

<u>February</u>		<b>Feasts/Memorial</b>
Tuesday	17	Seven Holy Founders of the Servite Order
Saturday	21	St Peter Damian, Bishop & Doctor

### ***Catholic Priesthood – The Challenge***

*The Challenge* is a week-end for men at Allen Hall Seminary, 21-22 March  
For more details, contact [vocations@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:vocations@rcdow.org.uk) Tel: 020-7798-9083.

### ***Bible Studies at the Prayer Centre, Nazareth House***

On Tuesday 3, 10 & 17 March, from 7.30-9.00pm, there will be Bible Studies, led by Fr Peter Burrows, at the Prayer Centre, Nazareth House, Hammersmith Rd., W6. All are welcome. For more information call 020-7931-6078. See also poster on our Church notice-board.

### ***Visiting the Sick***

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. He will be very pleased to pay a visit.

\* \* \* \* \*

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament on Wednesdays from 6.30-8.00pm.

**Our Parish Newsletter on the Web:** [www.carmelitechurch.org](http://www.carmelitechurch.org)

Weekday Masses:	8am, 12.15pm, 6pm
Saturday Masses:	8am, 12.15pm, 6pm ( <i>Vigil Mass for Sunday</i> )
Sunday Masses:	8.30am, 10am, 11am <i>Sung/Latin</i>
	12.15pm, 6pm <i>Young Adults Choir</i>
Holy Days:	8am, 12.15pm, 6pm
Bank Holidays:	9am, 12.15pm (no 6pm Mass)
Weekday Confessions:	5.30-5.50pm (Priest on duty except between 12 Noon-3pm)

Saturday Confessions: 10.30-11.45am, 3.30-5.50pm

**Carmelite Priory, 41 Kensington Church St., London W8 4BB**

**Tel: 020-7937-9866 Fax: 020-7938-1470**

**Registered Charity No: 253645.**

## **OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL**

### **Parish Newsletter**

Sunday 15 February 2009 – Sixth Sunday of the Year

### ***Jesus and Leprosy***

To us in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, today's Gospel can seem like just another of the many healing stories in the Gospel. We have to imagine the shock on the minds of the onlookers: *A leper leaves the isolated place where he is expected to live, he comes right up to Jesus, kneels in front of him and speaks with him.* How will Jesus deal with this very challenging situation? The shock becomes even greater: *Jesus feels sorry for the leper, Jesus reaches out to him and Jesus touches him. Jesus heals him and sends him to the priest.*

Leprosy was not just a dreaded physical illness, it also brought with it social and religious exclusion and the sufferer was forced to live a life of isolation and loneliness. We admire the courage of the leper and we can also understand his doubts: *if you want to, you can cure me.* We must appreciate the context and background in order to understand why this man would think that Jesus might not want to cure him.

What makes this story so extraordinary and so important for us is what happens after the healing. The former leper now goes around everywhere telling people about Jesus – in other words he is now a disciple [had we read the line immediately before this in Mark's Gospel, we would have read about Jesus going around from place to place preaching – so the man is doing what Jesus was doing!]

Then we find that Jesus can no longer go about openly and has to live in the lonely place, the place where the leper used to live and all those who seek Jesus have to go there. The leper and Jesus have swapped places!

This man has come to Jesus to be healed of his leprosy, he is healed of everything that cuts him off from God and other people. The man has to have the courage to be open about his leprosy and to allow Jesus to touch him in order to be healed. Leprosy, the source of pain and exclusion, now becomes the door through which Jesus enters this man's life.

Jesus is to be found wherever there is leprosy in our world today – the lepers are those who are excluded, marginalised, isolated, not accepted, those whom we would not want to be seen with, those whose company poses a risk to us, etc. There, in those uncomfortable and threatening parts of our world, society, community, social circle, family, Jesus is to be found and

healing will happen. More surprising again, those very people speak to us and speak to us of Jesus!

However, this Gospel takes us further again. Each of us is a leper and in order to know Jesus we must be open to our leprosy and go to that place within each of us and within our lives where we feel doubt, pain, isolation, shame and fear - the inner, deeper leprosy within each one of us that cuts us off from love, healing, people and God.

We are healed when we go to the sources of pain and hurt within us, it is there we will meet Jesus. Just like the leper, our starting point must be whatever there is in our lives that causes us to doubt God's willingness or ability to heal. The leper had the courage to face his doubts and overcome the obstacles deep within him – in doing so he shows us all the way to Jesus and to healing and true freedom.

*Fr Matt Blake*

#### ***Mass in Honour of Our Lady of Lourdes***

Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor will celebrate Mass in *Honour of Our Lady of Lourdes and her Patronage of the Sick* at 3.00pm in the Cathedral on Saturday 14 March. All parishioners with a devotion to Our Lady of Lourdes are invited to come together in her honour on this day.

#### ***The Cardinal's Lecture***

On Thursday 26 February, Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor will give a lecture at Westminster Cathedral, starting at 7.00pm. The theme will be '*Joy and Hope – The Shape of the Church: Past, Present and to Come....*' Admission is free, no ticket required.

#### ***Samuel Group***

Making important decisions about career, study or a gap-year? Wondering whether marriage, priesthood, single life or consecrated life is for you?

Why not join a **Samuel Group**? For young adults [20-30s] open to listening to the Word of God speaking to their life. Contact: [samuel.group@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:samuel.group@yahoo.co.uk)

#### ***Holy Hour on Monday 23 February***

On Monday 23 February from 6.30-7.30pm we will have the second of our Holy Hours in the Church with emphasis on ***Prayer for the gift of Vocations to Religious Life***. The prayer will be guided by the message of St Thérèse, whose relics will be coming to England in September this year. Everybody is welcome.

#### ***Lenten Daily Meditations & Group Reflections***

*Lord, Giver of Life* – this is the title of our Reflections for Lent this year. The Booklets will be distributed at our Masses next Sunday. As usual we will give them free to parishioners of this parish but those who wish to donate the £1 charge, may put it in the collection bag.

#### ***RCIA – Right of Christian Initiation of Adults***

Please pray for Riandra, Marian, Samorn, Sherez, Jeffrey, Gergely, Elena and Thomas as they prepare to receive the Sacraments this Easter. At our evening Mass this Sunday we will celebrate the *Rite of Signing and Sending Forth*, and on Saturday next they will be at the Cathedral for the *Rite of Election*, celebrated by Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor.

\* \* \* \* \*

\* *Parish Winter Cinema for Children* - Today at 3.30pm, all children are invited to come to the Priory to see the film ***Bee Movie***. No need to book, just come along, accompanied by an adult.

#### ***Education Sunday***

We thank you for your contributions to the collection for the *Catholic Education Service* on Sunday last. The amount collected was **£654.08**.

The 12.15pm Mass tomorrow Monday will be a Funeral Mass for  
**James Coleman RIP**