

BEATING THE BLUES: *ADVICE FROM AQUINAS*

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 celebrate this 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 week as possible!

Sr Ann



FISHER HOUSE NEWSLETTER

Sunday 27 January - 3rd Week of the Year

CALENDAR - TERM WEEK II

Sunday 27	3RD WEEK OF THE YEAR		
	9.00am	Sung Latin Mass	
	11.00am	Sung English Mass	
Monday 28	1.05pm	Mass	<i>St Thomas Aquinas</i>
Tuesday 29	1.05pm	Mass	
Wednesday 30	1.05pm	Mass	
Thursday 31	1.05pm	NO MASS	<i>St John Bosco</i>
Friday 1	1.05pm	Mass	
February	7.30pm	<i>Vespers and Meditation</i>	
Saturday 2	1.05pm	Mass	<i>PRESENTATION</i>
	4.30—5.30	<i>Confessions</i>	<i>OF THE LORD</i>
	6.00pm	Vigil Mass of Sunday	
Sunday 3	4TH WEEK OF THE YEAR		
	9.00am	Latin Mass	
	11.00am	Sung English Mass	

FR MARK LANGHAM - SR ANN SWAILES OP - FR CHASE PEPPER CSC

POST-DOCS SCRIPTURE DISCUSSION

Wednesdays at 7.00pm in the Fisher House dining room, beginning on 6 February. There will be pizza available. We continue to meet for lunch on the second Sunday of every month. Contact Kotryna on kb449

O&C LOURDES PILGRIMAGE

The Oxford & Cambridge Lourdes Pilgrimage will be from 20 to 28 July. Travel and accommodation costs are estimated at £350 with 50% bursaries available to students in financial need. More information from Simon Johnson at lourdesoandc@gmail.com

TAIZE PRAYER

Join the Taize group in the chapel at 8.00pm every Monday evening.

GILBEY SCHOLARSHIPS

Available for singers and organists who wish to sing regularly at Fisher House. Please see the notice board for details.

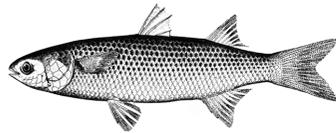
FILM CLUB

Films will be shown at 8.30pm on Sunday evenings in the Fisher Room during term. This Sunday *Of Gods and Men* - the searing tale of the Algerian martyrs (recently beatified).

APOLOGIA

Our popular Tuesday meal and meeting continues on Tuesday, at 7.00pm in the Fisher Room. Come for dinner, a talk, compline and the bar. This week Fr Dominic OP will speak on *What the early Christians believed about the Cosmos, and its surprising relevance to us today.*

THE HADDOCKS



Fisher House's discussion group on medical ethics, aimed at doctors or anyone interested in these questions. Next meeting 4 Feb 4.00pm. Contact Prakash on pt403.

THE DOLPHINS

Fisher House's football team meets every Sunday afternoon to practice. Please contact Julia Wdowin on jw735.



PRO-LIFE GROUP

The new Fisher House Pro-Life Group will meet fortnightly during term. The first meeting will be on Monday 4 Feb at 7.30pm in the Fisher Room. Contact Conor McKee on cmm85.

AQUINAS LECTURE

The annual Aquinas Lecture will be take place on Monday 28 January at Blackfriars, at 6.00pm. Fr Mark will speak on *'Defrosting Ecumenism: from Exposition to Altruism'*.

SENIOR MEMBERS' SCRIPTURAL REASONING

The next meeting takes place on Wednesday 30 January from 6.30 to 8.00pm. The following meeting will be on 25 February and then 27 March. Meetings take place at Charlotte Turner's house, 55 Grantchester Street, Cambridge, CB3 9HZ.

FRASSATI PILGRIMAGE

The English Dominicans are leading a pilgrimage to Turin, in the footsteps of Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, in July. Please see the notice board for details.

SUMMER HOLIDAYS!

It's the time of year to look ahead to warm and lazy days of summer. We are planning another visit for Senior Members to Palazzola, the stunning villa outside Rome, from 5 August for 7 nights. Not to be missed! Please see the notice board for details.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE

If you are a young parent, please fill in a form to request a new Catholic school in the area.

CROSSING THE GREAT DIVINE

At the 11.00am Mass this Sunday, the preacher will be Fr Matthew Power SJ, Catholic Chaplain to Oxford University.

QUAERO: THEOLOGY FOR NON-THEOLOGAINS

On Sundays at 3.30pm in the library, discussion of classic texts in an engaging and accessible way - over mead! Contact Reed on rjm228

SCRIPTURE & SOUP

Each Friday, an opportunity to study scripture over lunch in the Fisher Room, from 1.30pm.

CONTACTLESS GIVING

This term we shall be trialing a new form of giving to the collection. As well as the traditional plate, a terminal for contactless giving will go around, which will enable you to donate £4. We would appreciate your comments!

DAILY LUNCH

Lunch after Mass in the Fisher Room each day, just £1.50 - payment may now be made by card.

WEEKLY COLLECTION

It costs £4,000 per week to run Fisher House.