

# LENTEN JOY

**W**e tend to think of Lent as the miserable period in the Church's calendar, and understandably: we begin the season by wearing ashes in remembrance of our own mortality and end it by retracing the steps of Jesus to the Cross; the Church encourages us to reflect on our distance from God and to address the root causes of our sinfulness by the uncomfortable means of prayer, fasting and almsgiving; we sing more restrained music at Mass and the priest wears sombre purple. But this is very far from being the whole story: the breviary talks of "this joyful season" of Lent, and, at least in the Northern Hemisphere, nature seems to confirm this: signs of new life are everywhere as the darkness of winter gradually gives way to the radiance of spring.

Here are some challenging but wise words about how to find joy in our observance of Lent, to see it not as a burden but as a gift, from a great spiritual writer of the last century:

"Humility and joy go together. If we think of the sacrifices we make as something that we are doing, of ourselves, we are going in the wrong direction, and in the effort to live up to the plan we have set ourselves, we may well become thin-lipped, gloomy, hard. St Francis, when he gave up everything to God, even his clothes, burst into song; because his nakedness was not a feat of human endurance, but a liberation of spirit, a falling into the arms of God".

*(From the Son's Course, by Gerald Vann, OP)*

This is a cause of real joy, especially for those of us who habitually fail to stick to the good resolutions we make on Ash Wednesday. The point of all our penance, our prayer, fasting and almsgiving, is not to earn God's favour, but to remind ourselves of our need for God's healing, our longing, to fall, like St Francis, into the arms of the God who is our heart's desire. And that is shown up particularly clearly when we fall short of our self-imposed goals, because it is then that we can ask God to pick us up again. In his mercy, he always will.

An ancient Lenten hymn puts it very well:

*The day is come, the accepted day  
When grace like nature flowers anew  
Trained by thy hand a surer way  
Rejoice we in our spring time too.*

Have a holy – and a happy – Lent!

*Sr Ann OP*



## FISHER HOUSE NEWSLETTER

Sunday 1 March - 1st SUNDAY OF LENT

### CALENDAR - LENT TERM WEEK VII

Sunday 1	1ST SUNDAY OF LENT	
MARCH	9.00am	Sung Latin Mass
	11.00 am	Sung English Mass
Monday 2	1.05pm	Mass
Tuesday 3	1.05pm	Mass
Wednesday 4	1.05pm	Mass
	6.00pm	Mass at Downing College Chapel
Thursday 5	12.30 - 1.00pm	Adoration
	1.05pm	Mass
Friday 6	12.30pm	Stations of the Cross
	1.05pm	Mass
	7.30pm	Fisher House Stations of the Cross
Saturday 7	1.05pm	Mass
	4.30 - 5.30	Confessions
	6.00pm	Vigil Mass of Sunday
Sunday 8	2ND SUNDAY OF LENT	
	9.00am	Latin Mass
	11.00 am	Sung English Mass

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

## FROM CAMBRIDGE TO THE CROSS



*A shared journey of Lenten Devotions.* Catholic institutions in Cambridge are collaborating during Lent on our devotional journey. Our contribution will be on Friday 6 March, with our traditional *Stations of the Cross* meditation for the end of term. Come and share this very special event, which showcases the work of our talented students, and provides a powerful meditation for Lent.

### MASS TIMES

We are intending to change the arrangement of Masses next term. The 6.00pm Vigil Mass will become the Sung Latin Mass with the Schola Cantorum: after this Mass there will be a time to socialise. The 9.00am Sunday Mass will be a simple English Mass without Music, and the 11.00am Mass will remain a sung English Mass with the Chapel Choir. If you would like to comment, please contact Fr Mark on ml709.

### SENIOR MEMBERS' & POSTDOCS READING GROUP FOR LENT

We will meet at 6.00pm on Fridays in Lent, in the Great Chamber, to read and discuss Ruth Valerio's *Saying Yes to Life* - a Christian look at environmental, ethical and social concerns. Please sign up outside the chapel. The book costs £7.00 and can be obtained from Fr Mark. The first meeting will be Friday 6 March.

### STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Sr Ann will lead Stations of the Cross each Friday in Lent in the Chapel at 12.30pm.

### BENSON CLUB

The book for this term is classic Spanish novel *The House of Ulloa* by Emilia Pardo Bazan. We will meet to discuss it on Thursday 12 March

### GOOD WORKS WORKSHOP

A workshop on living Catholic values in our careers and workplaces after Cambridge will be held on 14 March, from 11.00am to 1.00pm. See notice board for details.

### SVP

The Society of St Vincent Paul is always looking for more members to help with the soup run, and other ventures. Please sign up outside the chapel.

### APOLOGIA

Our series continues this week on Tuesday with a meal at 7.00pm, and at 8.00pm Fr Chase speaking on *Evangelisation* - following up from his very popular talk last term. The evening ends at 9.00pm with Compline, and the Black Swan Bar.

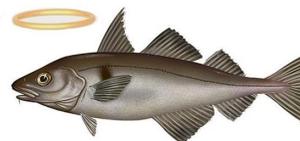
### MASS AT DOWNING COLLEGE

Fr Mark will celebrate Mass at Downing College Chapel at 6.00pm on Wednesday.

### DANTE CIRCLE

Meeting at 5.30pm on Monday, in the Great Chamber, to discuss *Purgatorio XIII-XIV*. Texts and translations will be provided.

### HADDOCS



Our medical ethics group, aimed at (but not exclusively for) medics, meets on Monday at 6.00pm, when Dr Cajetan Skowronski will deliver a talk entitled '*Eugenics—a Historical Perspective*'.

### LAST WEEK'S COLLECTION

£327.77

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

### FISHER LECTURE

This year's Fisher Lecture, examining themes of Faith and Society, is entitled '*Should I Stay or Should I Go? Faith in Contemporary Culture.*' Given the state of the world, and the scandals in the Church, is not the Church itself hopelessly compromised? What is the right thing to do? The lecture will be given by Fr Michael Conway, Professor in Faith and Culture at Maynooth University, Ireland, and will take place in the Chapel on Thursday, 5 March, at 6.00pm. All welcome.

### CAMBRIDGE HALF-MARATHON



Next Sunday, the half-marathon has been routed right past Fisher House. Please allow extra time to get to Mass. There are 'crossing points' to get across the route - speak to one of the stewards.

### MARRIAGE PREPARATION DAY

There will be a one-day course in marriage preparation on Saturday 7 March, 10.00am - 3.00pm. Please see Fr Mark for details.