

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 21st 2010: THE FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

THE FORTY DAYS' FAST

St. Luke tells us in today's Gospel reading that the Holy Spirit who had come down upon Our Lord at His Baptism, then led Him out into the wilderness for forty days, and during that time He held a struggle of wills with the devil, and also that He ate nothing during this whole time, so that He was hungry.

The first thing we note is that this strange combat took place after Our Lord's Baptism, and under the direct impulse of the Holy Spirit. The struggle with the devil, of which we hear three specific instances in this Gospel reading, was something which He had to undergo. It was not an accidental by-product of this retreat from normal human life—it was the very purpose of it.

Why should the Holy Spirit have inspired such a strange and extreme struggle? What can it have contributed to Our Lord's ministry to have gone without food for forty days? What connection is there between the fast, the wilderness and the temptations?

The wilderness is a hostile environment. Our Lord and the Holy Spirit deliberately chose it as being somewhere quite remote from human habitation and ordinary everyday life. Our Lord came away from human society and spent time utterly alone. This in itself made Him prone to strange experiences as anyone who has spent considerable time on their own can tell us. Solitary confinement is even used as a form of punishment because the lack of human contact, and the sensory deprivation can have a severe impact on one's mental state that may lead to a severe personal crisis. Our Lord not only deprived his senses of much that is normal, He also deprived His body of food. He was bringing about a *crisis* in the ancient Greek sense of that word: "a moment of judgement and choice".

Our Lord was, in effect, deliberately inviting the devil to make use of this opportunity to "get inside" His mind and put Him to the test. He wanted to enter into combat with the devil. On the other hand, the devil also wanted to see what Our Lord would do when he put Him to the test. Deprived of human contact and being

very hungry, Our Lord was exposed to most extreme and unusual states of mind and body which opened the way for the devil to test Him in the various ways we hear about in today's Gospel.

In order to understand this at all we must go back to the very beginning of human history. Adam and Eve had been created in a state of grace from which they had fallen through the devil's deceit. The devil had tempted them with the thought that God was keeping them in the dark and withholding from them a great secret and denying them a fascinating gift: the knowledge of good and evil. They fell, and lost their grace; yet God promised them a Saviour who would atone for the fall and repair the terrible damage it had done us all.

Now at last that promised Saviour was here as a new Adam. "A second Adam to the fight and to the rescue came", as Cardinal Newman puts it. Would this new Adam resist the devil's cunning? Would He succeed where our first human parents had failed? The devil overcame the first Adam in the first temptation, but he does not know exactly how far he can tempt this new Adam whom he has heard called "Son of God" at His baptism. Therefore, the devil says to Jesus, "If you are the Son of God..." in the temptations which we hear about in the Gospel. The devil enters into combat with the Son of God and Adam. He fails and Jesus, God made man, wins.

Sunday February 21st: The First 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

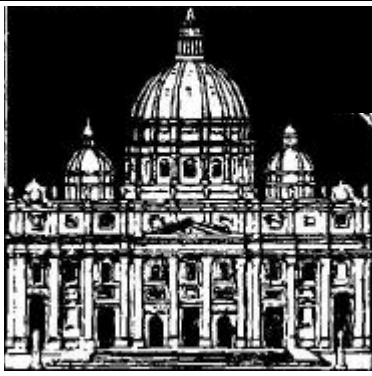
Year 2 of the Lectionary at Weekday Mass and Psalter Week 1 in the Divine Office

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.

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



Monday 22nd February: The Chair of St Peter, Feast. (White)

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

The Chair of St Peter: Today we celebrate the unity of the Catholic Church around the primacy of St Peter, the Prince of the Apostles, and his successors. We recall that Our Lord gave St Peter authority among the Apostles to "strengthen his brothers in faith". (*St Luke's Gospel, ch. 22 v. 32*) The "Chair" is a symbol of teaching authority (as with professors in universities). The Altar of St. Peter's Chair is situated at the far end inside St. Peter's Basilica.

Tuesday 23rd February: Tuesday of Lent. (Purple). Optional memoria of St Polycarp, Bishop & Martyr. (Red)

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

St Polycarp (d. 155) As a young man, he had known St John the Apostle and 'others who had seen the Lord'. He became Bishop of Smyrna and was renowned for his candour and wisdom in dealing with the many heresies which began to spring up. He is among the earliest Christians whose writings survive. An account of his martyrdom was recorded at the time and exists to this day. When he was in his eighties, he was betrayed by a servant. Refusing to denounce Our Lord, and to burn incense to the Roman Emperor, he was sentenced to be burned alive, but miraculously, the flames formed an arch around him and he remained unharmed. The executioner was therefore ordered to stab him.

Wednesday 24th February: Wednesday of Lent (Purple)

Thursday 25th February: Thursday of Lent. (Purple).

Friday 26th February: Friday of Lent. (Purple) FAST DAY (see Notices)

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

Saturday 27th February: Saturday of Lent. (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 Second Sunday of Lent) at 5.45 p.m.**

February 28th: The Second Sunday of Lent (Purple)

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: Kevan Bleach, Sarah Wallin, Lizi & Michael Fox, Clare Crickmore, Kathleen Coggins, Tony Colqhoun, Pat Cartwright, Carolyn Knight, David Pritchard, Elizabeth Caswell, James Foynes, Michael McCann, Philip McCann and Tony Farmer.

Of your charity please pray for those who have died recently: Eamonn Short, Michelina Sannio and James Dunbar;

and of the souls of those whose anniversaries occur about now: Fr Edward Pereira of this Oratory, Dorothy Miller, Margaret Higgins, Bolek Kuzminski and Paul Ahern.

The following are requested to read at Mass next weekend, February 27th/28th, The First Sunday of Lent:

Saturday 5.45 p.m.: Jenni Hardwick
Sunday 8.30 a.m.: Murray Wilson-Browne
12.00 p.m.: Chris Sammons
5.30 p.m.: Simon Stacey

Collections:

The Sixth Sunday of the Year:
14th February, 2010

Offertory: £1,379
Second: Beatification costs: £710

Thank you

TODAY

THE SECOND COLLECTION THIS WEEKEND will be for the expenses of heating our Church this winter.

TODAY IS THE ANNIVERSARY OF CARDINAL NEWMAN'S BIRTH and at 3 p.m. there will be a Musical Oratory (a short service of music, preaching and prayer) on the subject of "Newman on Preparation for Easter". Refreshments will be available afterwards.

THE PIETY STALL is open after all Sunday Masses (including after the Saturday 5.45 p.m. Mass). 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 music sung by our own Oratory Choir. It is available at a special offer price of £8 **this weekend only**. (Normal price £11.50)

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.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS: Please note 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.

FRIDAY IS A DAY OF FASTING FOR THE NEEDY AND HUNGRY OF THE WORLD and next Sunday's collection will be for Aid to the Church in Need

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 Anton on St Luigi Scrosoppi.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

ORATORY YOUNG ADULTS GROUP (for those aged 20-35) next meet on Thursday 4th March at 7.30 p.m. in the Oratory House. A talk will be given on "Experiences of missionary work in the Philippines".

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 454 1289.

YEAR FOR PRIESTS—a reflection by Pope Benedict XVI

It was complete commitment to a "new style of life" which marked the priestly ministry of the Curé of Ars. Pope John XXIII, in his Encyclical Letter *Sacerdotii nostri primordia*, published in 1959 on the first centenary of the death of Saint John Mary Vianney, presented his asceticism with special reference to the "three evangelical counsels" which the Pope considered necessary also for diocesan priests: "even though priests are not bound to embrace these evangelical counsels by virtue of the clerical state, these counsels nonetheless offer them, as they do all the faithful, the surest road to the desired goal of Christian perfection". The Curé of Ars lived the "evangelical counsels" in a way suited to his priestly state. His poverty was not the poverty of a religious or a monk, but that proper to a priest: while managing much money (since well-to-do pilgrims naturally took an interest in his charitable works), he realized that everything had been donated to his church, his poor, his orphans, the girls of his "Providence", his families of modest means. Consequently, he "was rich in giving to others and very poor for himself".