

'THE WORST TIME OF THE YEAR'

Forgive my stealing, and presenting out of context, words from T.S. Eliot's great poem on the *Coming of the Magi*. But I cannot help myself. I hate January. And February. And most of March. It's not the cold, especially; it's the grey, the unremitting grey, that gets into one's lungs, one's eyes, one's soul. Everyone *looks* grey at this time of year, deprived of sunshine and its rejuvenating beams. I find (perhaps this is just me) that people are less friendly, more short tempered, more crabby. They have spent all their energies on Christmas conviviality. Now, like their waistlines, they want to suck in, avoid excess.

While it is probably necessary to have this flat period in the new year, Nature conspires with the liturgical calendar. There is no Christmas to chase away the winter chill, nothing in prospect but Lent. Outside, the garden is stagnant with no hint of the pleasures and exuberance to come. Country walks are muddy, slimy, boggy.

Yet, reluctantly, I admit we probably need this time. How would we appreciate the summer, how would we warm to Christmas, if every day were a festival? How would joy awaken in our hearts, if we were not surprised by it at certain times of the year? When I lived in Rome, I realised one day that I had walked across one of its most beautiful squares without having looked up. I was too used to it. It had become familiar, and its gorgeous effervescence had become ordinary, unremarkable. No; we need these dark, drear days to remind us of the light that warms us, elates us, gives us hope.

I was struck this Christmas by some words St Luke writes about our Lady. Amid the wonders and glories of the birth of her Son, the angels, the shepherds, *'she pondered these things within her heart.'* I like that idea of pondering, of laying things up in the heart, to process them, allowing our thoughts to dwell there, mature, deepen, brew. That, surely, is what this season is for; a quieter time to consider (not necessarily actively) the great things that we have been celebrating, and that we shall shortly commemorate. As we huddle in the warmth on these long, damp evenings, we can be enlightened by the truth that rests within our hearts: that we are held in God's hand, that his wonderful plan is worked out in our lives. Even at this dismal time of year, we have cause for hope.

Fr Mark



FISHER HOUSE NEWSLETTER

Sunday 14th January - 2nd Sunday of the Year

CALENDAR - TERM WEEK 0

Sunday 14	SECOND SUNDAY OF THE YEAR 10.30am	Sung English Mass
Monday 15	1.05pm	Mass
Tuesday 16	1.05pm <i>Beginning of Lent Term</i>	Mass
Wednesday 17	1.05 pm 12.30	Mass (St Anthony, Abbot) <i>Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament</i>
Thursday 18	1.05pm	Mass <i>Beginning of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity</i>
Friday 19	1.05pm 7.30pm	Mass (St Wulstan) Vespers and Reflection
Saturday 20	1.05pm 4.30—5.30 6.00pm	Mass (St Sebastian) <i>Confessions</i> Vigil Mass of Sunday
Sunday 21	THIRD SUNDAY OF THE YEAR 9.00am 11.00 am	Sung Latin Mass Sung English Mass

FR MARK LANGHAM - SR ANN SWAILES OP - FR PHILIP MOLLER SJ

ALTAR SERVERS,

We are in need of altar servers for the Saturday evening Vigil Mass, for Sunday 9.00am Mass, and for weekdays. Please sign up on the notice outside chapel, or speak to Fr Mark, or Daniel on dif21.

SAY IT TO GOD - IN SEARCH OF PRAYER

On Tuesday 15 January, at 4.00pm in St Edmund's College, a new book by Dr Luigi Gioia, *Say it to God*, will be launched, with Professor Sarah Coakley. Dr Gioia is well known to us from the Von Hugel Institute, and his book has been chosen by the Archbishop of Canterbury as his lent book. It will also be the text that our Senior Members' Lent Group will study.

ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH GROUP

An exciting programme this term, beginning with Revd Paul Dominiak, Dean of Jesus College, on Anglicanism. Wednesday 24 January at 7.30pm in the Great Chamber. Refreshments will be provided.

FR BRENDAN BRADSHAW

Fr Brendan was a great scholar and familiar Cambridge figure. He died just before Christmas. A memorial Mass will be celebrated for him in Queens' College chapel on Wednesday 24 January at 6.00pm.

QUERO : THEOLOGY FOR NON-THEOLOGIANS

A new venture this term, beginning on Sunday 28 January at 6.15pm, is aimed at theologically minded postgraduate and undergraduate students who aren't (necessarily) doing theology degrees. There will be some reading to do, and each session will comprise prayer, a presentation and a discussion. The topics for this term are:

1. The Role of Faith in the Modern World (Jan 28)
2. Can you reason your way to God? (Feb 4)
3. Theodicy, Original Sin, and the Fall (Feb 11)
4. Heaven, Hell and the Catholic Response to Eternity (Feb 18)

Watch the notice-board for more details.

FISHER SOCIETY FACEBOOK PAGE

The best way of keeping up with events in Fisher House is through the Fisher Society Facebook page. Please make sure you are a member. There is also a full calendar of services and events maintained on the website.

CONSIDER YOU CALL

A group for those thinking of religious life and priesthood. We will meet for discussion, prayer (and food) in the Great Chamber on Friday 2 February.

PROFESSOR JOHN HALDANE

Professor of Philosophy at St Andrew's University, and a member of the Vatican's Pontifical Council for Culture, John Haldane is a familiar voice from his many radio appearances. He will be speaking at Fisher House on Friday at 1.30pm on *Aquinas and Catholic Philosophy* (addressing the need for Catholic philosophy, and the ways in which Catholic philosophy provides a coherent and comprehensive alternative to materialism and naturalism). Professor Haldane will also be speaking at Peterhouse on Thursday evening, on Politics. For more details contact William Simpson (wmrs2).

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY.

This week is the beginning of the annual week of prayer for Christian Unity, this year on the theme: *That all may be Free*. We shall celebrate a special ecumenical Vespers at 7.30pm on Friday 26 January, at which an address will be given by Revd Helen Arnold, Chaplain of Fitzwilliam College. All are welcome.

There is an ecumenical service for Christian Unity Week at Great St Mary's at 4.00pm next Sunday, 21 January.

BENSON CLUB: MURIEL SPARK

The novel we shall be considering at the beginning of this term is Muriel Spark's scintillating first book: *The Comforters*. Thursday 25 January, 8.00pm in the Great Chamber. Wine and chocolate will be provided.

DANTE CIRCLE

The Dante Circle this term will aim to introduce the Divine Comedy to those who are new to Dante. Our guide is Prof. Robin Kirkpatrick - we could ask for no-one better to accompany us! See the notice board outside the chapel for details.

APOLOGIA - TUESDAY EVENING TALKS

This term's series begins on Tuesday 23 January with the topic 'The existence of God'. Join us for a meal at 7.00pm, talk at 8.00pm, followed by a period of prayer and the Bar.

FILM CLUB

We kick off with a recording of our pre-Christmas Pantomime, *Dick Whittington*. Fisher Room, 8.00pm, Sunday 21 January. If you were not able to be there, or even if you were, don't miss it!

COLLECTION LAST WEEK

£251.46

Thank you!