

8th Sunday in Ordinary Time

People's words flow out of what fills their heart: this is very much the theme of today's Gospel reading. Its background is the extract from the Old Testament that we are given in the first reading.

Today's Readings

Ecclesiasticus 27:4-7

What we say reveals who we truly are. ````

1 Corinthians 15:54-58

Physical death does not have the last word, thanks to the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Luke 6:39-45

Jesus warns us against thinking that we might be better people than we actually are.

Tuesday this week:
Shrove Tuesday (see below)

Wednesday this week:
Ash Wednesday (see below)

Friday this week:
Stations of Cross (see below)



NOW I SEE!

I went to the opticians recently for a check-up. There was the usual chart on the wall with rows of letters of diminishing size. I was given the standard challenge to recite the smallest line I could read. I chose the second last F C M B S Y. I read it as P O N 3 8 V. Then came the lens adjustment and, to my delight, the line became clear. Squinting and guessing gave way to clarity, precision, and the relief that comes of being once more visually in touch with my environment.

Or was I? Are glasses all we need to see things clearly? It depends on what you mean by “see.” To see surfaces, to see things three dimensionally, to find a dropped teaspoon, to avoid a traffic accident—for all practical purposes, glasses are the remedy. But to see things in what you might call a multi-dimensional way: to see “a World in a Grain of Sand / And Heaven in a Wildflower”; to see, too, the hurt in a smiling face, or the loneliness behind every act of pettiness, the terror cringing behind every act of bravado; to see Christ in a piece of bread—to have that kind of vision requires a level of optical remedy you won’t find in the Yellow Pages.

To acquire that kind of insight you’ve got to open your eyes wide and allow some application of Christ’s sermon on the mount (which we’re getting from Luke’s Gospel these Sundays)

As a matter of fact, somewhere within this Sunday's text is Jesus talking a bit like an optician: (to paraphrase a bit) "If your eyes are sound, your whole body will walk in brightness. If your eyes are no good, things are going to get a bit dark—and once darkness takes over, things can get doubly dark." Of course, you can see, beneath those words that Jesus is talking about your spiritual vision.

This is what those words mean in their deeper sense: "If your eyes are influenced by a meanness of soul, if your eyes are jaundiced by resentment over a slight experienced yesterday (or 10 years ago), if your eyes are bloodshot with irritability that defies all thought of reconciliation, then you will never see more than such meanness, resentment, and crankiness will allow. Or again, if you let your perception of people and things be narrowed by the biases of ancestors long dead, or of political demagogues of whatever is "trendy," you might as well grope your way through life than ever expect to stride forth bold in mind and heart amidst the immensity of God's world around you".

On the other hand, if you can arrive at that largeness of soul resonant in Christ's sermon on the mount - a largeness of soul that banishes every sneer off your face, that would rather you postponed all thought of worshipping God until you've been reconciled with your neighbour - a largeness of heart that would make you so obviously candid in everything you do or say - a largeness that would have you go the extra mile and never judge but only care about other people the way God cares about you - then what radiance! How wide and deep and penetrating your perception of reality will be!

Jesus taught his disciples to love their enemies and to be forgiving, non-judgmental, and generous toward other people. His disciples must be clear-sighted in their understanding of the gospel. They are hypocrites if they criticize other people and yet are blind to their own faults. A person who is blind can't guide another sightless person. Both of them will stumble and fall. The disciples can't lead other people unless they are able to see their own defects and limitations. Then they will understand when other people fail and can help them overcome their wrongdoings. When these future leaders of the Church are fully trained, they will resemble their teacher, Jesus.



We at St Francis, Friars and Parishioners, stand in solidarity with the Ukrainian people at this time..

We pray for Ukraine and all its people, that God will bring them peace.

With Pope Francis, we call upon political leaders to make “a great examination of conscience before God, who is the God of peace and not of war”.

(Ash Wednesday, 5 March: Day of Fast & Prayer for Peace)

GOSPEL WORDSEARCH

H	E	A	R	T	P	L	A	I	D
E	H	R	E	H	C	A	E	T	I
T	G	R	A	P	E	S	R	R	S
I	E	O	S	R	H	E	B	P	C
R	S	A	O	G	E	A	L	L	I
C	S	T	P	D	D	I	P	A	P
O	S	P	Y	N	N	A	E	N	L
P	L	A	H	T	A	E	C	H	E
Y	N	N	A	L	P	U	S	T	O
H	S	R	T	H	O	R	N	S	H

DISCIPLE
TEACHER
SPLINTER
PLANK
HYPOCRITE
TREE
GRAPES
THORNS
GOODNESS
BADNESS
STORE
HEART





The emphasis of THE SYNOD is on **BAPTISM**.
ALL the Baptised are part of the Church – members of our Parish. We are not an assembly of the righteous. EVERYONE participates, EVERYONE plays an equal part.

COMMUNION, PARTICIPATION, MISSION is for everyone!

We're all part of the listening, discerning process.



SHROVE TUESDAY (Mardi Gras, Pancake Day)

Shrove Tuesday (or "Mardi Gras" "Fat Tuesday") is, for us, the Feast before the Fast (of Lent). The word "shrove" comes from "shrive," meaning "the confessions of sins" – one of the emphases of Lent. The word "carnival" comes from the Latin words (Carne Vale) meaning "farewell to meat."



Wednesday: Mass and Ashes at 12.15pm and at 7.30pm

Ashes



The ashes used for Ash Wednesday come from burning the palms from the previous year's Palm Sunday, the Sunday before Easter. Ashes are a biblical symbol of mourning and penance used since the time of Moses ("sackcloth and ashes," Nm 19:9-10, 17-18). They also symbolize death to remind us of our mortality. Thus, when the faithful are signed with ashes, we hear, "Remember! You are dust and to dust you shall return." Ashes remind us of the Day of Judgment when we stand before God: "Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel!" To prepare well for that day, we must die now to sin so that we can rise to new life in Christ. Being marked with ashes at the beginning of Lent indicates our need for deeper conversion of our hearts and our lives during this season of repentance and renewal.

Pope Francis has declared **Ash Wednesday, March 2** this year, as a **day of fasting and prayer for peace.**

He condemned the "diabolic senselessness of violence" and asked our Lady, "the queen of peace, to save the world from the madness of war".



1. Jesus is condemned to death
2. Jesus takes up his Cross
3. Jesus falls for the first time
4. Jesus meets his Mother
5. Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the Cross
6. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus
7. Jesus falls for the second time
8. Jesus meets the women of Jerusalem
9. Jesus falls for the third time
10. Jesus is stripped of his garments
11. Jesus is nailed to the Cross
12. Jesus dies on the Cross
13. Jesus is taken down from the Cross
14. Jesus is laid in the tomb

Although not traditionally part of the Stations, the Resurrection of Jesus is sometimes included as an unofficial fifteenth station

Stations every Friday evening of Lent at 7.30pm.

History of 'The Stations'.

The first Stations of the Cross started when pilgrims to Jerusalem wanted to follow the Via Dolorosa (The Sorrowful Way) of Jesus' last journey.

Following their founder, St Francis, the Franciscans had a special devotion to the Passion of Christ.

In 1217, St. Francis founded the Custody of the Holy Land to guard and promote the devotion to the holy places. The Franciscans were officially proclaimed custodians of holy places by Pope Clement VI in 1342. Several travellers visiting the Holy Land during the 12th –14th centuries mentioned a "Via Sacra" (a settled 'Holy Way' that pilgrims followed) there is nothing to say that this was the Stations of the Cross, as we understand it.

The earliest use of the word "stations", for the usual stopping places on the Via Sacra in Jerusalem, occurs in the narrative of an English pilgrim, William Wey, who visited the Holy Land in the mid-15th century, and described pilgrims following the footsteps of Christ to Calvary.

During the 15th and 16th centuries, the Franciscans began to build a series of outdoor shrines in different parts of Europe to replicate their counterparts in the Holy Land. The number of stations varied between seven and thirty; seven was common. These were usually placed in small buildings, along the approach to a church.

In 1686 Pope Innocent XI granted the Franciscans the right to erect stations within their own churches. In 1731, Pope Clement XII extended this to all churches - provided that a Franciscan blessed and opened them them, with the consent of the local bishop. At the same time the number was fixed at fourteen. In 1857, the bishops of England were allowed to erect the stations by themselves, without the intervention of a Franciscan, and in 1862 this right was extended to bishops throughout the church.