

OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL

Parish Newsletter

Sunday 5 July 2009 – Fourteenth Sunday of the Year

July

Feasts/Memorials

Monday 6 - St Maria Goretti, Virgin & Martyr
Thursday 9 - SS Augustine Zhao Rong, Priest & Companions
Martyrs
Saturday 11 - St Benedict, Abbot, Patron of Europe

Bright Lights Festival

Brightlights, the annual festival in the Diocese of Westminster, bringing together hundreds of young adults for quality music, inspirational speakers and opportunities for worship, will take place at St Joseph's Pastoral Centre, Hendon, from Friday 10 - Sunday 12 July. For full details of the programme visit www.brightlights.org.uk

The Sick, Elderly & Housebound

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.

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

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

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 **Sung**, 11.00am **Sung/Latin**
12.15pm, 6.00pm **Young Adults Choir**
Holy Days: 8.00am, 12.15pm, 6.00pm
Bank Holidays: 9am, 12.15pm (no 6.00pm Mass)
Weekday Confessions: 5.30-5.50pm (Priest on duty except between
12 Noon-3.00pm)
Saturday Confessions: 10.30-11.45am, 3.30-5.50pm

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'My Grace is Enough for You'

Our second reading today is one of the best known and most commented upon passages of St Paul's writings. We do not know what Paul's "thorn in the flesh" was – there has been all kinds of speculation down through the years [even some wild speculation!]. Not only would Paul prefer the "thorn in the flesh" not to be there but he sees it as an obstacle to his work of proclaiming the Gospel. There is something missing, painful or damaging in Paul's health, reputation, history, relationships or lifestyle that is making his life difficult and that he sees as an obstacle to the Gospel. To understand how important this is for Paul, we must remember that Paul eats, lives and sleeps the Gospel of Jesus Christ, he is passionate about it and ruthless with anything or anyone who gets in the way. Therefore to see himself, or his life or something he is responsible for, as the obstacle is a source of great pain and confusion to him.

Paul is powerless to deal with the "thorn in the flesh" himself and so he prays to God asking God to take it away. God does not answer Paul's prayer as Paul would like him to, instead with the grace of God, Paul makes one of the most important and life-giving spiritual discoveries of his life. The "thorn in the flesh" is a meeting place with God's grace. It is in his very weakness that God can do most for Paul and with Paul: "*My grace is enough for you: my power is at its best in weakness*".

Paul's boast is now no longer his strength but his weakness, no longer his success but his failures, no longer what makes him proud but rather what embarrasses him. Paul discovers that what matters most is not our abilities or gift but our capacity to allow God to work with us, through us and in us. The more we know our need for God the more open we are to his work. Whatever reminds us of our powerlessness, our weakness or our failures can become a source of grace if we let it go and hand it over to God. Paul had to learn to live with, accept and welcome his "thorn in the flesh" and when he did that he discovered something so much deeper and richer. Our lives too are deepened and enriched when we stop fighting our inner battles, let go of our anger and accept ourselves as we truly are.

Let us all thank God for Paul's "thorn in the flesh" because it inspired him to give us teaching that is so life-giving and liberating. When Paul welcomed and accepted his "thorn in the flesh" he discovered a deep

freedom, peace and strength. This can only come from the grace of God because it goes totally against our natural inclinations. We do not want thorns in our flesh, we want our lives [and our bodies also] to look good, pure, clean, healthy etc.

Without our “thorns” our lives become superficial, empty, self-absorbed and deeply unhappy. What Paul learned we must all learn. The learning however involves pain, risk, sacrifice, failure and a gradual opening up to the deeper, liberating and life-giving plan God has for each of us. When we know that God’s grace is enough for us, then we are happy, free and alive.

Fr Matt Blake, Prior

***Triduum in Honour of Our Lady of Mount Carmel
Patroness of Our Church***

Thursday 16 July is the Solemnity of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, and in preparation for this we will have a Triduum in our Church as follows:

Monday 13th, Tuesday 14th and Wednesday 15th July after the 6.00pm Mass. This will include a short talk each evening on “*What Inspires me about Our Lady*” by Sr Cathy, Fr Sylvester and Fr Iain. You are all invited.

Relics of St Thérèse

The Relics of St Thérèse of Lisieux will be visiting our Church on **Sunday 11 October**, as part of their national visit to England and Wales. They will depart for Westminster Cathedral on Monday 12 October. You will find full details of the various venues involved in the visit if you go to our website: www.carmelitechurch.org Details of arrangements for the visit to our Church will be given nearer the time.

Day for Life 2009

Sunday 26 July will be **Day for Life 2009** in England and Wales. This day is dedicated to celebrating the dignity of life from conception to natural death. There will be a special collection after all Masses. Your generosity towards this worthy cause will be greatly appreciated.

Sacrament of Confirmation

Young people aged 13 years and over who wish to be prepared to receive the **Sacrament of Confirmation** should get in touch with Fr Iain at the Priory iainmatthew@yahoo.com

RCIA – Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

The **RCIA** programme will run from October 2009 until Easter 2010 in the Priory. It is intended for:

- * Adults who wish to be baptised.
- * Adult Catholics who are baptised but who have not received First Communion and/or Confirmation.
- * Members of other Christian Churches who wish to enter into full Communion with the Catholic Church.

Please pass on the word to anyone you know who may be interested.

For further information and to apply, please contact Fr Matt at: matthewblake@rcdow.org.uk

Fundraising for the Catholic Children’s Society

We wish to offer our extreme gratitude for your kind generosity towards our recent fundraising for the Catholic Children’s Society, who were in great need of funds. From the various events in our Church, i.e. Children’s Paintings, Cake Sale, plus all your generous donations, the amount raised was **£6,040.61**. This will support the Catholic Children’s Society’s work with children in need. Sincere thanks to you all again. Fr Iain

Holy Hour for the Gift of Vocations

Tomorrow Monday 6 July from 6.30-7.30pm we will have our **Holy Hour** with emphasis on Prayer for the *Gift of Vocations to Religious Life* – guided by the *Message of St Thérèse*. All are most welcome.

Sea Sunday

Sunday next 12 July is Sea Sunday. There will be a special Collection after all Masses to support the **Apostleship of the Sea**. Seafarers bring us 90% of the goods we use every day, and several thousand merchant ships visit British ports each year. The Apostleship of the Sea welcomes all seafarers to our shores as brothers and sisters regardless of colour, race or creed, and provides for their practical and pastoral needs. As a Catholic charity, they rely solely on voluntary contributions and our generous support to continue their mission.

Notices

- * Our monthly *Parish Advisory Group* meeting will take place this evening at 7.00pm in the Priory.
- * We thank you for your contributions to the *Peters Pence* Collection on Sunday last – the amount collected was **£767.77**.