

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. 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

But this year, in his Lenten message, 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 22 February - 1st Sunday of Lent

CALENDAR

| | |
|--------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sunday 22 | FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT 9.00 Sung Latin Mass 11.00 Sung English Mass |
| Monday 23 | 12.30 Mass |
| Tuesday 24 | 1.05 Mass |
| Wednesday 25 | 1.05 Mass 12.30 <i>Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament</i> |
| Thursday 26 | 1.05 Mass |
| Friday 27 | 1.05 Mass 12.30pm <i>Stations of the cross</i> 7.30 Mass |
| Saturday 28 | 1.05 Mass 4.30—5.30 <i>Confessions</i> 6.00 Vigil Mass of Sunday |
| Sunday 1 | SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT 9.00 Sung Latin Mass 11.00 Sung English Mass |

FISHER BITES

Among our congregation are some of the greatest experts in their fields. This series is an opportunity to meet them, and hear them speak on their own subjects. On Monday, Professor Nicholas Boyle will speak on *FAUST*. 8.00pm, Great Chamber. Wine will be served.

COLLEGE MASS

Mass will be celebrated at Downing College on Wednesday at 6.15pm. Please contact Rajiv Shah (res65) if you would like to attend Formal Hall afterwards.

ECUMENICAL LENTEN STATIONS

On Monday 9 March, there will be Stations of the Cross in the chapel. If you would like to write a poem or a meditation for one of the stations, please email Molly Cornell (melc2).

CAFOD - LENT FAST DAY

Next Friday is Lent Fast Day, and there will be a soup lunch in the Fisher Room with proceeds going to CAFOD's Lenten charity. Stations of the Cross on that day will use prayers written by CAFOD.

COFFEE After the 11am Mass in the Fisher Room. Please do join us.

CATHOLICISM FOR THE CURIOUS

A short presentation followed by discussion during lunch. 1.15pm, Fisher room. This week, *Why did Jesus die?*

WORTH ABBEY RETREAT

There will be a Fisher House retreat at Worth Abbey, led by Sr Ann, from 20 to 22 March. Please see either Sr Ann or Fr Mark if interested.

FILM NIGHT This evening, at 8.00pm in the Fisher Room, *A Man for All Seasons* - Robert Bolt's impressive take on the life and martyrdom of St Thomas More.

MUSICIAN?

The Friday evening mass has proved very popular, but needs volunteers to help play and sing. See Ryan or Sr Ann.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

At 12.30pm on Fridays, before Mass, Stations of the Cross will be prayed during Lent.

SAINTS AND SCONES: Sunday 4.30PM, Sr Ann's room. This week, *Julian of Norwich*. Tea and scones as standard.

APOLOGETICS GROUP

Meeting in the Library on Saturday at 7.00pm. This week, *The sins of the Church*. Contact Hania Wyciszczok (hmw56) or Max Nussbaumer (mn406).

DANTE CIRCLE On Wednesday the Dante Circle will consider the cantos 6 of *Inferno*, *Purgatorio* and *Paradise*, under the expert guidance of Professor Kirkpatrick. Great Chamber, 6.30pm. All welcome.

SPIRITUAL READING GROUP

Meets on Thursday for Vespers at 6.30pm in the chapel, and then in Sr Ann's room to discuss a spiritual classic over wine.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION

The next course for couples preparing for marriage will begin on Monday 9 March at 7.00pm. If you wish to attend, or would like more information, contact Fr Mark (ml709).

FACEBOOK & WEBSITE

Stay up to date through the Fisher Society Facebook page: www.facebook.com/groups/fishersociety/ - And our website, with its calendar of events: www.srcf.ucam.org/fisherhouse

SCRIPTURE STUDY GROUP

Please watch the Fisher Society Facebook page for confirmation of the day this week (Wednesdays are proving very crowded!).

FISHER FAMILIES

There will be no Fisher Families meeting this week. We will be returning to normal on Monday 2nd March. Contact: Irenka Lennon (wmis2).

MEDICAL ETHICS GROUP

The group, of special but not exclusive interest to medics, meets on Mondays at 7.00pm in the Fisher House library. Contact Basia Chmielewska (bjmc2).

ARE YOU AN ARTIST? We know you are out there! If you have produced paintings or sculptures, and you would like to contribute to a Fisher House Art exhibition, please contact Fr Mark on ml709.

LUNCH Is available in the Fisher Room every weekday during term, for £1.50. Do join us!

WEEKLY COLLECTION

Collection last week: £410.45

Thank you!