

THE ORATORY—dedicated to THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

141 Hagley Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B16 8UE

Registered as a Charity

Parish Weekly Newsletter

Telephone: 0121 454 0496

Fac simile: 0121 455 8160

E-mail: parish@theoratory.org.uk

Web-site: www.theoratory.org.uk

Oratory Primary School: web.oratory.bham.sch.uk



This newsletter is available in large-print format. Ask at the Sacristy.

February 7th 2010: THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR



Fishers of Men

Today the Gospel tells of a miracle and a vocation. When Our Lord called Simon Peter to be His follower, He won His admiration by working a miracle. Simon was a fisherman. On the particular occasion we hear of today, he had had an unsuccessful night's fishing. Our Lord told him to put his faith in Him and throw out the nets once more, on the other side of the boat. Having done as He suggested, Simon was astonished to find that he had caught a huge number of fish. Our Lord told Simon that he would "become a fisher of men".

A Life Worth Living?

Assisted suicide has been intensively debated in the media since the Law Lords decided unanimously in favour of Ms Debbie Purdy in July last year. Ms Purdy suffers from primary progressive MS and foresees that her life will become not worth living. When it does, she wants her husband to assist her to commit suicide. But assisting suicide is a criminal offence, and Ms Purdy refuses to risk her husband's prosecution. By a complex legal argument, she persuaded the Law Lords that she has a right to know whether prosecution would follow. In fact Ms Purdy had every reason to think that it wouldn't. Her appeal, supported by the pressure group *Dignity in Dying* was about obtaining from the Crown Prosecution Service a new policy on assisted suicide, guaranteeing immunity from prosecution in cases like hers. Although it would be at odds with the law, Ms Purdy knew that the Director of Public Prosecutions (Keir

Starmer QC) was keen to operate such a policy. When the Law Lords granted her appeal, they conspired with Ms Purdy and *Dignity in Dying* to override the law, giving a green light to what they euphemistically called 'compassionate assistance'. The draft guidelines on prosecution subsequently issued by Mr Starmer have exactly this effect.

Just over a month later, Lord Phillips, one of the Law Lords who had heard Ms Purdy's appeal, went on the record to say that he has 'enormous sympathy' with anyone who prefers to 'end their life more swiftly and avoid [a prolonged] death as well as avoiding the pain and distress that might cause their relatives'. Reading their judgements in Ms Purdy's case, it's clear that Lord Phillips' four colleagues felt the same way. The Law Lords' evident approval of 'compassionate assistance' has led to their decision in Ms Purdy's case being challenged in the Supreme Court.

We await the outcome of this challenge; but given the ideological commitment to assisted suicide among the judicial elite, no one should hold his breath.

At the heart of the issue of assisted suicide is the idea of a life 'not worth living'. Of course people can come to feel their existence is worthless. But are they right? As Christians, we know that such thinking embodies a tragic mistake. Since 1961, suicide has been decriminalised in the UK, and that is perhaps as it should be. But decriminalisation does not equal endorsement. When someone assists another to commit suicide, even out of 'compassion', he or she unavoidably endorses the suicidal person's conviction of worthlessness. This is what the law, as well as our Faith, forbids us to do. Transgressing this, society would legitimise the murderous doctrine that there really are 'lives not worth living'.

We should say, in fact, *further* legitimise – for already the UK is up to its neck in this way of thinking. Babies are aborted because their lives are judged not worth living; and every abortion, for whatever reason, says that a baby's life is not worth saving. Similarly, involuntary euthanasia frequently threatens the 'worthless' lives of the disabled and the elderly. Everywhere, we see the growing exercise of lethal power over the afflicted and dependent. Suicide, tragically, exercises that power over oneself: killing to erase one's own affliction, just as others are killed to erase theirs.

A rage against affliction and dependency is at the heart of the culture of death. Assisted suicide, which Ms Purdy, *Dignity in Dying* the Law Lords and many others wish to portray as a 'civilised' and 'compassionate' solution, merely deepens the catastrophe.

Sunday February 7th: The Fifth Sunday of the Year (Green)

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

Liturgical Calendar

Year 2 of the Lectionary at Weekday Mass and Psalter Week 1 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.

Monday 8th February: Feria. (Green) Optional memorias of *St Jerome Emiliana*, Priest. (White); or of *St Josephine Bakhita*, Religious. (White)

- **Blessing with St Philip's relic at 8 p.m.**

St Jerome Emiliana (1481-1527) A Venetian soldier, he converted whilst in prison following being captured. After his release, he became mayor of Treviso for a short time before returning to Venice where he studied for the priesthood. He dedicated the rest of his life to the care of others, particularly the sick and orphans (whose patron he is), and founded orphanages in other cities as well as a hospital and shelter for prostitutes. Others wished to join him and so he founded an order of clerks regular known as the *Somaschi*. He suffered much from poor health but always put his own sufferings aside, offering them for others.

St Josephine Bakhita (1876-1947) Although born into a wealthy Sudanese family she was kidnapped and sold into slavery. Having been bought and sold several times, suffering greatly at the hands of her 'owners' she was eventually bought by an Italian Consul who planned to free her. He took her to Italy where she was treated very well and soon converted to the Faith. She joined the Canossian Sisters in Venice where she became renowned for her compassion which was demonstrated in her care of the poor and suffering. Her biography was published in 1930 and she became a much sought-after speaker, raising funds for the missions. She was canonised in 2000 and is the first Sudanese saint.

Tuesday 9th February: Feria. (Green)

- **Benediction at 8 p.m.**

Wednesday 10th February: St Scholastica, Virgin. (White)

St Scholastica (d. c.547) The sister of St Benedict, at an early age she dedicated her life to God. Like her brother, she embraced monastic principles and is regarded as the founder of monastic life for women.

Thursday 11th February: Feria. (Green). Optional memoria of *Our Lady of Lourdes*. (White)

Friday 12th February: Feria. (Green)

Saturday 13th February: Our Lady on Saturday. (White) or Feria. (Green)

- **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 Sixth Sunday of the Year) at 5.45 p.m.**

February 14th: The Sixth Sunday of the Year (Green)

Mass & Service Times:

- **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**

Please pray for the sick Grant Morris, Dennis Grigg, Kathleen Coggins, Tony Colqhoun, Tony Farmer, Pat Cartwright, Leroy McCoy, Carolyn Knight, David Pritchard, James Foynes, Michael McCann, Philip McCann and Christopher Brown.

Of your charity please pray for those who have died recently: Pat Glennon and Ronan Doherty;

and of the souls of those whose anniversaries occur about now: Fr Joseph Gordon, Fr Lewis Bellasis and Fr Henry Tristram, all of this Oratory, John Duncan, Lucy Arnold, Kevin Cole, Dorothy Bowyer, Mary Beesley, Nellie Preece, Michael Kamdem and Martina Hayes.

The following are requested to read at Mass next weekend, February 13th/14th, The Sixth Sunday of the Year:

Saturday 5.45 p.m.: Jenni Hardwick
Sunday 8.30 a.m.: Murray Wilson-Browne
12.00 p.m.: Dennis Wood
5.30 p.m.: Brendan Cummins

Collections:

The Fourth Sunday of the Year:
31st January, 2010

Offertory: £1,562
Second: ACN Haiti Appeal: £1,816

Many Thanks

TODAY

THE SECOND COLLECTION THIS WEEKEND will be for the DDF **THE PIETY STALL is open** after all Sunday Masses (including after the Saturday 5.45 p.m. Mass).

THIS WEEK

ADORATION AT REDNAL will not take place this week. However, instead, there will be Adoration on Monday in the Cloister Chapel, commencing with Mass at 2.30 p.m. followed by Exposition and ending with Benediction at c.4.45 p.m.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

OUR LENTEN TALKS will be on the Priesthood in the lives of the Oratorian *Beati* and will begin on Saturday 20th February.

The ANNIVERSARY OF CARDINAL NEWMAN'S BIRTH, 21st February, falls this year on the First Sunday of Lent. There will be a Musical Oratory at 3 p.m. followed by refreshments.

NOTICES

ANNIE BRIGHT WESTON HOUSE RESIDENTIAL HOME (Sisters of Charity of St Paul the Apostle) in Norfolk Road, have a vacancy of a single bedroom for a lady over 65 years of age in their residential home for the elderly. (Please note: it is not a nursing home.) It has its own chapel and Mass is celebrated most days. For further information, please contact the Manager on 0121 4541289.

CONFIRMATION: the Sacrament of Confirmation will be administered by Bishop Parfetter on Wednesday March 17th at 7 p.m. Any one wishing to receive the Sacrament, or any who wish their children (aged nine or over) to receive the Sacrament should see Fr Guy as soon as possible, so that arrangements can be made for instruction by the Parish catechist.

SUNDAY 5.30 p.m. MASS CHOIR: If you wish to sing, please be in the Back Gallery by 5 p.m. No previous experience needed!

YEAR FOR PRIESTS—a reflection by Pope Benedict XVI

In his time the Curé of Ars was able to transform the hearts and the lives of so many people because he enabled them to experience the Lord's merciful love. Our own time urgently needs a similar proclamation and witness to the truth of Love: "*Deus caritas est*" - *God is love* (1 Jn: 4:8). Thanks to the word and the sacraments of Jesus, John Mary Vianney built up his flock, although he often trembled from a conviction of his personal inadequacy, and desired more than once to withdraw from the responsibilities of the parish ministry out of a sense of his unworthiness. Nonetheless, with exemplary obedience he never abandoned his post, consumed as he was by apostolic zeal for the salvation of souls. He sought to remain completely faithful to his own vocation and mission through the practice of an austere asceticism: "The great misfortune for us parish priests - he lamented - is that our souls grow tepid"; meaning by this that a pastor can grow dangerously inured to the state of sin or of indifference in which so many of his flock are living. He himself kept a tight rein on his body, with vigils and fasts, lest it rebel against his priestly soul. Nor did he avoid self-mortification for the good of the souls in his care and as a help to expiating the many sins he heard in confession. To a priestly confrère he explained: "I will tell you my recipe: I give sinners a small penance and the rest I do in their place". Aside from the actual penances which the Curé of Ars practised, the core of his teaching remains valid for each of us: souls have been won at the price of Jesus' own blood, and a priest cannot devote himself to their salvation if he refuses to share personally in the "precious cost" of redemption.