SUNDAY NEWSLETTER

Third Sunday of Lent **23rd March 2025**

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

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Mass Times Sundays: Vigil (Sat.) 6.00 p.m., 8.30 a.m., 10.00 a.m., 12.15 p.m. & 6.00 p.m.
Weekdays (including Bank Holidays): 8.00 a.m., 12.15 p.m. & 6.00 p.m.
Livestream *(All Masses)*: www.carmelitechurch.org & YouTube: "Kensington Carmelite Church"
Confessions: Sat: 11.30 a.m. – 12.15 p.m. & 5.00 - 5.50 p.m. Weekdays: 5.40 p.m. - 6.00 p.m.
Priests in the Parish: Fr Thaddeus Ekuma, Fr Matt Blake, Fr John Williamson, Fr Joseph Odiahi
Safeguarding Rep: Franca Bren (Email: kensington2sg1@safeguardrcdow.org.uk)

Reflection

THE ANNUNCIATION

Tuesday March 25th is the *Feast of the Annunciation*; an event recounted beautifully for us in Luke's Gospel [Luke 1:26 – 38]. It is one of the best known of all Bible Stories – one has only to think of the great number of artists who have attempted to paint this scene. For us who are Christians it is the starting point for everything we believe in: God becomes human and enters the full reality of life in this world. In addition, we meet the first believer in Jesus Christ: his mother Mary. Another way of looking at this story is to see it as the revelation of how God operates in our lives and the revelation of the right human response – the response of Mary.

The following text from St. Teresa may help us enter the depths of Mary's response: "Oh, secrets of God! Here there is no more to do than surrender our intellects and reflect that they are of no avail when it comes to understanding the grandeurs of God. It is good to recall here how God acted with the Blessed Virgin, Our Lady. In spite of all her wisdom, she asked the angel: *How can this be?* But he answered, *The Holy Spirit will come upon you; the power of the Most High will overshadow you;* she engaged in no further discussion. As one who had such great faith and wisdom, she understood at once that if these two intervened, there was nothing more to know or doubt." [meditation on Song of Songs 6:7]

Teresa goes on to tell us that we all have something to learn from the humility of Mary. Once Mary understood that this was a work of God, she did not seek more explanation. The human mind can never understand the ways of God. Here, in this story, we have a human being [Mary] acting in absolutely the right way before the reality of a call [or grace] of God. Whenever a person experiences something of the presence or grace of God in their lives, humility is always the right response. Humility shows that the person recognises who God is and who they are before God. The person is not limited or trapped by their need to understand but can say yes in faith; and give themselves in generosity and love to the fulfilment of the call of God.

One of the most profound "secrets" or "mysteries" of God being revealed here is that whenever God bestows gifts or calls a person – the person must freely choose those gifts; or freely choose to respond to the call. Hence, we see in this story that God makes his whole work of becoming human and saving the world dependent on the free and complete "Yes" of one person, Mary. Therefore, two things are being "announced" in this story:

Firstly, God is becoming a human being and is going to save the whole world through his life, death and resurrection. Secondly, Mary is giving all people a model of what the right response to the works of God is. No words, stories, paintings or images can possibly convey the truth and depths of these announcements. It is the greatest news humanity has ever heard, an our understanding or intellects can never plunge its depths.

To follow the Mass Readings on your phone, please scan the QR Code:

NOTICES

COFEE MORNING / LENTEN SOUP KITCHEN

Today is our community gathering, coffee morning, after the 10.00am and 12.15pm mass. It is also our annual Lenten Soup Kitchen during which we make a lenten donation to support the poor and hungry. This year our donations will go to CAFOD, our diocesan agency which supports the poor and hungry in different parts of the world. Please come along after 10.00am mass and after 12.15 mass to share some time together, enjoy delicious soup and raise some funds for Cafod.

YOUNG ADULT LENTEN RETREAT DAY

Young Adults LENT RETREAT DAY with the Assumption Sisters on Saturday 5th April 2025 10 am – 5.30 pm. Venue: Milleret House, 20 Kensington Square, London, W8 5HH (closest tube station: High Street Kensington). Programme includes: talks • prayer, adoration and confessions • faith sharing • mass and social time. Donations only. Register by emailing to: rebecca@assumpta-eu.org

COLLECTIONS/APPEALS

National Shrine of Walsingham: Special Collection this Sunday **March 22/23**. Envelopes available at back of Church.

GIFT AID ENVELOPES

New Gift-Aid envelopes for April onwards are available for collection at the back of the church. May those who use the envelopes to gift-aid their donations pick up their pack whenever convenient.

If you are a tax-payer, you may consider gift-aiding your donations. Doing so allows the Carmelite Church to claim 25p on top of every £1 that you donate. If you'd like to gift-aid your donations, please request a form from any of the priests or simply insert your donation in the gift-aid envelopes found on the pews. Remember to fill in your details on the envelope.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

On Fridays during Lent after the evening Mass, we have Stations of the Cross devotion. Our usual evening prayer together will be replaced by the Stations of the Cross. You are all invited to this Lenten devotion.

You may make your offering or donation by scanning this QR Code with your mobile phone
Thank you and God bless!

Collections Last Sunday:	Offering	£1149
	Gift Aid Envelopes	£153

Thank you for your generosity!

Fr Thaddeus