

## SEXAGESIMA



Without us even realizing it, the countdown to Easter has already begun. For two weekends now, the Church has entered upon a period of the liturgical year that used to be observed (and is now mostly forgotten in Catholic circles) as a sort of pre-Lent, that is, a warm-up to the overt spiritual athleticism (askesis) of the penitential season. If Lent proper represents (more or less) forty days of labour in preparation for our participation in the Paschal Mystery, then pre-Lent tacks on an additional thirty(ish) days of stretching, as it were, to make sure that we are primed for the contest. Easter is coming up in eight weeks (just about sixty days). Hence, today is traditionally known as Sexagesima Sunday (and brownie points for those who know or can figure out what last Sunday and next Sunday are called).

On one hand, the whole idea of pre-Lent sounds pretty terrible. I mean, who wants more Lent? Not me. I'm a terrible faster. I subscribe whole-heartedly to the camp that says you can give up your give-ups on Sundays and solemnities. I'm already aching for St. Joseph's Day (March 19) and the Annunciation (March 25). One year on Ash Wednesday, though, a wise hospital chaplain said to me, "*I'm so bad with fasting, I have to pray for the grace to fast.*" She stunned me. How obvious! But how radical. The reminder that you can pray for the grace to do the things you find difficult revolutionized my spiritual life and salted my insipid attitude toward sacrifice.

On the other hand, there's part of me also aching to have something like a pre-Lent. One of my liturgy professors back at Notre Dame used to say, "*The point of Lent isn't to bang your head against a wall for forty days because it feels good to stop.*" His point was that Lent isn't about doing stuff to make yourself feel pain. It's about energy. It's about freedom. It's about training for the wondrous exchange that God effects when he lays down our humanity so that we can take up his divinity. But how many times do I get to the end of Lent and think, "*The season had so much potential! Why was I so mediocre about it?*" For me, mediocre ends often reflect mediocre beginnings. I usually let Lent cobble itself together rather than taking the reflective time at the start to really sit with God and ask, "*Where do you want to be with me when we get to Easter? What do you want me to do to get there with you?*" If we start that conversation now and ask for the grace of Lent, then when Easter morning breaks in eight weeks, we will ecstatically appear with Christ in his risen glory.

*Fr. Chase, csc*



## FISHER HOUSE NEWSLETTER

Sunday 24 February - 7th Week of the Year

### CALENDAR - TERM WEEK VI

Sunday 24	7 <sup>TH</sup> WEEK OF THE YEAR	
	9.00am	Sung Latin Mass
	11.00am	Sung English Mass
Monday 25	1.05pm	Mass
Tuesday 26	1.05pm	Mass
Wednesday 27	1.05pm	NO MASS (Audio Visual Installation)
	6.00pm	Mass at Downing College
Thursday 28	1.05pm	Mass
Friday 1	1.05pm	Mass <i>St David</i>
March	7.30pm	<i>Vespers and Meditation</i>
Saturday 2	1.05pm	Mass
	4.30—5.30	<i>Confessions</i>
	6.00pm	Vigil Mass of Sunday
Sunday 3	8 <sup>TH</sup> WEEK OF THE YEAR	
	9.00am	Latin Mass
	11.00am	Sung English Mass celebrated by HE Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster

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

## FILM CLUB

Films will be shown at 8.30pm on Sunday evenings in the Fisher Room during term. This week: *Risen* - a Roman Solider investigates reports of Christ's resurrection from the tomb.

## BENSON CLUB

The Club meets on 14 March to discuss Graham Greene's tortured classic: *The Heart of the Matter*.

## COULD YOU MAKE THE STONES SPEAK?

ARC UK is looking for English speaking tour guides aged 18-30 to work as guides in cathedrals and churches around Europe. You'll have time off to explore the country you're staying in! For more information about this opportunity visit [www.encounterarc.org.uk](http://www.encounterarc.org.uk) or see the noticeboard.

## O&C LOURDES PILGRIMAGE

The Oxford & Cambridge Lourdes Pilgrimage will be from 20 to 28 July. Travel and accommodation costs c. £350 with 50% bursaries available to students in financial need. Please see Fr Mark or sign the list outside the chapel.

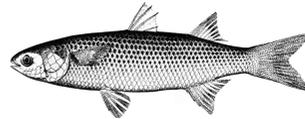
## PALM BRANCHES

Please bring in your palm branches, which will be burned for Ash Wednesday.

## 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 Dr Brian Sloan will speak on *Reconciling God's Law and the Law of the Land*.

## THE HADDOCS



A discussion group on medical ethics, aimed at medics or anyone interested in moral issues. Next meeting 4.00pm Monday 25 Feb to discuss *IVF*. Contact Prakash on pt403.

## GRADSOC

Graduates meet this week on Thursday (NB) for Formal Hall at Pembroke College. Please contact Marco on mb2187.

## POST-DOCS

On Wednesdays we meet at 7.00pm in the Fisher House dining room for scripture discussion. We are also keen to hear from **young families**. To join the mailing list, please contact Kotryna on kb449

## FR MARK

will be installed as an ecumenical canon of Ely Cathedral on Monday.

## NEXT SUNDAY

We welcome Cardinal Vincent Nichols to celebrate 11.00am Mass and Confirmations.

## MASS AT DOWNING COLLEGE

Mass will be celebrated at 6.00pm on Wednesday 27, in the chapel of Downing College.

## INTERFAITH TALK

On Thursday at 7.30pm, members of the Ahmadiyya Islam community will speak in the Great Chamber. All are welcome.

## THE DOLPHINS

Fisher House's football team practices every Sunday afternoon on Jesus Green. It's a great break from study! Contact Julia Wdowin on jw735.



## CONTACTLESS PAYMENT

We need volunteers to collect after all Masses - it's easy, and a great way to meet people! Sign up on the noticeboard.

## CONGRATULATIONS

to the new Fisher Committee, and to Gui, the new Chairman. A list of the committee members, and the officers, is on the noticeboard.

## STATIONS OF THE CROSS



On Friday 15 March, we will celebrate Fisher House *Stations of the Cross*. Please sign up to write a poem, reflection, or piece of music, for the stations.

## 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.

## AUDIO-VISUAL RELAY

We are installing this on 27 February, to enable Mass to be followed from the Fisher Room. At the same time, a Loop System for the hard of hearing will be activated. For this reason, there will be no Mass on Wednesday.

## LAST WEEK'S COLLECTION

£371.60

Contactless: £44

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