

# 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 29th 2009: THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT (formerly Passion Sunday)



#### FATHER! SAVE ME FROM MY SUFFERINGS

As we enter the final part of Lent, known as, "Passiontide", in today's passage from St. John's Gospel we hear Our Lord's prayer to His Father to be "saved from this hour", that is, to be spared His forthcoming sufferings. Yet He also acknowledges that it is "for this hour that I have come into the world". Those who witnessed this prayer also heard what sounded like thunder. St. John tells us that it was God speaking to His Son to strengthen Him, by assuring Him that all that He would undergo would be for the glory of God's name. This is very similar to Our Lord's prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, and the ministration to Our Lord by the Angel of the Agony to strengthen Him (Lk. 22:43).

It is important to understand from this event, as far as one can humanly grasp it, that the Father's request for His Son's acceptance of a terrible death, and the Son's willing obedience in spite of the horror of it all, points to God's infinite love of for us. In this moment Our Lord shows His human anguish in the face of all that is to befall Him. But the Father also shows His Son's godhead in pointing to the glory that His Son will give by His willing self-sacrifice for sinful mankind.

#### TWO IMPORTANT TALKS ON INTOLERANCE

Secularism is an ideology which is increasingly opposed to the contribution of religion to public debate, and even to the presence of religion in the public sphere. It has grown in influence in this country in recent years and now threatens the freedom not only of all Christians but of all who believe in the primacy of conscience over the State or over public opinion. We are now witnessing the ever increasing intolerance of the State towards those who uphold or defend Christian doctrine and morals. Moreover, Christians both here in the West and even more in the Middle East are experiencing a worrying escalation of intolerance and hostility from Islamism, aided and abetted by a secularism which fears Islamist extremism.

You may be interested to read two very thoughtful speeches made recently on these topics by two influential Bishops. The first was given by Cardinal Pell of Sydney, who visited the Oratory at the beginning of this month. He spoke shortly afterwards in Oxford about "Varieties of Intolerance: religious and secular". The second is by the Most Revd. Charles Chaput, Archbishop of Denver, who spoke at Toronto last month in the immediate aftermath of the coming to power in the USA of President Obama, on the current threat to freedom of conscience posed by the new President's attitude to abortion law—entitled "Tolerance is not a Christian Virtue". We cannot recommend these powerful talks too highly. You will find copies of both of them at the Church doors. Please take them and study them closely. They will give you plenty of food for thought.

#### THE POPE WAS RIGHT

A good example of the growing atmosphere of intolerance was also to be found in the recent furore surrounding the Pope's comments on the negative influence of condoms in the war against Aids in Africa. The Pope was attacked with unprecedented ferocity not only by the media but even by representatives of Western Governments for daring to say that condoms are aggravating the spread of Aids. Yet he was not simply making an off-the-cuff remark—he was basing his words on hard facts. It is a fact that the only country in Africa where Aids is significantly in decline is Uganda, which is the only country where abstinence and fidelity to one partner are promoted over the use of condoms. You can read an interesting article on the front page of this week's Catholic Herald that supports the Pope's statement. Dr. Edward Green is a real expert on the subject, being the Director of the Aids Prevention Research Project at the Centre for Population and Development Studies of Harvard University in the USA. He says: "The Pope is right...the best evidence we have supports the Pope's comments." His further analysis demolishes the current secular dogma: "We just cannot find an association between more condom use and lower reduction rates", but on the contrary, "our best studies" show a "consistent association between greater availability and use of condoms and higher HIV-infection rates." He believes this is due to what is known as "risk compensation", when one's behaves more carelessly as a result of relying on a "risk-reducing technology". For instance, it can be the case that drivers take more risks when they have more safety features in their cars; so, too with reliance on condoms. Tell all those who criticise the Pope and the Church that they are relying on blind prejudice and dogma, **while the Pope relies on facts.**

### Sunday March 29th: The Fifth Sunday of Lent (Purple)

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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 or B of the Lectionary at Mass and Psalter Week 1

Monday to Friday: Masses at 7.30 a.m., 12.45 p.m. and 5.45 p.m. Rosary at 7.45 p.m.

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

Stations of the Cross at 1.15 p.m. and 8 p.m. on Fridays in Lent

<p><b>Monday March 30th: Monday of Lent Week 5. (Purple)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Blessing with St Philip's relic at 8 p.m.</b></li> </ul> <hr/> <p><b>Tuesday March 31st: Tuesday of Lent Week 5. (Purple)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Benediction at 8 p.m.</b> Brothers of the Little Oratory meet in St Philip's Chapel after Benediction</li> </ul> <hr/> <p><b>Wednesday April 1st: Wednesday of Lent Week 5. (Purple)</b>  <i>Commemoration of St Francis of Paola, Hermit.</i>  <b>St Francis of Paola</b> Educated by the Franciscans, he became a hermit in 1436 and was joined by two companions. They formed a community, considered to be the foundation of the Minim Friars. He introduced a Rule emphasising penance, charity and humility but adding fasting and abstinence. Credited with many miracles, he had the gift of prophecy and insight into men's hearts.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Thursday April 2nd. Thursday of Lent Week 5. (Purple)</b>  <i>St John Paine, English Martyr</i>  <b>St John Paine</b> He studied for the priesthood at Douay, returning to England in 1576, where his chief protector was Lady Petre at Ingatestone in Essex. He worked very effectively and converted many to the Faith, but was betrayed by George Eliot, a trustee of several Catholic households, who turned out to be a thief and embezzler. Charges against him of theft and murder were dropped, and he was financially rewarded, when he gave up Fr Paine who was fiercely tortured before being hanged at Chelmsford on this day in 1582.</p> <hr/> <p><b>Friday April 3rd. Friday of Lent Week 5. (Purple)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>STATIONS OF THE CROSS at 1.15 p.m. and 8 p.m.</b></li> </ul> <hr/> <p><b>Saturday April 4th. Saturday of Lent Week 5. (Purple).</b> <i>Commemoration of St Isidore, Bishop &amp; Doctor of the Church</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Masses at 8 a.m. and 11 a.m.</b></li> <li><b>Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament from 8.30 to 10.45 a.m.</b></li> <li><b>Benediction at 10.45 a.m.</b></li> <li><b>Confessions from 10.55 a.m. to 12 noon &amp; from 5.30 p.m.</b></li> <li><b>First Mass of Palm Sunday: at 5.45 p.m..</b></li> </ul> <p><b>St Isidore</b> (d. 636) Archbishop of Seville for 36 years, he promoted education and wrote an encyclopaedia. He did much to help convert the Visigoths from Arianism to Christianity. Renowned for his charity, as he was dying he gave all his possessions to the poor who had crowded into his house.</p>	<p><b>Sunday April 5th: Palm Sunday (Purple)</b></p> <p><b>Mass &amp; Service Times:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>8.30 a.m. Low Mass</b></li> <li><b>9.30 a.m. Latin low Mass 1962 Missal</b></li> <li><b>10.15 a.m. BLESSING &amp; PROCESSION OF PALMS</b> (commencing in the College Sports Hall)</li> <li><b>12.00 p.m. (Families with young children)</b></li> <li><b>5.30 p.m. Sung Congregational Mass in English</b></li> <li><b>7.30 p.m. Vespers and Benediction</b></li> </ul> <hr/> <p><b>Please pray for the sick:</b> Alf Cooke, Maria Constantinou, John McCann, Bobby Cunningham, Dean Farrell, Patrick Walshe, Katie Hayward, Mary Cunliffe, Raymond Colquhoun, Margaret Casey, and Carole Halls. <b>Of your charity please pray for the repose of the souls of those who have died recently:</b> Rachel Noble, Margaret McKenna, Michael Nee; <b>and of the souls of those whose anniversaries occur about now:</b> Florence Pope, Geoff Jenkins, Neil O'Driscoll and John Pugh</p> <p>Margaret McKenna's funeral is on Tuesday at 12.45 p.m. Reception of remains: Monday at 4.30 p.m.  Rachel Noble's funeral is on Friday at 12.45 p.m. Reception of remains before Mass.</p> <hr/> <p><b>The following are requested to read at Mass next weekend, April 4th/5th, Palm Sunday:</b></p> <p><i>Saturday 5.45 p.m.: Anne Roebuck</i>  <i>Sunday 8.30 a.m.: Margaret Hawkins</i>  <i>12.00 p.m: Chris Sammons</i>  <i>5.30 p.m.: Brendan Cummins</i></p> <hr/> <p><b>Collections:</b>  <i>Fourth Sunday of Lent:</i>  <i>22nd March, 2009</i></p> <p>Offertory: £1,405  Second: Diocesan development Fund: £427  <i>Thank you</i></p>
<p><b>TODAY</b></p> <p><b>The second collection today will be for the Diocesan Development fund.</b></p> <p><b>HOLY WEEK TIMES OF SERVICES</b> are available at the Church Doors. Please take one for yourself and any more for friends of relations who might not otherwise be able to get one. <b>Please note that many Masses and other services are at unusual times during the Easter Triduum, from Maundy Thursday to Easter Day.</b></p> <p><b>ORATORY PATRICIANS DISCUSSION GROUP</b> meets today at 3.15 p.m. in the Oratory House. Subject: "The best way of keeping Holy Week well".</p> <p><b>The PIETY STALL</b> is open after all Sunday Masses. Easter cards are on sale, including those for Aid to the Church in Need.</p> <p><b>THIS WEEK</b></p> <p><b>ADORATION AT REDNAL</b> takes place this week on <b>Wednesday</b>, commencing with Mass at 2.30 p.m. and ending with Benediction.</p> <p><b>YOUNG ADULTS' GROUP</b> (aged 20 to 35) will meet for the first time on Thursday April 2nd and thereafter on the first Thursday of each month at 7.30 p.m. in the Oratory house to share and deepen their faith and to socialise. All are welcome. All enquiries to Richard on 07905 601721, or to Fr Anton.</p> <p><b>Our TALKS on ST PAUL &amp; HIS TEACHINGS in this Year which Pope Benedict has designated as the Year of St Paul conclude</b> on Saturday with the final talk to be given by Fr Anton on the subject of "St Paul's Letters to The Hebrews". The talk will be in the Lower Cloister Hall and will commence at approximately 11.30 a.m.</p> <p><b>THE SEVEN CHURCHES WALK</b> will take place this Saturday 4th April beginning from St. Catherine's Bristol Street at 2 p.m., including stations for prayer at St. Catherine's, St. Chad's, St. Francis's, the Convent of Mercy, Handsworth, St. Patrick's, St. Paul's Convent and the Oratory. You are welcome to join us for all or part of this walk. The walking itself has to be at a good pace so <b>please remember that this event is unsuitable for anyone who has difficulty walking. A group will leave the Oratory at 1.30 p.m. to get to St. Catherine's by 2 p.m.</b></p> <p><b>The SOCIETY OF ST HUGH</b> meets on Saturday at 2 p.m. in the Oratory House. All are welcome.</p> <p><b>BIRMINGHAM BACH CHOIR CONCERT</b> in our church on Saturday</p>	<p>at 7.30 p.m. Sacred Music by contemporary Scottish Catholic composer James MacMillan and Henry Purcell. Tickets can be obtained on the night.</p> <p><b>FORTHCOMING EVENTS</b></p> <p><b>PRO-LIFE MORNING OF PRAYER AND WITNESS on GOOD FRIDAY:</b> Walk commences here after Tenebrae (which begins at 8.30 a.m.), so at approximately 10 a.m. to pray outside the Calthorpe (Abortion) Clinic, Arthur Road, returning to the Oratory at 11.45 a.m. Please see the posters in the Notice boards for full details.</p> <p><b>DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY</b>, April 19th, will be observed here by an afternoon of prayer, commencing at 2.30 p.m. with Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, during which there will be the Divine Mercy Chaplet, Rosary and Benediction. Mass will be at 4.30 p.m. Confessions will be heard throughout the afternoon from 2 p.m. A Plenary Indulgence is attached to this Devotion, under the usual conditions.</p> <p><b>The CATHOLIC WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB</b> will resume on Tuesday 14th April 12-2 pm to discuss the writings of Catholic Apologist Raymond De Souza. All women are welcome. Contact Mrs Jackie Parkes 0121 688 4154 rosary@blueyonder.co.uk for more details.</p> <p><b>CONCELEBRATED MASS COMMEMORATING CARDINAL NEWMAN'S MINISTRY AT ST ANNE'S, ALCESTER STREET</b> (1849-1852) will be offered on Wednesday, 22nd April at 7 p.m. by Bishop Gilles Cabazon, OMI, Emeritus Bishop of St. Jerome, Quebec, Canada. The Preacher will be Fr Paul. Mass will be followed by a Reception hosted by Trident Housing in Cherish House (opposite St. Anne's).</p> <p><b>NOTICES</b></p> <p><b>APF RED BOXES:</b> holders of boxes will be contacted by their collectors to arrange exchange of boxes, as the half-year has come to an end. <i>Thank you to all who contribute to the Missions.</i> (If you are do not have a box and would like one, please contact 427 2039).</p> <p><b>SUBSTANTIAL BAGS OF FIREWOOD</b> from Rednal are on sale for £5 (comparable sized bags sell commercially for £6 or more). Available inside the Lower Cloister Hall.</p> <p><b>LENTEN ALMS BOX</b> is by Plough and Harrow door and the gate to St. Charles's chapel. The proceeds will be brought up to the Altar on Maundy Thursday evening and will go to Fr. Hudson's Society.</p>