

OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL

Parish Newsletter

Sunday 8 March 2009 – Second Sunday of Lent

Kensington Council of Churches Lent Course

“Sense Making Faith; Observing Lent through the senses”.
Kensington Council of Churches Lent Course commenced on Monday last at Our Lady of Victories, Kensington (in the Parish Centre). You are all warmly invited to attend on Monday 9 March at 7.30pm for the next session. For details contact: secretary@kensingtonchurches.org

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 next 14 March. All parishioners with a devotion to Our Lady of Lourdes are invited to come together in her honour on this day.

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.

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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:	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

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Abraham, our Father in Faith

“Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah. There you shall offer him as a burnt offering, on a mountain I will point out to you”.

This is the command God gives to Abraham in our first reading today – Abraham is asked by God to murder his own son. Is it possible that God would command a human being to kill another human being? Of course not, we have to see this story as a parable. Like all good parables, it gets us to think, question, and it leaves us disturbed and searching for answers. Abraham must have been very confused, sad and frightened. Yet Abraham also knew this was a call of God [God calls Abraham by name and Abraham responds “*Here I am*” – this is typical of a vocation story in the bible]. Abraham is the first person in the bible to be called by God, to all who follow he is “Our Father in Faith” and here his faith is put to the most severe of tests.

As we reflect on this passage of scripture, let us remember the times in life when our faith is put to the most severe and painful of tests: illness, worry, insecurity, pressure, prayers not answered, rules or expectations one struggles to accept or understand, feeling of God’s absence, this list could go on forever. We have all been where Abraham was – what God is asking, expecting, ignoring or revealing is just too much, unacceptable and could not be right. Abraham places his total trust in God, he has the faith to remain loyal and obey no matter what is asked. For this, God rewards him and rewards him more than he could ever have asked or expected. Abraham had to be willing to give up even his only son whom he loved so much in order to receive all that God wanted to give him. Our goals, ambitions, attachments, desires and wants also need to be purified and transformed, otherwise they become obstacles to God’s will in our lives. This process can be painful, confusing and demanding but it is the only road to true freedom and to the openness we need in order to receive the great gifts God wants to give us. The more we can let go of, the more we can receive from God – this story of Abraham demonstrates this so clearly for us.

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To help us reflect on this I will finish by quoting some well-known lines from St John of the Cross:

To reach satisfaction in all, desire satisfaction in nothing.

To come to possess all, desire the possession of nothing.

To arrive at being all, desire to be nothing.

To come to the knowledge of all, desire the knowledge of nothing.

To come to enjoy what you have not, you must go by a way in which you enjoy not.

To come to the knowledge you have not, you must go by a way in which you know not.

To come to the possession you have not, you must go by a way in which you possess not.

To come to be what you are not, you must go by a way in which you are not.

Fr Matt Blake, Prior

Monday Group Lent Reflections

Our **Young Adults Monday Group** will meet in the Parish Centre tomorrow evening 9 March when they will follow Week 2 of the Lenten programme, **Lord, Giver of Life**, this week's theme being "*The Holy Spirit in the life of the Church*". All young adults who come to our Church are welcome to join them – 7.30pm in the Parish Centre each Monday, entrance via Pitt Street.

Young Adults in the West

On Sunday 29 March we will have the '*Young Adults in the West*' gathering in our Church with Bishop Alan Hopes, starting with Mass celebrated by Bishop Alan at 6.00pm. Mass will be followed by refreshments, faith-sharing and Question Time in the Parish Centre. All young adults (17-35) who come to our Church are warmly invited. It is also hoped as many of our parishioners as possible will attend the 6.00pm Mass that evening.

RCIA – Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

We ask you to please continue to pray for our group of young people from this Church as they journey in faith towards receiving the Sacraments at Easter. They are: Riandra, Marian, Samorn, Sherez, Jeffrey, Gergely, Elena and Thomas.

Celebration Mass with Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor

As we await the appointment of the new Archbishop of Westminster, a Mass of thanksgiving to God for the ministry of **Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor** will take place at St Benedict's Abbey Church, Ealing, on Wednesday 1 April at 7.30pm. The Cardinal will be the main celebrant, and we are all invited.

Saturday Lenten Reflection Group

During Lent there will be a *Lenten Reflection Group* in the Priory each Saturday from 12.45-1.30pm, with some input with Fr Iain and some time for discussion and prayer. The next session will be on Saturday 14 March. All are welcome.

Distribution of Lenten Alms

Parishes are encouraged to collect Lenten Alms to support the charitable work of the Church with disadvantaged people locally and overseas. This year money raised will be divided between the *St John Southworth Fund* and *School Projects in Bangladesh*. You will find a special box at the back of the church for your contributions throughout Lent. Your kind generosity will be greatly appreciated.

10th Anniversary of the Vocations Discernment Group

'**Steps along the Way**' - On Friday 13 March from 7.00pm onwards, in the Hinsley Room at Westminster Cathedral, there will be a 10th *Anniversary Celebration* with Fr Chris Vipers and Fr John Armitage, for young adults (18-38) discerning their calling in life. For further details visit: www.free2become.org or call 01277-373848.

Lenten Fast Day for CAFOD

Friday last was **Lenten Fast Day**, and today there will be a collection after all Masses for your contributions to **CAFOD**, the official overseas development and relief agency of the Catholic Church. We ask you please to be as generous as you can towards this very worthy cause.

We have **Stations of the Cross** after the 6.00pm Mass each Friday during Lent. You are all invited to take part.