



HOLY CROSS PRIORY CHURCH

SUNDAY 25TH FEBRUARY 2018

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

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

A WORD FROM THE PRIOR ...

The ice blast that's promised for us this coming week is a timely reminder that we're 'not out of the woods' regarding winter weather yet, even though the days are longer and the gardens are beginning to waken up a bit. Sometimes we have to wait a bit longer if we are to understand things more fully. The Gospel today reminds us of that, as it encourages us on our Lenten journey.

We're beginning to feel the benefits of the new lights in the church now. Just a few more weeks until it's all installed and then we can give the church a good cleaning up in time for Easter. Our church is much loved by our congregation, but also by a great many people in the wider community.

There's plenty of things going on during Lent and hopefully you'll be able to take part. This year, we're having a special Lenten pilgrimage to the Rosary Shrine in London. This is an opportunity to give a few hours to God in the middle of Lent. We hope to do a similar one to Mount St Bernard during Eastertide. Do try and take part!

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

Fr David

SPECIAL EVENTS DURING THE SEASON OF LENT

On Saturday 10 March, we will have our Lenten Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of the Rosary at our Priory in London. The bus will depart from the Priory at 9:30am, returning at 7pm in the evening. We will have Mass at the Rosary Shrine, and an opportunity to learn more about the work of the Shrine and its history, in addition to Adoration and time for reflection, with the opportunity for Confession. A donation of £15 is requested. Please pass your name to Michael in the shop if you wish to attend.

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.

CHURCH LIGHTING PROJECT NEARING COMPLETION

The project nears completion with some final fittings to be installed in the transepts and the Lady Chapel. We think it looks well!

VISIT OF THE MASTER OF THE ORDER OF PREACHERS

Next Saturday, Fr Bruno Cadore OP will visit us in Leicester. He is the Master of the Dominican Order throughout the world, and the successor of St Dominic. Currently he is visiting all the priories in England and Scotland, and his visit is designed to encourage our communities to renewal of our Dominican life and mission, and it is an opportunity to share our experiences with him and to learn from him about the mission of the Order throughout the world.

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

ST PATRICK'S DAY, SATURDAY 17 MARCH 2018

The principal celebration of Mass for St Patrick's Day will be celebrated by +Patrick our Bishop at St Patrick's, Beaumont Leys at 11am. Shamrock will be blessed here at 12:30pm Mass and the annual Parade will take place, starting outside the church at 1pm. It is, of course, St David's Day on Thursday – so all the best to the Welsh!

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.

BLACKFRIARS MARKET 2018

As the spring approaches, we begin to look ahead, and we are now beginning to prepare for Blackfriars Market. This year it will be on Sunday 20 May. Very soon we will be gathering together to start the planning, so look out for further announcements very soon.

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

Our main student night, *Catholic Wednesdays*, will take place again this week (28 Feb) with a discussion on 'Church vs Choice? Abortion and Euthanasia'. Come along and learn more about these significant debates. Please note that food starts earlier now at 6.45pm! Our new 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, or by emailing Fr Matthew (matthew.jarvis@english.op.org) or George (george.ralph@english.op.org).

CATHOLICISM 101

The next in this latest Lenten series takes place this Thursday, 1 March. We start with food at 7pm followed by a 40-minute video and discussion, in St Clement's Hall. Free entry. All welcome! This is a great thing to do during Lent.

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. We have a small amount of St Pauls Missals available to purchase and St Benedict Crosses. New stock has just arrived and there is now a First Communion and Confirmation Section and St Patrick's Day goods are also available, so please drop in and have a look.

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:

£ 1,490.15

(Gift aided: £492.70)

Woodhouse Collection

£ 117.00

(Gift aided: £83.00)

*THANK YOU FOR YOUR
CONTINUED SUPPORT!*

THE SCRIPTURES THIS WEEK

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

FIRST READING

How can we grasp the message of this passage? The first lesson, the most obvious and immediate, is that the God of Israel rejects as an abominable crime, the sacrifice of children. It's always been a feature of the idols to claim human sacrifice. The God of Israel, however, stopping the arm of Abraham who was about to strike his son, has shown to be the Lord who loves life (Wis 11:26). Any attempt on life, even those perpetrated against a criminal, can never be passed as an act of love for God and his righteousness. The death, every form of death, is never in harmony with his will. If a religion imposes degrading practices, creates anxieties and fears, deprives the joy of living, liberty, and poses obstacles to the freedom and full development of the human person it does not render worship the true God but to an idol. The central message of the story is the loyalty of Abraham. He thought, erroneously, but in good faith, that God demanded from him the child. Well, the patriarch expressed his willingness also to this sacrifice. He had always blindly believed in the Lord. He left his homeland, renounced the security of his house and the protection which came from the family and from the tribe to which he belonged (Gen 12:1), cut the connection with the past, sure that God would fulfill his promise, would give him a land, a blessing and, above all, numerous descendants. Even when it seemed to him that God contradicted himself, even in the face of the apparent absurdity of life, Abraham unwaveringly maintained his faith. In every tragic situation, he continued to believe in the Lord's faithfulness. He passed every test. At the beginning of Lent, his faith is put forward as a model to anyone who intends to offer one's own life in the hands of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Response: Your ways, Lord, are faithfulness and love for those who keep your covenant.

SECOND READING

In the middle of his letter, Paul cannot help but cry out all his joy: "If God is with us, who shall be against us?" (v. 31b). He then goes on to imagine that sinners are brought before the tribunal of God, to support the process for their actions. They know they are guilty, but, having arrived at the place of judgment, here's the surprise: no one shows up to accuse them and no court stands up to condemn them. God, the only one who could stand as a witness, is instead the one who defends them. How can he accuse them, after having loved them to the point of giving up his only begotten Son (vv. 32-33)? Jesus, in turn, cannot pronounce a judgment against sinners: they were his best friends and he sacrificed his life for them (v. 34). This brief reading contains an indisputable statement: the love of the Father is final and gratuitous and cannot be cancelled by any sin; there is no infidelity of the man that is stronger than this love.

GOSPEL

Every year on the second Sunday of Lent, we are offered the subject of Jesus' transfiguration. The message of this passage is not immediately clear and easy to grasp because it is transmitted with a symbolic language and images that require an explanation. The scene is set in a secluded place, on a high mountain where Jesus led three of his disciples (v. 2). They will be witnesses of his agony in Gethsemane (Mk 14:33). Mark stresses the fact that "they were alone." Jesus acts as the rabbi who, when they wanted to reveal a secret or convey a very important teaching, used to retreat with the disciples in an isolated place, away from prying ears, to avoid being heard by those who were not able to understand or might misunderstand.

NEXT SUNDAY: THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT (YEAR B)

"Pray as though everything depended on God. Work as though everything depended on you."

St. Augustine

THE WORD AT WORK: OUR WEEKLY REFLECTION

LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

Fr David Sanders reflects on the darkness of suffering and the hopeful light of the Transfiguration.

Saint Peter must have felt relief by his experience of the Transfiguration. A few verses before in Mark's Gospel he had really been deflated by Christ's words to him. Why? Peter in a moment of revelation had publicly acknowledged that Jesus was the Messiah. And no doubt he had seen the implications of this announcement for himself. He could see himself as Christ's right hand man in a thriving Kingdom of God. But then Jesus had added words which Peter did not want to hear. He prophesied that there would indeed be glory in a resurrection after three days but before this Jesus must suffer grievously through public rejection and death. Peter wanted the glory but not the suffering. And at this point Jesus corrects him severely, telling him he is a scandal and sees things from a purely human point of view not as God sees them.

Peter must have been confused by this put-down and probably dazed as he heard Jesus go on to say that only by being willing to lose your life will you save it. But then a few days later comes the Transfiguration and Peter's relief. Jesus leads him and James and John up a high mountain. And now there is an even greater revelation. Jesus is transfigured and his clothes become a dazzling white, a symbol of divine glory. And there on the mountain talking to Jesus are the great prophetic figures of Israel, Moses and Elijah who according to some traditions did not die but were exalted to heaven. Now this this is what Peter was hoping for –an experience of heavenly glory separated from the miseries of earthly reality. We are told that the disciples are terrified but for Peter it may have been sort of ecstatic terror. He is beside himself with excitement.

It is as though he wants to capture this divine mountain-top experience in some kind of liturgical event, recalling a great feast like Tabernacles. This is really what Peter has been seeking but clearly he is not too sure what he is asking for when he says to Jesus 'Master let us make three tabernacles, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.' The Transfiguration is a powerful vision but it needs a word to interpret it; eye and ear must be opened so we can see and hear clearly. Finally the word comes in the voice of the Father as the cloud overshadows them.

There is no sharp separation between heavenly and earthly, between divine and human in Jesus. When he is transfigured the divine glory breaks out through his humanity. His body is transfigured. Jesus will save us through taking on the sufferings of the world not by separating himself from them. The glory will come for certain in the resurrection but first he will show a divine love in giving himself in sacrifice. And this is what the Father confirms from the cloud. 'This is my beloved Son, listen to him.' Jesus' words will help Peter not only to understand the vision but the path of suffering which promises to bring life out of death.

They come down from the mountain top. As soon Jesus and the disciples are down to earth the sufferings of the world impinge. A father desperate for a cure for his dumb and epileptic son pleads with Jesus to help. He heals the boy. It is a sign that God's kingdom is breaking through and pushing back Satan's kingdom. Jesus continues his journey to Jerusalem. There his glory will be revealed not apart from his humanity but in weakness and pain as he hangs on the cross. As St Paul writes to the church at Corinth 'we have been given the light of the glory of God in the face of Christ.'

Peter can help us on our Lenten journey. Most of us resist the prospect of suffering. We want to belong to Christ's Church but we would prefer that it was a thriving community. But a thriving community in our modern world means the exclusion of suffering. It means being respected, possibly envied, and probably growing in numbers. After Pentecost when Peter received the Holy Spirit he was called to lead the Church. At first glance it looks as though the story of the Church in the Acts of the Apostle is one of success; it gets bigger and better. It is a thriving community. But Peter found very soon that thriving included suffering. The Holy Spirit drove Peter and then Paul to new missions but also into prison. But the Holy Spirit also gradually shaped their inward lives to conform to the pattern of Christ's death and resurrection. A thriving Church may provoke and offend but it will certainly suffer.

Amidst the many worldwide sufferings of the Church today, which Lent tell us is part of the vocation of a Christian, the wonderful light of the Transfiguration shines in the darkness and reminds us as Paul discovered for himself 'the sufferings of the present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.'