SUNDAY NEWSLETTER

Fourth Sunday of Lent **30th 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

GOD WHO DWELLS WITHIN US

Our Gospel today starts by setting the scene for us: *"The tax collectors and sinners were drawing near [seeking, searching for, wanting to be in the company of] Jesus. The pharisees and scribes grumbled [complained, objected, questioned], saying – This man receives [welcomes, wants to be with] sinners and eats with them".*

One group is drawing near, the other is grumbling. Jesus must respond, defend himself, explain/justify what he does and what he teaches. His response is very simple: I say what I say, I act as I do, I am who I am – because this is what God is like. In three parables: the shepherd who leaves ninety-nine sheep to search for one, the women who clears out her house to search for a small coin, and today's story of the father who welcomes back the prodigal son.

When we ask a person who has "found" God, gone through a conversion experience, discovered their true calling/vocation, etc. what it is really like; we frequently get an answer like: "it is like coming home", "it is like I always belonged here", "it is where I was always meant to be"; or some similar answer. In today's Gospel, God is "home" for the two brothers. We read that the younger son decides to come home, but a little later we read that the Father was waiting for him, longing for his return and puts on a great party when he returns. We are reminded of the famous words of St. John of the Cross: *"It should be known that if anyone is seeking God, the Beloved [God] is seeking that person much more".*

The Father invites the other son to come into the house, to come home. He is unable to accept the invitation. That is the tragedy of his life: he will not be at peace until he can accept that invitation. The "home" he is invited into is the deepest place within him – the home where God dwells. Jesus tells us in John Gospel [John 14:23]: *"If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we shall come to him and make our home with him".* That home is in the deepest place with the person, the person's true self, the soul. St. Augustine tells us that *"our hearts are restless until they rest in God".*

The God we come to know is the God we already know. Human beings know this instinctively. St. John of the Cross expresses this so beautifully in his poem [Dark Night]: *"This guided me more*

surely than the light of noon to where He awaited me; Him I knew so well". The One that the spiritual life guides us to is One our inner being already knows "so well". It is like we live life on an external level but there is an interior world inside us that we are almost totally unaware of. To grow spiritually is to be awakened [to be made aware of] that inner world, where God lives and where God is already well known. That is what is drawing the tax collectors and sinner to Jesus: their inner being knows who Jesus is and they are drawn to him with a force they cannot resist. The pharisees and scribes only see the external world and so cannot see or understand what is really going on.

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

NOTICES

LENTEN SOUP KITCHEN

Today, after the 10.00am and 12.15pm mass we will have the second round of 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

HOLY WEEK AND EASTER LITURGIES

The programme of our Holy Week and Easter liturgies is displayed on the notice board. Take away programme cards will be available next week.

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	£1630
	Gift Aid Envelopes	£928

Thank you for your generosity!

Fr Thaddeus