

**PARISH OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL AND ST SIMON STOCK
CARMELITE CHURCH 41 KENSINGTON CHURCH STREET LONDON W6 4BB**

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Priests in the Parish: Fr Thaddeus Ekuma ocd, Fr Matt Blake ocd,
Fr John McGowan ocd, Fr Tijo Xavier ocd, Fr Theophilus Nyamali, ocd

5th Sunday in Ordinary Time – 7th February 2021

Most of us are familiar with the story of Job in the bible. This statement from Job at the opening of our first reading probably represents the sentiment of many of us: Is not man's life on earth nothing more than pressed service, his time no better than hired drudgery? Job is a prototype of faith seeking understanding. His questions and reflections about life are addressed to God as the creator and sustainer of all. He seeks to understand the meaning of life as he grapples with his life's difficulties. Job stands for us as a person of genuine prayer who prays out of his circumstances asking for direction in his life. But Job's question might also reflect for some of us a genuine concern for the place of our daily toil within the whole framework of our relationship with God.

Both St Paul in our second reading and Jesus in the Gospel answer to the question that Job poses. Human labour is not a hired drudgery if it is undertaken as a duty in God's kingdom. St Paul saw his preaching of the Gospel as a duty laid on him by his faith in Jesus, therefore he did not expect to be rewarded. Instead he says he should be punished if he failed to carry out this duty.

In the Gospel, we hear of Jesus going about his work – healing those who are suffering from diseases of all kinds. He gives us the framework within which our human labour can truly be fulfilling: 'In the morning, long before dawn (that is before he began his daily work) he got up and left the house, and went to a lonely place and prayed there.' This indicates that when the tasks of our daily life are carried out within the overall framework our life with God – our relationship with God – we find that our daily labour is not a mere drudgery. It is purposeful in building up the kingdom of God. Jesus's attitude towards his ministry tells us that our work cannot be isolated from our relationship with God. Instead, our work becomes the channel through which our relationship with God is manifested.

The focus of Jesus's ministry (as well as Paul's) calls us to reflect on what our work is about. When Jesus called his first disciples at the sea of Galilee, he said he was calling them from catching fish to catching human beings for God ("I will make you into fishers of men"). We realize that the focus of Jesus's ministry is always on people – healing them, building them up. As his disciples, what is the focus of our work? Every human work must be directly or indirectly aimed at building, protecting, or healing humanity. Are our priorities at our workplace the human beings our work is meant to serve; do they contribute to human flourishing? Or does our work instead contribute to the dehumanization of the human person?

St Paul in particular emphasizes the point that his work is done for free and he does not insist on the rights which the gospel gives him. Although every labourer deserves his or wages for their sustenance, Paul's model of discipleship calls us to reflect on the motive for our work. Needless to say neither Paul nor Jesus did their work for wealth or fame but solely for the salvation of humankind. Our work also must first have as its goal the service of humanity rather than to earn wealth or fame. Like Jesus, "this is why we came" – that the glory of God may shine through our

actions, including our daily work. This is how we contribute to building the kingdom of God in real terms in our society, following in the footsteps of Paul and as disciples of Jesus.

Lord, help me to see my daily work as a participation in your ministry of building the kingdom of God in our world. Let the glory of God reflect through my daily service of my brothers and sisters.

NOTICES

Church Opening

Our church remains open for prayer and common worship at the usual times. We continue to do everything possible to make this church safe for everyone that comes here in order to provide spiritual support to everyone that needs it at these critical times.

Greater Precaution because of COVID-19 New Variants

We urge everyone that comes to our church to exercise greater precaution and observe our safety protocols in the church especially at this time. **Wear a facemask before entering the church, sanitize your hands by the entrance, and sit only on the marked spaces. Maintain at least 2m distance at all times while in the church.** Be assured the church is carefully sanitized and disinfected after every use.

Donations using Credit Cards

As part of our measures to prevent the possibility of infections in our church, it is now possible to make donations and offering through bank cards. Two payment stations are installed at the back of the church and are meant to offer alternative means of making donations without handling cash.

Talks on Mark's Gospel by Fr Matt Blake

We are now on the last session of the Talk on the Gospel of Mark coming up next Wednesday, the 10th. Each talk is livestreamed at 10.00am and repeated at 8.00pm on our website www.carmelitechurch.org and YouTube 'Kensington Carmelite Church.' Previous talks can be accessed on YouTube.

Preparations for Confirmation

We are in the final week of accepting those who wish to prepare for Confirmation. Classes have been scheduled tentatively to begin on 13th February by Zoom. If your child is yet to register, please contact the parish or send an email to enquiries@carmelitechurch.org.

<u>Collections Last Sunday</u>	Offering	£1363
	Gift Aid	£239

Thank you for your generosity

Fr. Thaddeus, OCD