

BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT

a reflection for the Year of Consecrated Life

One thing that “everybody knows” about members of religious orders is that they are the people in the Church who are especially committed to poverty, chastity and obedience: and that they take vows to that effect. Like many things that “everybody knows”, however, this is only half true.

For one thing, some orders take different vows: Dominicans, for instance, only explicitly promise obedience (though before we do so, we have to sign a declaration saying that we do understand that we’re supposed to be poor and chaste as well!) Benedictines vow stability: a commitment to remain in a particular community for life, and so on.

A much more serious mistake would be to think that poverty, chastity and obedience, the Evangelical Counsels as they are called, *only* apply to “Religious”, to monks, nuns, sisters and brothers. Actually, the clue is in the name: these are the *Evangelical* Counsels, advice about how to live Gospel values, in other words, helping us to come more and more to resemble Jesus and thus to play our part in showing our brothers and sisters what God’s love looks like.

But Christlikeness isn’t a job description for some special elite within the Church: growing into Christlikeness is just what it means to be a Christian at all. And if being poor, chaste and obedient makes us more like Jesus, then it makes sense to say that all the baptized are called to these things. Members of religious orders have the special vocation within the Church of reminding their brothers and sisters of this common calling.

To say that poverty, for instance, is a gospel value is not to suggest that material deprivation and the suffering it causes is a good thing. That is why Christians are to be found at the forefront of so many initiatives for social justice, attempting to safeguard the human dignity of the dispossessed and the marginalised. Poverty, in the Gospel sense, is a matter not of how little we own, but of how little we *are owned* by what we have, a matter of not being attached to our possessions, of not judging ourselves or each other on the size of our income or the classiness of our postcode. Members of Religious Orders, who have no individual possessions and live from a common purse, challenge themselves and the Church as a whole to look to God alone for security and for the peace which the world cannot give.

Sr Ann



FISHER HOUSE NEWSLETTER

Sunday 25 January—3rd Sunday of the Year

CALENDAR

Sunday 25	THIRD SUNDAY OF THE YEAR	9.00	Sung Latin Mass
		11.00	Sung English Mass
Monday 26	12.30	Mass	Sts Timothy and Titus
Tuesday 27	1.05	Mass	
Wednesday 28	1.05	Mass	St Thomas Aquinas
	12.30	<i>Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament</i>	
Thursday 29	1.05	Mass	
Friday 30	1.05	Mass	
	7.30	Mass	
Saturday 31	1.05	Mass	St John Bosco
	4.30—5.30	<i>Confessions</i>	
	6.00	Vigil Mass of Sunday	
Sunday 1 February	FOURTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR	9.00	Sung Latin Mass
		11.00	Sung English Mass

NEW ALTAR FOR FISHER HOUSE

It has always been intended that the renovation of Fisher House would be completed with a permanent stone altar, to replace the present temporary one. Money for this was raised by friends and colleagues of Fr Alban, and the altar has been designed by Aidan Hart. The altar will be installed later this week, so that you will see it next Sunday. This means that the 1.05 Mass on Wednesday, and possibly Thursday and Friday, will be celebrated in the Fisher Room. The altar will be consecrated by the Archbishop of Liverpool, Malcolm McMahon, on Sunday 31 May.

FISHER FAMILIES

A group for those with bumps, babies and little children, meeting on Mondays from 3.00pm - 4.30pm in Sr Ann's room. Meet other Catholic families, eat cake, and bring along something to play with or read together. Contact Irenka Lennon (*wmis2*)

LUNCH is available in the Fisher Room every weekday during term, for £1.50.

BENSON DINNER

The annual Graduate Society Dinner will take place on Saturday 7 February. Please contact Hugh Burling (*hdpd2*)

COLLECTION COUNTERS

We need volunteers to help count the Sunday collection— it only need be once a term, and doesn't take long. Please contact Fr Mark (*ml709*).

DANTE CIRCLE

After the successful first meeting, the next meeting will take place on Wednesday 4 February. Please see the Fisher Society Facebook page for details.

MEDICAL ETHICS GROUP

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

IMPERIAL COLLEGE CHAPLAINCY VISIT

Members of Imperial College will be with us at 11.00am Mass next Sunday, and will join us for lunch in the Fisher Room after Mass. Cost of lunch £2.

FACEBOOK & WEBSITE

Keep up to date with announcements on the Fisher Society Facebook page: www.facebook.com/groups/fishersociety/ - and don't forget to check out Fisher House website, with its useful calendar of events www.srcf.ucam.org/fisherhouse

QUESTION & ANSWER WITH ROWAN WILLIAMS

On Monday 26 January, Revd Dr Rowan Williams will hold a Q&A on Christian Unity, Fisher Room 1.15pm. All are welcome .

FISHER SOCIETY ELECTION

Please see the board outside the chapel for details of those standing for election for the Fisher Society Committee - which organises the religious and social events in the chaplaincy. Also on the board, the manifestos of those running for the chairmanship of the Committee.

Voting takes place on Sunday 8 February after 11.00am Mass, and any Catholic member of Fisher House can participate.

APOLOGETICS GROUP

Meeting in the Library on Saturday at 7.00pm, the Group will conclude St Augustine's *Confessions*. 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.

TEA & COFFEE

Available after 11.00am Mass in the Fisher Room - do come and join us!

EXTRAORDINARY FORM (TRIDENTINE) MASS

With only one priest, we have had to cut the weekly 8.00am EF Mass. We are now planning to celebrate it on the first Saturday of each month (*ie* twice a term) at 1.05pm Mass. Accordingly, the next EF Mass will be on Saturday 7 February at 1.05pm.

SAINTS AND SCONES

Meeting at 4.30pm in Sr Ann's room, over a cream tea, to hear about St Francis de Sales.

NEWMAN EXHIBITION

There will be a small exhibition on Cardinal Newman at Fisher House from 8 - 15 February. An introductory talk will be held on Thursday 5 February.

BLACKFRIARS LECTURE

Professor Robin Kirkpatrick will deliver the Blackfriars Lecture, *Aquinas in Dante's eyes: Discretion and Courtesy*, at Blackfriars, on Wednesday 28 at 6.00pm.

MARGARET WILEMAN

There will be a memorial service to Margaret at Great St Mary's, Saturday 21 February, 10.30am

WEEKLY COLLECTION

Collection last week: £564.47
Thank you!