

To Fall in Love, Do This....

Lent is the period of preparation for Easter. Easter isn't just an event that we prepare for but an encounter, the beginning, the deepening of a new relationship with a person. How do we best deepen a relationship? Last week, an article that went viral from the *New York Times* illustrates an important point.

To Fall in Love With Anyone, Do This by Mandy Len Catron, has been shared thousands of times on social media. It recounts how the author tested a famous psychological experiment in which strangers were invited to a laboratory to answer 36 increasingly intimate questions about each other. Afterwards the 'couples' were invited to stare into each other's eyes for four minutes. The psychologist in charge wanted to see if this would make the subjects fall in love. Sometimes it did.

Not exactly romantic, but, one might say, it gets the job done. Stripping away the romantic courtship and relying on the utilitarian building blocks of an intimate relationship ignores much of what we feel is most truly human in that process. True enough, but such a focus might be helpful to us as we approach Lent. It's time to strip things away, like Jesus during the 40 days in the desert, in order to focus on a relationship.

In the experiment, question asking was key to knowing the other more deeply. Not just because of the intimate content of such questions, but also because the asking requires an openness in disposition, a vulnerability, and an intentionality. Catron writes: "The questions reminded me of the infamous boiling frog experiment in which the frog doesn't feel the water getting hotter until it's too late...I didn't notice we had entered intimate territory until we were already there". The Gospels are littered with Jesus asking questions that cut to the core of those whom he confronts in love. He answers all of their questions on the cross.

Maybe this week we can ask questions of Jesus. Perhaps it is time to examine where our relationship with him is. Maybe we can let his questions to us resonate and lead us into a greater intimacy with him. Questions like: What are you thinking in your hearts? Who do you say I am? Why are you terrified? Can you drink the cup that I am going to drink? What do you want me to do for you? Do you love me?

The bleak nature of laboratory, formulaic, relationship making sits uncomfortably with us because we know deep down that we were made to *be with* the one whom we love. That time, that physicality cannot be ignored or substituted. The final part of the experiment, the long gaze, attempts to provide this in condensed form. Catron again: "I know the eyes are the windows to the soul or whatever, but the real crux of the moment was not just that I was really seeing someone, but that I was seeing someone really seeing me. Once I embraced the terror of this realization and gave it time to subside, I arrived somewhere unexpected".

Alongside our question asking, maybe we can take time to gaze at the Blessed Sacrament this week, and be conscious of him, really seeing us. Maybe we can take some extra time in our schedule aware, like Catron that, "Love didn't happen to us. We're in love because we each made the choice to be".

Ryan



FISHER HOUSE NEWSLETTER

Sunday 8 February - 5th Sunday of the Year

CALENDAR

Sunday 8	FIFTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR		
	9.00	Sung Latin Mass	
	11.00	Sung English Mass	
Monday 9	12.30	Mass	
Tuesday 10	1.05	Mass	St Scholastica
Wednesday 11	1.05	Mass	Our Lady of Lourdes
	12.30	<i>Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament</i>	
Thursday 12	1.05	Mass	
Friday 13	1.05	Mass	
	7.30	Mass	
Saturday 14	1.05	Mass	Sts Cyril and Methodius
	4.30—5.30	<i>Confessions</i>	
	6.00	Vigil Mass of Sunday	
Sunday 15	SIXTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR		
	9.00	Sung Latin Mass	
	11.00	Sung English Mass	

LIBRARY SURVEY

We want to know how we can improve the library for you. To that end an online survey has been created. You can find it embedded under the events calendar on our website, or at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/9HVBjG7>

Please do fill it in, especially if you currently use the library little. The survey only takes five minutes. A random respondent will win a bottle of Gin for their labours!

PALM BRANCHES

The ash used on Ash Wednesday is traditionally made from last year's palms used on Palm Sunday. If you have any old palms, please bring them in to one of the chaplains, so that we can burn them in preparation for Lent.

FISHER BITES

In the next of our series, delivered by members of Fisher House who are experts in their field, Dr Sara Silvestri, Director of Research at the Von Hugel Institute, will speak on *How to think about religion and politics*. Thursday 12 February, 8.00pm in the Fisher Room. All welcome.

VISITING PREACHER

Fr Dushan Croos SJ, Senior Chaplain at Oxford University, will preach at 9.00am and 11.00am Mass next Sunday.

GRADUATE SOCIETY

On Wednesday 11 February at 6.00pm in the Fisher Room, Dr Michael Banner, Dean of Trinity College, will speak on *Why Christians Don't Have Family Values*. Dr Banner has written and advised government departments on ethics and written many books on Christian ethics.

CATHOLICISM FOR THE CURIOUS

A series of talks over lunch on Mondays, given by Fr Mark in the Fisher Room at 1.15, on a range of topics to do with Catholicism. This week: *Is marriage for good?*

FISHER SOCIETY ELECTION

Please see the board outside the chapel for details of those standing for election for the Fisher Society Committee. Voting takes place on Sunday 8 February after 11.00am Mass, and any Catholic member of Fisher House can participate.

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

Available in the Fisher Room every weekday during term, £1.50.

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

APOLOGETICS GROUP

Meeting in the Library on Saturday at 7.00pm. For more information contact Hania Wyciszczok (*hmw56*) or Max Nussbaumer (*mn406*).

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.

SAINTS AND SCONES will not take place this week. Next week's meeting will feature a special guest speaking on St Simon Stock, and an exciting change of venue. Further details will appear on the Fisher Society Facebook page.

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).

THE CERTAINTY OF

NEWMAN An exhibition following Cardinal Newman's conversion will be held at Fisher House from 8 - 15 February. Tours available on Sundays 8 and 15 on request.

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 GROUP

Fr Bruno OP will lead the Scripture Study Group on Monday at 8.00pm in the Library. The text this week: *2 Tim 4:1-5*.

SENIOR MEMBERS

On Wednesday at 5.00pm, there will be a meeting for senior members of Fisher House to discuss the Bishops' Questionnaire on marriage, and to choose a Lent Book for discussion. All non-student members are welcome. For details please contact Jan Lash (jal49).

DANTE CIRCLE

The Circle meets in the Great Chamber at 6.30pm on Wednesday. For further details, please see the Circle's page on www.facebook.com/groups/655496891227108/

MEDICAL ETHICS GROUP

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

APOLOGETICS GROUP

Meeting in the Library on Saturday at 7.00pm. For details contact Hania Wyciszczok (*hmw56*) or Max Nussbaumer (*mn406*).

WEEKLY COLLECTION

Collection last week: £477.45

Thank you!