

we see Jesus becoming more and more isolated as the Gospel story progresses, to finding himself totally alone on the cross. Jesus does not give us an answer but tells us to follow him there – follow him to the lonely empty space that is within each of us. This space can only be filled by God, we are tempted to fill it with so many relationships, things, ideas, etc. that do not satisfy but rather increase the enslaving desires. Inner freedom requires that we live with and embrace this empty space and allow it to be a source of creative energy and life.

Failure: My former spiritual director told me, “*Matt, Christianity taught the world only one thing – failure. Jesus taught the world how to fail well but the world refuses to listen!!*” I understand more and more what he meant.

Solomon ruled Israel in a time of unprecedented peace and prosperity, yet his reign was failure in every aspect of life: economic, social, diplomatic, religious, spiritual, moral, personal. He left great achievements but is most remembered for his failures. He had not learned how to fail well.

If we learn how to fail well, how to deal with failure, how to respond creatively to failure, then we will achieve great things – few people in the history of humanity have done this. Jesus Christ is the only one who has shown us how.

Solomon got what he asked for but could not live with it or its consequences. Can we live with being Christian, and the consequences of living committed Christian lives, in the world of 2011? My guess is that few of us can or are even willing to try; but those who do are the people this world most needs but least welcomes.

This is my last Newsletter. I came here on March 28th, 2005. It has been a great joy to write these weekly Newsletters. A special thanks to **Rita McDonagh** for editing and printing them each week.

Fr Matt Blake, Prior

Young Adults Monday Group

Our *Young Adults Monday Group* will meet in the Parish Centre tomorrow, Monday 25 July, for their “*End of Term*” celebration - prayer of thanksgiving and a party ! Meetings will resume on Monday 5 September.

Reminder!

This evening after the 6.00pm Mass, we will have a relaxed **Parish Social Evening** in honour of **Fr Matt** and **Fr Bob** who will be leaving us shortly. We invite all our parishioners to come and show your support and gratitude to the two Fathers, and help make it a happy occasion – if you bring some food, we will provide the drinks! *Fr Iain*

Children’s Painting Exhibition

We thank and congratulate our children for the excellent selection of paintings they’ve done for our **Annual Children’s Painting Exhibition**. These are now displayed on the walls of the Church Corridor along Reception, and we invite all our parishioners to come inside after the Masses today and take a look, and hopefully make a donation to the **Catholic Children’s Society** which does such wonderful work with needy children and their families in London, and especially at the present time when many children living in poverty have never had a summer holiday or have never seen the sea. *Thank you.* (Fr Iain)

A Day for Life

On Sunday next 31 July we celebrate a **Day for Life 2011** – the day in the Church’s year dedicated to celebrating the dignity of life from conception to natural death. This year it focuses on what it means to live a full and happy life. It takes as its starting point the words of Pope Benedict during his visit to Britain last year, when he said: “*Happiness is something we all want, but one of the great tragedies in this world is that so many people never find it, because they look for it in the wrong places. The key to it is very simple – true happiness is to be found in God. We need to have the courage to place our deepest hopes in God alone, not in money, in a career, in worldly success, or in our relationships with others, but in God. Only He can satisfy the deepest needs of our hearts*”. (Pope Benedict XVI, The Big Assembly: Address to Young People, Twickenham, 17 September 2010).

There will be a Special Collection after all Masses on Sunday next to assist the work of the Anscombe Bioethics Centre, and other life-related activities supported by the Church. Your kind generosity will be greatly appreciated.

- * There will be a **Day With Mary** in our Church on Saturday 6 August, starting at 10.00am with the Entrance Procession etc., followed by Mass, and a full programme throughout the day. Please note there will not be the usual 12.15pm Mass on this occasion.