



HOLY CROSS PRIORY CHURCH

SUNDAY 23 SEPTEMBER

25 SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

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

A WORD FROM THE PRIOR ...

Greetings from Rome, where I've been working with the General Curia of our Order, thinking about how we Dominicans can help each other to persevere in our calling. In some ways, it's the same as what we do here every day – try to live our Christian call with authenticity. Looking forward to returning to the application of it all!

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

Fr David

A NEW PUBLICATION - WORKS OF MERCY

'WORKS OF MERCY' by Peter and Isidore Clarke, OP goes on sale today. Please pick up your copies after all our Masses at the price of £3. These are the fruits of over sixty years of the Clarke twins being involved in ministry, and celebrated during the Year of Mercy. Do please spread the word.

OUR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

At the beginning of October, all our 22 Catholic schools in Leicestershire will become "academies" and become part of the St Thomas Aquinas CMAT (Catholic Multi Academy Trust). We are grateful to our colleagues and governors in our schools for their hard work at this time of transition. Please see copies of Bishop Patrick's letter which explains what is happening.

NEW ACADEMIC AND PASTORAL YEAR

As the Academic and Pastoral year begins, we look forward to welcoming new students and to developing our programme of events and pastoral links. On Sunday 30th September at 10.30am, we will celebrate a Mass for the Opening of the Academic and Pastoral Year, asking God's blessing on all we will do in the year ahead.

LEICESTER CATHOLIC STUDENTS

If you're a newly arrived fresher, WELCOME to Leicester! We'd love to get to know you, so come and say hello to the priests after Mass. There's also a welcome event for you here on Wednesday 3 October, 7pm. Check out the noticeboard in church and our Facebook page for updates. And welcome back to our returning students: I look forward to catching up in the next week or two! – Fr Matthew, Chaplain to Leicester Catholic Students.

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NOTICE BOARD

BAPTISM PREPARATION

If you wish to have your child baptised, please attend one of our baptism preparation sessions. The next is Sunday 30 September 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

MONEY MATTERS

Last week's collections:

£1,090.03; (Gift Aid-£290.16) Woodhouse: **£ 102.20**; (Gift Aid-£46.00)

THE WORD AT WORK: OUR WEEKLY REFLECTION

CHRIST AND DISCIPLESHIP – TRUE AND FALSE IMPRESSIONS

Mark would not have made a good spin doctor! While he sets out to tell us the Good News of Jesus Christ, Son of God, his message seems to be very bleak. He casts the Christ in the role of the Suffering Servant of the Lord, who would be brutally executed on the cross. That certainly doesn't seem to be good news!

And in today's Gospel Mark presents the disciples in a very bad light. While Jesus foretells His Passion, they bicker over which of them is the greatest. They think only of their personal honour, glory and status and don't give a thought to Christ's future shame and suffering. How insensitive can you get! Throughout this Gospel Mark shows the disciples as completely misunderstanding and refusing to accept what it really meant for Jesus to be the Christ. If Mark had wanted to do a good P.R. job for the disciples, he should have stressed their strengths and kept silent about their weaknesses and failings.

So why did Mark present the Good News and the disciples' reaction to it in such a bad light? I think he wanted to convince us that not only the disciples, but also each of us, has to learn to accept Jesus on His own terms. For all of us there's the danger of trying to force Him to fit into a mould of our own fashioning. Like the disciples, we tend to think we know better than God. We feel He's let Himself and us down when He doesn't fulfil our expectations. We want God to conform to our wills, rather than us to His.

Mark wants us to learn from Jesus, and the disciples' misunderstandings, what is the true nature of Christ's mission and ours, as His followers. He and his followers are called to serve God, not our own selfish interests. Paradoxically, for Mark it's not the major self-important characters -Christ's hand-picked apostles -who show us what it should mean for us to be His true disciples. No, Jesus draws our attention to those whom the self-assertive would brush aside as being unimportant nuisances: for example, little children who welcomed Jesus with an innocent sense of wonder. Then there was the poor widow, who, in giving the little she possessed, was an example of the total commitment Jesus expects of all of us. Then there's the blind Bartimaeus who would allow no one prevent him from reaching and following Jesus.

We must follow Christ on the humiliating way of the cross, rather than seek personal status and glory. We, too, are called to be servants of the Lord. At times that will involve suffering the onslaught of temptations, and even persecution, which attempt to undermine our commitment to following Christ.

Mark's Passion Narrative is the bleakest of the four Gospels. And yet Jesus achieved His purpose at the very moment He appeared to be a total failure, utterly humiliated. It was through the cross that Jesus became the Christ –the Messiah saviour. For Jesus, for the disciples and for us service is the path to true greatness. That means –generous self-giving in sacrificial love.

Through adversity, rather than in spite of it, Jesus was triumphant. The same is true for us, His followers. That's the Good News of Jesus Christ, which Mark proclaimed. Mark only used the disciples' failure to understand this, in order to ensure that we wouldn't make the same mistake.

Mark realised that we can become discouraged by so much suffering in our own lives and in the world. That may lead us to doubt whether Christ did in fact defeat the power of evil. That could well have been true for the persecuted church for whom Mark was writing. Mark wanted them and us to realise that far from abandoning us, the victorious crucified Christ is with us, joining us as we fight His battle against evil. With Him on our side the battle is already won.

Instead of fobbing us, and them, off with unconvincing platitudes he sets out to strengthen our resolve as we share in Christ's battle against sin. For Mark Christ was victorious precisely in the apparent defeat of the cross, not afterwards. If we take up our crosses and follow Christ, we will share in the triumph of the cross. We will be true Christians, who identify with the crucified Messiah. That's the heart of the Good News as Mark sees it.