

THE ORATORY—dedicated to THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

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Registered as a Charity

Parish Weekly Newsletter



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This newsletter is available in large-print format. Ask at the Sacristy.

March 1st 2009: THE FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT



A SPIRITUAL BATTLE FOR JESUS...

On the First Sunday of Lent we hear each year one of the Gospel accounts of Our Lord's temptations in the Wilderness. This year we hear that of St. Mark. St. Mark's is the shortest Gospel, and the most condensed. Today's Gospel passage is a good example of his writing.

Mark tells us no details of Our Lord's temptations, unlike Matthew and Luke who tell us about each of the three of them in great detail. Instead he focuses our attention on several other things.

First, he tells us that *The Spirit drove [Jesus] into the wilderness.*" This took place immediately after Our Lord's baptism. On that occasion the Spirit had come down upon Him in the form of a dove, and the Father's voice had marked Him out as "God's beloved Son". Now St. Mark seems to tell us that Our Lord was *compelled* to go into the desert. This was not a whim

of His, but clearly followed on from His Baptism. Since it was at His baptism in the Jordan that He effectively took upon Himself His role as Messiah, "the Lamb of God", this time in the wilderness immediately afterwards suggests to us that it was a necessary preparation for His work ahead. The fact that He was *driven out* implies that Our Lord must have been in a sense *reluctant* to undergo this ordeal.

That reluctance can be understood when we read on that Jesus was "*tempted by Satan.*" The wilderness was understood in Our Lord's time as the place of chaos and the abode of evil spirits, precisely because it was so inhospitable and uninhabitable. Left in this simple unadorned way, the temptations take on more of the unnerving character of the wild surroundings in which they took place. St. Mark's account of this ordeal is the only one to include that small but significant detail that "*He was with the wild beasts*", which also increases the inhuman and frightening aspect of this strange event. We can imagine how dreadful the onset of night time particularly would be in such surroundings. What we can learn specifically from St. Mark's account is that Our Lord, with understandable reluctance, yet obedient to God the Holy Spirit's direction, willingly allowed Himself to endure some kind of contest of will with Satan in a place where Satan could play on His fears and put Him to the test. But St. Mark also tells us that "*the angels looked after Him*". This event was clearly a huge spiritual battle in which good and evil spirits were warring within our Lord's own spirit over His future work as Redeemer. The outcome of this was to be the beginning of His public ministry. Our Lord. St. Mark tells us immediately afterwards that "*Jesus went into Galilee. There He proclaimed the good news from God. The time has come, and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent and believe the Gospel* (which is the "Good News")."

...AND FOR US, TOO

What this brief account tells us is that our forty days of Lent must be a sharing in Our Lord's time of temptation. The Pope reminds us of the importance of fasting in his Letter for the Season of Lent, copies of which are still at the church Doors. He tells us that fasting recognises that God's commandments to mankind began with the command "*Thou shalt not eat...*" when He forbade Adam and Eve to eat of the Tree of knowledge of good and evil. Even before the Fall, then, we were commanded to fast, to abstain from food. Now fasting takes on a new meaning for us: as a sign of repentance for our sins and a desire to turn away from earthly sustenance to God. Our Lord said to Satan: "*Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God*" (Mt 4,4) Also in St. John's Gospel, Our Lord told the Apostles that the true food He sought was "*to do the Father's Will*" (Jn. 4,34). Giving up something in Lent is a most important part of our spiritual combat. As the Pope says, it "nurtures an interior disposition to listen to Christ and be fed by His saving word". If it is difficult at times, don't give up, but pray for the angels of God to come to your help. Be sure that they will if only you ask them!

Sunday March 1st: The First 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 or B of the Lectionary at Mass and Psalter Week 1

Monday to Friday: Masses at 7.30 a.m., 12.45 p.m. and 5.45 p.m. Rosary at 7.45 p.m.

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

Stations of the Cross at 1.15 p.m. and 8 p.m. on Fridays in Lent

Monday March 2nd: St Chad, Bishop & Patron of the Diocese. Feast. (White)

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

St Chad (d.672) A former pupil of St Aidan's at Lindisfarne, he became Abbot at Lastingham in Yorkshire. Soon he was ordained Bishop of York, but he humbly declined in favour of St Wilfred who had been appointed by the Pope. So when a bishop was required for Mercia, (St) Wilfred recommended Chad who made Lichfield his see. He was a zealous bishop who walked throughout his diocese visiting his flock "in the manner of the Apostles". Despite his elevated office, he was renowned for his humility and devotion, and after his burial at Lichfield, his tomb quickly became a pilgrimage site. During the Dissolution of the Monasteries under Henry VIII, Staffordshire Catholics managed to hide St Chad's remains near Sedgley until they were eventually enshrined in our Cathedral in Birmingham.

Tuesday March 3rd: Tuesday of Lent Week 1. (Purple).

- **Benediction at 8 p.m. Brothers of the Little Oratory meet in St Philip's Chapel**

Wednesday March 4th: Wednesday of Lent Week 1. (Purple)

Optional memoria of St Casimir.

St Casimir (1460-83) The son of King Casimir IV of Poland, he was imprisoned by his father for three months for refusing to use force to invade Hungary as he believed that to seize the throne of Hungary was unjust. He also refused his father's attempts to make him marry and instead devoted his life to prayer and good works, becoming a great friend of the poor. He lived a very austere life and died of consumption whilst visiting Lithuania. He was buried at Vilnius and his tomb quickly became noted for many miracles. He is Patron of Poland and Lithuania.

Thursday March 5th. Thursday of Lent Week. (Purple)

Friday March 6th. Friday of Lent Week 1. (Purple)

- **LENT FAST DAY**
- **STATIONS OF THE CROSS at 1.15 p.m. and 8 p.m.**

Saturday March 7th. Saturday of Lent Week 1.. Optional memoria of Sts Perpetua and Felicity. Martyrs. (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 the Second Sunday of Lent: at 5.45 p.m.**

Sts Perpetua and Felicity (d. 203) Both these women were married, but they were of different social standing: Perpetua was a woman of rank, whilst Felicity was a slave. They were imprisoned together at Carthage during the persecution under the reign of Emperor Septimus Severus, and were thrown to the wild beasts in the amphitheatre on this day, 203. They are mentioned in the Roman Canon of the Mass.

Sunday March 8th: The Second Sunday of Lent (Purple)

Mass & Service Times:

- **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 in English**
- **7.30 p.m. Vespers and Benediction**

Please pray for the sick Alf Cooke, Mary Cunliffe, Kim Potter, Raymond Colqhoun, Marie-Therese Jones, Margaret Casey, Carole Halls, Ingeborg Parkes and Nicola Moore-Bridger.

Of your charity please pray for the repose of the souls of those who have died recently: Craig Thompson, Leroy Fitzgerald and Betty Owen; **and of the souls of those whose anniversaries occur about now:** Fr Humphrey Crookenden of this Oratory, Elena Cozzi, Charles Slammon, Charles Henry Baker, Elsie Kraft, Elizabeth Houghton and Frank Hayward.

Kathleen Senger's funeral is on Friday at 12.45 p.m. Reception of remains: Thursday at 4.30 p.m.

The following are requested to read at Mass next weekend, March 7th/8th, The Second Sunday of Lent:

Saturday 5.45 p.m.: Brigid Hogan
Sunday 8.00 a.m.: Margaret Hawkins
12.00 p.m.: Chris Sammons
5.30 p.m.: Brendan Cummins

Collections:

*Seventh Sunday of the Year:
22nd February, 2009*

Offertory: £1,483
Second: Church heating: £636
Thank you

TODAY

The second collection today will be for the Maintenance of St Chad's Cathedral.

CLOISTER SALE: The Union of Catholic Mothers is holding a sale in the Cloisters. Proceeds will go towards the UCM's own funds and to Fr David Cullen, a White Fathers missionary working in Zambia. **Please give the sale your best support.**

THE POPE'S LENTEN MESSAGE ON FASTING is available at the Church Doors.

The ARCHBISHOP'S "WALK WITH ME" prayer books (price £1) and Calendars (30p) are available at the main Church Doors.

The PIETY STALL is open after all Sunday Masses. It also includes a wide selection of books for spiritual reading in Lent, and gifts for Baptism, Confirmation and First Holy Communion.

THIS WEEK

ADORATION AT REDNAL takes place this week on **Wednesday**, commencing with Mass at 2.30 p.m. and ending with Benediction.

Our TALKS on ST PAUL & HIS TEACHINGS in this Year which Pope Benedict has designated as the Year of St Paul continue on Saturday in the Lower Cloister Hall after the 11 a.m. Mass (approx 11.30 a.m.) This week the talk will be given by Fr Paul on the subject of "St Paul's Letter to the Philippians" **These talks are extremely interesting and informative. Please come along and encourage your friends in other parishes to do so.**

CATHEDRAL DEANERY VOCATIONS GROUP will meet at St

Patrick's, Dudley Road on Wednesday March 4th at 7:00 pm. All are welcome, to see how we can promote vocations to the priesthood and the religious life throughout our deanery and beyond.

FRIDAY IS A LENT FAST DAY and so the Second Collection next Sunday will be for the money you save from keeping this day. Proceeds will be sent to **Aid to the Church in Need (ACN)**

ST PAUL'S SCHOOL FOR GIRLS IRISH NIGHT, to celebrate St Patrick's Day, will be held at the school, in Vernon Road, on Friday 6th March from 7.30—11 p.m. Proceeds will be used for assisting the sick in a Pilgrimage to Lourdes. Please see the Poster for more details.

SOCIETY OF ST HUGH meets on Saturday March 7th at 2 p.m. in the Oratory House. All are welcome.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

EX CATHEDRA CONCERT 'Monteverdi made spiritual: In search of 1610' will take place in our church on Saturday, 14th March at 7.30 p.m. *Please note, we do not deal with ticket sales*

NOTICES

LENTEN ALMS BOX is by Plough and Harrow door and the gate to St. Charles's chapel (where Cardinal Newman's relics are displayed). As usual the proceeds will go to Fr. Hudson's Society.

YOUTH GROUPS: We hope to start up two groups for young people in the near future: one for young adults (aged 20-35) and another for teenagers. Some people have already expressed an interest in helping with one or another of these groups. Please watch this space for further information in the near future.