

BEATING THE BLUES

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 4th February - 5th Sunday of the Year

CALENDAR - TERM WEEK III

Sunday 4	FIFTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR 9.00am Sung Latin Mass 11.00am Sung English Mass
Monday 5	1.05pm Mass <i>St Agatha</i>
Tuesday 6	1.05pm Mass <i>Martyrs of Japan</i>
Wednesday 7	1.05 pm Mass <i>St John Bosco</i> 12.30 Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament 6.15pm Mass at Queens' College
Thursday 8	1.05pm Mass
Friday 9	1.05pm Mass 7.30pm Vespers and Reflection
Saturday 10	1.05pm Mass <i>St Scholastica</i> 4.30—5.30 Confessions 6.00pm Vigil Mass of Sunday
Sunday 11	SIXTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR 9.00am Sung Latin Mass 11.00 am Sung English Mass

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

TAIZÉ PRAYER

Prayer in the Taizé tradition will take place in the chapel on Monday 3 February at 9.00pm.

MASS AT QUEENS'

Mass will be celebrated in the chapel of Queens' College on Wednesday 7 February at 6.15pm.

LOURDES O&C PILGRIMAGE

The Oxford and Cambridge Lourdes pilgrimage takes place 21 - 27 July. Cost £350 (bursaries available). Contact lourdesoandc@gmail.com or speak to Fr Mark

PALM BRANCHES

The Ashes we use on Ash Wednesday are traditionally made by burning last year's palm branches. Please bring yours in, so that we can have a merry conflagration!

SENIOR MEMBERS' READING GROUP FOR LENT

At 6.00pm on Thursdays in Lent, there will be an opportunity for senior members to meet and discuss together a spiritual text: this year Dr Luigi Goia's *Say it to God* - chosen as the Archbishop of Canterbury's Lenten Book. Copies are available from Fr Mark at £7. Sign up outside the chapel.

QUERO : THEOLOGY FOR NON-THEOLOGAINS

A new venture this term, held in the Library on Sundays at 3.30pm, 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 next topics are: Can you reason your way to God? (Feb 4); Theodicy, Original Sin, and the Fall (Feb 11); Heaven, Hell and the Catholic Response to Eternity (Feb 18). Watch the notice-board for more details.

BENSON CLUB

The next novel to be read is our own Monsignor Benson's apocalyptic masterpiece: *Lord of the World*. It is available free online. We meet to discuss it on 15 March - so you have all term to read it!

SCRIPTURAL REASONING GROUP

An interfaith group for Christians, Moslems and Jews, meeting in the Fisher Room on Monday at 5.00pm, to discuss Fasting in the sacred texts of each religion.

FISHER LECTURE

The annual Fisher Lecture, entitled 'How can we keep hoping' will be given by Fr Timothy Radcliffe OP on Thursday 15 February at 6.00pm.

FISHER SOCIETY AGM

The AGM takes place at 12.00 noon this Sunday. We encourage you to attend to support the committee, and to vote for new members and a new Chair.

APOLOGIA - TUESDAY EVENING TALKS

Fr Mark will speak on *The Church* on Tuesday. Come for a meal at 7.00pm, talk at 8.00pm, followed by Compline and Bar.

CARDINAL CUPICH

A major event takes place at the Von Hugel Institute on Friday: Cardinal Blase Cupich, Archbishop of Chicago, will speak on *Pope Francis' revolution of Mercy: Amoris Laetitia as a new paradigm of Catholicity*. Cardinal Cupich is perhaps the most eloquent commentator on Pope Francis among the North American Bishops, and a much respected member of the Synod on the Family. The talk takes place in the Garden Room, St Edmund's College, 9 February 4.00pm.

EUCCHARISTIC CONGRESS 7 - 9 SEPTEMBER

A major event in the life of the Church. A Eucharistic Congress will be held in Liverpool, with delegates from every parish in the country. Please see the notice board for details. We have two allocated places. If you would like to attend, see Fr Mark.

FR AMBROSE HENLEY OSB

The preacher at Mass next Sunday will be Fr Ambrose, from Ampleforth Abbey.

CONFIRMATION

Bishop Nicholas Hudson will celebrate Mass on 4 March, and confer the sacrament of Confirmation. If you want to be Confirmed, please see Fr Mark.

INTERFAITH TALKS

On Thursday at 7.00pm, (note time) our series continues with a talk by Dr Jagbir Jhutti-Johal on the Sikh religion. 7.30pm in the Great Chamber.

FILM CLUB

Tonight (Sunday) the classic film of finding Catholicism in Food (and favourite of Pope Francis and Bishop Rowan Williams), and a real treat for foodies - *Babette's Feast*. 8.00pm Fisher Room.

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.

COLLECTION LAST WEEK

£381.92

Thank you!