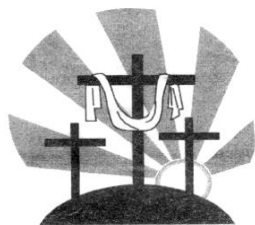


REST IN PEACE



Your prayers are requested for the souls of the following whose anniversaries occur at this time:

Michael Rafferty and his son Mark; Edward Lennon; Bee Bee Whearity; Angela O'Reilly; Brendan Mackey; Doreen Reynolds; Carmel Lawlor; Tom Morgan; Leo Healy.

And for Michael Timony whose Month's Mind occurs.

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
14 th February 2021	€80	€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.

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 McLraith, Tel: 6686845
www.stmarysstaroftheseasandymount.com

Sunday 21st February 2021

The Desert Experience

The Sundays of Lent offer spiritual signposts on the road to Easter. This first Sunday invites us into the desert as a place of temptation but also a place of resolution and deepening of purpose. Jesus was tempted to pursue a pathway of wonder-working, of immediate worldly power or of theatrical gestures without pain. Instead, in each case, he draws on the Book of Deuteronomy to re-assert the Shema Israel at the heart of the Law – “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one, the only God. You shall love the Lord your God with your whole heart, with your whole soul, with your whole might.” Jesus is determined instead to “seek first the Kingdom of God” as he advised his followers later. He will follow the call of the Father even if it leads to Calvary. Sometimes, you need your enemy or some desert experience to help you define who you are, what you stand for and what your governing purpose in life is.

This past year of pandemic and for further into the future our lives have been uprooted out of the familiar into something of a desert wilderness. Cut off from family and friends, we've experienced some aspects at least of the desert: A place of testing, a brooding unfamiliar landscape, a lockdown hideout, a setting where you confront yourself, a godforsaken place, a place where the devil haunts and fear overtakes. It's a place also where we can enter the inner world and the unconscious, a sacred place to meet God.

“Away, away, from men and towns,
To the wild wood and downs
To the silent wilderness,
Where the soul need not repress its music.”

Percy B. Shelly – “The Invitation”

Perhaps in this, your Lent in Pandemic, you can resonate with the Lord's responses to temptations that beset us all, temptations to follow a route other than the way the Lord invites. "You shall love the Lord your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your might."

Fratelli Tutti : The Pope's Encyclical chapter two: A Stranger on the Road

Following his observations of factors in modern life that hinder the development of fraternal brotherhood worldwide, Pope Francis devotes an interesting chapter to reflection on the parable of the Good Samaritan, as told by Jesus. He offers it in 'a search for a ray of light in the midst of what we are experiencing' before he will go on in subsequent chapters to propose some concrete lines of action.

Beginning with a question that arises in the early pages of the Book of Genesis where God asks Cain where his brother Abel is and Cain answers 'am I my brother's keeper', Francis perceives this conversation as God encouraging us to create a different culture, one in which we resolve our conflicts and care for one another. He leaves no room for the indifference that lives easily with attitudes of fatalism or determinism. We are our brother and sister's keepers.

There follows a scriptural review on how the imperative to love one's neighbour developed over time from one initially focused on one's immediate circle of fellow citizens to one of embrace for the stranger. The New Testament resonates with this deeper call to fraternal charity. Pushing out the boundaries of love to all persons is the context in which Jesus related the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Jesus' story is of a man assaulted by thieves and lying injured on the roadside. Several people in important social positions passed him by but didn't stop. Only one person stopped to give the injured man his time and attention, share his resources and care. Francis sees this story replicated today in our world. In asking which of the characters we resemble, he observes first that we need to acknowledge that we're constantly tempted to ignore others, especially the weak. He raises this as a critical feature of modern culture. A society that seeks prosperity but turns its back on suffering is an unhealthy society. He prays we may not sink into such depths. We are called instead to work for the 'common good' and our only course is to imitate the Good Samaritan. Any other way 'makes us either one of the robbers or one of those who walked by without compassion'. If we review our lives honestly, he adds, all of us are, or have been, like each of the characters in the parable. We have in ourselves 'something of the wounded man, something of the robber, something of the passerby and something of the Good Samaritan'. The parable urges us to persevere in love, to restore dignity to the suffering and build a society worthy of the name.

Pope Francis enjoys a gift of opening the Scriptures in a way that addresses our world directly and one can only commend a closer reading of this chapter. Here are some emergent thoughts in his reflection.

- 'A believer can be untrue to everything that his faith demands of him and yet think he is close to God and better than others'.
- 'Robbers usually find secret allies in those who pass by and look the other way'.
- 'We shouldn't expect everything from those who govern us; we have the space we need for co-responsibility in creating and putting into place new processes and changes'.

- 'We can start from below with the same concern the Samaritan showed for the wounded man's injuries'
- 'Let us renounce the pettiness and resentment of useless in-fighting and constant confrontation'.
- 'We're asked to be present to those in need of help regardless of whether or not they belong to our social group'.
- 'For Christians, the words of Jesus have deeper meaning. They compel us to recognise Christ himself in each of our abandoned or excluded brothers and sisters'.
- 'I sometimes wonder why it took so long for the Church unequivocally to condemn slavery and various forms of violence. Today, with our developed spirituality and theology, we have no excuses'.
- 'Still, there are those who appear to feel encouraged by their faith to support varieties of narrow and violent nationalism, xenophobia and contempt, and even the mistreatment of those who are different. Faith and the humanism it inspires must prompt an immediate response whenever they rear their head'.

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.

We are happy to facilitate the booking of Masses, the provision of Baptism application forms and Statement of Freedom Forms for those planning a marriage in the coming months, the procurement of Certificates, or of items from the shop such as Mass cards, or the weekly editions of the Tablet or the monthly magazines such as Reality and Messenger. We can arrange the safe collection of items as needed and should a payment be involved it can be made appropriately by dropping an envelope through the parish office letter box. Newspapers like the Irish Catholic are at the back of the Church but should not be handled unless purchased and taken home. We encourage your support of the Catholic Press at a very difficult time for it.

For those in preparation for marriage it is best that they contact Fr John or Fr Cormac directly to arrange appropriate meetings.

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