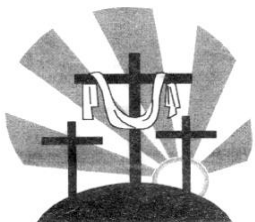


REST IN PEACE



Your prayers are requested this weekend for the souls of Ann Riordan and Fr. Eoin Cassidy who died this week and also for the souls of the following whose anniversaries occur at this time:

Aisling Crowe; Angela O'Reilly; John Owens; Damian Pilkington; John Costello and his son Fergus; Padraig & Sadie Corcoran; Peter & Maria Evers; Tommy Allen; Maureen Alford; Martina O'Gorman.

MAY THEIR SOULS AND THE SOULS OF ALL THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED THROUGH THE MERCY OF GOD REST IN PEACE. AMEN.

CHURCH COLLECTIONS

The amounts collected last weekend are:

DATE	GREEN BASKET	Share
7 th March 2021	€85	€25

The green basket is the collection for the support of the priests of the Diocese.

The white basket is the collection for Share, which meets the needs both of poorer parishes and of central agencies of the Diocese.

We thank you for your contributions to the Church collections and for your continuing support of all the collections.

TROCAIRE

Lenten Boxes are available on the table at the back of the church. We would love to see Trocaire getting the support it deserves.

On Sundays in Lent there will be a short reflection service at 5.30pm available on webcam.

WEEKLY BULLETIN



St. Mary's, Star of the Sea, Sandymount

Parish Office 6683894 / 6683316 – Monday to Friday 9.30 – 12.30
Fr. John McDonagh, Tel: 6684265 – Fr. Cormac McIlraith, Tel: 6686845
www.stmarysstaroftheseasandymount.com

Sunday 14th March 2021

Fourth Sunday of Lent

In our two great penitential seasons, Lent and Advent, a Sunday is set aside to celebrate 'joy' even as we journey through challenging times. In Lent when we're invited into self denial to afford a greater attention to God, we're still asked to do so with a smile. 'Prayer, fasting and almsgiving,' the traditional hallmarks of Lent, are intended to afford greater heart space for God and greater appreciation of all that Jesus Christ means for us. We want to ready ourselves for the celebration of Easter and we do so with joy.

You'll notice the joyful messages in today's readings and prayers on what we call "Laetare Sunday." Laetare is the Latin word for 'Rejoice' – as in the opening verse of today's Mass – 'Rejoice, Jerusalem, and all who love her.'

"God loved us with so much love that he was generous with his mercy ... He brought us to life with Christ" (2nd Reading).

"We are God's work of art, created in Christ Jesus to live the good life as from the beginning he had meant us to live it." (2nd Reading)

"God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life." (Gospel)

"The man who lives by the truth comes out into the light, so that it may be plainly seen that what he does is done in God." (Gospel)

It may be a very difficult pandemic time with a heavy toll of suffering but we have a lot to rejoice in as we journey forward.

The fifth chapter of the encyclical letter is a call by Pope Francis for a better kind of politics in the development of a global community of fraternity. It's a call for a politics that truly serves the common good and whose focus is on people, especially with concern for vulnerable people.

He begins with an analysis of both populism and liberalism as two major forces in modern politics and finds both inadequate to meet the global challenge. In respect of populism, he notes that 'lack of concern for the vulnerable can hide behind a populism that exploits them demagogically for its own purposes' while liberalism, essentially 'serves the interests of the powerful'.

In recent years the communications media and conversation have been overrun with words like 'populist' and 'populism'. The effect has been to immediately label a person whenever they express a view about anything. They are either 'unfairly dismissed or praised to the sky.' It doesn't facilitate dialogue but stifles it divisively. What is missing is an understanding that people across all kinds of differences can in fact come up with shared goals and enter together in long term projects. Populism lacks this appreciation of 'people', crucial as it is to social reality and democracy. It is a fact also that there are 'popular' leaders, capable of good leadership, who drift into unhealthy populism whenever they exploit people and their culture to their own advantage or do so simply to be re-elected and further their power. In facing immediate needs of people, welfare programmes should always be viewed as temporary. Francis sees the provision of employment as the biggest issue and the best path to giving people a life of dignity. It not only allows them earn their daily bread but gives them a shared responsibility for our world and for our life as a people.

Liberal politics on the other hand, with reliance on market forces, will tend to reject the concept of 'a people'. There is no shared story when one speaks of freedom in this liberal camp. 'The people' is only an abstract idea in their perspective and those who speak for the rights of the vulnerable will be dismissed as 'populist'. Scanning the horizons of current affairs and politics today, we don't have to look far to find instances of what the Pope is saying here in this chapter.

Francis advocates a necessary spirit of fraternity and social charity and a more efficient worldwide organisation to resolve the problems that plague the abandoned, who are suffering and dying in poor countries. Neither populism nor neoliberalism alone will solve it. Nor is it to be denied that human weakness, the proclivity to selfishness, the inclination to focus on 'myself', 'my group,' 'my own petty interests' was ever and remains a constant reality. It's something to be 'overcome with the help of God' he adds. That's why 'education and upbringing, concern for others, a well-integrated view of life and spiritual growth' are all essential for quality human growth if we are to confront injustices. 'Everything,' he writes, 'depends on our ability to see the need for a change of heart, attitudes and lifestyles. Otherwise, political propaganda, the media, the shapers of public opinion will continue to promote an individualistic and uncritical culture subservient to unregulated economic interests and societal institutions at the service of those who already enjoy too much power.' We must put human dignity back in the centre and around that pillar build the alternative social structures we need and we must move beyond the idea of social policies *for* the poor to policies *with* the poor and *of the* poor.

Casting his reflections on the international dimension of this challenge, Pope Francis is quite strong in his criticism of the response to the financial crisis of 2007-2008. The response did not rethink the outdated criteria which continue to rule the world. In fact, strategies in the wake of the crisis 'fostered greater individualism, less integration and increased freedom for the powerful'. He asserts that 'no individual or group can consider itself absolute, entitled to bypass the dignity and rights of other individuals or social groupings.' He perceives, in our time, the weakening of the power of nation states in the tendency for transnational economic and financial sectors to prevail over the political. This trend calls for a greater degree of international regulation. He calls for a significant reform of the United Nations and of international financial institutions so that the concept of the family of nations may acquire more teeth. He emphasises the need to be faithful to international agreements, preferably multilateral rather than bilateral, the better to promote the universal common good and the protection of weaker states. Importantly too, amid the failures of the international community, he points to organisations within society whose work is commendable in the service of global fraternity and whose members show great heroism.

This half-way stage in the chapter invites a pause until we continue next time. Amid the topicality of much of what Francis expresses in chapter five his reference to groups serving the global fraternity reminds us of our own Trocaire. Their Lenten box packs are available at the back of the church. Please help Trocaire if you can: it's a good way to enter into the spirit of what this letter is saying to us. We thank those who are already doing so.

St. Patrick's Day – Wednesday 17th March

The Masses for St Patrick's Day will be as on a Sunday, at 10.30am and 12 noon on the webcam.

The Explorers

The Explorers are an informal ecumenical group with the aim of reading scriptures together. This year all presentations will take place on Zoom. Their next meeting will be on this Monday 15th March at 7.30pm. All are welcome. Contact Annret.Simms@ucd.ie

The Parish Office is closed to the public for the time being.

Because of the current seriousness of concern for public health, we have decided to close the parish office to the public for the time being. However, parishioners are invited to leave a message on the phone (01 6683316 or 01 6683894) or to contact Fr John (01 6684265/0876294325) or Fr Cormac (01 6686845) for any services required. Phone messages to the parish office will be checked daily and responded to.