

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 in the next few weeks. 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

In his Lenten message, however, 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 18th February - 1st Sunday of Lent

CALENDAR - TERM WEEK V

Sunday 18	FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT 9.00am 11.00am	Sung Latin Mass Sung English Mass
Monday 19	1.05pm	Mass
Tuesday 20	1.05pm	Mass
Wednesday 21	12.30pm 1.05 pm	<i>Exposition of Blessed Sacrament</i> Mass
Thursday 22	1.05pm	Mass CHAIR OF ST PETER
Friday 23	12.30pm 1.05pm 7.30pm	<i>Stations of the Cross</i> Mass <i>Vespers and Reflection</i>
Saturday 24	1.05pm 4.30—5.30 6.00pm	Mass <i>Confessions</i> Vigil Mass of Sunday
Sunday 25	SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT 9.00am 11.00 am	Sung Latin Mass Sung English Mass

INTERFAITH GROUP

Rachel Harris will speak on Buddhism on Thursday at 7.30pm in the Great Chamber.

MORNING PRAYER

The Office of Lauds is prayed in the chapel each morning at 8.15am.

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

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. First meeting this Thursday in the Great Chamber.

FR MARK

is speaking at 7.15pm on Tuesday in Clare Chapel on 'The Caroline Divines and the Church of Rome'.

RESPUBLICA

A think-tank influenced by Catholic Social teaching. On Thursday at 5.00pm in the Fisher Room, there will be a discussion led by Lord Maurice Glasman and Phillip Blond on 'The Political Economy of Virtue.'

QUERO : THEOLOGY FOR NON-THEOLOGAINS

Our theology group for postgraduate and undergraduate students who aren't (necessarily) doing theology degrees, continues on Sunday at 3.30pm in the Library with the question of *Fasting and Lent in the Catholic tradition*. For more details, and a reading package, contact Robert Billups on querocam@gmail.com

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!

DANTE CIRCLE

The Dante Circle aims to introduce the Divine Comedy to those who are new to Dante. Our first meeting is on Wednesday at 7.30pm when we will look at Inferno xxvi. No knowledge of Italian is needed, and texts will be provided.

CATHOLIC UNION

David O'Mahoney will speak briefly at 11.00am Mass next Sunday on the Catholic Union.

GRADSOC

The grad/postdoc society will host *Theology on Tap* on Wednesday at 7.30pm in the Fisher Room. Fr Philip will tell us about different approaches to spirituality, and how one goes about discerning one's own.

APOLOGIA

Our popular Tuesday series continues this week with Fr Philip speaking on Salvation, Justification, Sanctification, Donation. Come for a meal at 7.00pm, talk at 8.00pm. Followed by Compline and Bar.

** We invite you to make a voluntary donation of £1 towards the cost of the meal.

EUCCHARISTIC CONGRESS 8 - 9 SEPTEMBER

A major event in the life of the Church. A Eucharistic Congress will be held in Liverpool, with delegates from every parish and community in the country. We have several allocated places. If you would like to attend, see Fr Mark.

TAIZÉ PILGRIMAGE

Revd Andrew Bigg, Chaplain at Corpus Christi, is organising a pilgrimage to Taizé 3-10 September. Travel will be via TGV, and cost will be around £400. Please contact him for more information on ab2495@cam.ac.uk
Revd Bigg needs names by the end of this month.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Are celebrated every Friday during Lent at 12.30pm, just before Mass.

FISHER HOUSE STATIONS

On Friday 9 March, we will celebrate a special Stations of the Cross at 7.30pm, with your opportunity to write reflections, poems, songs, for each stations. A sign-up list is outside the chapel - there are still a few spaces left.

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.

FILM CLUB

Tonight (Sunday) Gregory Peck rescues allied soldiers in wartime Rome, as Mgr O'Flaherty. *The Scarlet and The Black*. 8.00pm Fisher Room.

SCRIPTURE READING

On Fridays in Lent, over lunch in the Fisher Room, there will be opportunity to read and discuss some scripture passages.

COLLECTION LAST WEEK

£310.56

Thank you!