

THE ORATORY—dedicated to THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

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Registered as a Charity

Parish Weekly Newsletter

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

March 7th 2010: THE THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT



The parable of the tree which did not yield its proper fruit is told in today's Gospel.

A CATHOLIC VICTORY?

Those in our society committed to a radical anti-Catholic agenda, as well as many 'ordinary' people with moral opinions formed more or less unconsciously by anti-Catholic forces, greeted the Government's recent 'concessions' regarding school-based sex education ('Amendment 70') as a climb-down, cynically designed to appease the Church and attract Catholic votes in the General Election. Others, predictably, have hailed the Amendment as a victory for the Church, enabling Catholic schools to continue to uphold her teachings in the sensitive and profoundly important area of human relationships and sexuality.

Both sides are mistaken. On none of the key issues was there a Government 'climb-down', and in none of them any kind of 'victory' for the Church. Anti-Catholic forces have nothing to fear from Amendment 70. The Catholic Church in England and Wales, by contrast, faces what John Smeaton, the Director of *The Society for the Protection of Unborn Children*, has rightly called 'arguably the greatest advance in the culture of death...since the passage of the Abortion Act in 1967.'

What Amendment 70 says is that a Catholic school may teach sex education 'in a way that reflects the school's religious character.' It is easy to see why many on both sides of the debate have been taken in. Surely 'in accordance with its religious character' means *in accordance with the teaching of the Church?*

But that is not what it means. 'In accordance with its religious character' means only that a Catholic school may convey Church teaching *in addition to the 'facts' about sex and sexuality decided upon by the Government.*

And what are these 'facts' which Catholic schools must convey? Ed Balls, the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, has been unambiguous. The 'facts' (in Mr Balls' own words) include 'how to access contraception [and] how to use contraception'; they include '[explaining] civil partnership' in a way which shows 'that there are different views on homosexuality' and which therefore doesn't 'teach homophobia'; and they include 'a balanced view on abortion, [giving] both sides of the argument, and [explaining] how to access an abortion.'

We need to be absolutely clear. Although Catholic schools will be able to teach, if they choose, that contraception, homosexuality and abortion are wrong, they will *also* have to teach that there are different views on these subjects, what these views are and why they are held, explain to their pupils what a civil partnership is, and explain how to use contraception and where to 'access' it, and how and where to 'access' an abortion.

So (under Amendment 70) the situation of Catholic schools, with regard to contraception, homosexuality and abortion, is as it would be if the Government were to say that, of course, schools can teach that *racism* is morally wrong; but were then to legislate that (in the interests of conveying a 'balanced' account of 'the facts') schools *also* had to explain why racism can be thought *morally acceptable*, and inform children about where they can 'access' *racist literature*, attend *racist meetings*, join a *racist political party* and how *to put racism into practice on the streets*.

Could any teacher convinced that racism is morally wrong be induced to deliver such a curriculum? Why would he or she want even to try? Government imposition of such a curriculum would demand conscientious civil disobedience. And yet a *precisely analogous imposition* is being made upon Catholic teachers in the area of sex and relationships. What's the difference? Only this: that whereas the vast majority (rightly) believe that racism is wrong (or for that matter paedophilia, or torture, or cruelty to animals – the argument is the same, whichever near-unanimous conviction you chose), only the Catholic Church also teaches, clearly and consistently, the wrongness of contraception, homosexuality and abortion. What is at stake is her right, in her own schools, to continue to do so, free from State censorship and control. If Amendment 70 really is an attempt to win the Catholic vote, Catholics will soon have an opportunity, and indeed a duty, to demonstrate that it has failed.

Sunday March 7th: The Third Sunday of Lent (Purple)

- 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 2 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.

Monday 8th March: Monday of Lent Week 3. (Purple) Optional commemoration of St John of God, Religious.

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

St John of God: (1495-1550) He worked variously as a shepherd, soldier, superintendent of slaves and a book seller when, at the age of forty he heard a sermon preached by Bl John of Avila which inspired him to radically change his life. He gave all his possessions away, but in his own town his actions were regarded as those of a lunatic and he was imprisoned in an asylum. He did everything he could to help the sick and went to Grenada where he founded a hospital. This was the beginning of the an order of Brothers Hospitallers, which later became known as the *Brothers of St John of God*. He is patron of book sellers, the sick and hospitals.

Tuesday 9th March: Tuesday of Lent Week 3. (Purple) Optional commemoration of St Frances of Rome, Religious.

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

St Frances of Rome (1384-1440) Born into a noble family, she wanted to give her life to God even at an early age. However at only thirteen, she was married, but her husband was a good and devoted man. Frances dedicated herself to helping others, especially victims of plague and civil war. Several other Roman shared her ideals of self-denial and good works and so she organised a community of Benedictine Oblates. Following the death of her husband, she joined the community and directed it herself until her death. She was renowned for her mystical experiences and was a religious power in Rome, much esteemed by Pope Eugenius IV.

Wednesday 10th March: Wednesday of Lent Week 3. (Purple)

Thursday 11th March: Thursday of Lent. (Purple).

Friday 12th March: Friday of Lent Week 3. (Purple)

- **Stations of the Cross at 1.10 p.m. and 8 p.m.**

Saturday 13th March: Saturday of Lent Week 3. (Purple)

- **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 Fourth Sunday of Lent) at 5.45 p.m.**

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

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 Douglas Ferrier, Geoff Jones, Kevan Bleach, Sarah Wallin, Lizi & Michael Fox, 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:** Fr Kenneth Freeman, Michael Coghlan and Anthony Chambers ; **and of the souls of those whose anniversaries occur about now:** Fr Humphrey Crookenden of this Oratory, Fr Thomas Fullerton, Alice Chavasse, Caroline Wardell, Gertrude Arnold, Bridget Genockey, Kate Brooks, Vincent Baker, Elizabeth Campbell, Bernadette Doyle, Mandy Lloyd, Yon Jarrett, Lucille Ahee and Frank Hayward.

John Murphy's funeral is on Thursday at 12.45 p.m. Reception of remains: Wednesday at 4.30 p.m.

The following are requested to read at Mass next weekend, March 13th/14th, The Fourth Sunday of Lent:

Saturday 5.45 p.m.: Jenni Hardwick
Sunday 8.30 a.m.: Murray Wilson-Browne
12.00 p.m.: Dulcie Robinson
5.30 p.m.: Jason Mahoney

Collections:

The Second Sunday of Lent : 28th February, 2010

Offertory: £1,709

Second: Lent Fast Day

(for Aid to the Church in Need): £1,066

Thank you

TODAY

THE SECOND COLLECTION THIS WEEKEND will be for THE COST OF HEATING IN OUR Church this winter.

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. *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.*

THIS WEEK

ADORATION AT REDNAL will not take place this week.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS: There are two opportunities on Fridays in Lent to take part in this devotional exercise: after the Lunch time Mass, approximately 1.10 p.m. , and after the Rosary at 8 p.m.

OUR LENTEN TALKS are on the Priesthood in the lives of the Oratorian Saints and *Beati* and continue on Saturday with a talk given by Fr Richard on Blessed Juvenal Ancina and Blessed Antonio Grassi.

ORATORY YOUNG ADULTS GROUP (for those aged 20-35) meet on Thursday at 7.30 p.m. in the Oratory House. A talk will be given on "Experiences of missionary work in the Philippines".

The SOCIETY OF ST HUGH will meet on Saturday at 2 p.m. in the Oratory House. *All are welcome.*

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

CONFIRMATION: His Lordship Bishop Pargeter will administer the Sac-

rament 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.

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. Please note that this devotion is unsuitable for anyone who has difficulty walking.

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.

NOTICES

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.

www.petitiononline.com/PopeinUK/petition.html

YEAR FOR PRIESTS—a reflection by Pope Benedict XVI

Finally, St. John Vianney's obedience found full embodiment in his conscientious fidelity to the daily demands of his ministry. We know how he was tormented by the thought of his inadequacy for parish ministry and by a desire to flee "in order to bewail his poor life, in solitude". Only obedience and a thirst for souls convinced him to remain at his post. As he explained to himself and his flock: "There are no two good ways of serving God. There is only one: serve him as he desires to be served". He considered this the golden rule for a life of obedience: "Do only what can be offered to the good Lord".