

Parish Newsletter
Sunday 5 June 2011 – Ascension of the Lord

June

Monday	6	St Norbert, Bishop
Tuesday	7	Bl. Anne of St Bartholomew, Virgin, Carmelite
Thursday	9	St Columba, Abbot/St Ephraem, Deacon & Doctor
Saturday	11	St Barnabas, Apostle

If there are any couples planning to get married within the next year, it is very important they come and see Fr Iain or Fr Matt without delay so that marriage preparation and all the paperwork can be completed well in advance.

If you know of any sick, elderly or housebound parishioner who would like a visit from a priest, please tell **Fr. Iain** at the Priory and he will be pleased to arrange for one of the Fathers to pay a visit.

Warning! Unfortunately from time to time there are thieves operating in this Church. So please take great care of your money and personal possessions and be particularly careful with handbags – do not leave them unattended whilst in Church. *Thank you.*

Holy Day Masses 8.00am, 12.15pm, 6.00pm
Bank Holiday Masses: 9.00am, 12.15pm (no 6.00pm Mass)
Weekday Confessions: 5.30-5.50pm - Priest on duty except 12 Noon-3pm
Saturday Confessions: 10.30-11.45am, 3.30-5.50pm
Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament: Wednesdays 6.30pm-7.30pm

Our Carmelite Newsletter on the Web: www.carmelitechurch.org

Today we celebrate **Ascension**. Jesus leaves, his life in this world is over, yet he has not left and it is not over: *“Go make disciples of all nations..... I am with you always, yes to the end of time”*. In fact, we are only at the beginning. How do we understand all this? The Ascension was confusing for the disciples at the time and it has been confusing for disciples ever since. God works in ways we can never understand, the apparent contradictions around Ascension bring us face to face with this fact.

Ascension is a departure, a saying goodbye but it is at the same time a transition from one kind of presence to another. Jesus emphasises on more than one occasion that he must go in order that the Holy Spirit might come. The departure of Jesus, the sense of loss, the pain of his absence, are all necessary experiences for the disciples, in order that they be ready to receive the Holy Spirit. They need the experience of absence and pain in order to be prepared for the new relationship with God that the coming of the Holy Spirit inaugurated.

We can never hope to understand this paradox, yet we see it borne out in our own human and spiritual lives. Just look at the traditions of separation and limitation of contact that have grown up around preparation for marriage and are found in every culture and throughout all history. They show us how well human beings have understood that distance, separation and self-denial are essential for building a stable marriage relationship. This pattern is even more true in the spiritual life. Every person of prayer goes through times of feeling God is absent, there is no progress, a feeling of abandonment or bewilderment. These times must be understood as transitions from one type of presence to a new presence which is deeper and more complete. However, it does not seem like this at the time. The discipline of acceptance, patience and self-denial are essential for our relationship with God.

In our Gospel today Jesus tells us: *“All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me”*. That is an astounding statement and the Ascension is an appropriate moment for it to be made. Jesus is suspended between the world as we know it and the heavenly world that is total

mystery to us. He has authority over all and that includes our inner worlds where doubts, fears and apprehensions sometimes reign. The disciples have the strength and courage to cope with the departure of Jesus because they know that whatever is taking place is under his authority. That is our reassurance also. Ascension is an intense moment of grace that is experienced through loss, grief and incomprehension. It calls us to deeper acceptance, trust and a profound reverence for a God who allows us to know Him and yet at the same time remains total mystery.

Fr Matt Blake, Prior

Changes at our Carmelite Church

Following the recent Carmelite Chapter, **Fr Tony Parsons** has been appointed **Prior** of this Church. Many of you will know Fr Tony – he was here for some years during the 1990's. Since then he has spent some years in Glasgow [where he is a native of], and for the past nine years he has been at St Joseph's, Gerrards Cross. Fr Tony is a person of many gifts and widespread experience. We welcome him and assure him of our prayers and support.

Fr Bob Davies, who has been with us for just over a year, is moving to Gerrards Cross.

I myself will be moving to the **Carmelite Priory, Boars Hill, Oxford** – a place where I have spent many years of my life. No date has yet been fixed for these changes to take place but I expect it will be later in the summer.
(Fr Matt)

World Communications Day

Today is **World Communications Day** – a day dedicated to prayer for the work of communications professionals across the world. *The Catholic Communications Network* (CCN) provides support for the Bishops of England and Wales in promoting the gospel in the media. There will be a special collection after all Masses today for **Catholic Communications**. Your kind generosity will be greatly appreciated.

Children's First Holy Communion

On Sunday next, 12 June and Sunday 19 June, at the 10.00am Mass in our Church, some 40 children from this Parish will receive **First Holy Communion**. You are all invited to be present at the Mass on both Sundays, and we ask you please to pray for these children on this special day in their lives, and to pray also for their families and Catechists.

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Young Adults Monday Group

Our *Young Adults Monday Group* will meet in the Parish Centre tomorrow 6 June at 7.30 for 8.00pm. They will be reflecting on **Pentecost** with a discussion on the Gospel of John (20:19-23) in preparation for Pentecost Sunday. All young adults in their 20s and 30s are very welcome to join them. Entrance to the Parish Centre via Pitt St.

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament during June

There will be **Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament** each Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings from 6.30-7.30pm in our Church for the month of June.

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On Fridays 10th and 17th June, from 6.30-7.30pm, we will have a **Holy Hour of prayer for Vocations to Religious Life**. All are invited.

Solemnities in June

Today, Sunday 5 June **The Ascension of the Lord**, is the first of four Solemnities celebrated on consecutive Sundays in June, followed by:- Sunday 12 June, *Pentecost Sunday*; Sunday 19 June, *The Most Holy Trinity*, and Sunday 26 June, *Corpus Christi, Most Holy Body & Blood of the Lord*. Following this we will have the *Solemnity of SS Peter & Paul* on Wednesday 29 June.

Funeral Mass

On Tuesday 21 June, the 12.15pm Mass will be a **Funeral Mass** for **Carol Howard RIP**