

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.

February 10th 2008: The First Sunday of Lent



The Temptations in the Desert

The Gospel speaks of our Lord's forty day fast in the wilderness before He began His public ministry. It is on the basis of this experience that we, too, keep an annual fast of forty days in preparation for keeping the Paschal Mystery, i.e., celebrating the Passion, Death and Resurrection of our Lord at Holy Week and Easter.

We fast, that is we do penance by depriving ourselves of food, drink and other good and enjoyable things, in order to arouse and express sorrow for our sins and to show the fruits of repentance—a growth in love of God and neighbour. Hence the call to practise almsgiving as an integral part of our Lent. If we only fasted without giving away the proceeds of what we do not spend on ourselves, we would not get any real spiritual benefit. We might grow in self-control, we might even lose a little weight, but we would not grow closer to Our Lord.

Now, of course, Our Lord did not need to fast for the same reasons as we do. He did not need to do penance and so that was not the reason for His fasting. He did not need especially to practise almsgiving at any particular time. He fasted for another vital reason: He did it in order to enter spiritual combat with the Devil.

This may seem strange to us. We do not associate fasting with spiritual warfare. We probably even expect that fasting should release us from exposure to temptation, or else why face it? We, of course, pray, as our Lord taught us, *not* to be led into temptation. But we are fallen creatures and temptation poses greater danger

of a different kind for us. Our Lord faced temptation not as *fallen* man, but as *perfect* man. Some might thank that therefore He cannot have been truly tempted, but He was. He took on the wiles of Satan in the same condition as Adam and Eve before their fall. The difference was that He would have to conquer where they had failed.

Another way of describing Our Lord's temptations, therefore, is to see them as trials of strength of will. The devil did not yet know exactly how strong our Lord was. He already realised that he could not tempt Jesus to commit any typically human sin. Jesus was clearly out of the ordinary, with unusual powers. Could the devil fool Jesus into using those powers in a way that would ultimately neutralise their effectiveness? That is why the devil cleverly uses the words of scripture to try and cajole Jesus into using His powers to win support and approval from men. He might even persuade Jesus to be a great worldly ruler, though of course a "good" one rather than a tyrant. But how would that end? Would Jesus fall into that trap?

Jesus shows that He is aware of the subtlety of these "tests". He will not change stones into bread because, although He is very hungry, He knows that "man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God". He will not perform a spectacular act like jumping from the very top of the Temple "protected by the angels at God's command", because He will not "put God to the test". He will not conform to Satan's rule over the world by "worshipping him" because "worship belongs to God alone". In these three ways, our Lord prepares Himself for the pitfalls of His forthcoming ministry, and especially how to avoid the danger of seeking human approval and admiration.

Lourdes: 150 years

The Pope has granted the faithful a special Plenary Indulgence this year because of the 150th anniversary of the Apparitions. In all churches dedicated either to our Lady of Lourdes, or, like ours, under her title of the Immaculate Conception, it will be possible to obtain a Plenary Indulgence—the complete remission of all punishment due to past sins—on the anniversary of the first apparition, that is, tomorrow, the memorial of our Lady of Lourdes.

As is customary, the Indulgence is obtained by going to confession on or soon before the day, and by 1) receiving Holy Communion, 2) praying for the Pope's intentions and 3) praying the Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be to the Father and the Creed (I believe in God). **All of these, except confession, must be done on the feast day and in the designated Church.** If you have been to confession shortly before and are still in a state of grace, then there is no absolute need to go to confession again on the day, or in this Church.

Sunday February 10th: The First Sunday of Lent (Purple)

Year 1 or A of the Lectionary at Mass

- 8.30 a.m. **Low Mass**
- 9.30 a.m. **1962 rite Mass (in the church)**
- 10.30 a.m. **Solemn High Mass**
- 12.00 p.m. **(Families with young children)**
- 5.30 p.m. **Sung Congregational Mass**
- **Vespers and Benediction at 7.30 p.m.**

Liturgical Calendar

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

Rosary at 7.45 p.m. STATIONS OF THE CROSS ON FRIDAYS IN LENT: 1.10 & 8 p.m.

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

Monday February 11th: Monday of Lent Week 1. (Purple)

Commemoration of Our Lady of Lourdes. (A Plenary Indulgence may be obtained today: see below)

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

Tuesday February 12th: Tuesday of Lent Week 1. (Purple)

- **Benediction at 8 p.m.** Brothers of the Little Oratory meet after Benediction in St Philip's Chapel.

Wednesday February 13th: Wednesday of Lent Week 1. (Purple)

Thursday February 14th: St Cyril, Monk, and St Methodius, Bishop. Patrons of Europe. Feast (White)

St Cyril & St Methodius (d. 869 & 885) Brothers from Greece, Cyril became a secular priest and Methodius a monk; both were blessed with missionary zeal. They were sent to Moravia at the invitation of Prince Rostislav, who sought missionaries able to preach in the Slavonic vernacular. Their immediate success aroused the hostility of the German rulers and ecclesiastics. Candidates from among their converts were refused ordination, and their use of the Slavonic language in the Greek liturgy was severely criticized. However, the Pope intervened and the use of Slavonic in the liturgy was approved. Cyril died while in Rome, but Methodius returned to Moravia and was made archbishop of Sirmium. Despite the papal sanction the Germans contrived to have him imprisoned, and, though released two years later, his effectiveness appears to have been blocked. His last years were spent translating the Bible and ecclesiastical books into Slavonic. His influence spread to Bulgaria, Serbia, and Russia, where the southern Slavonic of Cyril and Methodius is still the liturgical language of both Roman Catholic and Orthodox churches. The **Cyrillic alphabet** used in those countries today is traditionally ascribed to St. Cyril. Pope John Paul II, himself a Polish Slav, declared them co-patrons of Europe.

Friday February 15th: Friday of Lent Week 1. (Purple)

(Lenten Fast Day for the needy and hungry of the world)

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

Saturday February 16th: Saturday of Lent Week 1 (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. until the end of Mass**
- **Vigil Mass of THE SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT at 5.45 p.m.**

DEANERY VISITATION

On the weekend of 23/24th February Bishop Pargeter will preach at every Mass, and celebrate the 12 noon Mass during his canonical visitation of the Parish. He will then return on Wednesday March 5th to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation at 7 p.m.

Sunday February 17th: The SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT (Purple)

Mass & Service Times:

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

Please pray for the sick: Isaac Brown, Michael Miller, Marie-Thérèse Jones, Marianne Jarvis, Dorothy Price, Ellen Westwood, Tommy Smyth, Margaret Casey, Jacqueline Griffiths, Frank McGuinness, George Saunders, and Desmond Williams

Of your charity please pray for the repose of the souls of those who have died recently: Severio Mele and Larry McCloskey;

and of the souls of those whose anniversaries occur about now: Fr Joseph Gordon and Fr Richard Bellasis, both of this Oratory, Kitty Harrison, Stanley Willetts, Lucy and Gertrude Arnold, Caroline Wardell and Charles & Nellie Preece.

Severio Mele's funeral (in Italian) is on Friday at 11.15 a.m. Reception of remains: before Mass

The following are requested to read next weekend, February 16th/17th: The 2nd Sunday of Lent

Saturday 5.45 p.m.: Anne Roebuck

Sunday 8.30 a.m.: Margaret Hawkins

12.00 p.m.: Sr Hilary

5.30 p.m.: Jason Mahoney

Collections

The 4th Sunday of the Year, 3rd February:

Offerory: £1,439

Second: diocesan development Fund: £442

Thank you

**The second Collection today will be for the DDF
Next Sunday it will be for Friday's Lenten Fast Day**

TODAY

'WALK WITH ME', The Archbishop's companion to Lent Books are by the back door: cost £1. There is also a Calendar, (30p) designed for children. We encourage you to buy these aids to prayer life during this holy season, and for those who you know who are housebound, and perhaps for members of your family who no longer go to church.

LENTEN ALMS: The box for your Lenten alms-giving is near the Plough and Harrow Door. Proceeds are for Father Hudson's Society.

THIS WEEK

FEAST OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES, Monday 11th. To celebrate the 150th Anniversary of the Apparitions, the Pope has granted a Plenary Indulgence obtainable on the 11th, in certain churches (inc ours), under the usual conditions. (Confession, Holy Communion, and prayers for the Pope (Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be and Creed)

ADORATION AT REDNAL will take place this week on *Wednesday* commencing with Mass at 2.30 p.m.

LENTEN TALKS: The first talk will be on *Saturday*, February 16th. Following on from our very successful talks on Purgatory, the Fathers will present a series on the important matter of "Conscience". The talks will be given, as usual, in the Lower Cloister Hall after the 11a.m. Mass. The first talk will be "Conscience in the New Testament" by Fr. Guy.

ANNE WIDDECOMBE, DAVID ALTON and guests will be speaking at a rally in Coventry Cathedral at 7.30 p.m. on Wednesday, February 13th to inform on Life issues and the Human Fertilisation & Embryology Bill going through Parliament. (01925 220999 for further information).

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

ORATORY PRIMARY SCHOOL TALKS FOR PARENTS / Carers: The fourth in this important series of talks is on *Wednesday 20th February* from 2.00—3.15 p.m. in the Oratory School Hall, on the subject of **Sex Education**, and is open to all parents of children in the school. The title of the talk is: "Hot Topics: Contraception, Abortion, Teenage Pregnancy, Gay issues". The talk will be given by Dr. Greg Gardner who is a GP in Handsworth who has written extensively on matters of sex education, abortion and contraception in the Press. We hope that, if at all possible, parents will attend these very important talks.

ELCT ECUMENICAL LENT DISCUSSIONS on the Passion begin on Tuesday 19th February with coffee at 7.15 for 7.30 p.m. at the Church of the Redeemer, Monument Road. First topic: "Mary Magdalene".

The ANNIVERSARY of CARDINAL NEWMAN'S BIRTH: Thursday, 21st February: There will be a service of music, preaching and prayer at 7.30 p.m. The subject will be **Newman on Lent**. In addition to music by the choir, Dr Francis Jackson, CBE will be the guest organist.