

THE ORATORY—dedicated to THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

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Registered as a Charity

Parish Weekly Newsletter

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March 14th 2010: THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT (LAETARE)



THE PRODIGAL SON

From a sermon by Cardinal Newman

We are ever sinning, we must ever be renewing our sorrow and our purpose of obedience, repeating our confessions and our prayers for pardon. No need to look back to the first beginnings of our repentance, should we be able to trace these, as something solitary and peculiar in our religious course; we are ever but beginning; the most perfect Christian is to himself but a beginner, a penitent prodigal, who has squandered God's gifts, and comes to Him to be tried over again, not as a son, but as a hired servant.

In this parable, then, we need not understand the description of the returning prodigal to imply that there is a state of disobedience and subsequent state of conversion definitely marked in the life of Christians generally. It describes the state of all Christians at all times, and is fulfilled more or less, according to the circumstances, in this case or that; fulfilled in one way or measure at the beginning of our Christian

course, and in another at the end. So I shall now consider it, viz., as describing the *nature* of all true repentance.

First, observe, the prodigal son said, 'I am no more worthy to be called Thy son, make me as One of thy hired servants.' We know that God's service is perfect freedom, not a servitude; but this is in the case of those who have long served Him; at first it is a kind of servitude, it is a task till our likings and tastes come to be in unison with those which God has sanctioned.

Now, I insist upon this, because the conscience of a repentant sinner is often uneasy at finding religion a task to him. He thinks he ought to rejoice in the Lord at once, and it is true he is often told to do so; he is often taught to begin by cultivating high affections. Perhaps he is even warned against offering to God what is termed a *formal service*. Now this is reversing the order of a Christian's life. The prodigal son judged better, when he begged to be made one of his father's servants—he knew his place. We *must begin* religion with what looks like a form. Our fault will be, not in beginning it as a form, but in continuing it as a form. For it is our duty to be ever striving and praying to enter into the real spirit of our services, and in proportion as we understand them and love them, they will cease to be a form and a task, and will be the real expression of our minds. Thus shall we gradually be changed in heart from servants into sons of Almighty God.

THE CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES BILL

As you will remember, last week we carried an important piece on this Bill which the Government is trying hard to pass before Parliament closes for the general Election. It is vital that we do all that we can to defeat it. John Smeaton, the highly experienced campaigner for life and Director of SPUC says that it is "*arguably the greatest advance in the culture of death since the passage of the abortion act in 1967.*" As is explained on the other side of this Newsletter, tomorrow, Monday, is a day on which we are called to pray and fast for this Bill to be defeated. Please do all you can to assist this act of communal prayer. E.g. Please try and spend some time ~~praying the Rosary and adoring the Blessed Sacrament between 2.30 and 4.30 on Monday in the Cloister Chapel.~~

Sunday March 14th: The Fourth Sunday of Lent (Rose)

- 8.30 a.m. *Low Mass*
- 9.30 a.m. *Latin Low Mass—1962 Missal*
- 10.30 a.m. *High Mass*
- 12.00 p.m. *(Families with young children)*
- 5.30 p.m. *Sung Congregational Mass*
- 7.30 p.m. *Vespers and Benediction*

Liturgical Calendar

Year 2 of the Lectionary at Weekday Mass and Psalter Week 4 in the Divine Office

Monday to Friday: Masses at 7.30 a.m., 12.45 p.m. and 5.45 p.m.

Rosary at 7.45 p.m. Benediction on Monday and Tuesday. Exposition on Saturday : 8.30—10.45 a.m.

Confessions are heard from 12.30 p.m. and from 5.30 p.m. until the end of Mass.

Stations of the Cross on Friday at 1.10 p.m. and 8 p.m.

<p>Monday 15th March: Monday of Lent Week 4. (Purple)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blessing with St Philip's relic at 8 p.m. 	<p>March 21st: The Fifth Sunday of Lent (Passiontide): (Purple)</p> <p>Mass & Service Times:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8.30 a.m. Low Mass 9.30 a.m. Latin Low Mass 1962 Missal 10.30 a.m. High Mass 12.00 p.m. (Families with young children) 5.30 p.m. Sung Congregational in English 7.30 p.m. Vespers and Benediction <p>Please pray for the sick: Mary Shafer, Douglas Ferrier, Geoff Jones, Kevan Bleach, Sarah Wallin, Tony Colqhoun, Pat Cartwright, Carolyn Knight, David Pritchard, Elizabeth Caswell, James Foyne, Michael McCann, Philip McCann and Tony Farmer. Of your charity please pray for those who have died recently: Mattie Drummond, John Lynch and Clare Crook; and of the souls of those whose anniversaries occur about now: Fr William Neville and Brother Aloysius Boland of this Oratory, Michael Brewer, Michael Brennan, Emmi Worrall, Margaret McKenna, George Bernard Dunn, Elsie Kraft, Pat and Jack Quigley, Catherine Poole, William McNamara and Ethel Rowbottom.</p> <p>Clare Crook's funeral is on Wednesday (17th) at 12.45 p.m. Reception of remains: 4.30 p.m. Tuesday</p>
<p>Tuesday 16th March: Tuesday of Lent Week 4. (Purple)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benediction at 8 p.m. 	<p>The following are requested to read at Mass next weekend, March 20th/21st, The Fifth Sunday of Lent:</p> <p>Saturday 5.45 p.m.: Anne Roebuck Sunday 8.30 a.m.: Peter Bateman 12.00 p.m.: Chris Sammons 5.30 p.m.: Simon Stacey</p>
<p>Wednesday 17th March: St Patrick, Bishop. Feast. (White)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmation Mass at 7 p.m. <p>St Patrick (c.385-c.461) A Briton, he was captured and sold into slavery in pagan Ireland. He escaped but realised that God was calling him to return and bring the Gospel to the Irish.</p>	
<p>Thursday 18th March: Thursday of Lent. Week 4. (Purple) Optional memoria St Cyril of Jerusalem, Bishop.</p> <p>St Cyril (c.315-386) He was appointed Bishop of Jerusalem and his episcopacy was marked with struggles to defend the Church against Arianism and also matters of jurisdiction. He was forced into exile on three occasions resulting in him being absent from his see for more than 35 years. When he finally returned, he devoted his time to reclaiming the City from corruption and disorder. He is renowned for his writings on Doctrine, particularly those on the Sacraments addressed to new converts.</p>	<p>Collections: <i>The Third Sunday of Lent : 7th March, 2010</i> Offertory: £1,119 Second: Church Heating: £847 Thank you</p>
<p>Friday 19th March: Solemnity of St Joseph, Husband of Our Lady. (White)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stations of the Cross at 1.10 p.m. Solemn High Mass at 8 p.m. <p>St Joseph is revered as the man chosen by Almighty God to be the foster-father of His Son and the husband worthy to protect Our Blessed Lady and her divine Son. He is described in Holy Scripture as "a Just Man". Blessed Pope Pius IX declared him patron of the universal Church.</p>	
<p>Saturday 20th March: Saturday of Lent Week 4. (Purple)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masses at 8 a.m. and 11 a.m. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament from 8.30 to 10.45 a.m. Benediction at 10.45 a.m. Confessions from 10.55 a.m. to 12 noon & from 5.30 p.m. First Mass of Sunday (The Fifth Sunday of Lent) at 5.45 p.m. 	

<p>TODAY</p> <p>THE SECOND COLLECTION THIS WEEKEND will be for the costs of Cardinal Newman's Beatification.</p> <p>THE PIETY STALL is open after all Sunday Masses (including after the Saturday 5.45 p.m. Mass). Gifts and cards for Confirmation and First Holy Communion are on sale and Easter cards including those being sold on behalf of Aid to the Church in Need. <i>There is a good selection of books for Lenten reading and meditation, and also a new CD of Cardinal Newman's Stations of the Cross read by Fr Guy with our own Oratory Choir singing Bach Chorales. Price £11.50.</i></p> <p>THIS WEEK</p> <p>PRAYER AND FAST DAY FOR THE DEFEAT OF THE CHILDREN SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES BILL: On Monday, we are asked to fast and pray for this very important and urgent petition. Therefore, this will be our intention at Adoration (without a preceding Mass) in the Cloister Chapel from 2.30 to 4.30 p.m. As mentioned in last week's Newsletter, the much publicised amendment to the Bill will <i>not</i> protect children in faith schools. If passed, the Bill will mean that children of primary school age will be taught explicit sex education and secondary schools will have to teach immoral aspects of sex education such as where to procure an abortion For more information on the Bill see: http://spuc-director.blogspot.com/2010/02government-amendment-on-sex-education.html</p> <p>STATIONS OF THE CROSS: As Friday is the Solemnity of St Joseph, there will be a High Mass at 8 p.m. instead of Stations of the Cross, which will still take place after the Lunch time Mass, approximately 1.10 p.m. (the Rosary will be at 7.45 p.m. as usual)</p>	<p>OUR LENTEN TALKS continue on Saturday at 11.30 a.m. with a talk given by Fr Gregory on the priesthood of the Oratorian Blessed Sebastian Valfré.</p> <p>BIRMINGHAM NEWMAN ASSOCIATION meets on Saturday from 2-3 pm at St Dunstons, Kingsfield Rd, Kings Heath. Fr Gregory will give a talk on "Newman's Lent Sermons". All are welcome.</p> <p>CONFIRMATION: His Lordship Bishop Pargeter will administer the Sacrament of Confirmation to our schoolchildren and some of our adults during Holy Mass on Wednesday, March 17th, the feast of St. Patrick, at 7 p.m.</p> <p>FORTHCOMING EVENTS</p> <p>THE SEVEN CHURCHES WALK will take place this year on Saturday, March 27th, beginning at 2 p.m. at St. Catherine's Church, Bristol Street.</p> <p>THE DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES will take place from Saturday 29th May to Friday /Saturday 4/5 June. There are three choices of travel: Train fares from £589, Coach fares from £394 and Air fares from £710. (There are reductions for children under 14 on train fares and under 10 for coach or air fares). Booking forms are available from the Oratory House; or for sick pilgrims, who will travel by air or Jumbulance, please apply to Miss Elizabeth McDonald, 210 Somerville Rd, Small Heath B10 9HB.</p> <p>NOTICES</p> <p>PAPAL VISIT During the recent Ad Limina Visit, the Holy Father announced his forthcoming trip to the UK, possibly sometime in September 2010. Sadly there is already opposition to this visit headed by the Secular Society of Great Britain who have an online petition which has already attracted over 20,000 signatures and yet a petition supporting the visit has very few signatures (to date). You are asked to visit the website and sign the supporting petition as we welcome the Holy Father to our country. Please pass on the word to your friends and email contacts.</p>
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YEAR FOR PRIESTS—a reflection by Pope Benedict XVI

The 150th anniversary of the death of Saint John Mary Vianney (1859) followed upon the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the apparitions of Lourdes (1858). In 1959 Blessed Pope John XXIII noted that "shortly before the Curé of Ars completed his long and admirable life, the Immaculate Virgin appeared in another part of France to an innocent and humble girl, and entrusted to her a message of prayer and penance which continues, even a century later, to yield immense spiritual fruits. The life of this holy priest whose centenary we are commemorating in a real way anticipated the great supernatural truths taught to the seer of Massabielle. He was greatly devoted to the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin; in 1836 he had dedicated his parish church to Our Lady Conceived without Sin and he greeted the dogmatic definition of this truth in 1854 with deep faith and great joy." The Curé would always remind his faithful that "after giving us all he could, Jesus Christ wishes in addition to bequeath us his most precious possession, his Blessed Mother".