

Beating the Blues: Advice from Aquinas.

This time of year can be tough. Christmas seems a long time ago; Easter is in the distant future. Minor but debilitating sicknesses abound, depleting our energy for study and socialising. The weather is often damp and dispiriting rather than crisp and invigorating, and for some of us the lack of sunshine and warmth can be genuinely oppressive. The spring will come, but, in the meantime, here is some advice from a perhaps unexpected source on getting through the worst of the winter.

St Thomas Aquinas, the 13th century Dominican theologian whose feast day we celebrated last week, suggests five potential ways forward, which are profound and yet surprisingly down to earth. First, we shouldn't be afraid to give ourselves treats. St Thomas doesn't specify what these are – he lived, after all, before chocolate was known in Europe – but the principle is clear. We are made for happiness, and even the simplest pleasures can help remind us that the darkness will not triumph in the end.

Secondly, we shouldn't be ashamed to weep. Tears can help, St Thomas tells us, to release us from the painful emotions that otherwise threaten to paralyse us in our sadness. He also understands that, since our bodies know instinctively what is good for us, and we do sometimes need the liberation that tears bring, there is a positive pleasure, sometimes, in having a good cry!

Third, we should feel comfortable, when times are difficult, in turning to our friends for help and support. We are made to bear each other's burdens, and reflecting on our friends' love for us is a powerful weapon in the fight against the low self-esteem which has nothing to do with true humility and which is itself a cause of sorrow.

Fourth, "contemplating the truth" will help in our struggle against sadness. Of course, this might mean saying our prayers and finding time for spiritual reading, but it might also mean reflecting on the truth, and the goodness and the beauty, to be found in nature, in art or music. Walking to Grantchester or visiting the Fitzwilliam, going to a concert or reading a poem, count as contemplating the truth!

Finally, St Thomas tells us, both baths and sleep can help when we are feeling low: common sense advice, but perhaps worth reminding ourselves. These suggestions are not miracle cures, of course, but they may just do a little to dispel the gloom. Try the Angelic Doctor's prescription, and have as happy a February as possible!

Sr Ann



FISHER HOUSE NEWSLETTER

Sunday 5 February: 5th Sunday of the Year

CALENDAR: WEEK III OF TERM

Sunday 5 February	5th SUNDAY OF THE YEAR 9.00 11.00	Sung Latin Mass Sung English Mass
Monday 6	12.30	Mass <i>St Paul Miki and companions</i>
Tuesday 7	1.05	Mass
Wednesday 8	1.05	Mass 12.30 <i>Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament</i>
Thursday 9	1.05	Mass
Friday 10	1.05 7.30	Mass <i>St Scholastica</i> Compline
Saturday 11	1.05 4.30 - 5.30 6.00	Mass (EF) <i>Confessions</i> Vigil Mass of Sunday
Sunday 12	6th SUNDAY OF THE YEAR 9.00 11.00	Sung Latin Mass Sung English Mass

NEXT SUNDAY

we welcome Fr Euan Marley OP, the Prior of Blackfriars, to preach at 11.00am Mass.

CATHOLICISM FOR THE CURIOUS

A short talk on varied aspects of the Catholic faith, over lunch. Monday, 1.15pm. This week, *The martyrs of Japan*.

DAVID ISAAC

David's funeral will be at 2.30pm on Monday 13 February at Fisher House.

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 Italian culture (and cooking!). Please contact Fr Mark (ml709) if interested.

LUNCH

is available Monday to Friday in the Fisher Room, priced

FISHER SOCIETY AGM

Today after 11.00am Mass, the AGM will see the election of a new Fisher Society Committee and Chairman. Please do support this essential part of the Chaplaincy's 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.

TAIZÉ PRAYER

Monday 6 February, at 9.00pm in the chapel. All are welcome.

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.

CARDINAL TAGLE

will speak on 'the Contributions of Catholicism to a secular university' on Friday at 4.00pm in the Garden Room at St Edmund's College.

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 Fisher Room.

INTERFAITH EVENT

'Scriptural reasoning': Tuesday 7 February at 6.15. Michael Milller will be at Fisher House at 6.00pm to take people over to the Jewish Chaplaincy. It will last about an hour

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/>

FR PHILIP AT ST JOHN'S

Fr Philip will preach next Sunday at evensong in St John's College.

FOOTBALLING HONOUR

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

BOOK SALE

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

OXFORD/CAMBRIDGE LOURDES PILGRIMAGE

22-29 July. Bursaries are available. There will be an information evening on Thurs. 23 February.

FISHER LECTURE

The annual Fisher Lecture will be given by Dr Gabriele Finaldi, Director of the National Gallery, London, on 'Articles of Faith: Finding God in museums.' 6.00pm Friday 24 February in the chapel.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION

For couples preparing for marriage, pastoral preparation is obligatory. There will be a one-day course on Saturday 18 February. Please see Fr Mark for

COLLECTION LAST WEEK

£477.49

Thank you!