

ST THOMAS MORE – PARISH NEWSLETTER

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SUNDAY 11TH FEBRUARY 2024

SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (Year B)

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday 14th February marks the beginning of the liturgical season of Lent. The ashes will be blessed and distributed during Mass that day. To make it easier to start Lent by attending Mass and receiving the ashes, there will be an evening Mass at **6pm** on 14th February in addition to the normal **10am** Mass.

Ash Wednesday is a day of fasting and abstinence. Fasting means seriously reducing the amount of food we eat as a penance. Abstinence means not eating meat, again as penance.

Stations of the Cross

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

Lent

One of the Church's documents explains that "All Christ's faithful are obliged by divine law, each in his or own way, to do penance. However, so that all may be joined together in a certain common practice of penance, days of penance are prescribed. On these days the faithful are in special manner to devote themselves to prayer, to engage in

works of piety and charity and to deny themselves, by fulfilling their obligations more faithfully ..."

In these days before Lent starts we are invited to decide how to mark this great season of grace in our own lives.

We often hear of the traditional "giving something up" for Lent. This is a good and an easy-to-remember approach to Lent. But there are many possible approaches:

- Try to identify a spiritual book to read, perhaps a life of a favourite saint, or one of those books specially written to accompany us through Lent.
- Resolve to set aside more regular time for prayer each day, perhaps abstaining from social media at times.
- Talk to people about the importance the Mass has in our lives and encourage them to attend Sunday Mass.
- Find time to keep in touch with those who are elderly, or living on their own.

- Attend Mass more often.
- Attend the Stations of the Cross in the parish or do them on one's own

Funeral Friday 23 February 2024

The funeral of Mrs Joan Ross, a parishioner known to many in the parish, will take place on **Friday 23 February at 10am**. There will be tea and coffee in the parish hall after the Mass for her friends to exchange memories. Meanwhile a small group will attend the final committal at the crematorium. Please note that there will be **no exposition of the Blessed Sacrament that Friday**.

Cardinal's Lenten Appeal 2024

If you can, please show your support for the Cardinal's Lenten Appeal. All funds raised go towards projects across our Diocese.

Each year, the Diocese uses donations made to support the work of its services, such as Marriage & Family Life; Youth Ministry, and Education. Funds are also used to support the work of Caritas Westminster, who work for and with some of the most vulnerable people in our Diocese.

Archbishop Cardinal Nichols has expressed his gratitude to everyone who supports the appeal, with whatever they can afford.

Donation envelopes will be provided in the entrance to the church during Lent. We will make use of one of the collection boxes in the wall of the Narthex for this purpose. You can also use the QR code to make your donation online. However, it is not possible to use the card reader in the Narthex for this appeal due to difficulties with regard to gift aid issues. Thank you for your generosity.

Parish Film Club

The Parish Film plans to project a number of religious films and programmes on certain Wednesdays before Easter. The initial plan is to meet on the following Wednesdays: 21st February, 28th February and 20th March at 10.45am after the 10am Mass.

February Mini-Retreat for Women

The February Mini-Retreat for Women will be held on Tuesday 13th February from the 10am Mass until 12.40pm, 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 just before Lent begins. You are welcome for all or part of it.

Themes: Five Beatitudes for Lent. The gift of grace.

First Holy Communion Classes

There is now a break in the first Holy Communion classes for the school half term. Classes will start again on Saturday 24th February 11.00am to 12 noon.

Area for young children during Sunday Mass

If you are new to the parish it may help to know that during the 9.30am and 11am Masses on Sundays we generally open the parish hall and project a view of the sanctuary onto the screen in the seminar room (top floor). This enables parents with small children who become restless to follow the Mass from there if they so wish. Please help to make newcomers aware of this helpful area in the parish hall.

Mass Intentions

Please use the brown Mass intention envelopes in the Narthex to request a Mass. These can be handed to a priest or put through the letterbox of the presbytery. Please speak to Maggie Ainsworth in the Parish Office (Tuesday or Friday mornings) or email her at swisscottage@redow.org.uk about any Masses you wish to be offered on a specific day.

If your Mass intention is for someone who has recently died or is seriously ill, we shall try to allocate a Mass as soon as possible. However, bear in general that it is not unusual for Masses to be offered several weeks after they have been requested.

Annual Mass for Matrimony in Westminster Cathedral

The annual Mass for Matrimony will be celebrated in the Cathedral by Cardinal Nichols on Saturday 25th May at 2.30pm for couples celebrating significant wedding anniversaries. Full information and an invitation will be issued shortly, but in the meantime parishes have been invited to note the date and begin to advertise this very popular and important celebration.

Commentary on Sunday's Gospel

Some thoughts on this Sunday's gospel Mk 1: 40-45 from the Angelus Address of Pope Benedict XVI on 15 February 2009.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

During these Sundays the Evangelist Mark has offered for our reflection a sequence of various miraculous cures. Today he presents to us a very special one, the healing of a leper (*Mk 1: 40-45*) who approached Jesus and, kneeling down begs him: "If you wish, you can make me clean". Jesus, moved with pity, stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him: "I do will it. Be made clean!" And the man was instantly healed. Jesus asked him to say nothing about the event but to present himself to the priests to offer the sacrifice prescribed by the Mosaic law. However, the leper who had been healed was not able to keep quiet about it and instead proclaimed what had happened to him to all so that the Evangelist recounts the sick flocked to Jesus in even greater numbers, to the extent of forcing him to remain outside the towns to avoid being besieged by people.

Jesus said to the leper: "Be made clean!" According to the ancient Jewish law (*see Leviticus 13-14*), leprosy was not only considered a disease but also the most serious form of ritual "impurity". It was the priests' duty to diagnose it and to declare unclean the sick person who had to be isolated from the community and live

outside the populated area until his eventual and well-certified recovery. Thus, leprosy constituted a kind of religious and civil death, and its healing a kind of resurrection. It is possible to see leprosy as a symbol of sin, which is the true impurity of heart that can distance us from God. It is not in fact the physical disease of leprosy that separates us from God as the ancient norms supposed but sin, spiritual and moral evil. This is why the Psalmist exclaims: "Blessed is he whose fault is taken away, / whose sin is covered", and then says, addressing God: "I acknowledged my sin to you, / my guilt I covered not. / I said, 'I confess my faults to the Lord' / and you took away the guilt of my sin" (*Ps 32[31]: 1,5*). The sins that we commit distance us from God and, if we do not humbly confess them, trusting in divine mercy, they will finally bring about the death of the soul. This miracle thus has a strong symbolic value. Jesus, as Isaiah had prophesied, is the Servant of the Lord who "has borne our griefs / and carried our sorrows" (*Is 53: 4*). In his Passion he will become as a leper, made impure by our sins, separated from God: he will do all this out of love, to obtain for us reconciliation, forgiveness and salvation. In the Sacrament of Penance, the Crucified and Risen Christ purifies us through his ministers with his infinite mercy, restores us to communion with the heavenly Father and with our brothers and makes us a gift of his love, his joy and his peace.

Dear brothers and sisters, let us invoke the Virgin Mary whom God preserved from every stain of sin so that she may help us to avoid sin and to have frequent recourse to the Sacrament of Confession, the sacrament of forgiveness, whose value and importance for our Christian life must be rediscovered today.

ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC CHURCH

6th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Tel: 020 7435 1388

11th - 17th February 2024

<https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/swisscottage/>

	MASS	OTHER ACTIVITIES
SUN 11th February Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Readings. Year B)	9.30am Joseph Daaboul (RIP) 11am Mass Peggy Benz (intentions) 6pm Mass People of the Parish	The Church opens at 9.15am 10.30am Confessions 5.30pm Confessions
MON 12th February Feria	10am Mass Christopher Czerniszewski (intentions)	Church opens at 9.30am Monday to Saturday Church closes about 1pm on Mondays, other weekdays about 6pm
TUE 13th February Feria	10am Mass Duarte Costa Pereira (RIP)	After 10am Mass Womens' Mini-Retreat
WED 14th February ASH WEDNESDAY Fasting & Abstinence	10am Mass Jim and Hildegard Charles (intentions) 6pm Mass Holy Souls	
THU 15th February Lent feria	10am Mass Fay Ohler (RIP)	
FRI 16th February Lent feria Friday abstinence	10am Mass Richard Pavilon (RIP)	10am to Noon Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament
SAT 17th February Lent feria	10am Mass Joyce and Maura Cheal (RIP)	The Church opens at 9.30am Half Term - No First Holy Communion Class

Prayer Intentions:

Recently deceased: Joan Ross; Maria Maguire; Mervyn Agnew; Fr Terry Murray OMI
Anniversary: José Miguel Vargas Alvoraz; Mark Sharman; Mabel Bull; Nick Aldridge

Confessions:

Weekdays: before and after 10am Mass
Saturday: before and after 10am Mass
Sunday: 9.30am then 10.30am and 5.30pm (before Mass)

Forthcoming liturgical celebrations:

18th February: **FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT**
19th March: **SAINT JOSEPH, SPOUSE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**
24th March: **PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD**