

**PARISH OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL AND ST SIMON STOCK
CARMELITE CHURCH 41 KENSINGTON CHURCH STREET LONDON W8 4BB**

Web: www.carmelitechurch.org
Tel: 0207 937 9866

Email: enquiries@carmelitechurch.org
Mobile: 0770 8203 595

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

Twelfth Sunday in Ordinary Time (B) – 20th June 2021

For many of us, the question “Who is God?” rarely comes to our mind. We have been given the gift of faith and we are simply happy to worship God through our everyday devotions. But times come when the question pops up in our life. Often it is in times of great difficulty, such as we have had in the last 18 months, in failing health, or in times of disaster, that the question of who God is surfaces in our minds. The question is often raised by the fact that our experience doesn’t show us that God rises to our pains and necessities when and in the manner that we expect.

Yet, we see in our Gospel today that it is not the seeming aloofness of God that raised this question for the disciples. It is rather their experience of the power of God. And this power of God is manifested through a man who at that moment they had not recognised as God. It is important to pay attention to their question: ‘Who can this be? Even the wind and the sea obey him.’ We are told that the question came out of their being totally over-awed. This event, including the disciples question which summarizes what happened, is of course an allusion to the great event of crossing the red sea in the Book of Exodus. But then the Israelites recognized that it was God who saved them by His power. In the case of the disciples in our passage today, they are totally filled with awe, yet still in wonder who Jesus is.

Thus, the main point of this story is the disciple’s lack of faith, as shown in Jesus’s reaction: ‘Why are you so frightened? How is it that you have no faith?’ The disciples had been there when Jesus healed the man with unclean spirit, healed many sick people at Simon’s house, cleansed a leper, healed a paralytic, and a multitude of others, yet these events were not enough to instil faith in Jesus. They were worried that Jesus was asleep in the boat and seemed not care when they were beset by gale.

We find a similar rebuke for lack of faith in God’s response to Job in our first reading. We recall that Job had complained bitterly to God about his misfortune. He believed that his suffering was unwarranted since he had committed no sin against God to merit such a punishment. God’s response to Job rebukes Job’s assumption that suffering must be a consequence of wrongdoing. Instead God puts Job’s experience in the context of His overall creative plan. And while it is undoubtedly difficult for us to understand how our suffering could have a place in God’s creative plan, this is what God’s response to Job tells us.

This message is particularly important for us today as we celebrate the ‘Day of Life’ dedicated to raising awareness about the meaning and value of human life at every stage and in every condition. The Church teaches that life is to be nurtured from conception to natural death. But we see that life is constantly threatened from all sides, not only by those who decide for a baby in the womb but also those who decide for the old and terminally ill. The thinking behind these decisions are similar to the assumptions of Job which God rebukes in our first reading, as well as the short-sightedness of the disciples and their lack of faith which Jesus rebukes in the Gospel. In the case of assisted suicide, the person(s) who decides that life should not continue fails, like Job, to see

the place of suffering in our life. They also fail to acknowledge the great work of God already manifest in the universe which indicates that the healing of any sickness or suffering is not beyond the power of God, nor does it indicate that God is asleep and does not care. Rather, as Jesus points out to the disciples, our experience of suffering can simply be the means by which God invites us to trust in His power.

Therefore, whether seemingly asleep or awake, the Lord God of creation, and He alone, has power to control the forces of nature, including sickness. ‘No water can swallow the ship where lies the Master of ocean and sea and skies.’ Nothing in existence or in our experience escapes His plan. We may be incapable of fully understanding this plan but it will gradually unfold. No matter in what situation we find ourselves, God has the power to still the storms and tempests of our daily lives. We only have to learn to trust completely in His power.

NOTICES

Second Collection Today for the Day of Life

Today we will have a 2nd collection for the Day of Life dedicated to raising awareness about the precious gift of life and to support the work of protecting life in its most vulnerable stages through the annual collection. Our collection will assist pro-life organisations who raise awareness, engage in parliamentary work and pastoral outreach. Envelopes marked ‘Day of Life’ are at the back of the church. Please donate generously.

Church Opening

Our church is now open from 7.30am to 7.00pm. All COVID protocols will continue to be observed including signing in using Track & Trace number or NHS App. Please continue to sanitize your hands, wear your face mask and maintain a safe distance while in the church.

Preparations for First Holy Communion

We are accepting registrations for preparations for Holy Communion. The last group met by Zoom only. But this group which will begin classes in September will meet face to face here in our church hall. All necessary protocols for safety at that time will of course be followed. If you have children for First Holy Communion, please do register them ahead of September. Children must be 7yrs old by 31st August. The registration form is on our website www.carmelitechurch.org/activities/catechism-classes or simply email catechism.co-ordinator@carmelitechurch.org and request a form to be sent to you.

Carmelite Annual Pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham

Our Annual pilgrimage to the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham will take place this Saturday, 26th June. Information about trains and other transport to the venue is on the notice board.

Family Retreat Day

Next Sunday, 27th June, is the day of retreat at the SPEC Centre, Pinner HA5 3EP from 9am-5pm. It’s a retreat for families by families. Children of all ages are welcome. Fr Matt Blake, Carmelite, will help the parents (re)discover the power of prayer. Children will participate in a school of prayer specially tailored to their age, under the responsibility of volunteers. If you would like to register or just know a little bit more, please visit the website: <https://www.pulse-retreats.com/catholic-family-retreat> Do not hesitate to share the information and invite friends who might be interested.

Collections Last Sunday

Offering	£1117
Gift Aid Envelopes	£189

Thank you for your generosity

Fr. Thaddeus, OCD