

February 2012 *Feasts/Memorials*
Monday 27-Wednesday 29: Lent Feria
March

Thursday 01 St David, Bishop, Patron of Wales
Friday 02 Lent Feria/Women's World Day of Prayer
Saturday 03 Lent Feria

***Vigil for a Greater Respect for Life in our Nation &
for the Protection of Unborn Children***

On Friday 30 March at 7.00pm, Bishop Alan Hopes and Fr David Reilly, Diocesan Youth Chaplain, will lead a Vigil of prayer for a greater respect for life in our nation, and especially for the protection of unborn children. This will take place outside BPAS London Central, 26-27 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3HP. The event is being organised by *40 Days for Life, London*. All are welcome.

Lenten Alms: The two charities chosen to benefit from Lenten Alms collected in the parishes in the Diocese this year are: **CAFOD** and **St Joseph's Pastoral Centre**. Throughout Lent there will be an Alms Box at the back of our Church for your donations towards these two charities.

Weekday Masses: 8.00am, 12.15pm, 6.00pm
Saturday Masses: 8.00am, 12.15pm, 6.00pm (*Vigil for Sunday*)
Sunday Masses: 8.30am, 10.00am (*with Choir*) 11.00am **Latin Choir**
 12.15pm, 6.00pm **Young Adults Choir**
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: Fridays 6.30-7.30pm – for Vocations
 to the Priesthood and Religious Profession.

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OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL

Parish Newsletter

Sunday 26 February 2012 – First Sunday of Lent

Lent

Traditionally the Church asks from us to look at three ways to prepare for Easter - almsgiving, fasting and prayer. So let us take a little look at the latter:

When Jesus taught his way of praying it was in response to his disciples' disposition. They wanted to pray like him. In a very real sense what's implicit in this encounter is their realisation of just how connected prayer and life were to be found in Jesus. That they wanted to pray like Jesus is indicative of what they saw was real for Him (c.f. Lk11.1). Prayer informed, shaped and nourished Jesus' life and now they were beginning to open themselves up and see the need for prayer in their own lives. The inseparable bond between prayer and life is summed up nicely by the catechism: "*We pray as we live, because we live as we pray*" (2725).

Lent draws us towards discerning the truth of this conviction. Without doubt the cry of Lent calls us to examine what may perhaps feel more like a disconnection between what we pray and what we live. Not to hide from the question. Can we say we live as we pray and pray as we live? is the challenge.

To perhaps try and move in a direction that can help us to be affirmative, St Thomas Aquinas understood that within this prayer of Jesus lies a particular order of petition, that following this order can bring us into a depth of meaning intended by Jesus. In this prayer St Thomas Aquinas perceives Christians are called to remember: "... *The Lord's Prayer is the most perfect of prayers.... not only for all the things we can rightly desire, but also in the sequence that they should be desired. This prayer teaches us not only to ask for things, but also in what order we should desire them....*" Interesting – a sequence to how we approach prayer.

In the *Way of Perfection*, Teresa of Avila dedicates 16 chapters as a reflection on the gift of this prayer, together with its ramifications in our spiritual journey. Teresa is immediately arrested with the depth of the first two words of Jesus' prayer: "*Our Father*". Why? To her it revealed prayer as so intimate and personal that it immediately caused her to become motivated to live up to this extraordinary bond *Jesus shares with us* and His Father.

The beginning of this prayer gave her the sense that Jesus had revealed the end goal. If it had come at the end of the prayer, it would not have been as attractive to her. Without this beginning, prayer would have been more about changing ourselves first before we experience the gift of God and his love. Instead, for Teresa, the beginning of this prayer expresses the conviction that God, being unconditional in his love, does not hold back from giving himself, does not require from us to change before he gives his love. Instead, God gives as intimately as God can and allows this giving to speak for itself. The invitation to pray is the invitation to wrestle with our dispositions that say *‘we change, then God acts’* instead of loving the fact that *‘God acts in us with love and so we change’*. **Lent** encourages each of us to keep the door of prayer open and discover this for ourselves. For, once discovered, prayer itself changes as Teresa states:

“Once they (we) are conscious of Our Lord’s presence within their (our) souls, they (we) need only look upon Him and conversation will follow. This friendly conversation will not be much thinking but much loving, not a torrent of words, much less a strained prepared speech, but rather a relaxed conversation with moments of silence as there must be between friends”.

‘We pray as we live, because we live as we pray’.

Lenten Devotions in the Carmelite Church

Stations of the Cross will take place in our Church every Friday during Lent. Please come and pray for priests and vocations, by walking the path of Christ’s Passion after the 6.00pm Mass. (Please note the regular *Holy Hour* at this time on Fridays will be suspended during Lent).

The Ways of Carmel

Beginning on Sunday next 4th March, at the 6.00pm Mass, the **Carmelite Community** will present their understanding of the ways some of our Carmelite saints developed their relationship with God. This 4-part pilot series aims at contributing towards the vision Blessed John Paul desired for Parish life – i.e. Parishes become “schools of prayer”.

Lenten “Drop off” Group

An invitation to parents dropping off their children to school, to spend some time reflecting on **Lent**. Together with input and sharing to lift the sense of Lent, Fr Iain is running Friday morning sessions from 9.15-9.55. Contact: 07776 457392 iainmatthew@yahoo.com

Lenten Fast Day for CAFOD

Friday next 2 March is **Lenten Fast Day for CAFOD**. CAFOD is the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development, working with communities in over 40 countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America, supporting people to find their own solutions to poverty. This Lent CAFOD invites us to help people living without one of God’s most precious resources – clean water. A child under five dies every 20 seconds because of diarrhoea caused by dirty water. For this Lent only, the UK government will match pound for pound every donation given to CAFOD, giving them the chance to help twice as many people gain access to water and other vital services like health and education. There will be a **collection after all Masses on Sunday next 4 March** when your Fast Day offerings will be taken up. Kindly use the special CAFOD envelopes available at the back of our Church this week and next. Please give as generously as you can.

A Quick Journey Through the Bible

On Wednesday next 29 February at 8.00pm, we begin a series of **eight weekly Bible Studies** in the Priory. In this Study you will learn the major places, events and themes of the Bible – getting the “big picture” of salvation history. This series will continue on Wednesdays at 8.00pm until the final one on 2nd May. The course will cost **£40**, inclusive of materials needed. There are still some places left for anyone who wishes to join. Please contact Reception or call 020-7937-9866, leaving your contact details and payment.

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### ***Carmelite Monday Group***

Our Carmelite Monday Group will meet in the Parish Centre at 7.30 for 8.00pm, tomorrow Monday 27 February. Throughout the Lenten Season they will follow the booklet **“Sparks of Light”**, beginning with Session 1, *Walking on water - On the possibility of holiness*. All young adults who come to our Church are invited. Entrance via Pitt Street.

### **Feast of Santo Niño (Divine Infant of Prague)**

We would like to offer our extreme gratitude to the Carmelite Filipino Choir and friends who contributed so generously to the collection in our Church on the Feast of Santo Niño, 29 January. The amount donated to the Carmelite Church was **£4,628.00** - greatly appreciated. Fr Tony