if anyone does not stumble in what he says, he is a perfect man, able also to bridle his whole body" (James 3:1, ESV). We stumble or sin with our words because we are not perfect. Regardless of imperfection, we should strive to imitate Christ in thought, word, and deed: "Be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Ephesians 5:1–2, ESV).

James condemns the incongruity of using the same tongue for both blessing and cursing. In church or in prayer, we open our mouths in praise to God, but later we malign those who cross us—James says, "This should not be" (James 3:10). Many ideas in James find a correspondence in the book of Proverbs, including using the tongue for blessing and cursing: "Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits" (Proverbs 18:21, ESV). If we are not careful, we can do great damage with our words. David also had to deal with people who "take delight in lies. With their mouths they bless, but in their hearts they curse" (Psalm 62:4).

In the same context of blessing and cursing, James calls the tongue "a restless evil, full of deadly poison" (James 3:8, ESV). The tongue is evil and deadly when it is not being used as it should be. The tongue should only be used to "bless our Lord and Father" (verse 9). Instead, we use it to bless the Lord and "curse people who are made in the likeness of God" (ESV). How can this be? How can we bless, praise, and worship God one moment, and then turn around and speak ill of our brothers and sisters in Christ? This happens because we forget that people are made in the likeness of God. The image of God, then, provides the moral ground for proper use of the tongue.

Satan loves to create division and hear people cursing other people. We must not give him a foothold (Ephesians 4:27). Instead of allowing Satan to control our tongues, we should submit ourselves to the Lord and ensure that our speech will "always be gracious, seasoned with salt" (Colossians 4:6, ESV). Genuine believers are marked by gracious speech.

Matthew Henry's comment on James 3:10 is still pertinent 300 years after he wrote it: "True religion will not admit of contradictions: how many sins would be prevented, if men would always be consistent! Pious and edifying language is the genuine produce of a sanctified heart; and none who understand Christianity, expect to hear curses, lies, boastings, and reviling's from a true believer's mouth, any more than they look for the fruit of one tree from another" (*Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible*).



Richard Wurmbrand



Richard Wurmbrand had a comfortable life as a pastor in Communist Romania. He had a salary that supported his family and a congregation that loved and trusted him. But as he watched other Christians suffer for their faith while a tyrannical dictatorship destroyed everything around them, Richard was not at peace. Why, he wondered, had God spared him from persecution and trial? Desiring to answer Christ's call to take up his cross and follow him, Richard and his wife, Sabina, began to pray that God would give them a cross to bear. And on Feb. 29, 1948, their prayers were answered.

As Richard walked to church that winter morning in Bucharest, members of the secret police abducted him, taking away not only the comfortable life he had known but also his identity. "From now on," they told him, "you are Vasile Georgescu," labelling him with a generic Romanian name to conceal his true identity.

He disappeared without a trace, and Sabina had no information beyond the outrageous rumours she had heard: One said he had been taken to Russia, while another claimed he had died under interrogation. Though overwhelmed with worry from not knowing where Richard was or if he was even alive, she continued to minister to the spiritual and material needs of others and continued Richard's work.

Like Richard and Sabina, many Christian couples today bear their cross together as they work to advance the kingdom in restricted nations and hostile areas around the world. While they may not specifically pray for a cross to bear, they know their work comes with a price. Couples willingly take up their cross, understanding that *not* doing God's work is far more dangerous than *doing* his work, as Sabina once said.

After being ransomed out of Romania in 1965 and arriving in the West, Richard and Sabina discovered a new cross to bear, one they took up tirelessly: "The West sleeps and must be awakened to see the plight of captive nations," Richard wrote.

As members of Christ's body, we are all called to bear a cross together as we advance God's kingdom. Our crosses may come in the form of an unbelieving family member, a spouse uninterested in the Great Commission, a medical diagnosis or loss of employment. But whatever it is, the testimonies of our brothers and sisters in Christ encourage us as we bear our cross.