

## FASTING FROM FOOD: FEASTING ON LOVE

The Daily Telegraph last year reported that a mere three days' fasting can rejuvenate the immune system, 'flipping a regenerative switch' which helps fight off infection. It seems to be true that more and more people are taking up fasting, and are seeing benefits both in physical and mental terms. Fasting, of course, has a long pedigree in the Church; indeed, as a religious practice it is older than the Church and not limited to the Church. For us Catholics, though, it has a special significance during Lent, both in formal terms (on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, when we give up one meal) and informally (I'm off the booze - I don't know about you). Of course there are physical benefits; we eat too much anyway, and I am hoping to drop at least half a stone in the next few weeks. But our primary reason for fasting must be spiritual. By controlling the passions of the body, we free our hearts and minds for prayer; by removing some of the elements that crowd out our lives, we get to see what is really important. It is like having too many post-it notes on the fridge door: everything is a muddle until you remove some of the clutter, and see the essential items

In his Lenten message, however, Pope Francis has sounded a caveat. Our fasting during Lent is of little use unless it also results in a new attitude towards others. He quotes the formidable St John Chrysostom "No act of virtue can be great if it is not followed by advantage for others. So, no matter how much time you spend fasting, no matter how much you sleep on a hard floor and eat ashes, if you do no good to others, you do nothing great." The Pope is suspicious of acts which direct us only inwards, without any resulting change of attitude, and he sees a danger that a concentration on interior life on its own can emphasise our own interests and concerns, without allowing room for others. Our real fast, he suggests, should be from indifference towards our brothers and sisters. When we engage on this sort of fast, says Pope Francis, we begin to feast on love. This is perhaps a more difficult fast than giving up gin and chocolate; but it is a fast that will make room in our hearts to experience love and set us free.

*Fr Mark*



## FISHER HOUSE NEWSLETTER

Sunday 5 March: 1st Sunday of Lent

### CALENDAR: WEEK VII OF TERM

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| Sunday 5    | <b>8th SUNDAY OF THE YEAR</b><br>9.00 Sung Latin Mass<br>11.00 Sung English Mass |
| Monday 6    | 12.30 Mass   |
| Tuesday 7   | 1.05 Mass <i>St Perpetua and St Felicity</i>                                     |
| Wednesday 8 | 1.05 Mass <i>St John of God</i>  |
| Thursday 9  | 1.05 Mass <i>St Frances of Rome</i>  |
| Friday 10   | 12.30 Stations of the Cross<br>1.05 Mass<br>7.00 Nightfever                      |
| Saturday 11 | 1.05 Mass (EF)<br>4.30 - 5.30 <i>Confessions</i><br>6.00 Vigil Mass of Sunday    |
| Sunday 12   | <b>2nd SUNDAY OF LENT</b><br>9.00 Sung Latin Mass<br>11.00 Sung English Mass     |

MONS. MARK LANGHAM : SR ANN SWAILES OP : FR PHILIP MOLLER SJ

## **ROBINSON COLLEGE MASS**

Mass will be celebrated at 6.30pm at Robinson College on Tuesday 7 March. If you have never seen the Piper window in the chapel, you're in for a treat! A more earthly treat will be provided for those who wish to attend Formal Hall after Mass. email Edward Butler-Caddle (eb598) or sign up on the list outside chapel.

## **QUEENS' COLLEGE MASS**

Mass will be celebrated on Wednesday 8 March. If you wish to attend Formal Hall afterwards, contact Liam on lbko2.

## **CATHOLICISM FOR THE CURIOUS**

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

## **LEARN ITALIAN IN THE SUMMER**

A summer camp experience, in Reggio Calabria, for a group of students



from the Cambridge and Oxford Catholic Chaplaincy to learn Italian and experience Italian culture (and cooking!). Please contact Fr Mark (ml709) if interested.

## **NIGHTFEVER**

On Friday, we shall hold the second 'Nightfever' at Fisher House, when we invite passers by into the chapel to pray. It is a great occasion of grace, and demands considerable commitment from those taking part - but brings wonderful blessings and some unforgettable experiences. Please sign up on the notice board to take part. Meeting on Friday at 5.30pm in the Fisher Room.

## **DANTE CIRCLE**

Professor Kirkpatrick will lead us on an exploration of Dante and Art, looking especially at early books of the *Purgatorio*. Wednesday 8 March 5.30pm in the Great Chamber.

## **FRUGAL FRIDAY COOKBOOK**

Fisher House's own cookbook, with a feast of recipes for Lent - on sale after Masses priced only £2.

## **SAINTS AND SCONES**

Come for a real Devon Cream Tea, and hear about the lives of Saints. This week: Thomas Merton, who used to riot in the pub outside Fisher House. Sr Ann's Office at 4.30pm today, Sunday.

## **JOSHUA SHUTTER**

Josh, a Fisher House alumnus, is just beginning a trip across Antarctica on an icebreaker. You can follow his adventures on [www.joshuashutter.com/travel/antarctica](http://www.joshuashutter.com/travel/antarctica)

## **FISHER HOUSE STATIONS OF THE CROSS**

On Friday 17 March, we will hold our own Stations of the Cross, with meditations and poems on each station written by students. Can you write for one of the Stations? See the sign-up sheet outside the chapel, or contact Anira on amp83.

## **STATIONS OF THE CROSS**

Stations will be celebrated at 12.30 on Fridays during Lent.

## **SENIOR MEMBERS' LENT READING GROUP**

We will meet at 6.00pm in the Dining Room of Fisher House on Thursday 9 March, to read '*Free of Charge: Giving and Forgiving in a culture stripped of grace*' by Miroslav Volf. Copies, costing £7.99, can be ordered through Fr Mark by signing up on the sheet outside chapel. All Senior Members welcome

## **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.

## **SVP**

The Society of St Vincent de Paul grounds its activity on the streets of Cambridge in prayer and reflection. Join them on Fridays in the Fisher Room at 6.00pm.

## **CAKE SALE**

Next Sunday, 12 March, after 11.00 Mass, come to the Fisher Room to buy and eat a selection of goodies to celebrate, er, Red Nose Day.



## **BOOK SALE**

After 11.00am Mass today, in the Fisher Room—a last chance to buy books at knock-down prices. Money goes to HCPT Group 104, the Fisher House chapter of the charity that takes disabled children to Lourdes.

## **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, or contact our team captain Nic Walker (nghw2).

## **MADONNAS & MIRACLES**

Don't miss this exhibition at the Fitzwilliam Museum, opening on 7 March, which looks at the hidden world of devotion in the Italian renaissance home.

**COLLECTION LAST WEEK**

**£459.85**

Thank you!