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11th February 2024

6th SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

MASS TIMES & INTENTIONS

Sat 10 Feb	5.30 pm	St George's	People of the Parish
Sun 11 Feb	9.30 am	St George's	Joseph Uranie
	11.15 am	Holy Spirit	Alan Mullarkey RIP
Mon 12 Feb	9.30 am	St George's	In thanksgiving, Guy Dussroth
	6.00 pm	Holy Spirit	Vigil Mass, Fr Peter Peterken RIP
Tue 13 Feb	9.30 am	St George's	Eucharistic Service
Wed 14 Feb	9.30 am	St George's	Veronica & Gerry Gannon RP
	7.00 pm	Holy Spirit	Private intention
Thu 15 Feb	9.30 am	St George's	Donor's intention for good health PG
Fri 16 Feb	9.30 am	St George's	Donor's intention, St Anthony
Sat 17 Feb	9.30 am	St George's	Action of grace for health and strength (E. Uranie)
	5.30 pm	St George's	Toryusen Family, deceased
Sun 18 Feb	9.30 am	St George's	People of the Parish
	11.15 am	Holy Spirit	Fr Peter Peterken RIP

GOSPEL REFLECTION

Leprosy was one of the most repugnant and most feared disease of ancient times. In its most virulent form it was considered so serious that the rabbis regarded the healing of leprosy to be as difficult as raising the dead.

However, the term 'leprosy' was used in the Old Testament to denote a broader range of skin diseases, some of which were curable: and so the law stipulated conditions to be fulfilled if the disease was to be recognised as cured. Perhaps the worst effect of leprosy was that people suffering from any of the diseases covered by the term were excluded from society. They were forbidden to enter a dwelling, and if anyone approached they had to cry "Unclean, unclean!" (Lev. 13:45-46)

And so in today's Gospel we see Jesus approached by a person who is normally denied any contact with healthy people. Those surrounding Jesus must have shied away from the sick man, fearful of contamination. But Jesus, with a word and a touch, heals him. How did he react to the man's presence? Some ancient manuscripts, rather than saying that Jesus was 'moved with pity' (v.41), read that he was 'moved with anger': commentators reflect that this reading may portray Jesus' anger against the power of evil seen as present in the illness.

Nevertheless, he is obedient to the law in complying with the regulations surrounding the proof of a cure, and so he tells the man to go to the priest and make the stipulated offering. Yet Jesus was there for the leper as he was for others despised by society. As we try to follow Jesus' way we ask ourselves who are the outcasts today?

St Francis of Assisi embraced a leper, kissing his wounds. Reflecting on this he said: "What before seemed bitter was changed into sweetness of soul and body." *'Heal my wounds, O Lord, cleanse me and I will be clean: wash me and I will be whiter than snow.'*

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION 2024

Parent Meeting, Sunday, 25th February, after Sunday morning Mass at St George's Church. For further information, please speak to Canon Alan Burbidge or Mrs McNamara or email: sacramentsstgeorgesrcderby@gmail.com

FOR Fr. PETER PETERKEN: The Book of Condolences and Memories for Fr Peter has been written in by parishioners at Holy Spirit church and is now available for St George's parishioners to write in their thoughts. It is at the covered way at the back of St George's for this weekend.

Fr. PETER PETERKEN FUNERAL DETAILS:

Reception into Holy Spirit Church for Mass 6 pm Monday, 12th February. Requiem Mass at 11.30 am on Tuesday, 13th February, at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Mickleover.

CONFESSIONS: SATURDAY ONLY: 10:15 – 10:45

ADORATION before the Blessed Sacrament daily before the 9.30 am Mass and then other times as announced.

A RECENT DEATH: Please pray for William Thomas Byrne of Johnson Avenue, Allenton, who has died recently. He was a regular parishioner at Holy Spirit and will be sadly missed by family and friends. Requiem Mass will take place on Friday, 1st March, at 9.30 am. Reception into St George's on Thursday, 29th February at 4.30 pm. *Eternal rest grant unto him O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace. Amen.*

Dying to Self

Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand, touched him, and said to him, "I do will it. Be made clean." Mark 1:41

On Ash Wednesday morning last year, I was in Putignano, Italy, looking for Mass. I found an open church with people sitting inside. I joined them. A man started lighting the altar candles. Mas must begin soon, I thought. But then what? Why is he lighting the paschal candle?

Well, then. Here come the men in black suits and white gloves. And a coffin. Obviously (now), not an Ash Wednesday Mass after all. I offered some prayers for the faithful departed and departed myself.

Lent is beginning in just a few days, and we might be preparing. Accidentally sitting in on a funeral was perhaps not the worst way to start off Lent, a season of dying to self. In today's Gospel, a leper asked Jesus to cleanse him if he was willing. Of course Jesus was, and of course he is. The cleansing will change us and require letting go. That may be a sort of death but one that will give me reason not for tears but joy. *Jesus, cleanse me. Amy Welborn*

ASH WEDNESDAY, the beginning of Lent, on Wednesday, 14th February. There will be blessing and distribution of ashes at the 9.30 am Mass at St George's and also at Mass at Holy Spirit in the evening at 7 pm.

May God bless us all as we begin our preparations of prayer and penance for the great feast of Easter, the death and resurrection of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

ASH WEDNESDAY REFLECTION

Return to the Lord

Even now, says the Lord, return to me with your whole heart, with fasting, and weeping, and mourning; for gracious and merciful is he, slow to anger, rich in kindness and relenting in punishment. Joel 2:12-13

It may seem more sacrificial, especially for children, to have Ash Wednesday, the day of fasting and penitence, falling on Valentine's Day. We grown-ups might also struggle just a bit with the coincidence. But maybe if we reverse it, reminding ourselves that this day of love falls on Ash Wednesday, we can start Lent with an apt reminder that, truly, love is our compass to chart our course through Lent. After all, the prophet Joel recounts that it is the Lord of Love who desires our whole hearts. Even now the Gracious and Merciful One is inviting our nearness, our closeness to him. Repentance is our turning away from sin and turning to the Lord. It is a deepening of love that we called to know while in relationship with this gracious Lord. May we follow him this Lent with renewed love.

Pat Gohn