

CATHOLIC PARISH OF OUR LADY AND ST GEORGE

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Fr Maurice Gordon; Fr Patrick Daly
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Sr. Anne Marie (Pastoral Care)

Our Lady & St George's Primary School:
Lower Site 8520 8500. Upper Site: 8520 3552
Holy Family Catholic College: 8520 0482/8520 3587

Sunday 6th March 2016 **Fourth Sunday of Lent (C)**

Today's Gospel is the very familiar parable of the Prodigal Son. It is one that sticks in our memory, and the danger is, we get so familiar with it that it goes over our heads. The parable describes the whole process of sin, conversion and repentance. It begins with the fascination of an illusory freedom. Sin always looks enticing, as if it will liberate us. But it is a false freedom that promises much but never satisfies, and like the son in the parable, leaves us miserable. Then there is the moment when we come to our senses, when we realise what has been lost and begin looking for a way back. We then decide to make the journey back and declare our guilt to the one whom we have hurt. And then, although it is not deserved, forgiveness and a very generous welcome are extended, and a restoration to dignity.

The prodigal son spent quite some time wandering in a faraway land. He had left the safety of the Father's house. Similarly the Israelites in the first reading had been wandering for 40 years in the wilderness. They too had forgotten God their Father, and in their stubbornness their hearts became hardened. In both cases, abandoning God leads to aimless wandering. The same is true for us too. If we forget where we come from, then we will not know where we are going. In the case of the Prodigal Son and the Israelites, both come to their senses and are led back to a homeland, where the Father is, and there they find themselves provided for and cared for.

Even though the prodigal son has squandered his inheritance, when he returns to the Father his dignity is restored; he is clothed in a fine robe, with a ring on his finger, sandals on his feet, and is offered a feast. When we sin, we squander our inheritance, which is the divine life within us. But when we do lose it, it can be restored. The sacrament of penance restores us to grace and dispenses the forgiveness of God. It is a restorative medicine for the soul. It makes us new again. St Paul refers to this in the second reading, speaking about living in Christ, as a new creation. The Father is extremely generous and eager to make us new; he runs to meet the prodigal son.

The older son did not appreciate this generosity. Even though he was living in the presence of the Father, he was not motivated by love for the father or his brother, only by a cold sense that doing his duty would earn him admiration. We too who practice our faith must be careful that our observance does not grow cold, or make us presumptuous or bitter about others.

The Father is extremely rich in mercy and that is available to everyone, no matter what their past. There is no sin that is too great to be forgiven if one is repentant. Instead of being closed in like the elder son, it is up to us to be what St Paul today calls 'ambassadors for Christ'; in other words to tell others about the mercy that is available through Christ.

Do not forget that this is the year of mercy – and so it is a special and privileged time to receive the Mercy of God; especially this Lent through the Sacrament of Penance. Today's psalm summarises these themes. 'Look towards him and be radiant; let your faces not be abashed' When we turn back to the Lord we become a new creation and no longer need to carry the burden of shame and guilt. In this way, He hears our call and rescues us from our distress.

Fr Maurice

BAPTISMS: By appointment. Prior attendance to Baptism Course required.

MARRIAGES: By appointment. Six months notice is required. Please speak to one of the priests for more information.

LENTEN TALKS: There will be video screenings of some of the main catechetical (teaching) talks from the recent Eucharistic Congress in the Philippines, which will take place in the Parish Hall over the next couple of Sundays. The talks will be as follows:

- 'The Eucharist: Dialogue with the Poor and the Suffering' – Cardinal John Olorunfemi Inaiyekan. Sunday 6th March at 7pm.
- 'The Eucharist and the Dialogue with Cultures' – Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle. Sunday 13th March at 7pm.

Each talk is just over 1 hour in length and will be followed by a short time of discussion.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS during Lent take place in the Church on Friday evenings at 7pm.

LENTEN PENANCE SERVICE: The Lenten Reconciliation service will take place on Tuesday 22nd March at 8pm in the Church. A number of visiting priests will be available to hear confessions. Parishioners are strongly recommended to avail of the Sacrament of Penance before Easter.

ALTAR SERVERS TRAINING: There will be an Altar Servers training session on Saturday 12th March at 12pm. All Altar Servers (and young people wishing to learn to serve who have made their First Communion) are asked to attend.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION: The formal practice for the First Communion children and their parents will take place on **Saturday 12th March at 9.45am in the Church**. All children and parents must attend this practice. Please note there will be no crèche available.

CHRISM MASS: The annual Chrism Mass at Brentwood Cathedral will take place on Wednesday 23rd March. At this Mass the priests of the Diocese gather with the Bishop to renew their priestly promises, and the Bishop will bless the oils, which are distributed to each parish and used in celebration of the sacraments. A coach will depart from outside the presbytery at 5.15pm, returning by 9.30pm. Next week a list will be available on the noticeboard to sign up. A contribution of £7 per seat is requested to cover travel costs.

PARISH PILGRIMAGE TO DOOR OF MERCY, BRENTWOOD: To mark the Year of Mercy, Pope Francis asked each diocese in the world to designate a 'Holy Door' in the local Cathedral, and invited the faithful to visit these doors, to obtain the indulgences and graces available during the jubilee year. Our Parish will be going to visit the Holy Door at Brentwood Cathedral on Saturday 28th May, and a coach will be booked. Further details will be available soon.

UPCOMING PARISH MISSION: There will be a Parish/School Mission from the 11th – 15th July 2016. The mission will be a week of talks and prayer aimed to renew us in faith and to reflect particularly on the gift of God's mercy, during the current year of mercy. Fr Soji Olikkal and a team of helpers will facilitate the week. Please keep an eye out for further announcements.

BETHEL PARISH PRAYER GROUP: A group of Malayalam speaking families who gather once weekly under the guidance of Fr Maurice. They are offering prayer support to the parish. Please drop in your intentions in the box located in the lobby of the Church

RCIA (BECOMING A CATHOLIC): The RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) group meets on Thursday evenings at 8pm in the Church meeting room. This group is for people interested in learning more about the Catholic faith, and exploring the possibility of entering

the Church – or for adults who may have been baptised but never received First Communion or Confirmation. For more information speak to one of the priests.

CONFIRMATION: The next session for the Confirmation programme is next Sunday 13th March at 4pm in the Parish Hall.

AFRICAN MISSION MEETING: African Catholic Mission Meeting will be held on Sunday 6th March 2016 at 2.30pm for 3pm prompt at St. George's Catholic Church Meeting Room.

NURSERY PLACES AT OLSG PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL: We have extended our closing date until Friday 18th March 2016 for our September 2016 intake. Parents with children born between 01.09.2012 – 31.08.2013 can apply for a place in our Nursery. We have full time (cost involved) and part time places (15 hours per week free). For further information or to get an application pack either download the form from our website www.olsgweb.org or call into the school office. Alternatively you can telephone the school office on 020 8520 8500 option lower site for further information.

BORDERLANDS CHARITY: Borderlands is a small charity set up by a parish in Bristol, which supports asylum seekers and refugees. The charity is seeking funding from the People's Projects – run by ITV and the Big Lottery – for a mentoring programme which will train volunteers to help and support asylum seekers on an individual basis as they come to terms with life in Britain. To win the funding we need lots of votes. Please complete and send off a postcard, available at the back of the Church this weekend. For more information on Borderlands please take a leaflet in the Church foyer.

SICK CALLS TO HOSPITAL: In light of strict data protection rules it is important that on entering hospital you tell the nurses that your details or those of your relatives be passed to the Catholic chaplain, if you wish to be visited. We visit the wards during the week and also provide a 24-hour on-call service in case of emergency.

RIP:

Your prayers are asked for the repose of the souls of:

Maureen Bee, whose body will be received into the Church on Wednesday 9th March at 5pm. Her Requiem Mass will take place on Thursday 10th at 11am.

Margaret Perry, whose body will be received into the Church on Monday 21st March at 5pm. Her Requiem Mass will take place on Tuesday 22nd at 11am.

Fr Ivor Morris, an Ordinariate priest, formerly based at Blessed Sacrament Parish, Chelmsford, who died last week. We extend our sympathy to his sister Norma, one of our parishioners. Funeral arrangements will be made later.

May they rest in peace

ROTAS – MARCH

Hospital	6/3 A	13/3 B	20/3 D	27/3 A
Counting	6/3 E	13/3 C	20/3 F	27/3 E
Christian Kitchen	5/3 Nor	12/3 G	19/3 A	26/3 B

The offertory collection for 28th February was £1442.70
Many thanks for your generosity.

Mass times and intentions at Our Lady and St. George this week

6.00pm	Tina Horn (RIP)
Sun 6 Mar	Fourth Sunday of Lent
8.30am	Agnes Byrne (Ints)
10.00am	Bridie Lacon (Ints)
12.00pm	Parish
Mon 7 Mar	Feria
7.00am	Special Ints
9.15am	Christopher Chase-Currier (Ints)
Tue 8 Mar	Feria
7.00am	Christopher Chase-Currier (Ints)
9.15am	John & Sheila O'Donnell (Ints)
Wed 9 Mar	Feria
7.00am	Christopher Chase-Currier (Ints)
9.15am	Tony Keane (Ints)
Thu 10 Mar	Feria
7.00am	Christopher Chase-Currier (Ints)
9.15am	Tony Keane (Ints)
Fri 11 Mar	Feria
7.00am	Theresa Musa (Thanksgiving)
9.15am	Margaret & Patrick Browne (RIP)
Sat 12 Mar	Feria
10.00am	Margaret & Patrick O'Sullivan (RIP)
6.00pm	Parish
Sun 13 Mar	Fifth Sunday of Lent (C)
8.30am	Catherine Murnane (RIP)
10.00am	John Edgar Palmer (RIP)
12.00pm	Reggie Jose (Ints)

We pray for those in our parish community who are ill:

Christopher Browne, Rose Dennehy, Carol Hogermeer, Brian Keane, Ignatius Keane, Tony McCarthy, Rose O'Neill, Andrea Roberts, Promise Shinondo, Victoria Wyndham, Christine Conway, Nora Meades, Veronica Nolan, Mr & Mrs Charles, Esperanza Buenaventura, Joyce Ross, Christine Raymond, Jacky Boyrow, Thelma Lewis, Tasmin Sparks, Eileen Karim, Sandra Gibson, Angelina Hoareau, Archie Garrod, Martin Keane, Masangela Tardioli, Alix Charlery, Natalie Rosario, Bridie Lacon, Peter Ikuptati, Mercy Fernando, Veronica Godsave, Mary and Anthony O'Boyle, Oliver Gaynor, Marjorie Singh, Gunanesan Singarajah, Bill Walsh, Bridget Lyons, Kristina Klimasauskaite, Philomena Spranklen, Jeffrey Mitchell, Michelle Boyle, Carla Cornelius, Cecelia Gibbs, Arthur Gibbs, Ural Gibbs, Gilbert Gibbs, Archie, George & Issac, Luis & Lukas, Anne Hutton, Comfort Kwawu, Judith Hilton, Gloria and Tracy Joseph, Pdraig Hester, Regina Jose, Tony Keane

Morning Prayer:

Rosary:

Adoration & Exposition:

Reconciliation (Confessions):

Mon-Fri: 9.00am. Sat. 9.45am

Weekdays after morning Mass

Mon – Fri: 7.30am-8.30am and at the following times:

Mon: 10.00am – 7.00pm Weds: 10.00am – 4.00pm

Fri: 9.45am – 10.45am, Sat: 10.30am-11.30am

Sat. 10.30am – 11.00am. 5.00pm – 5.30pm. During these times the priest is in the Reconciliation Room, inside the Blessed Sacrament Chapel, to the left. Confessions are also available at other times on request; please call at the house.