



HOLY CROSS PRIORY CHURCH

SUNDAY 18TH MARCH 2018

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

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

A WORD FROM THE PRIOR ...

The strains of Hail Glorious St Patrick had just faded away when the purple veils were brought out, announcing the beginning of Passiontide. We now move into that most important part of the Church's year, when we follow Christ to the Cross, and pray for a glimpse of the resurrection that lies ahead for us. As we act the story out, we reflect on the deep meaning it has in all of our lives, and we see its particular relevance to the world we inhabit.

We're well used to our Lenten observances at this stage. Hopefully, each of us will have the opportunity to spend some extra time in reflection and prayer during this holy season. The liturgies will carry us along as we enter the Sacred Triduum, but before that, each of us needs that little bit of space to allow the meaning of the Lord's Cross to become more apparent in our lives, and in the lives of those we love.

15 – 24. I think those were the numbers of the week ...

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

Fr David

PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH IN INDIA – PRAYERS AND ACTION

During the past week, we have been keeping in contact with Fr Thomas Rathappillil, who has made us aware of the severe challenges he faces in continuing his ministry to the destitute dying in his hospices. Fr Thomas is a priest of the Diocese of Leeds who is working in the Dindigul District near Madurai and in Kancheepuram District near to Chennai in the state of Tamil Nadu, India. He has been a friend of our community for a number of years. Thankfully, it seems our prayers are being heard, and Fr Thomas has now obtained court orders to enable him to continue his invaluable ministry in the hospices. We will keep in touch with him, and please keep up the prayers.

LENT AT HOLY CROSS

In addition to the Catholicism 101 course that will see us through Lent, we will have Stations of the Cross each Wednesday and Friday after 12:30pm Mass, and veneration of the Relic of the True Cross on Fridays. We will renew our commitments to Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament after the lighting is completed.

NOVENA IN HONOUR OF ST JOSEPH

The Novena to St Joseph runs from 11 – 19 March. This year, the Latin Mass Society have arranged to have Mass offered daily for the safeguarding of unborn children in the forthcoming Irish referendum. We will also remember the intentions of Fr Thomas's hospices in India, and for those who suffer persecution. Please do pray the Novena in your homes.

SHROUD OF TURIN EXHIBITION

There is currently an exhibition in St Peter's Church, Hinckley Road. It is worth a visit to learn more about the shroud.

NOTICE BOARD

BAPTISM PREPARATION

If you wish to have your child baptised, please attend one of our baptism preparation sessions. The next is Sunday 4 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 will begin in the next few weeks.

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

SPRING FORWARD – CHANGING THE CLOCKS

Please remember that clocks go forward one hour next Sunday morning, so we will have a little less time in bed. Make sure you keep a note and that it doesn't make you late for Mass. Do also remind any vulnerable or elderly people you might know.

HOLY WEEK 2018

Looking ahead to Holy Week, we are glad that Fr Christopher Thomas will preach our Holy Week Retreat this year. Fr Chris is a priest of this Diocese and has been a very good friend of our Community for many years. Please see the separate leaflet with the details.

BLACKFRIARS MARKET – 20 MAY 2018

We have begun to think about Blackfriars Market, the most important fundraising event in our calendar. Over the last number of years, this event has helped us raise £60,000 for the fabric and maintenance of the church and priory. This money has assisted us to address many issues with fabric within the priory itself. Over the next few years, we will need to turn our attention to facilities in the various halls and meeting rooms, as well as heating in the church. A successful Market in May will be a significant step towards addressing these needs.

HOLY CROSS SOCIAL GROUP

Holy Cross Social Group continues every Tuesday in St. Clement's Hall - doors open from 6.00-8.00pm. A great opportunity to meet for a chat and a bite to eat.

LEICESTER CATHOLIC STUDENTS

Catholic Wednesdays have concluded for this term, and we will meet to celebrate the term's work this week at 7pm for an international meal and party! Please come along, and bring your friends. Our weekly student email is the best way to keep in touch, as well as the Facebook page. So, if you're a student and you're not yet on the mailing list, you can give us your address using the blue form from the student table in the church.

CATHOLICISM 101 – LENTEN SERIES

The last in the current series will be this Thursday, 22 March, and the theme will be the Eucharist. We start with food at 7pm followed by a 40-minute video and discussion, in St Clement's Hall. Free entry. All welcome!

PARISH SHOP

Our Parish Shop is open each weekend, and every day after the 12.30pm Mass, come along and have a look at what wonderful items we have available. This is an excellent way of helping the church and priory. New stock has just arrived and there is now a First Communion and Confirmation Section and St Patrick's Day goods.

SOLEMNITY OF ST JOSEPH

A special Mass for the Solemnity of St Joseph will be sung in the Old Rite on Monday 19 March at 7:15pm. This will mark the conclusion of the Novena to St Joseph.

THE DOMINICAN COMMUNITY

Fr David Rocks OP PP *Prior*; Fr Isidore Clarke OP; Fr Fabian Radcliffe OP;
Fr Tony Rattigan OP *Bursar*; Fr Robert Gay OP CC *Subprior*; Fr Matthew Jarvis OP

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:

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:

£ 3,356.82

(Gift aided: £2411.50)

Woodhouse Collection

£ 114.00

(Gift aided: £51.00)

*THANK YOU FOR YOUR
CONTINUED SUPPORT!*

THE SCRIPTURES THIS WEEK

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

FIRST READING

Josiah was only eight years old when he ascended the throne. He was educated by wise guardians and grew up with a loving spirit, caring for the poor, respecting the law of the Lord. He carried out profound religious, political and social reforms. He thus awakened the dormant hopes of spiritual rebirth, a restoration of the glorious reigns of David and Solomon and a reconquest of the northern lands occupied by the Assyrians. Jeremiah carefully accompanied the political choices of the young king and, while not openly siding in his favour, he agreed to the reforms. It is in these years that the oracles of consolation contained in Chapters 30–33 were composed. Today's reading is taken from it. The prophet addresses the loving invitation the people who, for years, had endured many misfortunes: "Weep no more and wipe the tears of your eyes. There is hope for your descendants; your children will return to their own borders" (Jer 31:16). It is the announcement of the return of the Israelites deported to Nineveh by the Assyrians in 722 B.C.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Response: A pure heart create for me, O God.

SECOND READING

Today's passage focuses mainly on his reaction to pain and death. Jesus experienced what every person experiences in similar situations. He turns to the Father asking for help, if possible, to spare him from suffering and death (v. 7). He prayed, called on God to reveal his will, the sense of what was happening to him. The reading continues: "Although he was Son, he learned through suffering what obedience was" (v. 8). A few verses before the author had said: "He is able to understand the ignorant and erring for he himself is subject to weakness" (v. 2). These are moving statements. Jesus did not behave like those who give provisions, orders, carefully avoiding to become involved in the drama and anguish of those who have to perform them. He did not stay in heaven watching impassively human suffering. Instead he made himself a traveling companion. He was first to go through the path of humiliation and death. That's why one can trust him, when he calls to follow him.

GOSPEL

Jesus explains to the Greeks the true glory: to fall into the ground and die in order to bear much fruit. Now is the crucial moment of his mission and he was tempted to run away, to ask the Father to be saved from that hour. However, he knows that only through his death, the Father will reveal to the world his immense love for people. Behold the confirmation from the sky comes: in Jesus who gives himself, the Father declares himself perfectly reflected, to express the fullness of his glory. There is no need to have known Jesus physically to see him. Anyone can contemplate his true face, the one that, through today's gospel, he shows, a face "many have been horrified at his disfigured appearance" (Is 52:13); "He was despised and rejected, a man of sorrows familiar with grief, a man from whom people hide their face, spurned and considered of no account" (Is 53:3). In front of his proposal, the more subtle temptation is not that of refusal but that of falling into a religious practice in lieu of an authentic adhesion to Christ in faith. Recitation of prayers and participation in rituals and celebrations: yes; the gift of life... as little as possible and only with some doubt and hesitation. The face Jesus shows to all the "Greeks" requires a total commitment. His proposal is "a great scandal for the Jews and nonsense for the Greeks" (1 Cor 1:22), but only one who, like him, dies for the brothers and sisters, is a successful person according to God.

NEXT SUNDAY:
PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD (YEAR B)

"Whenever anything disagreeable or displeasing happens to you, remember Christ crucified and be silent.."

St. John of the Cross

THE WORD AT WORK: OUR WEEKLY REFLECTION

LEARNING TO OBEY GOD

Fr John Patrick Kenrick points to how we, like Jesus himself, have to "learn to obey through suffering".

Today's Gospel sets the scene for the forthcoming drama of Holy Week. Jesus is, in effect, telling his disciples both that his work of preaching is over and also – something difficult to grasp – that a final cosmic battle with Satan is about to begin. This battle will involve his death, but that death will be unimaginably fruitful in defeating evil and granting his followers access to eternal life.

What prompts this dramatic declaration is something fairly mundane, the significance of which only Jesus understands. Some Greeks arrive and want to see Jesus. He appears to show no interest in them. These are not Greek-speaking Jews but gentile Greeks. A meeting with them would surely be an opportunity for Jesus to expand his ministry. But he shows no interest. Philip and Andrew must have been perplexed by His reaction.

The arrival of these Greeks is the sign that Jesus has been waiting for – His message is beginning to spread to gentile lands. Paradoxically this means that His earthly ministry must now end – just as it is beginning to show promising signs of growth. Even so, here are potential converts – so why does Jesus ignore them?

It is easy for us to forget that Jesus' immediate ministry was primarily directed to his own people, the Jews. There is a very good reason for this. They are His people and God's chosen people. It is from them that He has been born and this is part of a divine plan which has been unfolding over the centuries, a plan in which the descendants of Israel are called to a two-fold witness – to witness in their faith to the one true God and in their manner of living, to be examples of fidelity to God's commandments. Like all human beings, the chosen people did not always live up to their calling to be a holy people. But their very failings served only to highlight God's love for them and His infinite mercy. The prophet Jeremiah reminds us of this mercy and he foretells a new era when God will recreate His chosen people by planting His law in their hearts.

It is Jesus who ushers in this new era. He is both a son of David and the Son of God. In Him a human will has so fully embraced God's law that it is a perfect expression of the Father's own will. His first priority, then, is to perfect his own people by living among them and acting as a channel of the Father's love for them. He will sacrifice everything to show them how to respond to the God who is our Father. If Jesus recognizes the privileged place of his own people in the divine plan, he also knows that there is a place in that divine plan for the rest of humanity too. As He tells us in this Gospel passage, by being 'lifted up from the earth', in other words by dying on the cross, he will draw everyone, Jew and gentile, to himself. And so after his resurrection He will send out his disciples to accomplish the second stage of His mission, which will be to the whole of the gentile world.

There is a hard pill to swallow in this Gospel because being drawn to Christ will involve 'hating our life in this world'. To serve Jesus means to follow Him says the evangelist; and to follow Him means to follow Him to the cross, because that is where He is now heading. The letter to the Hebrews offers us this further reflection on the human condition: that we all learn to obey God through suffering. Jesus himself in his passion and death demonstrates the need for 'suffering as a way to obedience'.

Most of us are careful to avoid anything that might involve difficulty or suffering. We are tempted to surround ourselves with comforts, says Blessed John Henry Newman, but these comforts corrupt our hearts and seduce us from God. It's just part of wanting to have things our own way and to be the centre of the world.

Yet, when we think about it, suffering is an ever present and important part of growing as a human being. The transformation from child to mature adult is no easy achievement. So it should not surprise us that suffering and sacrifice are also the way to grow in holiness. The main thing is not to fear sacrifice and to be willing to begin here and now to embrace the will of God in every moment of our lives.

'Easier said than done' you may say – and you would be right. But then it's not all down to us. It is the grace of Christ working within us which will refashion our will and transform our rebellious human spirit into loving and regular obedience. We only have to keep asking for that grace.