



St Francis of Assisi Parish Newsletter “Laudato, Si”



ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI CHURCH
Grove Crescent Road, Stratford, London, E15 1BJ

7th Sunday in Ordinary Time - 19th February 2023

Day for the Unemployed.

Today’s readings set out the standards of holiness that are set before the people of God. There is nothing trivial about them. It seems a tall order to try to be as perfect as God. Of course we can’t manage this on our own, but Jesus himself is our perfection and our holiness. We bring before God our struggles to live in holiness, knowing that God is compassionate.

Today's Readings:

Leviticus 19:1-2. 17-18: The book of Leviticus can seem rather dry. It begins with the command to be as holy as God. This is an impossible command, but the point is to allow God to live that holiness within us by make in space for God in our lives.

Response to the Psalm:

The Lord is compassion and love.

1 Corinthians 3:16-23: Paul writes to the Corinthians, a community made up of common people with no pretensions to greatness. He reminds them that their dignity comes from being temples of God.

Matthew 5:38-48: Jesus sets out the implications of living as his disciples. He reminds us that God gives the same grace to good and bad people alike. The choice is ours, on a daily basis, whether to respond to it or not.

“But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you”.

As Jesus continued his Sermon on the Mount, he quoted the earliest known code of law - an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. The law was known as the “Lex Talionis,” which can be described as the law of “tit for tat.” Its aim was the **limitation** of vengeance -- the punishment must fit the crime. Jesus abolished the old law and introduced a new law of love and non-retaliation. He said that it was no virtue to love only those who love you; nonbelievers do that much. A disciple has got to go an “extra mile” in response to another person's needs, even at y our own expense, and to give generously without expecting repayment. Jesus asked his disciples to imitate the perfect love of God who gave gifts of sun and rain to the just and unjust alike. He emphasized that no limits could be placed on Christian forgiveness. They must never seek retaliation for any insult no matter how hostile.

Injured parties might have to force themselves to love their enemies, but the Lord would show them the way. Christians must strive to love even people who persecute them. On the cross, Jesus gave us the supreme example of ‘enemy love’ when he asked God to forgive the people who were putting him to death.



Dates for your Diary: 22nd February – ASH WEDNESDAY MASS: 12.15pm and 7.30pm.
24th February – REQUIEM MASS: 12:15 – ANN MARIE HENRY, R.I.P.

Pray for those who have died, and those whose Anniversaries occur around this time, also, please pray for the sick, and, remember the People of Ukraine. Our thoughts and prayers for the people of Turkey and Syria following the devastating earthquake.

Lent is a Catholic liturgical season consisting of forty days beginning on Ash Wednesday and concluding at sundown on Holy Thursday. The official liturgical



colour for Lent is purple/violet. Throughout history, Jews and Christians have found **prayer, fasting, and almsgiving** to be an important part of repentance and renewal. Rather than giving up something, a lot of Catholics address personal habits that need to be changed or perform some outreach to other people in need. Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are obligatory days of universal fasting and abstinence. **Fasting** allows a person to eat one full meal a day and is mandatory for everyone over 18 and not over 60. You can take two smaller meals or snacks, which do not equal one full meal. **Abstinence** (from meat) is required of everyone who is 14 or over. Drinking ordinary liquids does not break the fast.



The ashes used on 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

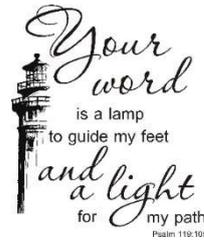
ashes," Nm 19:9-10, 17-18). They also symbolize death to remind us of our mortality. When we are signed with ashes, we hear, "*Remember! You are dust and to dust you shall return*" or "*Turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel.*" Ashes remind us of the Day of Judgment when we stand before God: To prepare well for that day, we've got to **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 profound need for the conversion of our lives during this season of repentance and renewal.

FAMILY FAST DAY

Friday 3 March

Syria/Turkey Earthquake:

CAFOD is responding with support in the provision of food, water, shelter, medical assistance and winter kits for survivors. Your Family Fast Day donations makes a quick response like that possible when disaster strikes. Please also pray for the afflicted in those areas.



LENT (begins on Ash Wednesday) MASS READINGS. All the readings for the Masses of Lent, with a short commentary by Fr Adrian Graffy, can be found on www.whatgoodnews.org Click on 'Scripture Readings' (at the top) and then 'Lent Readings' (in the drop-down).

RETREAT DAY

The Secular Franciscans of the London area are holding a Retreat Day on Saturday 25th February in St Francis' Hall, Stratford. All parishioners are welcome to take part. The Retreat begins with the usual Saturday Mass in St Francis' Church at 10:00 am, followed by a period of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. There will be opportunity for Confession at this time. Please bring a packed lunch. Drinks will be available.

The Retreat will end at 4:00 pm.

VACANCY:

SVP Membership Support Officer (MSO). Please contact lancep@svp.org.uk for more information.

Brentwood Cathedral Lent Lecture, "The pain, passion and privilege of supporting Christians who are suffering persecution" to be given by Baroness Caroline Cox at Brentwood Cathedral on Wednesday 1st March at 7.00 p.m. Free Entry. No need to book. All welcome.

We are looking for someone to do a bit of cooking for the three Friars at St Francis. It could, if wanted, be combined with some cleaning. Speak to one of the Friars or phone the Parish Office.

Grove Crescent Rd, Stratford, E15 1BJ

Masses

Monday to Friday 12:15. Tuesday, after Mass, St Anthony Novena.

Saturday: Morning Prayer: 9:40am Mass 10am followed by Holy Hour Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament until 11:30am.

Confession: 10:30am — 11:30am & 5pm — 5:45pm

Sunday: 6pm Saturday, 9am, 10:15am, 12 noon & 4:30pm (Ukrainian).

Fr. Patrick Lonsdale, OFM (Guardian)

Fr Michael O'Grady, OFM (Parish Priest)

Fr Brian McGrath, OFM

Address: The Friary, 160 The Grove, Stratford, E15 1NS.

Parish Office: Monday to Friday 9:30am - 3pm

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