

# 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*.

On one hand, the whole idea of pre-Lent sounds pretty terrible. Who wants more Lent? Not me. I'm a terrible faster. I subscribe wholeheartedly to the camp that says you can give up your give-ups on Sundays and solemnities. 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 be ready to shine with Christ in the light of his risen glory.

Fr. Chase, csc



## FISHER HOUSE NEWSLETTER

Sunday 23 February - 7th SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

### CALENDAR - LENT TERM WEEK VI

Sunday 23	6TH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR	
	9.00am	Sung Latin Mass
	11.00 am	Sung English Mass
Monday 24	1.05pm	Mass
Tuesday 25	1.05pm	Mass
Wednesday 26	ASH WEDNESDAY	
	Masses at 8.00am, 1.05pm, 6.00pm	
Thursday 27	12.30 - 1.00pm	Adoration
	1.05pm	Mass
Friday 28	1.05pm	Mass
7.30pm	'A Heart-subduing Melody' - an evening of St John Henry Newman's Poetry, Prose and Music	
Saturday 29	1.05pm	Mass
	4.30 - 5.30	Confessions
	6.00pm	Vigil Mass of Sunday
Sunday 1	1st Sunday of Lent	
March	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. We are asking students and members of Fisher House for poems, meditations, music that you have written. A sign-up list is outside the chapel.

### MASS TIMES

With two solemn sung Masses on Sunday mornings, we are finding the schedule overloaded, with little time for rehearsing and socialising between Masses. We are intending, therefore, 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, the bar will be opened and there will be a time to socialise. The 9.00am Sunday Mass will be a simply 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.

### ASH WEDNESDAY

Mass with distribution of Ashes takes place at 8.00am, 1.05pm, 6.00pm.

### OXFORD & CAMBRIDGE LOURDES PILGRIMAGE

This is the 25th anniversary year of the Oxford and Cambridge joint pilgrimage to Lourdes. The pilgrimage will take place 26 July to 2 August. There will be an information meeting on 27 February at 5.30pm in the Fisher Room. See the poster for more details, or contact Will Ransom on wlr22.#

### PRO-LIFE GROUP

The group meets on Monday at 7.30pm in the Fisher Room for a screening of the film *Unplanned*.

### GRADSOC

Meet in the Great Chamber on Thursday at 7.30pm for *Lectio Divina* with Fr Chase.

### GOOD WORKS

A workshop on living Christian values in our careers after Cambridge will be held on 14 March. See notice board for details.

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

We will meet 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.

### APOLOGIA

### MARDI GRAS & PANCAKES



There is no Apologia this week - it being Shrove Tuesday. Instead come and eat pancakes, and absorb the spirit of Mardi Gras!

Fisher Room, 7.00pm. £1 entry.

### LOURDES MEETING

There will be an information meeting about this year's Oxford and Cambridge Lourdes Pilgrimage (26 July - 2 August) on Thursday at 5.30pm in the Fisher Room.

### BENSON CLUB



The book for this term is classic Spanish novel *The House of Ulloa* by Emilia Pardo Bazan. (*It's fantastic - Fr Mark*). We will meet to discuss it on Thursday 12 March.

### LAST WEEK'S COLLECTION

£344.97

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

Contactless donation of £4 available after 11.00am Mass

### 'A HEART-SUBDUING MELODY'



On Friday we continue our series to mark the canonisation of St John Henry Newman with an evening of readings and music, featuring his poetry, prose and hymns. It will be a beautiful, moving and memorable evening. 7.30pm in the Chapel.

### 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*.' It will be given by Fr Michael Conway, Professor in Faith and Culture at Maynooth University, Ireland. Thursday, 5 March, 6.00pm.

### 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 further details.

### SR ANN

will preach at Pembroke next Sunday at 6.15pm.