



THE ARCHANGEL

St. Michael's School and Parish • Harts Lane • Burghclere • RG20 9JW

No. 17

March 2019

Desert Lands

Dear Parishioners,

Christmas and the Epiphany are to the liturgy what Baptism and Confirmation are to the soul. They mark the beginning and consolidation of a cycle of sanctification through the commemoration of the mysteries of the life of our Divine Saviour. The Church would have us meditate on the different stages of Christ's life through which the merit of Redemption are applied to the soul.

Christmas and Epiphany are the initiation of our Saviour's redemptive work. They are followed by a time of penance, the purpose of which is to root out habits of selfishness and egotism so contrary to the work of grace that seeks to root itself ever more in the soul in order to truly transform it into a likeness of Christ.

Like our Master, who, after His Baptism, "was led by the Spirit into the desert, to be tempted by the devil" (Matt. 4:1), we must follow suit. We must put distance between ourselves and the world. Our Lord withdrew to the desert to pray and fast. During this Lenten season, we must also retreat into the inner desert of our soul to fast and pray.

Our soul is indeed like a desert. There we find harshness of feeling, tepidity in prayer, gusty winds of needless emotion, times of numbness and general drought. There we find wild beasts of temptation and vice that howl in the night and seem ever ready to close in for the kill.

It is to this desert of self that God invites us. He knows the lie of our inner land and how desolate it is, but He reassures us that He will never abandon us there. Entering into the dark place of our secret self is not a pleasant experience, but it is necessary in order that we form a truthful opinion of ourselves. When we look with honesty and earnestness, God directs our gaze and reveals to us how He sees us. We are not what we habitually make ourselves out to be.

Lent is like a forty-day retreat, during which we nourish our souls with spiritual reading and prayer, in

the hope of understanding and accepting that we are indeed only dust, and unto dust, we will return.

During the journey through our inner desert, we fast. We give up food, we give up sweets and other tasty and legitimate pleasures.

We can also fast in other ways: we can reduce internet "screen time", and forego certain social activities if this does not offend our guest or host. We can also give up films and video games.

Retreat into the desert and fasting are the negative aspects of Lent. They prepare the ground for a more positive and enriching action: prayer and meditation.

Indeed, with the silence that comes from giving up our usual forms of entertainment and relaxation, we will be able to perceive God's sweet voice, whispering like the murmur of the wind and the light rustle of leaves. God never speaks to us with a clear and distinct voice. We never hear Him speaking to us in resounding tones. His words of counsel and consolation are only heard after they have been uttered.

Prayer and meditation invoke pictures of pious saints on their knees in floods of ecstasy. But for us they can take on other forms: reading a spiritual book, reciting the rosary on one's knees, going to Mass, performing a work of mercy. Dom Marmion's books are excellent support. They lift our souls up to the heights of Benedictine contemplation. Edward Leen's and Eugene Boylan's books make for substantial spiritual nourishment.

The purpose of this time of retreat and penance is to remind us that we are only passing through this world. Our true home, where we will be fully satisfied, where everything will be fair and balanced, is heaven. Nothing short of time in God's presence will make our Lent worthwhile. Then, when Easter comes, we will be ready to receive new stores of sanctifying grace that will flow afresh from our Saviour's glorious wounds. Whatever the outcome of Brexit, we will be in very safe hands.

Fr. John Brucciani, Prior

Custodians of Divine Grace

We are currently blessed with a new wave of infant Baptisms. The rite of Baptism is a simple and sober ceremony, free of pomp and solemnity. The child is brought to church and then taken home. Life goes on as before.

Yet faith tells us that this simple and sober ceremony is of greater import and magnificence than the creation of the world. It is something which God esteems of equal value to Himself, for which He readily gives His divine life in exchange for its possession.

A New Creation

In his epistle to the Colossians, St. Paul describes the effects of Baptism. He bids his readers to "Give thanks to God the Father, Who has made us worthy to be partakers of the lot of the saints in light, Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love, in Whom we have redemption through His blood, the remission of sins." (Col. 1, 12-14)

Baptism applies to us the merits of the Passion, Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus Christ. It is a ritual made of water and words which is invested with a power greater than that which presided over the creation of the universe. As the priest mumbles his words and fumbles his gestures, and the family looks on with distraction and amusement, heaven and hell engage in mighty confrontation. Satan is summoned by God and dispossessed of that which once belonged to him. By virtue of His sacrifice on Calvary, Christ lays claim to a soul which is transferred from sin (the absence of grace) to saintliness (sanctifying grace). The baptised soul now belongs to the "Son of God's love". It is forever sealed with an indelible mark. It is henceforth set aside for God's service, and woe to that soul if it does not live up to its sublime vocation. Our Lord does not like to lose possession of that which He has purchased with His blood.

Parents bring to the priest a helpless child. They take away with them a child of God to whom God has entrusted his most precious treasure: Himself in the form of divine friendship.

Through Baptism God brings into being a new member of His Son's Mystical Body. He resurrects the spiritually dead soul and infuses it with a share in His own divine life. The result of Baptism is a new creature who is, by divine right, destined to inherit the kingdom of heaven. Sons and daughters of men become sons and daughters of God.

Keepers of God's Treasure

Parents should, therefore, be aware of the almighty responsibility imposed upon them when they receive into their midst a baptised soul, beloved and espoused to God. Once the child is baptised, parents cradle in their arms the price of Christ's blood. They nurse the prize of His Passion. They care for an intimate friend of God destined to share His eternal beatitude. One day God will commune with the child in the intimacy of His Eucharistic embrace. Truly, parents inherit a terrifying responsibility when they give their child to God in Baptism.

Parents are therefore keepers of God's treasure. Each child is a pearl of great price for which God sold all He had - his only Son. It is God's plan to one day share all He has and all He is with that child. Meanwhile every child's home must be a place where his divine destiny is made secure.

We must understand that a healthy and saintly home is the most congenial environment for sanctifying grace to grow strong and efficient in the moulding of a soul into a likeness of Christ. As guardians of God's treasure, parents will organise family life around the primary duty of protecting, preserving and favouring the increase of divine life in their children's souls. Every decision they make will ultimately revolve around the question of divine grace. Where and when possible, schools will be chosen in as much as they favour and foster grace. Those that either endanger the life of grace or simply do not recognise its existence, will be avoided at all costs, lest the price of Christ's blood be lost and the Lord, being angry, delivers to the torturers until all the debt has been paid. (Matt. 18:34)

Busy with Holiness

Wise parental administration of family life is not the only safeguard to the life of grace in the souls of each family member. Parents must also carry out a work proper to themselves and to the sacrament of marriage that binds them to each other and through which God creates for Himself new pearls of great price.

Parents must busy themselves with holiness. When they first bring their child to the baptismal font, parents become an occasion of grace outside of which the child's soul would remain cut off from God's love. While the child grows up, through the power of the sacrament of marriage, parents remain the principal occasion of grace to their children. The

child's growth in holiness is very much tied to the parents' own personal growth in holiness. Though not infallible, it is the general rule that faithful souls come from parents full of Faith.

In a world that crashes on towards moral and material chaos, there is little doubt that today's generation will be called upon to witness the Faith as in times of old. Only God knows if we will be called to shed our blood, but it is likely that much of what we have will be taken from us and that we will become outcasts in a society that has chosen to embrace the unnatural and the iniquitous as new forms of virtue and wisdom. Institutions, schools in particular, will be called upon to expressly teach the new morality, which no Catholic school may do.

Religion may one day only exist in the secret of the family. There may be, one day, no other means for a child to learn to know and love God. There may be, one day, no churches, no chapels and no schools. The Catholic Church will return to the catacombs, and the family will be the only place where the Faith will be passed on.

Parents should, therefore, brace themselves. They should recall the solemnity of their marital vows, and the daunting responsibilities of receiving a child of God in their midst. They should be intimately aware of and call upon the sacrament which binds them to each other, and cultivate the graces of holiness at their disposal. In times of persecution, nothing short of heroism suffices to remain faithful. Parents must be heroic if they wish to instil heroism in their children, lest they cast their children into the world as pearls before swine.

These are the thoughts that pass through a priest's mind as he pours water over a baby's head and generates a new child of God. They should also be the thoughts of father and mother, who should murmur as they watch their children play: « « Behold how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints. » (Wis.5:5) ♦

MARRIAGE BANNS

MR PETER BEVAN of Hungerford, Hants.,
formerly of Dover, Kent
and **MS ISABELLE BRUCCIANI** of Newbury,
Hants

Plan to be married on 27th April 2019

*Any persons knowing of any impediment to this union
are obliged, under conscience, to notify a priest as soon
as possible.*

Internet Filters and Monitors

It is always good to recall the need to protect ourselves and our children against the temptations of the internet.

The following internet blockers or filters are recommended. They are free of charge and easy to navigate. And they provide peace of mind and heart. Using proper internet filters can make the difference between salvation and damnation. So read carefully and act accordingly!

Three choices, among many:

<https://www.kaspersky.co.uk/safe-kids>

<https://www.mobicip.com/>

<http://www1.k9webprotection.com/>

Very easy to set up. Works both on computer AND on mobile devices. Does not slow down you device. You can select either preset filters or customize your own.

<https://www.covenanteyes.com/>

For those who live on their own, Convent Eyes allows you to subject yourself to monitoring by a third party. You simply sign up and designate a parent or friend. Your internet history is then sent to them on a regular basis... and you keep out of trouble. There is a monthly fee, but a few dollars is worth protection from sin. **GREAT FOR STUDENTS!**

PLEASE NOTE: Adolescents and young adults should have their mobile devices monitored. Any confessor will tell you that we are under a grave obligation to have recourse to internet filtering if the internet is a frequent source of sin. That is why a priest will withhold absolution until the penitent takes the proper measures to reduce the occasion of sin. If internet access from a cell phone is an occasion of sin, the cell phone **MUST** be equipped with filters, with the password set by a parent or friend.

<https://support.apple.com/en-gb/HT201304>

<https://www.techadvisor.co.uk/how-to/google-android/android-parental-controls-3461359/>

The above links explain how to make an iPhone or Android phone secure from explicit content. Parents should have these features locked down before passing on a phone to their child.

It is all about ensuring the safety of God's grace in our soul.

WEEKLY CONFESSIONS

- Saturday: 11:00
- 1st Friday during Holy Hour
- Sunday before Masses

BENEDICTION & ROSARY

Sunday 18:00

CHAPEL CLEANING - VOLUNTEERS NEEDED.**SATURDAYS - 2:30 PM**

PLEASE VOLUNTEER TO HELP CLEAN FROM TIME TO TIME. IT IS ALWAYS THE SAME PERSONS WHO DO IT, AND THEY NEED HELP. GOD'S HOUSE IS WORTH OUR BEST EFFORTS.

**STOLE FEES**

Stole fees (also called stipends) are offerings in consideration of expenses incurred by a chapel or priest in the course of ministering to the faithful. The stole fees are waived at the discretion of the priest in cases of hardship.

Mass: £10 - Novena of Masses: £100**Gregorian of Masses: £400****Weddings £100 - Funerals £100 - Baptisms: £40****Received the Sacrament of Baptism**

Lucas Gabriel Zanon Rodriguez, 02-02-19

Ezekiel Joseph Coward, 10-02-19

Gabrielle Rose Stratton, 17-02-19

Ash Wednesday is a fast day for all persons aged 18-60 . One meal and 2 snacks allowed. No meat.

The Ash Wednesday fast is of grave obligation.

Tertiaries of the SSPX should fast on Ember Days and every Friday in Lent.

CAKE SALE

**Every 2nd Sunday of the month
For St. Michael's School
No need to bake dessert!**

	Liturgical Calendar March 2019	Masses
1	Feria 1st Fri - H. Hour 6PM	8:00 / 19:00
2	Saturday of Our Lady - 1st Sat.	7:30 / 12:00
3	Quinquagesima Sunday	7:30 Low
		9:00 Low
		18:00 Benediction
4	St. Casimir, Confessor	7:15
5	Feria	7:15
6	Ash Wednesday	7:15 / 19:00
7	St. Thomas Aquinas, Confessor & Doctor	7:15
8	Lenten Feria	7:15
9	Lenten Feria	7:30 / 12:00
10	First Sunday of Lent	7:30 Low
	<i>Cake Sale for St. Michael's School</i>	9:00 Sung
		17:30 Vespers/Benediction
11	Lenten Feria	7:15
12	Lenten Feria	7:15
13	Ember Wednesday	7:15
14	Lenten Feria	7:15
15	Ember Friday	7:15
16	Ember Saturday	7:30 / 12:00
17	Second Sunday of Lent	7:30 Low
		9:00 Low
		17:30 Vespers/Benediction
18	Lenten Feria	7:15
19	St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary	7:15 / 19:00
20	Lenten Feria	7:15
21	Lenten Feria	7:15
22	Lenten Feria	7:15
23	Lenten Feria	7:30 / 12:00
24	Third Sunday of Lent	7:30 Low
		9:00 Sung
		18:00 Benediction
25	Annunciation of the BVM	7:15 / 19:00
26	Lenten Feria	7:15
27	Lenten Feria	7:15
28	Lenten Feria	7:15
29	Lenten Feria	7:15
30	Lenten Feria	7:30 / 12:00
31	Fourth Sunday of Lent - Laetare	7:30 Low
		9:00 Low
		17:30 Vespers/Benediction

**Rosary for St. Michael's School**

Thanks to parents' initiative, the holy rosary will be recited between Masses each Sunday for the protection and welfare of St. Michael's School. This extra spiritual help comes at a time when State intervention seeks to erode the fundamental parental right to their children's education.

Evening benediction and rosary will continue as usual.