

A LIGHT IN THE DARKNESS

This week, on the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, or Candlemas, the candles used in Fisher House chapel are blessed. A good moment, then, to consider the custom of lighting candles in Church, to and ponder what it means.

Candles began as a practical measure; the early Christian community often worshipped in secret, and needed light. Acts 20:8 speaks of lamps burning during an early Christian meeting. But candles soon took on a symbolic value—easy enough to understand given the rich imagery of fire in the scriptures. God spoke to Moses from a burning bush, and went before the Israelites in the desert as a pillar of fire (Exodus 13:21). Jesus called himself the light of the world (John 8:12), and when he died darkness covered the earth (reflected in the Holy Week liturgy of Tenebrae, when candles are gradually extinguished). The Holy Spirit descended on the disciples as tongues of fire, and is called the ‘fire of love’. So there is a Trinitarian symbolism in the candle. More specifically, given the fabled purity of wax, early theologians compared the candle to Christ; the wax was his pure body, the wick his divine nature, united by the flame.

Candles are lighted on the altar for Mass as dinner candles (a sacred meal), and to recall the flame that consumes the offerings (a sacrifice). The most important candle is the Easter or Paschal Candle, which explicitly recalls the pillar of fire which led the Israelites through the desert, and symbolises the new life of Christ ‘dispelling the darkness of sin’; as it is lit, we intone ‘Christ our Light!’. Then, it is placed by the lectern, as the biblical stories of God’s dealings with his chosen people are read, literally, by the light of our salvation. From the Paschal Candle are lit baptism candles, symbolising the passing on of faith. Newly baptised are called ‘children of light’, and are to imitate the wise virgins with their lamps alight (Mtt 25). Candles are lit for the dead, to guide them on their journey, and so that our prayers for them remain bright after we have gone.

Bees, specifically mentioned in the Easter Proclamation, were believed to be especially pure, so their wax had a sacred property. St Ambrose (from whose mouth as a baby bees flew) called the Church a beehive, and ourselves bees, laying up honeyed treasure in heaven. This very purity of wax may explain the use of candles for the blessing of St Blaise.



FISHER HOUSE NEWSLETTER

Sunday 29 January: 4th Sunday of the Year

CALENDAR: WEEK I OF TERM

Sunday 29	4th SUNDAY OF THE YEAR 9.00 Sung Latin Mass 11.00 Sung English Mass Celebrant: Archbishop Kevin McDonald
Monday 30	12.30 Mass
Tuesday 31	1.05 Mass St John Bosco
Wednesday 1 February	1.05 Mass Conversion of St Paul 12.30 <i>Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament</i>
Thursday 2	1.05 Mass Presentation of the Lord
Friday 3	1.05 Mass Sts Lawrence, Dunstan <i>Blessing of St Blaise at Mass</i> 7.30 Compline
Saturday 4	1.05 Mass (EF) 4.30 - 5.30 <i>Confessions</i> 6.00 Vigil Mass of Sunday
Sunday 5	5th SUNDAY OF THE YEAR 9.00 Sung Latin Mass 11.00 Sung English Mass

CATHOLICISM FOR THE CURIOUS

A short talk on varied aspects of the Catholic faith, over lunch. Monday, 1.15pm. This week, *Is the Pope Infallible?*

DAVID ISAAC

Please pray for the repose of David's soul - he was tragically killed last weekend. David was received into the Church at Fisher House three years ago, and accompanied us on the pilgrimage to Rome in December. His funeral will be at 2.30pm on Monday 13 February at Fisher House.

GRADUATE SOCIETY

meets on Wednesdays at 7.30pm.

PRAYER COMMUNITIES

Small groups of students meet to pray, socialize, and support each other in faith. Prayer community meetings involve little commitment, and are held once every 2 weeks. Contact your college rep or Justin (yhjn2).

LEARN ITALIAN IN THE SUMMER

A Fisher House alumnus is offering a summer camp experience, in Reggio Calabria, for a group of about 10 students from Fisher House to learn Italian and experience

FISHER SOCIETY AGM

On Sunday 5 February at 12 noon, the new Fisher Committee will take up its office, and the new Chairman elected. Please consider attending and supporting this important aspect of the Chaplaincy life.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY

We would encourage all children to take part in the children's liturgy at 11.00am Sunday Mass. As well as providing a family-oriented catechesis, it allows the congregation in chapel a moment of quiet, particularly during the sermon.

SAINTS AND SCONES

Every Sunday afternoon, at 4.30pm in her office, Sr Ann discusses the life of a saint over a traditional cream tea.

FRIDAY COMPLINE

At 7.30pm, a relaxed and quiet half hour, with a meditation. If you are a singer or musician contact Fr Mark or Sr Ann.

MASS AT SELWYN

Monday 30th, at 6.30pm, followed by a drinks reception.

OTHER COLLEGE MASSES

Thurs. 16 Feb Pembroke
Tues. 21 Feb St Edmunds
Tues. 7 Mar Robinson
Wed. 8 Mar Queens'

- please watch the notice board for more details.

MEET THE CHAPLAINS #2

Fr Mark will hold an 'at home' evening on Wednesday 1 Feb., with a buffet supper, for second years. 7.30pm in the Great Chamber.

SILENCE

A discussion on issues raised by the film 'Silence' (and the book on which it is based) will be held on Monday 6 February at 7.30pm in the Great Chamber.

CONGRATULATIONS

to Tom Zawisza, who is to be confirmed today by Archbishop Kevin.

SR ANN'S OPEN OFFICE

Drop in for tea, cake, conversation. Friday afternoons, anytime between 3.00pm and 5.00pm.

PARLIAMENTARY INTERNSHIPS

The closing date for application for this scheme, run by the Catholic Church in England and Wales, is 10 February. Full details and an application form can be found on <http://faithinpolitics.org.uk/>

BABYSITTER NEEDED

5.30-8.30pm on Wednesdays: £30 for the 3 hours. Please contact Fr Mark or Sr Ann.

BLESSING OF ST BLAISE

The traditional blessing of throats

FOOTBALLING HONOUR

For two years, the More/Fisher trophy has adorned the Black Swan bar. Now Oxford want it back. You can stop them: sign up for the Fisher House football team outside the chapel.

FISHER FAMILIES

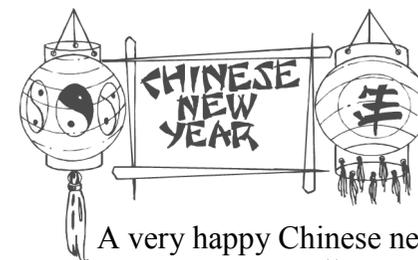
A group for young families, meeting every second Monday in the Fisher Room at 2.00pm. Contact Emma Boland (ejdt2).

DANTE CIRCLE

The next meeting will be on Wednesday 1 February at 5.30pm in the Great Chamber to look at Paradiso XXIII. All welcome. Translations provided and no knowledge of Italian necessary.

BOOK SALE

On Sunday 26 February, after 11.00 Mass, in the Fisher Room. Proceeds to HCPT.



A very happy Chinese new year to you all!

COLLECTION LAST WEEK

£347.69

Thank you!