

OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL

Parish Newsletter

Sunday 12 September 2010 - 24th Sunday of the Year

What is God Like?

Our Gospel today contains three of the most popular stories in all the Gospels and possibly in the whole Bible: *the Lost Sheep*, *the Lost Coin* and *the Prodigal Son*. However, the context of these stories in the life of Jesus is a very serious one. Jesus is speaking to a large number of people and two groups come into conflict with each other: the tax collectors and sinner want to be near Him and to hear more of what He is saying – the Pharisees and the Scribes, on the other hand, are objecting. He should not welcome and eat with these undesirable people.

Jesus does not directly defend his words and actions, rather he uses stories to tell them [and us] what God is like. Each story gives us an image to help us understand who God is and how he deals with us. God is a shepherd who will give up everything to find the lost sheep. God is a woman who desperately searches for the tiniest and most insignificant lost coin. God is a father who is devastated by the loss of his son and longs for His Son's return. When the sheep or coin is found and when the son returns, there is great joy and celebrating. God is happy and wants everyone to celebrate with Him when He has found the ones He has lost.

The Tax Collectors and Sinners sense or feel the force of God's longing and searching love for them. The power of this love compels them to seek Jesus, they just cannot stay away from Him. Their desire to be close to Him is overpowering. However, they have no way of understanding or explaining what they are experiencing. These three stories are told to help them understand the nature of their experience.

The Pharisees and the Scribes are endowed with an extensive knowledge of the scriptures and of their religion. Why are they objecting? They are objecting because, despite their knowledge and education, they do not understand the nature and ways of God. They are like the older son in the third story - "*you are with me always and all I have is yours*". The older son did not know or understand his father, likewise the Scribes and Pharisees do not know or understand God.

Pope Benedict's Journey by Popemobile through London

Friday 17th September:

At around 17:00 the Pope will travel in the Popemobile from Lambeth Palace across Lambeth Bridge and along Millbank. The Pope arrives at the Palace of Westminster at around 17:15. There will be limited space along this route and limited vantage points from which to see the Pope.

Saturday 18th September:

At 18:00 the Pope will travel in the Popemobile along Horse Guards Road, The Mall, Constitution Hill and Hyde Park Corner before arriving at Hyde Park for the Prayer Vigil at around 18:30.

Archbishop Vincent Nichols' Comments on some aspects of the Holy Father's visit:

"From this country's point of view there are profound historic and cultural implications and ramifications for the visit. And I suspect that these will be conveyed as much in the images as in some of the speeches and the words. So the image of Her Majesty The Queen welcoming Pope Benedict and formally greeting each other is one that will resonate through the history of this land. When the Pope enters Westminster Hall on the Friday to address politicians, diplomats, leaders of this society, that will be another very historic and resonant moment. The Pope will pause at the spot at which St. Thomas More, the Lord Chancellor of England, was condemned to death in 1535 for his Catholic faith.

He will also, with the Archbishop of Canterbury, go to pray at the tomb of St. Edward the Confessor, the canonised King of England, the founder of Westminster Abbey. And that too will enable us, as it were, to reach back into the deeper roots of who this nation is, who we are, and what our cultural roots are, and how refreshing they can be when they are seen to be a living source of inspiration for people today. And I think the fact that the Pope will also meet with leaders of society, who are men and women of all the different faiths present in this country, will also be a moment in which the Pope affirms the role of the breadth of faith in God as found here as a contributor to the common good".

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This Gospel is a very appropriate and helpful one for us to reflect upon as we prepare for **Pope Benedict's visit**. Many people, like the tax collectors and sinners, will be drawn to him, to listen to him, to watch him on television, to take an interest in the events without knowing why.

People will be surprised by their interest, by the powerful pull to listen, to pay attention, even to pray and reflect. This is the same power, energy and inspiration that drew the tax collectors and sinners.

There will be many objections, misunderstandings and even rejection and hostility. There would be none of this if we really knew the nature of God, knew the limitless love he has for each of us, the sacrifices He will make to find us and the joy in his heart when we turn to Him.

Fr Matt Blake, Prior

Preparation for the Papal Visit - Carmelite Church

This Sunday 12th September, the 6.00pm evening Mass in our Church will be a special Mass offered for **Pope Benedict and his Visit to us**. The Mass will be followed [from 7.00-8.00pm] by an **Open Forum** led by Mary O'Regan [a parishioner who is a well known writer and journalist] and **Fr Matt**. The Forum will include a short talk entitled "**Introducing Pope Benedict**", followed by questions and discussion. Everyone welcome and please pass the word around.

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You are all invited to **Three Holy Hours** – "*Times of Prayer and Reflection guided by Pope Benedict XVI and John Henry Newman*" on **Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday 13th-15th September 6.30-7.30pm**

- * Monday 13th : *God is love*
- * Tuesday 14th : *Lead, kindly light*
- * Wednesday 15th : *Saving hope*

BBC Coverage of Pope Benedict's Visit

The BBC will be covering all the key events of Pope Benedict's visit to Britain from 16-19 September across TV, Radio and online. The **Radio Times** gives full details of all the events, and you are strongly advised to obtain copies for this historic occasion.

Sunday next 19 September is **Home Mission Sunday**. There will be a special collection after all Masses for the *Catholic Agency to Support Evangelisation* (CASE), whose role it is to assist the spread of the Gospel.

Prayer Vigil with Pope Benedict, Hyde Park, Saturday 18th September

The complete list of those who have successfully applied for tickets through this parish is now at the back of the Church. Please check that your name is on it. Only those whose names are on the list can come with the parish group, it is not permitted to take someone else's place. If someone cannot come, then that ticket must be left unused. The practical arrangements are as follows:

- * Meet in the Parish Centre at 1.00pm.
- * **Gerard Ring**, our Pilgrim Leader, and his team will register each person, check their ID and give them a ticket, armband and pilgrim pack. The only forms of ID acceptable are **Passport, Drivers Licence [with photo] or European Identity Card**. Anyone who does not have the correct and valid ID will not be given a ticket.
- * The **fee of £5** will be collected from each person [it has been reduced from £10].
- * Once registration is complete [by 1.45 at the latest] the whole group walks together to Hyde Park – you will not be admitted if you are not part of the group.
- * Please bring the book "**Magnificat**" which you were given last Sunday [a small number of copies are still available].

Notices

- * We will have our *Parish Gathering* after the 10 o'clock Mass this morning, when you are all invited downstairs for tea/coffee and to socialise.
- * **Catechism, First Communion and Confirmation 2010/2011**
Enrolment forms are available from the back of the Church – we would ask all who have not done so yet, to kindly complete and return their forms as soon as possible.
- * A date for your diaries: Saturday 23 October is the date set for our **Carmelite Youth Day** this year. Please spread the word around to all your young adult friends and invite them to come along
- * Today is **Racial Justice Day**. There will be a special collection after all Masses for the *Catholic Association for Racial Justice*.