

St Thomas More – Parish Newsletter

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Sunday 19th February 2023, Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A)

Church teaching from the Documents of the Second Vatican Council to accompany Sunday's Mass reading

From *Lumen Gentium*, the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church

No. 40: The Lord Jesus, the divine Teacher and Model of all perfection, preached holiness of life to each and everyone of His disciples of every condition. He Himself stands as the author and consumator of this holiness of life: "*Be you therefore perfect, even as your heavenly Father is perfect*". Indeed He sent the Holy Spirit upon all men that He might move them inwardly to love God with their whole heart and their whole soul, with all their mind and all their strength and that they might love each other as Christ loves them. The followers of Christ are called by God, not because of their works, but according to His own purpose and grace. They are justified in the Lord Jesus, because in the baptism of faith they truly become sons of God and sharers in the divine nature. In this way they are really made holy. Then too, by God's gift, they must hold on to and complete in their lives this holiness they have received. They are warned by the Apostle to live "*as becomes saints*", and to put on "*as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved a heart of mercy, kindness, humility, meekness, patience*", and to possess the fruit of the Spirit in holiness. Since truly we all offend in many things

we all need God's mercies continually and we all must daily pray: "*Forgive us our debts*".

Thus it is evident to everyone, that all the faithful of Christ of whatever rank or status, are called to the fullness of the Christian life and to the perfection of charity; by this holiness as such a more human manner of living is promoted in this earthly society. In order that the faithful may reach this perfection, they must use their strength accordingly as they have received it, as a gift from Christ. They must follow in His footsteps and conform themselves to His image seeking the will of the Father in all things. They must devote themselves with all their being to the glory of God and the service of their neighbour. In this way, the holiness of the People of God will grow into an abundant harvest of good, as is admirably shown by the life of so many saints in Church history. (...)

From no. 41: Furthermore, married couples and Christian parents should follow their own proper path (to holiness) by faithful love. They should sustain one another in grace throughout the entire length of their lives. They should imbue their offspring, lovingly welcomed as God's gift, with Christian doctrine and the evangelical virtues. In this manner, they offer all men the example of unwearying and generous love; in this way they build up the brotherhood of charity; in so doing, they stand as the witnesses and co-operators in the fruitfulness of Holy Mother Church; by such lives, they are a sign

and a participation in that very love, with which Christ loved His Bride and for which He delivered Himself up for her. A like example, but one given in a different way, is that offered by widows and single people, who are able to make great contributions toward holiness and apostolic endeavour in the Church. Finally, those who engage in labour—and frequently it is of a heavy nature—should better themselves by their human labours. They should be of aid to their fellow citizens. They should raise all of society, and even creation itself, to a better mode of existence. Indeed, they should imitate by their lively charity, in their joyous hope and by their voluntary sharing of each others' burdens, the very Christ who plied His hands with carpenter's tools and Who in union with His Father, is continually working for the salvation of all men. In this, then, their daily work they should climb to the heights of holiness and apostolic activity.

May all those who are weighed down with poverty, infirmity and sickness, as well as those who must bear various hardships or who suffer persecution for justice sake—may they all know they are united with the suffering Christ in a special way for the salvation of the world. The Lord called them blessed in His Gospel and they are those whom *"the God of all graces, who has called us unto His eternal glory in Christ Jesus, will Himself, after we have suffered a little while, perfect, strengthen and establish"*.

Finally all Christ's faithful, whatever be the conditions, duties and circumstances of their lives—and indeed through all these, will daily increase in holiness, if they receive all things with faith from the hand of their heavenly Father and if they cooperate with the divine will. In this temporal service, they will manifest to all men the love with which God loved the world.

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Ash Wednesday and Stations of the Cross

To make it easier for as many people as possible to start Lent by attending Mass and receiving the ashes, there will be a 6pm Mass on Ash Wednesday 22 February.

Stations of the Cross will take place in the church every Friday of Lent at 6pm.

Confirmation Classes

Confirmation classes, open to all those who need to receive this Sacrament, continue this Sunday 19th February from 3.30 to 4.30pm in the hall.

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>

There will be a retiring collection for the work of CAFOD on Sunday 5th March, following the Lent Fast Day on Friday 3rd March.

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/>

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

As Lent begins part of a homily from Pope St Leo the Great

My dearest ones, what every Christian has to practise always, has now to be done with more faith and more love. In this way we will satisfy the apostolic instruction which commands us to fast for forty days, not only reducing our food intake, but principally abstaining from sin. As mortification has as its aim to cut out the focal points of carnal desires, no abstinence is so advantageous as the one which makes us abstemious of evil desires and free from immoral actions (...)

Good works are very varied, and this very variety gives true Christians, be they rich or poor, a part of the distribution of alms, in such a way that those who differ by the quantity of their good become equal at least through affections of the heart. Within sight of the Lord many throw into the collection boxes great amounts from their abundance, and a widow gives only two coins (cf Luke 21:2). Yet she deserves to be honoured with a testimony from Jesus Christ who said that

such a small gift was preferred to the offerings of others, since in relation to the big amounts of those who were still left with a lot, what she gave was all she had, as she was so poor. And even if someone were to see himself reduced to such a poor situation that he could not give two coins to the poor, he will find in the Lord's precepts the way of carrying out these desires of charity. For he who gives a glass of water to the thirsty will receive his reward (cf Matt 10:42).

My dearest ones, you who want to celebrate the Passover of the Lord, should carry out these holy fasts, so that you come to the most holy of all feasts free from all turmoil. Love of humility expels the spirit of pride, source of all sin, and meekness contains those whom presumption inflates. Those who, with their offences, have irritated the courageous, reconciled among themselves may seek to enter in harmonious unity: *Do not repay anyone evil for evil* (Rom 12:17), but *forgive each other, just as the Lord has forgiven you* (Col 3:13). Suppress human enmities with peace. And if some of your subordinates have deserved to go to prison or to be put in chains, let them mercifully be let loose. We, who daily need the remedy to indulgence, should pardon without difficulty the faults of others. If we say to the Lord, our Father: *Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors* (Matt 6:12), it is absolutely certain that when we forgive the offences of others, we prepare ourselves to receive divine clemency.

Homily 44

St Leo was born in Tuscany, he became Pope in 440 AD. It was a time when the Church was experiencing great obstacles to her progress following the increasing disintegration of the western empire, while the East was deeply agitated over dogmatic controversies. From the moment of his election, Leo untiringly dedicated himself to the governing of the Church with great prudence. Ninety-two sermons of his are preserved, almost all of them preached on the principal feasts of the liturgical year. He died in 461.

ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC CHURCH 7th Sunday of Ordinary Time

19th February – 25th February 2023

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	MASS	OTHER ACTIVITIES
SUN 19th February Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time (Readings. Year A)	9.30am People of the Parish 11am Mass Helen Conlon (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 2 5.30pm Confessions
MON 20th February feria	7am Mass Fr Nicholas' intentions 10am Mass Joan Ross (intentions)	The Church opens at 6.50am (Monday to Friday)
TUE 21st February St Peter Damian, Bishop & Doctor	7am Mass Zabeth Soulé (RIP anniversary) 10am Mass Carmine Albano (intentions)	
WED 22nd February ASH WEDNESDAY Fasting & abstinence	7am Mass Holy Souls 10am Mass Ita and Bernard Looney (intentions) 6pm Mass Holy Father's intentions	
THU 23rd February Lent feria (St Polycarp, Bishop & Martyr)	7am Mass For Priestly Vocations 10am Mass Iris Nally (RIP anniversary)	
FRI 24th February Lent feria Friday abstinence	7am Mass Sue and Len Hay (RIP) 10am Mass For Peace in Ukraine (1 st anniversary of the invasion)	10am – 12pm Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament 6pm Stations of the Cross
SAT 25th February Lent feria	10am Mass Persecuted Christians	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: Mark Sharman; Elizabeth Covenden; Maria Fernanda; Simon Ulcickas; Nick Aldridge; Mabel Bull; Sofia Vukusic; Maroun Ramia; Irene Cole; Iris Nally

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:

1st March: St DAVID, Patron of Wales

17th March: St PATRICK, Patron of Ireland

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