



CATHOLIC CHURCHES
of
OUR LADY & ST. KENELM, HALESOWEN
OUR LADY OF LOURDES, OLD HILL



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(Part of the Archdiocese of Birmingham Registered Charity No. 234216)

LITURGY FOR THE WEEK BEGINNING SUNDAY 11th FEBRUARY 2024
SIXTH SUNDAY in ORDINARY TIME

TIMES OF MASS & MASS INTENTIONS

Sat 10th	Vigil of the Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time	6.30pm H	Joan Redman (R.I.P)
Sun 11th	Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time	10.00am H 11.30am OH	Pat Doyle (R.I.P) Bosco Dinh and Maria Hue
Mon 12th	St Agatha	No Mass	—————
Tues 13th	Feria	10.00am OH	Robert Rennicks (R.I.P)
Wed 14th	Ash Wednesday 	10.00am H 12 noon OH 7.00pm H	V.P .Chakkappan (R.I.P) Pro Populo Celebrant Intentions
Thurs 15th	Thursday after Ash Wednesday	12 noon OH	Celebrant Intentions
Fri 16th	Friday after Ash Wednesday	12 noon H	Declan Power (R.I.P)
Sat 17th	Saturday after Ash Wednesday Vigil of First Sunday in Lent	10.00am H 6.30pm H	Mary Hatton (R.I.P) Pam and John Woods (R.I.P)
Sun 18th	First Sunday in Lent	10.00am H 11.30am OH	Keith Culliford (Int) Bosco Dinh & John Phap (R.I.P)

MASS INTENTIONS to Father Stefan please

Masses marked H will be at Halesowen, OH will be at Old Hill

Confessions

Confessions at Halesowen from 10.30 am (After Saturday 10am Mass) until 11am. The Blessed Sacrament will be exposed during confessions. Confessions are also available by appointment.

Second Collections

This weekend, there will be a Collection for LIFE.

Next weekend, there will be a collection for Parish Maintenance (H) and Parish Debt (OH)

On the weekend of 25th February, there will be a collection for CAFOD.

Ash Wednesday

This Wednesday is Ash Wednesday and is a day of fasting and abstinence. Although it is not a holyday of obligation, we are always encouraged to receive the Ashes. The Ashes that we receive allows us to enter into the time established for the purification of our souls. This sign of penance, a traditionally biblical one, has been preserved among the Church's customs until the present day.

As it takes place during the half-term holidays, the masses will be at 10am and 7pm at Our Lady and St Kenelm's and 12 noon at Our Lady of Lourdes.

Fasting and Abstinence (Ash Wednesday and Good Friday)

Many people get confused about what are the rules with regard to fasting and abstinence on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, especially at what age we need to start to do it.

Abstinence means that we **give up all types of meat that day**. Those who are over **fourteen years old** are bound by the law of abstinence for the rest of their lives.

Fasting means that **the amount of food we eat is considerably reduced**, it does not mean that we do not eat anything that day. Those **over eighteen years old** are bound by the law of fasting until the beginning of their **sixtieth year** (that's midnight of your 59th birthday!). Those who for medical reasons cannot take part in the fast are therefore exempt from the fast.

We can, of course, take part in fasting and abstinence when we don't have to. Choosing to fast or abstain is a great sign of our love for the Lord, and our dependence on his love.

FEBRUARY Anniversaries

Remember in your prayers these deceased members :

Adrian Powers, Ellen Kalinski, Glennis Cutler, Val Johnson, Fr. John Watkins, Maurice Winstanley, Marie Anne Hunter, Catherine Gull, Francis Brown, Richard Watkins, Peggy Harris, Mary Hatton, Olive Adkins, Rose Guilar, Lydia Doady, Rose Ingram, Hermes Mendez, Aloysius Kelly, Norman Lambert, Evelyn Hendy, Christopher Aylott, Joan Birch, Patricia Bamford, Kathleen Madigan, Maria Giovenco, Martin Raymund Bridge and Laura Westwood (1st Anniversary)
May they rest in peace.

Lately Dead

Please keep in your prayers Declan Power and Gretta Foden. *May they rest in peace.*

Declan Power's Funeral Service will take place at Rowley Regis Crematorium on this Friday 16th February at 2.30 pm.

Gretta Foden's Requiem will take place at Our Lady and St Kenelm's Church on Tuesday 20th February 2024 at 11:30am.

Old Hill Foodshare

There is a great need of - **cereals, sugar, toilet rolls, toiletries, detergents along with tinned fruit, tinned fish and tinned meat.**

Happy Anniversary SVP - 180 Years and still going strong!

On Monday 12th February the St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) will celebrate being present in England and Wales for 180 years. The SVP has served the parish in Halesowen for many decades and with 13 members continues to do so by visiting those who are isolated and providing practical help when necessary. If you are worried about grocery bills the SVP can help thanks to funds raised from national charitable foundations. For a confidential discussion, please contact SVP Conference President Mike Weaver (call or text on 07714 287867) or Vice President Jane Clarke or Secretary Roy Williams or Father Stefan.

Reflection for the Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Readings: Leviticus 13:1-2,44-46; Psalm 32; 1 Corinthians 10:31—11:1; Mark 1:40-45

In today's first reading we have the Law regarding leprosy is given to Moses and Aaron. This sets the scene for the gospel in which Jesus cures a person with leprosy, the ex-leper then reports his cure to everyone.

We are reminded in the second reading that we are all called to be good examples of Christian Living. We see this as Paul urges the Corinthians to imitate him as he himself imitates Christ.

(continued)

In today's Gospel, we continue to hear Mark report the miraculous healings that Jesus performed in Galilee. The Gospel begins with Jesus healing a man with leprosy. Leprosy is a disfiguring, infectious skin disease that has been surrounded by many social and religious taboos throughout history. In 1873, the cause of leprosy, also known as Hansen's disease, was identified. We now know that leprosy is caused by a bacterial infection. Although it is infectious, modern medical studies have shown that transmission is more difficult than previously thought. Since the 1940s, medical treatments have been available, and the patient no longer needs to be isolated once long-term treatment has begun.



In Jesus' time, however, religious and social taboos dictated the behaviour of those with leprosy and other skin diseases. The Law of Moses provided for the examination of skin diseases by the priests, and if leprosy was identified, the person was declared unclean. People with leprosy lived in isolation from the community. They were instructed to rip their clothes and to announce their presence with loud cries when moving in the community. If the sores of leprosy healed, the Law of Moses provided a purification rite that permitted the person to return to the community.

In today's Gospel, the man with leprosy took the initiative, approaching Jesus and asking for healing. In doing so, the leper violated the religious customs of the day by approaching a person who was clean. His request to Jesus can be interpreted as a courageous and daring act. The confidence of the leper in Jesus' ability to heal him is evident in the words of his request. But his words can also be read as a challenge to Jesus, asking just how far Jesus was willing to extend himself in order to heal someone. While healing the man, Jesus touched him, which also violated established social norms. This is an important sign of the depth of Jesus' compassion for the man and an important statement about Jesus' interpretation of the Law of Moses.

Although Jesus touched the leper, he did not break completely with the Law of Moses. He instructed the man not to tell anyone about the cure and told him to present himself to the priests as prescribed by the Law of Moses. The first instruction sounds nearly impossible to honour. Certainly, the man would want to share the good news of his healing, and his quick improvement would require an explanation. The second instruction honours the Law of Moses.

Mark's Gospel tells us that after this healing, it became difficult for Jesus to travel freely. There are several possible explanations for this. There might have been concern about the repercussions of Jesus' breach of social and religious norms. In touching the man with leprosy, Jesus made himself unclean. Despite his instructions, the cured man spread the word about Jesus' healing power. Even when Jesus was in deserted places, people sought him out in search of his healing.



Sharon,
Fr Stephen

The Parishes operate in accordance with Statutory Safeguarding Guidance and the National and Archdiocesan policies & procedures at all times. The Parish Safeguarding Representative for Our Lady and St Kenelm is Shelagh Ash. Shelagh can be contacted at: sg.olstkennel@rcaab.org.uk. The Parish Safeguarding Representative for Our Lady of Lourdes is Nadine Hancox. Alternatively, the Diocesan Safeguarding team can be contacted on 0121 230 6240 / safeguarding@rcaab.org.uk if you have any concern.

Reflection for Ash Wednesday

Readings: Joel 2:12-18; Psalm 51; 2 Corinthians 5:20-6:2; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18

Ash Wednesday's readings all speak of the interior conversion of heart towards God, which is shown by actions done in sincerity and purity of heart, and an underlying confidence that God will forgive our sins and purify our hearts. If we repent and convert to God we will experience the joy of his salvation. The prophet Joel appeals in the name of Lord to all groups to "come back to me with all your heart, fasting, weeping, mourning. Tear your hearts and not your clothes" (2:12-13). Priests are to intercede with God for their people. Psalm 51, traditionally considered as written by King David, contains the confession of offenses, the cleansing action of God, and the experience of the joy of being saved. The Gospel of Matthew homes in on the sincerity and purity of intention of prayer, fasting and giving to the poor, signs of genuine conversion and repentance. Any religious action done for mere appearance or to promote one's own image is a sign of hypocrisy.

St. Paul reminds the Christians at Corinth that now is the time to be reconciled with God. God's Son was treated as a sinner so that we might be justified.

Sin: A constant reality in both the Old and New Testaments is the presence of sin. In general, it is a turning away from God and following idols in his place. In particular, it takes the form of specific acts that break God's Law and show a disregard for God in spite of his goodness and protection. The history of Israel is a constant oscillation between sin and conversion, and between God's punishment and his mercy. Israel's liturgical calendar expressed this need of purification in the great Day of Expiation when a sacrificial goat was charged with the sins of the Israelites and driven into the desert. Prayers for forgiveness were offered by the High Priest (Leviticus 16). In the Gospels Jesus shows a remarkable compassion for sinners; he has come for them. He forgives their sins and causes a complete change of perspective in their lives. He offers forgiveness gratuitously and the positive commandment of love that he not only enjoins on sinners, but seems to evoke from their hearts. Sin is seen as an obstacle to the fulfilment of one's life in love. By removing sin, one is free to love. What is also unusual is the fact that it is precisely people apparently far from God that seem to recognize and to want most this liberation from sin.

God's forgiveness: Continuing Jesus' action of forgiving sins, priests are empowered to forgive sins in God's name and by his power. This forgiveness is real, not merely symbolic, and is always available. God forgives all past sins to those who want to be forgiven.

Repentance and conversion: In both Testaments conversion and repentance means an inner and profound change of heart. It is not an external washing of stains. While sacramental confession takes the form of the habitual confession of sins, this habit is based on a deeper orientation of one's whole life towards God. There is in each person, moved by God's grace, a movement of life towards God. When this movement is freely accepted life opens out to the greater truth; actions, desires and thoughts begin to turn in the same direction. Along this path one can sin, but it is always in the context of a movement of one's entire being towards God. This is whole-hearted Christian conversion, and it is this lifelong thrust of our lives that gives meaning, not mockery, to habitual confession.

Fifth Sunday of Ordinary Time

Entrance Antiphon

Be my protector, O God,

a mighty stronghold to save me.

For you are my rock, my stronghold!

Lead me, guide me, for the sake of your name.

Responsorial Psalm

Response: You are my refuge, O Lord; you fill me with the joy of salvation.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!

May the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ enlighten the eyes of our mind, so that we can see what hope his call holds for us. Alleluia!

Communion Antiphon

They ate and had their fill, and what they craved the Lord gave them; they were not disappointed in what they craved.

Ash Wednesday

Entrance Antiphon

You are merciful to all, O Lord, and despise nothing that you have made. You overlook people's sins, to bring them to repentance, and you spare them, for you are the Lord our God.

Responsorial Psalm

Response: Have mercy on us, O Lord, for we have sinned.

Gospel Acclamation

Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory! A pure heart create for me, O God, and give me again the joy of your help. Praise to you, O Christ, king of eternal glory!

Communion Antiphon

He who ponders the law of the Lord day and night will yield fruit in due season.