



# HOLY CROSS PRIORY CHURCH

SUNDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2018

FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

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

## A WORD FROM THE PRIOR ...

*The familiar cry of Laetare – Rejoice – reminds us that Lent is proceeding apace. Next week we will veil all our religious images, and soon we will be processing with palm branches. It really is a cry of encouragement, especially if we're weary with our burdens. It's a reminder that we can find contentment in the midst of trials, if we hold on to hope. That's something we need to learn, and the best teachers are all around you! We can only really learn this from loving one another.*

*That's why our concern for one another is so important. On Saturday there was a coffee morning to celebrate the One Roof project that has reached out to homeless people this winter through a multi faith arrangement here in our city. Today our prayers are requested for our persecuted brethren in India. We must be always attentive to different needs, and pray for guidance and support.*

*It was a great day for the Irish on Saturday. Hopefully it is only a foreshadowing of the great day we will have next week. Lá fhéile Pádraig sona dhaobh!*

*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. The Catholic Press in this country have now taken up his story, and hopefully awareness will be raised in the next few days. It will then be easier for us to do more about lobbying politicians and raising awareness of the persecution of Christians in particular, and indeed other faith groups. As we begin our Novena to St Joseph this week, we will hold this intention in our prayers, and ask for guidance for a way forward.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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 – 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

Our main student night, Catholic Wednesdays, continues this Wednesday. Meet in St Clement's Hall after the 6.10pm Mass: there's food at 6.45pm, followed by talk and discussion. 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

We meet this Thursday (15 March) to consider the role of the Blessed Virgin Mary in our salvation. 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](mailto:leicester.admin@english.op.org)

Lay University Chaplain: *Mr George Ralph* – [george.ralph@english.op.org](mailto:george.ralph@english.op.org)

Director of Music: *Mr Thomas Keogh* – [thomas@thomaskeogh.co.uk](mailto: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](http://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:

**£ 1,197.77**

(Gift aided: £344.50)

### Woodhouse Collection

**£ 113.00**

(Gift aided: £58.00)

*THANK YOU FOR YOUR  
CONTINUED SUPPORT!*

# THE SCRIPTURES THIS WEEK

## FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

### FIRST READING

We are in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. Many years have already passed since Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem and deported to Babylon those who had escaped the sword (vv. 19-20). The exiles have returned to the land of their fathers, but they still cannot give a reason for the disaster that hit them. Why—they ask—has God allowed the destruction of the temple and the holy city? The first part of the reading dissolves this enigma (vv. 14-18): Israel has been hit because of her infidelity and the senselessness of its leaders and priests. The Lord loved his people, cared for her, sent the prophets to show the way of life, but Israel despised the words of his envoys. They scoffed at and persecuted them. God then was seized with rage and punished, without remedy, the people, who was defeated and humiliated by the Babylonians. The second part of the reading (v. 21) introduces a second example of rigorous retribution. Before the invasion of the Babylonians, Israel had neglected the observance of the sabbatical year. She had not left the ground to rest every six years, to enable the poor and the animals to feed themselves on wild fruits of the land (Lev 26:34). This is why God had counted this infidelity on his people, sending her into exile for seventy years, so the earth rested all the time that she had been “taken away”.

### RESPONSORIAL PSALM

*Response: O let my tongue cleave to my mouth if I remember you not.*

### SECOND READING

In This passage is placed in the context from which it is taken, the second chapter of Letter to the Ephesians. It starts presenting, in dramatic terms, the condition of man away from God and from salvation. Who lives a corrupt life, who is a slave to his vices is not building his own life, is simply consuming his existence, is already dead. Paul included himself among those who were in this desperate condition: “All of us belonged to them at one time and we followed human greed; we obeyed the urges of our human nature and consented to its desires. By ourselves, we went straight to the judgment like the rest of humankind.” (Eph 2:1-3). At this point in our reading, God, full of love and mercy, intervened to free man and he raised him, with Christ, to new life (vv. 4-7). This salvation is not a reward for our good deeds, but it is a totally free gift of the Father, so that no one can boast of the good that he finds in himself, even less, to despise one who, unfortunately, has not yet opened his heart to so much grace.

### GOSPEL

Nicodemus, who understood little or nothing of what Jesus had said about the need to be “born from above,” certainly knew even less on raising the Son of Man. He surely was surprised, shocked, maybe even a little disappointed. He listened in silence, unable even to make one last question. He could not understand why he lacked the light of the Risen Christ and the claims of Jesus remained shrouded in mystery. It is not so for us today, in the light of the events of Easter, we are able to understand: to look at Jesus “lifted up” means “to believe in him” (v. 15), keeping the eyes focused on the love that he has shown. The cross is not an amulet worn round the neck or a symbol indicating the conquest of a territory or the consecration of a room. *It is the reference point of each gaze of the believer* that, in it, the proposal of life made to him by the Master is summarized. Slaves ended up on the cross, only slaves. On the Cross, Jesus proclaims that the fulfilled man according to God is one who has voluntarily made himself slave for love, servant of his brothers even to the point of dying for them.

### NEXT SUNDAY: FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT (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

## ARE WE LIKE THOSE PEOPLE?

*Fr Richard Conrad guides us to examine ourselves, and asks if today's decline in Faith is a rebuke to us.*

The first readings for Sundays 1 to 4 of Lent sketch for us the history of salvation, reminding us that, from humanity's beginnings, we have needed, and received, rescue from sin. On the 5th Sunday we hear a prophecy of what that history of salvation pointed forward to: Jesus' Passion and Resurrection, and his Gift of the Spirit. That was the New Covenant, God's ultimate pledge of loyalty; it was God's *great* saving deed, which won eternal life for all humanity.

In the Gospel readings for Sundays 3 to 5 in this Year B of the cycle, Jesus himself points forward to that great deed, when his Body, the true Temple, would be lifted up on the Cross so as to pour forth the Living Water. Like the grain of wheat that must be buried to yield a harvest, he would empower us to give our lives in union with him so as to rise in glory.

Today's first reading summarises the story of the Temple's destruction and the Exile in Babylon, which took place soon after 600 BC. It tells us why God allowed these traumatic events to befall his People: they had not remained faithful to him, they had resisted the Prophets, they had worshipped false "gods" alongside the True God. We think of the Prophets' complaints against failure to practise justice or care for the poor. We must be careful how we receive such texts, otherwise we may twist God's Word into an occasion of sin.

The temptation to pride is insidious. Some Christian writers, some Christian artists, have implied: "We are not like those people of old, whom the Prophets told off. God rejected them, and rightly so. He called us in their place, and made us faithful to him. We Christians are better than those Jews, so God will never have reason to reject *us*." If we have such thoughts, we must re-read the Scriptures, and ask why the Liturgy gives us readings like today's.

*Of course* God will never reject his People. That is because he is faithful to his Covenant with Noah, his Promise to Abraham, the fierce love he revealed through Moses – we have been listening to those. For St Paul, Jesus does not abolish the Promise to Abraham. He fulfils it, and graciously opens it to all nations. The Letter to the Hebrews agrees with St Paul that the Old Testament rituals could not achieve what Jesus' Sacrifice did. It also reminds us that throughout Old Testament times there were heroes and heroines of faith and hope, a cloud of witnesses to inspire us. So St Augustine describes how, throughout human history, there has been *one* City of God, *one* People of faith and hope, looking forward to Jesus' Coming – in times past, to his First Coming, and now to his Second. For God's loyalty to his People, God's loyalty to humanity, has always ensured that some people are loyal to him, and grieve over the sins they see. By "God's loyalty" I mean what was revealed and enacted in Jesus' Sacrifice. He said that when he was lifted up, he would draw all things to himself. Hence the Mediaeval English Liturgy for Holy Saturday says, "Opening your arms on the Cross, you drew *all* ages to yourself."

Scripture shows us *some* people resisting God, and *some* traumatic events as punishments for sin. St Paul sees such writings as a warning to us. The Liturgy does not give us such texts so that we can pride ourselves, but to make us *examine* ourselves. After all, Jesus himself warned us that calling him "Lord, Lord" does not ensure entry into his Kingdom.

Traumatic events have happened to the Christian People. Great houses of God, like Cluny, have been destroyed. England retains many such ruins – where the rich did not cannibalise the stones for their mansions. In penal times, many Martyrs gave their lives in solidarity with Christ, many people grieved. But were such times of destruction possible – were they *allowed* – because the Gospel had not penetrated Christian society deeply enough in "the Ages of Faith"? Civil rulers had waged dynastic wars, claimed authority over the Church, and hanged poor people for poaching! Some Church leaders had succumbed to greed.

And today: many people are ignorant of Christ; we worry how easy it will be to practise our Faith. But: how good a witness have we borne? How well have we resisted "false gods"? Is today's decline a *rebuke* to us?

Into the Exile a sign of favour broke; Cyrus' decree promised a "resurrection" of the People. On Good Friday, when we hear Jesus reproach us, reproach *us*, let us review how truly faithful we have been, and pray that into our lives and our land signs of God's faithful love may break.