

**PARISH OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL AND ST SIMON STOCK
CARMELITE CHURCH 41 KENSINGTON CHURCH STREET LONDON W8 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

THIRD Sunday of Lent – 7th March 2021

We are now in the third week into our Lenten journey. It is probably a good time to pause and check how far we are on this journey. At the beginning we made a commitment to follow Christ more closely by prayer, fasting and almsgiving. We might ask ourselves how we are doing in these areas. Today might be a good time to make a new commitment. We have yet a few weeks before the Lenten season ends.

Interestingly our readings today encourage us to re-commit ourselves to Christ. In our first reading God gives the people of Israel the commandments that will serve as their guide in their relationship with Him. The emphasis of the commandments is clear: “I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the house of slavery.” This meant that God, and nothing else, was to be the centre of the life of the people of Israel. Later in Israel’s history, the Temple became the dwelling place of God, where God was worshiped and the symbol of God’s presence with them.

This helps us understand the story in the Gospel. We are told that Jesus went to the Temple for the Passover feast – the feast that recalls God’s liberation of Israel from Egypt. What He observed there was not the worship of God, as God had commanded, but trading, extortion and oppression of the poor. In His disappointment he drove away those who sabotaged the Temple. But there is another reason why Jesus was not pleased with the whole Temple cult. Keep in mind that He is now in Jerusalem where He would be crucified. And during that festival, the religious authorities were plotting to do away with him. So at one level, the abuse of the Temple – the symbol of God’s presence – represented what was in fact going on between the Jewish authorities and Jesus. At a second level, Jesus’s action of cleansing the Temple of its abusers looked forward to His defeat of death through His resurrection. Therefore, when He was asked for a sign He said, “Destroy this Temple and in three days I will raise it up.” This is obviously a reference to His resurrection. But there is another reason why the physical Temple in Jerusalem needed to be destroyed and a spiritual Temple raised up. The structure of the Jerusalem Temple was such that it instituted hierarchy and discrimination among worshipers. The Temple was divided into five sections: the court of the Gentiles, the court of women, the court of men, the court of priests and the Holy of Holies. This structure represented the way the occupants of each court were regarded in the sight of God. The Gentiles were the least regarded and it is in their court that the Temple trading went on. So there is a two-pronged meaning to Jesus’s reply about ‘destroying the Temple.’ The physical Jerusalem Temple that was a symbol of hierarchy and discrimination before God needed to be destroyed in order that a spiritual Temple – which is Christ’s resurrected body – might be raised up to ensure that all divisions were removed. Everybody, the priests no less than the Gentiles, would have equal access to God through Jesus.

So following from last Sunday’s event of the transfiguration of Jesus, today we are given another promise of glory and resurrection. By giving us these glimpses at this time, Our Lord wishes to encourage us on the journey that we have undertaken. The hope of resurrection urges us to persevere in our efforts to develop and sustain our relationship with Jesus. Through this journey

of Lent Jesus will destroy everything that barricades us from Him. Jesus will purchase us back from those aspects of our life that offer us false remuneration in exchange for our friendship with Him. Let us not give up on our commitment to Jesus like those traders in the Temple. He has assured us that despite the difficulties we may be encountering now, it will all pay off at the end when we shall share in the glory of His resurrection at Easter.

NOTICES

Lenten Retreat

Our Parish Lenten Retreat is still ongoing. It consists of livestreamed talks given by Fr Matt Blake every Wednesday until the 24th of March as well as a piece of reflection that is posted on our website. Each talk will be livestreamed at 10.00am and repeated at 8.00pm on our website www.carmelitechurch.org and our YouTube channel 'Kensington Carmelite Church.' You are all invited to participate at this retreat.

Mass Request Through our Website

It is now possible to book a Mass and donate a Mass stipend through our website. This is helpful especially for those who still cannot come to the church to do that or who are far away from the parish. Of course, if you are here physically we continue to book Masses the usual way.

Stations of the Cross

As part of our common worship, we will have Stations of the Cross every Friday throughout the Lenten period at 5:15pm. On these Fridays, the evening exposition of the Blessed Sacrament will begin at 4.30 as usual and end at 5.10pm.

Cardinal's Lenten Appeal

Cardinal Nichols thanks you for your generous support for the Cardinal's Lenten Appeal, especially throughout the unprecedented events of 2020. Your donations help fund initiatives in parishes, schools and charities in three mission areas which are more critical than ever. Marriage and Family Life, Youth and Evangelisation, Caritas Westminster and Education Service. Please take a donation envelope at the back of the church. You can use the QR code to make your donation online. Thank you for your generosity.

Lectio Divina with Young People

A group of young people (20-35s) is meeting each Sunday during Lent at 4pm, on Zoom. If anyone is interested they should contact Fr John McGowan: johnmcgowan50@gmail.com or text 07598 913986.

Vacancy

St Richard Reynolds Catholic College is recruiting for MFL and Maths teacher roles from September 2021. Further details on the website or please contact recruitment@srcc.org.uk for information.

Collections Last Sunday

Offering	£1200
Gift Aid	£164

Thank you for your generosity

Fr. Thaddeus OCD