

THE ORATORY—dedicated to THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

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Registered as a Charity

Parish Weekly Newsletter

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March 21st 2010: THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT

A Temptation to be Resisted

Criticising the Children, Schools and Families Bill two weeks ago, we said its sex education provisions (PSHE) are incompatible with Catholic teaching.

On the Today programme on 23 February, and in writing to The Times on the same day, the Secretary of State Ed Balls made clear that 'Faith schools will not be able to opt out of statutory lessons on sex and relationship education' and 'will be required to teach the full programmes of study'. He went on: 'This includes education about contraception and the importance of stable relationships, including marriage and civil partnerships'. According to Mr Balls it also includes giving 'a balanced view' of and explaining 'how to access' abortion.

Mr Balls was explicitly describing the obligations of Faith schools under 'Amendment 70'. The obligations he described are incompatible with Catholic teaching. Some people – including some Catholics – suggest that Mr Balls' account of these obligations was mistaken. But surely the Secretary of State knows his own Bill?

Some Catholics, by contrast, have suggested that the amended Bill is actually consistent with Catholic teaching. They claim similarities between the Bill's approach to PSHE and some fundamental teachings of the Church. Any similarities, however, are illusory. They may look impressive; but under the surface momentous threats to Catholic education remain.

As usual when confusion reigns, there are 'buzz' words in abundance. In PSHE, the two most influential are 'diversity' and 'social cohesion'. 'Diversity' is used in various ways. 'Respecting human diversity', for example, means opposing prejudice towards minorities; in PSHE, the most important minority is of course the 'gay community'. Thus the Bill insists Catholic schools must teach that civil partnerships are 'stable relationships' analogous to marriage, give 'different views on homosexuality' and avoid '[teaching] homophobia'.

Some Catholics suggest this is consistent with the Gospel demand to embrace the God-given equality of every human being. Catholic schools, they claim, are adhering to the Faith by showing 'respect for diversity'. This is a fatal error. The Church teaches that human dignity makes demands which we may fail to honour (this is what 'sin' means). For the Church, some 'diversity' is incompatible with human dignity, and this includes active 'gay' sexuality. Catholic schools cannot teach this with integrity if out of 'respect for diversity' they are also obliged to explain that homosexual partnerships are 'stable relationships' like marriage; or that homosexuality itself can be thought of as 'equal' but 'diverse'. As we said, Catholics supporting the Bill should try presenting racism or paedophilia as 'equal' but 'diverse'; they will soon see the problem.

'Respect for diversity' is a Trojan horse. Far from the State's 'respect for diversity' being consistent with the Church's understanding of human dignity, our Catholic Faith means we must sometimes refuse 'respect for diversity'. Bullying, often wheeled out in this debate, is a smokescreen. Of course the Church opposes bullying. And of course she opposes 'homophobia' - if this means hating people identified as 'gay'. But 'homophobia', in our society, means a lot more than that. The Church's teaching on homosexuality itself is routinely accused of being 'homophobic'. Yet some Catholics seem to hope (or plan?) that our schools might avoid being tarred with the same brush.

And what of 'social cohesion'? This idea centres on 'core values' around which everyone, including the Catholic Church, is called to unite. In PSHE these 'core values' include teaching children 'responsible' sexual activity and 'the full facts of life'.

Some Catholics think the Church can unproblematically sign up to this. Who could object to teaching children 'facts' and 'responsibility'? Doesn't promoting such 'values' align the Church with what is best in society, helping her to do her bit for the 'common good'?

But the premise of all this is that boys and girls will, unavoidably, be sexually active. 'The facts' therefore include 'accessing' abortion, and 'responsibility' includes learning to use and 'access' contraception. 'Social cohesion' in PSHE means signing up to the Government's demoralised, fatalistic agenda of using 'facts' (abortion) and 'responsibility' (contraception) to reduce teenage ('unwanted') pregnancies. Education in chastity thus goes out the window.

We needn't speculate, but know from the horse's mouth, what the Government means by sexual 'facts' and sexual 'responsibility', 'respecting diversity' and avoiding 'homophobia'. For the Church to fall in with the State's agenda under cover of bogus 'theological' justifications would be disastrously misconceived. *Catholics promoting 'diversity' and 'social cohesion' in our schools must think again.*

Sunday March 21st: The Fifth Sunday of Lent (*Purple*)

- 8.30 a.m. *Low Mass*
- 9.30 a.m. *Latin Low Mass—1962 Missal*
- 10.30 a.m. *High Mass*
- 12.00 p.m. (*Families with young children*)
- 5.30 p.m. *Sung Congregational Mass*
- 7.30 p.m. *Vespers and Benediction*

Liturgical Calendar

Year 2 of the Lectionary at Weekday Mass and Psalter Week 1 in the Divine Office

Monday to Friday: Masses at 7.30 a.m., 12.45 p.m. and 5.45 p.m.

Rosary at 7.45 p.m. Benediction on Monday and Tuesday. Exposition on Saturday : 8.30—10.45 a.m.

Confessions are heard from 12.30 p.m. and from 5.30 p.m. until the end of Mass.

Stations of the Cross on Friday at 1.10 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Monday 22nd March: Monday of Lent Week 5. (Purple)

- **Blessing with St Philip's relic at 8 p.m.**

Tuesday 23rd March: Tuesday of Lent Week 5. (Purple). Optional commemoration of St Turibius of Mongovejo, Bishop

- **Benediction at 8 p.m.**

St Turibius (1538-1606) Born and educated in Spain, he was a brilliant scholar and was a judge before being ordained a priest. When the see of Lima in Peru became vacant he was appointed as a man of great moral strength and holiness to deal with the scandals and abuses which had developed amongst the Spanish masters and clergy. He travelled several hundred miles on foot to visit the native peoples, learning local dialects so that he could better communicate with them and convert them. He was also a strong and effective champion of their rights., which resulted in serious opposition to him amongst the Peruvian authorities. Nevertheless, he built roads, schools, religious houses and hospitals as well as founding the first seminary in the Western hemisphere. He is said to have baptised several hundred thousand souls, amongst them Sts Rose of Lima and Martin de Porres.

Wednesday 24th March: Wednesday of Lent Week 5. (Purple)

Thursday 25th March: Solemnity of the Annunciation (White)

- **High Mass at 8 p.m.**

The Annunciation: Today we celebrate the Solemnity of the Incarnation, the moment when Our Blessed Lady virginally conceived the Son of God. As she heard the Angel's greeting, "Hail, full of grace!" she pondered what this could mean. "Fear not Mary, for you will conceive and bear a Son." And she gave her consent: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it done onto me according to thy word."



Friday 26th March: Friday of Lent Week 5. (Purple)

- **Stations of the Cross at 1.10 p.m. and 8 p.m.**

Saturday 27th March: Saturday of Lent Week 5. (Purple)

- **Masses at 8 a.m. and 11 a.m.**
- **Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament from 8.30 to 10.45 a.m.**
- **Benediction at 10.45 a.m.**
- **Confessions from 10.55 a.m. to 12 noon & from 5.30 p.m.**
- **First Mass of Sunday (Palm Sunday) at 5.45 p.m.**

March 28th: Palm Sunday : (Purple)

Mass & Service Times:

- **8.30 a.m. Low Mass**
- **9.30 a.m. Latin Low Mass 1962 Missal**
- **10.15 a.m. BLESSING & PROCESSION OF PALMS (commencing in the College Sports hall)**
- **12.00 p.m. (Families with young children)**
- **5.30 p.m. Sung Congregational in English**
- **7.30 p.m. Vespers and Benediction**

Please pray for the sick: Agnes Healy, Mary Shafer, Douglas Ferrier, Geoff Jones, Kevan Bleach, Sarah Wallin, Tony Colqhoun, Pat Cartwright, Carolyn Knight, David Pritchard, Elizabeth Caswell, James Foynes, Michael McCann, Philip McCann and Tony Farmer. **Of your charity please pray for those who have died recently:** Celia Reddy and Patricia Jordan-Benjamin-Warner; **and of the souls of those whose anniversaries occur about now:** Marie Mealand, Gladys Morel and Peter Leicester.

Patricia Jordan-Benjamin-Warner's funeral is on Friday at 12.45 p.m. Reception of remains: before Mass. Celia Reddy's funeral will take place at St. Dunstan's, Kings Heath on Monday 30th March at 11 a.m.

The following are requested to read at Mass next weekend, March 27th/28th, Palm Sunday:

- Saturday 5.45 p.m.:** Anne Roebuck
- Sunday 8.30 a.m.:** Murray Wilson-Browne
- 12.00 p.m.:** Dennis Wood
- 5.30 p.m.:** Brendan Cummins

Collections:

The Fourth Sunday of Lent : 14th March, 2010
Offertory: £1,286
Second: Beatification costs: £596
Thank you

TODAY

THE SECOND COLLECTION THIS WEEKEND will be for the Diocesan Development Fund

HOLY WEEK TIMES OF SERVICES are available at the doors of the church. Please take one for yourself and any more for friends and relations who might not otherwise be able to get one. **Please note that many Masses and services are at unusual times during the Easter Triduum, from Maundy Thursday to Easter Day.** (Also, please see below re Palm Sunday)

THE PIETY STALL is open after all Sunday Masses (including after the Saturday 5.45 p.m. Mass). **Easter cards are on sale** including those being sold on behalf of Aid to the Church in Need. *There is a good selection of books for Lenten reading and meditation, and also a new CD of Cardinal Newman's Stations of the Cross read by Fr Guy with our own Oratory Choir singing Bach Chorales. Price £11.50.*

THIS WEEK

ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT will take place on Monday afternoon in the Cloister Chapel. There will be Holy Mass (at 2.30 p.m.), the Divine Mercy Chaplet and other prayers led by one of the Fathers, and the afternoon will end with Benediction at c. 4.30 p.m.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS on FRIDAY There are two opportunities to take part in this devotion: after the Lunch time Mass, approximately 1.10 p.m. and at 8 p.m. (the Rosary will be at 7.45 p.m. as usual)

OUR LENTEN TALKS conclude on Saturday at 11.30 a.m. with a talk on the priesthood of the Oratorian, Blessed Joseph Vaz.

THE SEVEN CHURCHES WALK This annual traditional devotion for Lent, based on St. Philip's custom in Rome, will take place on Saturday. At each church we pray two or more of the Stations of the Cross and during the walk we will pray the Mysteries of the Rosary. **PLEASE NOTE: This devotion is unsuitable for anyone who has trouble walking.** In addition, we have to walk at a good pace in order to complete the walk in the time allowed. However, even if you cannot manage the whole walk, you are welcome to join one or more "legs". We begin at 2 p.m. at St. Catherine's Church, Bristol Street and the approximate times at the other churches are: St. Chad's 2.50 p.m.; St Francis's

3.35 p.m.; Handsworth Convent 3.50 p.m.; St. Patrick's 4.40 p.m.; St. Paul's Convent, Vernon Road at 5.15 p.m.; returning to the Oratory in time for the Evening Mass at 5.45 p.m.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

PALM SUNDAY: Please note: *Palms will only be available after they have been blessed* (immediately before the High Mass). As mentioned above, the Blessing and Procession of palms commences at 10.15 a.m. in the college sports hall.

PRO-LIFE MORNING OF PRAYER AND WITNESS on GOOD FRIDAY: Walking commences after Tenebrae (8.30 a.m.), so at approximately 9.45 a.m., to pray outside the Calthorpe Clinic, Arthur Road. Please see the poster on the Notice Board for more details.

DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY AFTERNOON: Takes place on April 11th, at 2.30 p.m. Confessions (from 2 p.m.), Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Rosary and other prayers will precede Mass at c. 4.30 p.m. (A Plenary Indulgence is attached to this devotion, under the usual conditions).

THE DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE TO WALSINGHAM (Silver Jubilee Year) will take place on Saturday May 8th and will be led by His Grace, Archbishop Bernard Longley and Bishop David McGough. A coach will pick up from The Oratory and the total cost of £25 includes a cooked evening meal. Please contact Anne Roebuck on 0121 454 0130 to book.

THE DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES will take place from Saturday 29th May to Friday /Saturday 4/5 June. There are three choices of travel: Train fares from £589, Coach fares from £394 and Air fares from £710. (There are reductions for children under 14 on train fares and under 10 for coach or air fares). Booking forms are available from the Oratory House; or for sick pilgrims, who will travel by air or Jumbulance, please apply to Miss Elizabeth McDonald, 210 Somerville Rd, Small Heath B10 9HB.

NOTICES

Please remember your donations to the Lenten Alms Box which is situated at the top of the church, outside St Charles' chapel.