



HOLY CROSS PRIORY CHURCH

SUNDAY 7TH APRIL 2019

FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

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

A WORD FROM THE PRIOR ...

"It is all too good to be true." Those were the words with which Fr Fabian concluded his reflections on the Resurrection back in 2012. You can read that reflection again today in the Newsletter. It's a bit early for Easter, but I'm sure you'll join me in praying that Fr Fabian's gentle soul will now experience the blinding light of the resurrection.

It's been a difficult time for our Dominican Community, caring for the infirmities of our elderly brothers. It is also a great pleasure and privilege to witness their faith and forbearance. As one parishioner put it, our sadness at Fr Fabian's passing cannot but be tinged with joy at a life well lived

As we continue our preparations to mark the 200th Anniversary, and as we prepare for a time of renewal, surely we can be inspired by the legacy that Fr Fabian leaves us, with sixty-five years of faithful and consecrated service as a Dominican, 32 of them at Holy Cross. This makes our hearts grateful.

Please do look through our events, and get involved with the range of things that are happening.

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

Fr David

FR FABIAN RADCLIFFE OP, 1928 - 2019

It was with profound sadness that we said farewell to Fr Fabian, who died on Monday morning, 1 April. Fr Fabian was 90 years of age and has been a Dominican for 65 years, and a priest for 60 years. He has been in Leicester for half of his Dominican life, since 1987, and for three years was our Prior and Parish Priest. He was a person held in deep affection by so many people, and we have been overwhelmed by the extent of the good wishes we have received. We will miss his presence, but we must remember to pray for him. Please sign the books of condolence and light a candle to pray for the happy repose of his soul. Eternal rest.

FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS

Fr Fabian's remains will be received into the church on Wednesday evening of this week at 5:30pm with a celebration of Mass and Vespers. The Requiem Mass will be celebrated on Thursday evening at 11am, followed by burial at Gilroes Cemetery. You are most welcome to attend these ceremonies. The Prior and Community respectfully request that the utmost respect and consideration is given to Fr Fabian's relatives and close friends at this time, as they mourn their loss.

A WORD OF THANKS

On behalf of the Dominican Community, the Prior wishes to record a special word of thanks to all those who have shown especial kindness and consideration to Fr Fabian in the time of his illness. We are grateful to Diversity Care, who provided home care for Father when he was at the Priory, and to the staff at St Georges Care Centre. In particular, we are immensely grateful to the network of volunteers who arranged visits and support for Father in recent months and weeks. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass will be offered for you all.

NOTICE BOARD

BAPTISM PREPARATION

If you wish to have your child baptised, please attend one of our baptism preparation sessions. The next will be on Sunday 7 April 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 again in the Autumn.

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

LENT AT HOLY CROSS

During the season of Lent, we will have Stations of the Cross on Wednesdays and Fridays at 1pm, and Stations of the Cross with Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati on Fridays at 7pm. There will also be an extra opportunity for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament on Thursdays at 5pm. Scripture study sessions continue on Thursdays at 7pm in St Clement's Hall.

DEVELOPING THE FRASSATI CENTRE

Over the last few months, we have indicated the plans we are developing for a new pastoral centre here at Holy Cross – *The Frassati Centre for Preaching and Evangelisation*. This would seek to breathe new life into the original church buildings that we knew as the 'Holy Cross Centre'. We've assembled £180k so far to develop these buildings, and we are seeking to embark on a major fundraising project as we look towards our bicentenary. This week we have been pleased to meet with designers, thinking through the various scenarios, and have begun to prepare works to go out to tender. Please do pray for the success of the project

WHO IS BLESSED PIER GIORGIO FRASSATI?

He's the inspiration for our new initiative with developing our buildings and our apostolate, but who is he? He's a lay Dominican, whose life was marked by living the Dominican Charism in his everyday life. He was deeply devoted to prayer and study, and he inspired great fellowship with his contemporaries, and devoted himself to the service of others, especially the most vulnerable members of the community. We look forward to getting to know him more closely as we develop our apostolate.

GIFT AID BOXES

Your new Gift Aid Boxes are available for collection. They are on the table by the Wellington Street Entrance. Thanks for your continued generosity.

NEW ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE RECEPTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

Please do begin to come forward for communion when the server rings the bell at the priest's communion. We remind you that it is perfectly acceptable to receive communion on the tongue or in the hand, standing and/or kneeling. Self-intinction is forbidden by our Bishop. The worthy reception of Holy Communion is something that should always be before our minds and hearts.

ENCOUNTERING THE WORD: SCRIPTURE STUDY OF JOHN'S GOSPEL

Our scripture study sessions with Fr Matthew each Thursday evening at 7pm, continuing on 11 April. Please share the flyers.

APF "RED BOX" MISSION APPEAL

Fr Vincent, who visited us for the appeal earlier in the year, and his team wish to thank us all for the generous response to the appeal. Several additional people took the traditional "red box" away, while others set up direct debits. Please look out for future notices informing about the collecting of the red boxes for return.

THE DOMINICAN COMMUNITY

Fr David Rocks OP PP *Prior* Fr Tony Rattigan OP *Bursar*;
Fr Nicholas Crowe OP *Subprior*; Fr Matthew Jarvis OP *CC*

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

Lay University Chaplain: *vacant*

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:

£ 1052.92

(Gift aided: £259.10)

Woodhouse Collection

£ 123.00

(Gift aided: £81.00)

*THANK YOU FOR YOUR
CONTINUED SUPPORT!*

THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

A THOUGHT FOR THIS SUNDAY

We have reached the Fifth Sunday of Lent in which the Liturgy this year presents to us the Gospel episode of Jesus who saves an adulterous woman condemned to death (Jn 8: 1-11). While he is teaching at the Temple the Scribes and Pharisees bring Jesus a woman caught in the act of adultery for which Mosaic law prescribed stoning. Those men ask Jesus to judge the sinful woman in order "to test him" and impel him to take a false step. The scene is full with drama: the life of that person and also his own life depend on Jesus. Indeed, the hypocritical accusers pretend to entrust the judgement to him whereas it is actually he himself whom they wish to accuse and judge. Jesus, on the other hand, is "full of grace and truth" (Jn 1: 14): he can read every human heart, he wants to condemn the sin but save the sinner, and unmask hypocrisy. St John the Evangelist highlights one detail: while his accusers are insistently interrogating him, Jesus bends down and starts writing with his finger on the ground. St Augustine notes that this gesture portrays Christ as the divine legislator: in fact, God wrote the law with his finger on tablets of stone (cf. *Commentary on John's Gospel*, 33,5). Thus Jesus is the Legislator, he is Justice in person. And what is his sentence? "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her". These words are full of the disarming power of truth that pulls down the wall of hypocrisy and opens consciences to a greater justice, that of love, in which consists the fulfilment of every precept (cf. Rom 13: 8-10). This is the justice that also saved Saul of Tarsus, transforming him into St Paul (cf. Phil 3: 8-14).

– *Pope Benedict XVI*

Responsorial Psalm: what marvels the Lord worked for us, indeed we were glad!

THE WISDOM OF THE SAINTS OF THE CHURCH

The Word who became all things for us is close to us, our Lord Jesus Christ who promises to remain with us always. He cries out, saying: "See, I am with you all the days of this age." He is himself the shepherd, the high priest, the way and the door, and has become all things at once for us. In the same way, he has come among us as our feast and holy day as well. The blessed Apostle says of him who was awaited: "Christ has been sacrificed as our Passover." It was Christ who shed his light on the psalmist as he prayed: "You are my joy, deliver me from those surrounding me." True joy, genuine festival, means the casting out of wickedness. To achieve this one must live a life of perfect goodness and, in the serenity of the fear of God, practise contemplation in one's heart.

– *From an Easter letter by Saint Athanasius, bishop*

CONTEMPORARY WITNESS

Jesus indicates that we can break out of the vicious circle of sin. He tells the woman: "Go and sin no more." It is something, which we ought to consider seriously, especially, perhaps, when we prepare ourselves for the Easter confession. Do I really believe, that I can break away from my sins? Why do I go to confession? Of course, it is always such a great and liberating experience to know that my sins are forgiven. But confession should be more to me than a therapeutic exercise. It should be a way of thinking about my future, whereby I take real steps to avoid what harms me. And it all starts with what I actually believe. Do I believe that sin is no longer a necessary part of my life after baptism? Do I believe that I have been given sufficient grace? Do I believe that Christ lives in me and that he "by the power at work within us is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think"? Christ has conquered sin and death and we are united to him. I hope that the sure faith, that we are part of his body, and that nothing is able to separate us from his love, will give us courage and joy, and strengthen us.

– *Fr Benedict Jonak OP*

NEXT SUNDAY:

PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD (YEAR C)

“The higher we go, the better we shall hear the voice of Christ.”

Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati OP

BLINDED BY THE LIGHT

THE EXTRAORDINARY AND BEWILDERING MYSTERY OF THE RESURRECTION

In a slight anticipation of Easter, we offer these reflections of Fr Fabian on the Resurrection. May he rest in peace.

Without the Resurrection, the life and sufferings of Our Lord would have been meaningless. His death reveals the tragedy of human life when it is in conflict with God; but it also reveals God's compassion towards us despite our sin. And Christ's Resurrection shows that the love and forgiveness he displayed in his death leads to glory and new life. In him, death and resurrection cannot be separated.

The Gospels say that Jesus warned the Apostles that he would suffer and die, and then rise again. But the Gospels also say that they simply did not understand what he meant. Many, though not all, of the Jews at the time believed in resurrection from the dead; but they were thinking of a general resurrection in the future, when God would finally establish his Kingdom on earth and all the righteous would be gathered together in eternal bliss. They never imagined that one person would be resurrected ahead of all the rest.

So it is not surprising that the first reaction of the disciples to the report of the Resurrection was not joy, relief, gladness and rejoicing. The women who came to the tomb to anoint Jesus's body were told by the 'young man dressed in white': 'He has been raised; he is not here'. And they went out and fled from the tomb, for terror and amazement had seized them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid' (Mark 16: 5-8). St Luke says that when the women later reported to the Apostles what they had seen and heard, 'these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them' (Luke 24: 11).

In all the Resurrection appearances in the Gospels there is this mixture of belief and unbelief, of slow recognition and incredulity, of being sure but not yet sure. He was the same and yet transformed. They hesitated; it was all too good to be true. The two disciples on the road to Emmaus did not recognise him until he broke the bread for them, and then he vanished from their sight. Later, when they were having their breakfast of fish and bread by the lakeside, St John says: 'None of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?", because they knew it was the Lord' (John 21: 12).

If our experience of the Risen Christ is unlike that of the Apostles, it is much nearer to that of St Paul. He knew how the story had ended. He had heard, like us, that Jesus had been crucified. And he had also heard, like us, the report that Jesus had risen from the dead. But he resisted this, fiercely, passionately, so that he pursued the followers of Jesus even to death. Then suddenly the light broke in on him too. He was blinded, literally and metaphorically, dazzled by the light that shone on his eyes and in his mind. 'Who are you, Lord?' ... 'I am Jesus who you are persecuting'. The crucified, risen and glorified Jesus identified himself with those whom Paul was persecuting – and therefore also with all of us. Instantly, he recognised Jesus as Lord, and his life could never be the same again.

I think our celebration of the Resurrection is missing something here. We tend to associate fear and bewilderment with the Cross, and joy and new life with the Resurrection. And in a sense that is true. But the Gospels tell us that those to whom the resurrection was announced experienced bewilderment, terror and incomprehension. Perhaps we domesticate the Resurrection; we talk about it in a safe and comfortable way, like the glory of a beautiful sunrise. But this does not do justice to the overwhelming, blinding irruption of the God of glory made present to us in the face of the risen Christ.

The resurrection is continually happening for us. The light, the vision, is pouring into us. Our eyes may be dazzled by the light or blinded by seeing it. We try to open our blinded eyes to see him in Himself and in one another. At the same time the Resurrection is not yet, for us. It is still awaiting us. We are still in the darkness, and we walk towards the light in awe and trembling, hoping for courage. It is all too good to be true.

Fr Fabian Radcliffe OP
1928 – 2019