

St Thomas More – Parish Newsletter

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Sunday 12th February 2023, Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)

From the Holy Father

*Sunday, 5th February 2023 during his recent visit to
South Sudan*

Let us now pass to the second image used by Jesus, which is light: *You are the light of the world*. A great prophecy was told of Israel: "I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth" (*Is* 49:6). Now that prophecy has been fulfilled, because God the Father has sent his Son, who is the light of the world (cf. *Jn* 8:12), the true light that enlightens every person and every people, the light that shines in the darkness and dispels every cloud of gloom (cf. *Jn* 1:5.9). Jesus, the light of the world, tells his disciples that they, too, are *the light of the world*. This means that, when we receive the light of Christ, the light that is Christ, we become "luminous"; we radiate the light of God!

Jesus goes on to say: "A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house" (*Mt* 5:15). Again, this was a familiar image in those days. Many villages in Galilee were built on hillsides and were visible from a great distance. Lamps in houses were placed high up, so that they could illumine all

the corners of a room. When a lamp was extinguished, it was covered with a piece of terracotta called a "bushel", which deprived the flame of oxygen and thus put out its light.

Brothers and sisters, it is clear what Jesus means by asking us to be the light of the world: we, who are his disciples, are called to shine forth like a city set on a hill, like a lamp whose flame may never be extinguished. In other words, before we worry about the darkness surrounding us, before we hope that the shadows around us will lighten, we are called to radiate light, to give brightness to our cities, our villages and homes, our acquaintances and all our daily activities by our lives and good works.

The Lord will give us strength, the strength to be light in him, so that everyone will see our good works, and seeing them, as Jesus reminds us, they will rejoice in God and give him glory. If we live like sons and daughters, brothers and sisters on earth, people will come to know that all of us have a Father in heaven. We are being asked, then, to burn with love, never to let our light be extinguished, never to let the oxygen of charity fade from our lives so that the works of evil can take away the pure air of our witness. This country, so beautiful yet ravaged by violence, needs the light that each one of you has, or better, the light that each one of you is.

Dear brothers and sisters, I pray that you will be salt that spreads, dissolves and seasons South Sudan with the fraternal taste of the Gospel. May your Christian communities shine radiantly, so

that, like cities built on a hill, they will shed the light of goodness on all and show that it is beautiful and possible to live with generosity and self-giving, to have hope, and together to build a reconciled future. Brothers and sisters, I am with you and I assure you of my prayer that you will experience the joy of the Gospel, the savour and the light that the Lord, "the God of peace" (*Phil* 4:9), the "God of all consolation" (*2 Cor* 1:3), desires to pour out upon every one of you.

"John Garang" Mausoleum (Juba), South Sudan

Confirmation Classes

Confirmation classes, open to all those who need to receive this Sacrament, begin today Sunday 12th February. The classes will take place on five consecutive Sundays from 3.30 to 4.30pm in the hall. Please let Fr Stefan know if you would like to join these classes. Email: stefanhnylycia@rcdow.org.uk

CAFOD Syria-Turkey Earthquake Appeal

CAFOD is responding with support of provision of food, water, shelter, medical assistance and winter kits for survivors. Your donations in recent months have made that quick response possible. Let us join CAFOD in praying for our sisters and brothers affected by the earthquakes and the winter weather. Your support for CAFOD throughout the year allows our Catholic agency to act quickly when disasters strike. For more details visit CAFOD's Syria Turkey Emergency Appeal online at <https://cafod.org.uk/give>

Mary's Meals Syria Earthquake Appeal

Mary's Meals are working alongside their partner on the ground, Dorcas, to provide emergency support to communities affected in Aleppo and the surrounding area. For more details and to donate, visit their website:

<https://www.marysmeals.org.uk/>

Mary's Meals - Thank You Letter

St Thomas More RC Church

Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for your precious gift of £657.85, which is helping us to transform the lives of hungry children around the world with a nutritious daily meal in school. Your kindness is bringing food, joy and hope to the children who eat Mary's Meals, allowing them to make the most of their education and giving them the chance of a better future.

As part of our Double The Love appeal, your donation will be matched – all thanks to a group of generous donors who are doubling donations, up to £1.5 million, at this time. This means your gift will feed even more hungry children with Mary's Meals.

Our meals make a huge difference to children like 14-year-old Mona from Yemen, who says: "The meal is delicious with varied food. I really feel full with this and it helps my family to save money that we really need."

"The food enables me to better understand the lessons and do my homework. I hope to be a paediatric doctor when I am older, caring for and helping children."

Today, more than 2.4 million hungry children in 18 of the world's poorest countries – including South Sudan, Ethiopia, India and Yemen – are sitting in classrooms with full stomachs, and learning how to read and write, thanks to supporters like you.

Together, we are bringing the hope of a brighter future to so many little ones who depend on the promise of a daily meal in school. I thank you, with all my heart, on behalf of the children who eat Mary's Meals.

Yours sincerely,

Daniel Adams

Executive Director, Mary's Meals

Special “mini Retreat” for women to prepare for Lent

This is on Tuesday February 14th from 10 am Mass till 12.40 pm, including a time for Eucharistic adoration. Followed by coffee in the Hall. It is a time set aside to look at our lives in God's presence. You are welcome for all or part of it.

Magnificat — February and Lent

The February Magnificat (£5) and Lenten companion (£2) are available to buy. Please ask Maggie, or one of the priests for copies.

Annual Mass for Matrimony

“The annual Mass for Matrimony will be celebrated in the Cathedral by the Cardinal on Saturday 13th May at 2.30pm for couples celebrating significant wedding anniversaries.

Full information and invitation will be issued shortly by the Diocesan Co-ordinator for Marriage and Family Life, Deacon Roger Carr-Jones, but in the meantime Parishes are invited to note the date and begin to advertise this very popular and important celebration.”

Bach's St John Passion

As part of its Lenten devotions, Westminster Cathedral Choir, directed by Simon Johnson, will perform Johann Sebastian Bach's the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ according to St John on Thursday 16th March at 7.30pm.

Tickets (£45/35/25/15) for this seasonal performance in aid of Westminster Cathedral are available from Ticketmaster.

From the Fathers of the Church

The Power of the Cross

Every action of Christ and all his working of miracles were truly very great and divine and wonderful. But of all things the most wonderful is his honourable cross. For by nothing else except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ has death been brought low, the sin of our first parents destroyed, hell plundered, resurrection bestowed, the power given us to despise the things of this world and even death itself, the road back to the

former blessedness made smooth, the gates of paradise opened, our nature seated at the right hand of God, and we made children and heirs of God. By the cross all things have been set aright. For all we who are baptised in Christ, says the Apostle, are baptised in his death (Rom 6:3), and as many of us as have been baptised in Christ have put on Christ (Gal 3:27); moreover, Christ is the power and wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:254).

See how the death of Christ, the cross, that is to say, has clothed us with the subsistent wisdom and power of God! And the word of the cross is the power of God, whether because by it is God's might, his victory over death, that is, was manifested to us, or because, just as the four arms of the cross are made solid and bound together by their central part, so are the height and the depth, the length and the breadth, that is to say, all creation both visible and invisible, held together by the power of God.

This we have been given as a sign on our forehead, just as Israel was given the circumcision, for by it we faithful are set apart from the infidels and recognised. It is a shield and armour, and a trophy against the Devil. It is a seal that the Destroyer may not strike us, as Scripture says (cf Exod 12:27). It is a raising up for those who lie fallen, a support for those who stand, a staff for the infirm, a crook for the shepherded, a guide for the wandering, a perfecting of the advanced, salvation for soul and body, an averter of all evils, a cause of all good things, a destruction of sin, a plant of resurrection, and a tree of eternal life.

St John Damascene De Fide Orthodoxa 4,11

St John Damascene was born in Damascus about 675 into a prominent Christian family. He became a monk in the monastery of St Sabas, near Jerusalem and was ordained to the priesthood. He is best known for his strong defence of holy icons against the iconoclasts. He died in the year 749. He is considered to be the last of the Fathers of the Eastern Church. In 1890 he was named as a Doctor of the Church.

ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC CHURCH 6th Sunday of Ordinary Time

12th February – 18th February 2023

Tel: 020 7435 1388; <https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/swisscottage/>

| | MASS | OTHER ACTIVITIES |
|---|--|---|
| SUN 12th February Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Readings. Year A) | 9.30am People of the Parish 11am Mass Kathleen Murphy (RIP) 6pm Mass For the victims of the Turkish/Syrian earthquakes | The Church opens at 9.15am 10.30am Confessions 3.30pm - 4.30pm Confirmation class 1 5.30pm Confessions |
| MON 13th February feria | 7am Mass For the spread of the Gospel 10am Mass John Sterling Gallagher (RIP) | The Church opens at 6.50am (Monday to Friday) |
| TUE 14th February SS CYRIL, Monk and METHODIUS, Bishop, Patrons of Europe | 7am Mass Irene O'Sullivan (RIP) 10am Mass Jim and Hildegard Charles (intentions) | 11.00am Ladies' Recollection |
| WED 15th February feria | 7am Mass For Peace in Ukraine 10am Mass Peggy Benz (intentions) | N.B. The Seniors' Coffee morning has been cancelled this month. |
| THU 16th February feria | 7am Mass Holy Souls 10am Mass Alice La Vecchia (intentions) | |
| FRI 17th February The Seven Holy Founders of the Servite Order Friday abstinence | 7am Mass Carmine Albano (intentions) 10am Mass Persecuted Christians | 10am – 12pm Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament |
| SAT 18th February Blessed Virgin Mary on Saturday | 10am Mass Joyce and Maura Cheal (RIP) | The Church opens at 9.30am |

Prayer Intentions:

Recently deceased: Mike Cipolla; Michael Crook; Pope Benedict XVI; Angela Carpos; John Stopplecamp; Wendy Bellas; Irene O'Sullivan; Peter Glenn

Anniversary: Brigid Monaghan; Josephine Abdala-Tabet; Christine Banks; Mark Sharman; Elizabeth Covenden; Maria Fernanda; Simon Ulcickas; Nick Aldridge; Mabel Bull; Sofia Vukusic; Maroun Ramia; Irene Cole

Confessions:

Monday to Friday (before and after 10am Mass)

Saturday: before and after 10am Mass

Sunday: 10.30am and 5.30pm (before Mass)

Forthcoming Events:

22nd February: ASH WEDNESDAY, the beginning of Lent. NB There will be a 6pm Mass that day in addition to the morning Masses.

20th March: ST JOSEPH, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary

25th March: THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD