



THE SCRIPTURES THIS WEEK

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

FIRST AND SECOND READINGS – GENESIS 2:7-9,3:1-7 ROMANS 5:12-19

Each of us has been entrusted with some share in God's creation. The temptation is this: through pride, greed or fear to hold fast to that portion of the good things of this world we have been given. It is this temptation which Adam and Eve succumb to in the garden. They grasp for the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, but rather than rising to be like the gods they fall, and lose their innocence.

In the second reading, which is from the letter of St Paul to the Romans, we are told that 'as one man's fall brought condemnation on everyone, so the good act of one man brings everyone life.' Here St Paul is referring to the cross; it is the crucifixion of Jesus Christ which brings life, where the grasping of Adam had brought death. We are brought to another tree, one set on a hill, from which Jesus looks down upon the world. Jesus has rejected the temptations of Satan and now he completes his victory over Satan. Whereas Adam and Eve grasp at the apple, Jesus opens his arms in his great prayer of thanksgiving to the Father.

GOSPEL – MATTHEW 4:1-11

In the Gospel today St Matthew tells us how Jesus is set by Satan on a very high mountain and offered the kingdoms of the world in return for worshipping him. The picture is a vivid one, and it powerfully engages our imagination. From the great height Jesus is tempted with the question which is put to each of us, if you could hold the world in your hand what would you do? On the cross Jesus unites himself to each one of us as we are faced with the choice between life and death: do I grasp hold of the world beneath me, asserting my power and control over it, or do I return it in love to the one who has given it in love? On the cross Jesus Christ utters his great 'yes' to the father, to the gift of creation, a 'yes' that he makes on behalf of each one of us, and he invites us to share in this prayer of thanksgiving - to live our lives in the hope of the resurrection, not the despair of our own desires.

NEXT SUNDAY –

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT (YEAR A)

'If any dust of imperfection cling to your heart, be not troubled, but consume it immediately in the fire of divine love, and, sorrowfully asking forgiveness, continue to live in peace.'

St. Paul of the Cross

Pope Francis

Evangelii Gaudium

The Joy of the Gospel

"The parish is not an outdated institution; precisely because it possesses great flexibility, it can assume quite different contours depending on the openness and missionary creativity of the pastor and the community. While certainly not the only institution which evangelizes, if it proves capable of self-renewal and constant adaptivity, it continues to be 'the Church living in the midst of the homes of her sons and daughters.'"

THE WORD AT WORK: OUR WEEKLY REFLECTION

FR ISIDORE'S APPROACH TO LENT

Pope Francis has given me a fresh approach to celebrating the Holy season of Lent, which I hope you will find helpful. "Mercy," he wrote, "is the face of God"; Jesus gave a human face to divine mercy. We, who have been made in the image and likeness of God and, through baptism, share His very life as his sons and daughters, must radiate God's mercy in our daily lives.

We must begin with ourselves and our need for God's mercy, before we think of other people's guilt and their need for forgiveness. On Ash Wednesday, we expressed sorrow for our sins by receiving ashes -a very ancient way of expressing guilt and repentance. We should follow this up by seeking God's mercy -by going to confession. Surprisingly, this should be a joyful experience. Of course, none of us likes admitting we've done wrong. It's hard to be honest with ourselves, much more difficult with someone else. We feel ashamed and embarrassed, perhaps afraid the priest will be very fierce with us.

But always remember in this sacrament we priests are ministers of Christ's peace-making, meant to help you to find peace with God, peace within yourself. We are there to forgive, not condemn, to heal, not to inflict wounds. If you're nervous in coming to confession, you should leave with joy in your heart joy that God, in His loving mercy, has removed the burden of your guilt.

It's worth remembering that we priests need to confess our sins. We have the same sense of embarrassment and shame as anyone else, the same sense of relief when we've been forgiven. My approach to hearing confession is to try to show the penitent the same understanding and compassion as I hope and need to receive from God and those I have harmed.

Jesus repeatedly insisted that if we want to receive God's mercy we must forgive those who have harmed us. We must be as merciful as our heavenly Father is merciful. We must radiate God's 'face of mercy.' There's great scope for us to be peacemakers in our daily lives. We hurt each other and we get hurt, sometimes accidentally, sometimes deliberately. Instinctively we argue, "It was his or her fault; they must make the first move." But that's not God's way, nor can it be ours. Though completely innocent, He took the initiative at repairing our relationship with Him, damaged by sin. As images of God, reflecting His mercy, we must make the first move, whoever was at fault. That's the quickest, the only way to restoring the peace for which we all long. That certainly was the approach of the crucified Christ. There, on the cross He has shown how much He loves each one of us -"Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends," (Jn. 15. 13). But Jesus' love went much, much, much further -He prayed for the very people responsible for His brutal, unjust execution, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing," (Lk. 23. 34). In the crucified Jesus we see the human face of God's loving, healing mercy. That's what we are preparing to celebrate during Lent. This will reach its triumphant climax in Holy Week.

During this sacred season let us focus on Mercy being the Face of God. First, we must seek the healing balm of His forgiveness. As God's children let us concentrate on reflecting the face of His mercy. In other words, let's take the initiative in healing the wounds we have inflicted, the wounds we have suffered. That means having the courage to say, "sorry," the generosity to forgive.

Especially during this Lent let's determine to be peace seekers and peace makers. Let's make Lent a special time for bridge building, for repairing the damage caused by demolition experts, including ourselves!

Isidore Clarke O.P.



HOLY CROSS PRIORY CHURCH

SUNDAY 5TH MARCH 2017

FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT, YEAR A

· A ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISH · THE DOMINICAN PRESENCE IN LEICESTER SINCE 1247 ·

FROM THE PRIOR'S DESK

The Holy Season of Lent has begun. It was truly wonderful to see so many people at Mass on Ash Wednesday, and to be able to visit so many others in our schools, universities, our hospital and our prison. Lent is a great season for solidarity in prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

Over the last number of weeks, the Dominican Community has been touched by the solidarity of the people of Leicester. Our small numbers, the recent burglary, and the challenges facing our community have been met with compassion. We invite you to join with us in offering our Lenten observance for the growth and strengthening of our community.

One special moment in the week ahead is the University of Leicester Chaplaincy Lecture. This has been a key moment of our chaplaincy live during the past 25 years, and we are pleased to be welcoming Francis Campbell to Leicester for this lecture. It would be great to see you there. Our usual Station Masses for Lent begin this week also – St Thomas More, Wednesday at 7:30pm.

Be intent on prayer, and all that may happen will turn to our good.

Fr David

A BLESSED SEASON OF LENT

It was great to see so many people at Mass on Ash Wednesday as we began our Lenten observance. Each Wednesday and Friday of Lent, the Stations of the Cross are held following Mass at 12:30pm. The Relic of the True Cross is venerated each Friday. During Lent we hold **Station Masses** around the different churches on Wednesdays. The first of these will be on Wednesday of this week at 7:30pm at St Thomas More Knighton, and the next at Holy Cross on 22 March.

DOMINICAN ROSARY PILGRIMAGE TO ITALY IN JUNE

From **Wednesday 14-21 June 2016**, a pilgrimage to sites associated with Our Lady and the Holy Rosary, including Loreto, the site of the Holy House, the great Franciscan Shrines at Assisi, St Padre Pio's Shrine in San Giovanni Rotondo, and Pompei, the Shrine of Our Lady of the Rosary. Inclusive price: £1,165. Please see the flyers, and make contact with Fr David if interested.

UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Students from both our Universities are reorganising their Catholic Societies, so if you're a student, and you're interested in getting more involved with other Catholics at University, contact George who will point you in the right direction. george.ralph@english.op.org

NOTICE BOARD

BAPTISM PREPARATION

If you wish to have your child baptised, please attend one of our baptism preparation sessions. The next is Sunday 5 March, after the 10:30am Mass in St Clement's Hall.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION CONFIRMATION

Please get in touch with the Priory Office if members of your family wish to celebrate these sacraments.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION

Couples who are preparing for the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony should make an appointment with the Parish Priest in the first instance.

BECOMING CATHOLIC

Any adult who wishes to become a Catholic or receive Confirmation should join our RCIA programme, which begins in the Autumn Term.

VISITING THE SICK

The Faithful who are sick and housebound can arrange a visit from a priest or special minister by calling 0116 252 1501.

FAMILY VISITS

Families who would like a house blessing or a pastoral visit at home, can make arrangements by calling 0116 252 1501

CATHOLICISM 101 – THIS THURSDAY AT 7PM

Catholicism 101 this term will focus on the Church's moral teaching, and is entitled: *Living Life to the Full – becoming a joyful and faithful Catholic*. There are three further sessions this term, focussing on conscience, just war, and vice and virtue. We hope to develop further themes next term. Please come along and bring your friends.

PILGRIM VIRGIN STATUE VISIT TO HOLY CROSS – JUNE 1ST

The **National Pilgrim Virgin Statue of Our Lady of the Rosary of Fatima** will visit Holy Cross on **Thursday 1 June 2017**. The statue is making a pilgrimage round the country to mark 100 years since the apparitions at Fatima, and we are very privileged that it will come to Holy Cross. More information will be available soon

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER CHAPLAINCY LECTURE 2017

We are pleased that Francis Campbell, Vice-Chancellor of St Mary's University Twickenham and a former Ambassador to the Holy See, will visit the University of Leicester this week to deliver the Chaplaincy Lecture for the Silver Jubilee of the Chaplaincy. The lecture is entitled "Faith and Education – Challenges and Contributions, and takes place at the Rattray Lecture Theatre at 5:30pm. It promises to be an interesting evening for all those interested in Catholic education and in matters relating to chaplaincy within education. Please do come along if you can.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Our Sunday Holy Hour, 6-7pm – Rosary, Compline, Benediction.
- Organ recitals, first Friday of each month at 1:15pm. A very nice way to spend a lunchtime.
- Race Night - Saturday March 25th at Holy Cross. Tickets available now in the shop.
- Blackfriars' Market - May 2017, Planning meeting 6th March -1930hrs, please come along and help make it a success and contact Jeff on hcross.social@gmail.com if you can help in any way.
- 8.00 Mass Breakfast Club and 10.30am Meet for a Treat continues today Sunday 5th March. 8am is Continental Breakfast and 10.30am is Sweet treat for Goa, please come and join us.

THE DOMINICAN COMMUNITY

Fr David Rocks OP PP *Prior*; Fr Isidore Clarke OP;

Fr Fabian Radcliffe OP; Fr Robert Gay OP CC *Subprior, Bursar*.

Office Administrator: *Mrs Rachael Powell* – leicester.admin@english.op.org

Lay University Chaplain: *Mr George Ralph* – george.ralph@english.op.org

Director of Music: *Mr Thomas Keogh* – thomas@thomaskeogh.co.uk

For the Office Administrator, please call **0116 252 1501**

Holy Cross Priory, 45 Wellington Street, LE1 6HW. Tel: 0116 252 1501

For more details, visit: www.holycrossleicester.org

MASS TIMES

Sundays:

8am; 10:30am (sung);
12:30pm (old rite);
7pm

Weekdays:

8am (old rite);
12:30pm; 6:10pm

Saturdays:

8am (old rite);
10am; 12.30pm;
6:10pm Vigil Mass for Sunday

CONFESSION

Saturdays:

10:30-11:30am
5:00-6:00pm

MONEY MATTERS

Last week's collections:

£ 1314.97

(Gift aided: £ 431.80)

Woodhouse Collection

£ 174.00

(Gift Aided: £111.00)

*THANK YOU FOR YOUR
CONTINUED SUPPORT!*