



This parish is served by the Spiritans

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT YEAR A Mass Book A Vol 1 page 151

MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR LENT 2023

Lenten Penance and the Synodal Journey.

Dear brothers and sisters! The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke all recount the episode of the Transfiguration of Jesus. There we see the Lord's response to the failure of his disciples to understand him. Shortly before, there had been a real clash between the Master and Simon Peter, who, after professing his faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, rejected his prediction of the passion and the cross. Jesus had firmly rebuked him: "Get behind me, Satan! You are a scandal to me, because you do not think according to God, but according to men!" (Mt 16:23). Following this, "six days later, Jesus took with him Peter, James and John his brother and led them away to a high mountain" (Mt 17:1).

The Gospel of the Transfiguration is proclaimed every year on the Second Sunday of Lent. During this liturgical season, the Lord takes us with him to a place apart. While our ordinary commitments compel us to remain in our usual places and our often repetitive and sometimes boring routines, during Lent we are invited to ascend "a high mountain" in the company of Jesus and to live a particular experience of spiritual discipline – asceticism – as God's holy people.

Lenten penance is a commitment, sustained by grace, to overcoming our lack of faith and our resistance to following Jesus on the way of the cross. This is precisely what Peter and the other disciples needed to do. To deepen our knowledge of the Master, to fully understand and embrace the mystery of his salvation, accomplished in total self-giving inspired by love, we must allow ourselves to be taken aside by him and to detach ourselves from mediocrity and vanity. We need to set out on the journey, an uphill path that, like a mountain trek, requires effort, sacrifice and concentration. These requisites are also important for the synodal journey to which, as a Church, we are committed to making. We can benefit greatly from reflecting on the relationship between Lenten penance and the synodal experience.

In his "retreat" on Mount Tabor, Jesus takes with him three disciples, chosen to be witnesses of a unique event. He wants that experience of grace to be shared, not solitary, just as our whole life of faith is an experience that is shared. For it is in togetherness that we follow Jesus.



THE CHURCH IS OPEN

Tues-Fri 8.45am-4.00pm

Sat 10.00am-6.30pm

Sun 7.45am-12noon

THE SEASON OF LENT

SUNDAY MASS

Sat 25th February

Vigil Mass 5.30pm

Int People of the parish

Sunday 26th February

8.30am

10.15am

WEEKDAY MASS

Tuesday 28th February

9.30am Int. Barbara

Driscoll 1st Anniversary

Wednesday 1st March

Saint David, Bishop

Patron of Wales, Feast.

9.30am

Thursday 2nd March

9.30am

Friday 3rd March

9.30am

7.30pm Stations of the Cross

CONFESSIONS

Tues-Fri 8.40 -9.20am

Sat 4.30-5.20pm

or by appointment

PARISH OFFICE HOURS: TUES, THURS, FRI 10.00am-2.00pm - Tel 01474705361

Parish Priest: Fr Alphonsus Beni CSSp

Email: alphonsusbeni@rcaos.org.uk (**Day off: Mon**)

PLEASE CALL OR EMAIL THE PRIEST

DIRECTLY FOR AN APPOINTMENT

Tel: 07500262446

Parish Secretary: Jane Pemberton

Parish Council Chair: Chris Pieroni

Email: hartleypcc@rcaos.org.uk

Safeguarding representative: Judith Stephens

Email: hartleysg2safeguard@rcaos.org.uk

Together too, as a pilgrim Church in time, we experience the liturgical year and Lent within it, walking alongside those whom the Lord has placed among us as fellow travellers.

Like the ascent of Jesus and the disciples to Mount Tabor, we can say that our Lenten journey is “synodal”, since we make it together along the same path, as disciples of the one Master. For we know that Jesus is himself the Way, and therefore, both in the liturgical journey and in the journey of the Synod, the Church does nothing other than enter ever more deeply and fully into the mystery of Christ the Saviour. And so we come to its culmination. The Gospel relates that Jesus “was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light” (Mt 17:2).

This is the “summit”, the goal of the journey. At the end of their ascent, as they stand on the mountain heights with Jesus, the three disciples are given the grace of seeing him in his glory, resplendent in supernatural light. That light did not come from without but radiated from the Lord himself. The divine beauty of this vision was incomparably greater than all the efforts the disciples had made in the ascent of Tabor. During any strenuous mountain trek, we must keep our eyes firmly fixed on the path; yet the panorama that opens up at the end amazes us and rewards us by its grandeur.

So too, the synodal process may often seem arduous, and at times we may become discouraged. Yet what awaits us at the end is undoubtedly something wondrous and amazing, which will help us to understand better God’s will and our mission in the service of his kingdom. The disciples’ experience on Mount Tabor was further enriched when, alongside the transfigured Jesus, Moses and Elijah appeared, signifying respectively the Law and the Prophets (cf. Mt 17:3).

The newness of Christ is at the same time the fulfilment of the ancient covenant and promises; it is inseparable from God’s history with his people and discloses its deeper meaning. In a similar way, the synodal journey is rooted in the Church’s tradition and at the same time open to newness.

Tradition is a source of inspiration for seeking new paths and for avoiding the opposed temptations of immobility and improvised experimentation.

The Lenten journey of penance and the journey of the Synod alike have as their goal a transfiguration, both personal and ecclesial. A transformation that, in both cases, has its model in the Transfiguration of Jesus and is achieved by the grace of his paschal mystery.

So that this transfiguration may become a reality in us this year, I would like to propose two “paths” to follow in order to ascend the mountain together with Jesus and, with him, to attain the goal. The first path has to do with the command that God the Father addresses to the disciples on Mount Tabor as they contemplate Jesus transfigured. The voice from the cloud says: “Listen to him” (Mt 17:5). The first proposal, then, is very clear: we need to listen to Jesus. Lent is a time of grace to the extent that we listen to him as he speaks to us.

And how does he speak to us? First, in the word of God, which the Church offers us in the liturgy. May that word not fall on deaf ears; if we cannot always attend Mass, let us study its daily biblical readings, even with the help of the internet. In addition to the Scriptures, the Lord speaks to us through our brothers and sisters, especially in the faces and the stories of those who are in need.

Let me say something else, which is quite important for the synodal process: listening to Christ often takes place in listening to our brothers and sisters in the Church. Such mutual listening in some phases is the primary goal, but it remains always indispensable in the method and style of a synodal Church. On hearing the Father’s voice, the disciples “fell prostrate and were very much afraid. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, ‘Rise, and do not be afraid.’ And when the disciples raised their eyes, they saw no one else but Jesus alone” (Mt 17:6-8).

Here is the second proposal for this Lent: do not take refuge in a religiosity made up of extraordinary events and dramatic experiences, out of fear of facing reality and its daily struggles, its hardships and contradictions. The light that Jesus shows the disciples is an anticipation of Easter glory, and that must be the goal of our own journey, as we follow “him alone”. Lent leads to Easter: the “retreat” is not an end in itself, but a means of preparing us to experience the Lord’s passion and cross with faith, hope and love, and thus to arrive at the resurrection.

Also, on the synodal journey, when God gives us the grace of certain powerful experiences of communion, we should not imagine that we have arrived – for there too, the Lord repeats to us: “Rise, and do not be afraid”. Let us go down, then, to the plain, and may the grace we have experienced strengthen us to be “artisans of synodality” in the ordinary life of our communities.

Dear brothers and sisters may the Holy Spirit inspire and sustain us this Lent in our ascent with Jesus, so that we may experience his divine splendour and thus, confirmed in faith, persevere in our journey together with him, glory of his people and light of the nations.

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 25 January, Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul

FRANCIS

PARISH NOTICES

PRAYING THE STATIONS OF THE CROSS IN LENT

On Friday 3rd March at 7.30pm, in the church and on livestream. Please join us in person or online.

ANNUAL WORLD DAY OF PRAYER Friday 3rd March 10.30am in Saint Francis de Sales Church. The service will be followed by refreshments in the Meeting Room. All are warmly invited. Further details from Carol carolwilton0@gmail.com

PARISH BARN DANCE CEILIDH ON SATURDAY 4th MARCH 2023, with live music from the Aqueducts

All Saints Church Centre, Ash Rd, Hartley, DA38DB from 7.30pm-10.30pm. Bring your family and friends. For tickets & further information please contact Kate 0785431948 or Anna 07703475720.

ST FRANCIS DE SALES 200 CLUB

Membership for the 200 club is open. To become a member, you will find information and forms in the porch area of the church or on the parish website. Please speak to Tina Shirley or Kate Whittaker for assistance. **Our February Draw will take place on Sunday 26th February, after the 8.30am Mass.**

CATECHETICAL PROGRAMMES

Parishioners are asked to first check the **SACRAMENTS** section on the parish website for general information on the programmes. Please speak with Fr Alphonsus for any further advice. Sacramental programmes for school-aged children

are lead by the parish. **Families wishing to enrol adults or children for Sacramental programmes must be registered parishioners, attending Mass.**

BAPTISM FOR BABIES AND INFANTS

Parents of infants and those seeking Baptism, please attend weekend Mass and speak with Fr. Alphonsus afterwards to register for the Baptism course.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY – FOR CHILDREN IN YR TO Y2

On **Sunday 26th February**. Please bring your child into the Meeting Room before 10.15am Mass begins

RECEIVING COMMUNION

Any adult who does not receive Communion, please do speak with Fr Alphonsus for guidance.

RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) 2023.

Please pray for our 6 parishioners who will be attending the Rite of Election at St. George's Cathedral, Southwark this weekend.

DIOCESAN NOTICES

CLERGY SUPPORT FUND SECOND COLLECTION

The Clergy Support Fund of the Archdiocese of Southwark provides care for priests in their old age and retirement, and in their time of ill health. A gift to this worthy fund will ensure a dignified retirement for our priests, after they have dedicated a lifetime of service to Christ, His Church and His People.

In 2022, the Clergy Support Fund provided care to 73 retired priests, at a cost of £1.33 million. With the number of priests over the age of 65 steadily increasing, so too will the financial obligation to the Archdiocese. You may make your gift as follows:

- **Donate Online:** <https://rcaos.org.uk/donate/csf>
- **Use QR Code (below or by the card machine)**
- **Telephone Mon-Fri 9am-5pm: 0207 960 2504**
- **Cash/Cheque – please use the Clergy Support Fund envelope you have been given/at the back of church**



Please be generous today with a gift to the Clergy Support Fund and continue to keep our priests in your prayers.

Thank you!

ARCHDIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK LENT RETREAT 2023 - 'RENEWED IN HOPE'

Make some space to develop your relationship with God this Lent. Sign up for the Diocesan Lent Retreat “Renewed in Hope”. You will receive a weekly email with links to a 20-minute video in which Archbishop

John will introduce the theme and the reading, along with materials to use in your own prayer and reflection. Just sign up at <http://eepurl.com/hVT7Dv>

CAFOD FAMILY FAST DAY APPEAL 5th MARCH 2023

This Lent, your donations to CAFOD's Family Fast Day (Fri 3rd March) Appeal will help families fighting the climate crisis and ensure that our Church network can quickly respond to emergencies.

Please return the envelope provided on Sunday 5th March for our 2nd Collection or may donate directly via cafod.org.uk/give

If you'd be interested in some fundraising this Lent, you will find lots of ideas by clicking below:

<https://cafod.org.uk/Fundraise/Parish-fundraising>

PARISH GROUP MEETINGS

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP

We have a small, friendly group whose members can visit to chat or just to lend a listening ear. Please speak to Fr. Alphonsus and he will put you in touch with us. Meetings/visits are held in strict confidence.

YOUTH GROUP

Meetings take place in the meeting room. Contact: Laura Bourne through the parish office.

ADULT CHOIR

Thursdays at 7:30pm in the church. New members are welcome. Contact: Yvonne at yhegarty@talktalk.net

ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY (SVP)

Contact us confidentially via the parish office.

KNIGHTS OF ST. COLUMBA

Third Wednesday each month at 7:00pm in the church meeting room. New members welcome.

Contact: William Rons williamrons@hotmail.com

CATHOLIC WELCOME CIRCLE (CWC)

2nd Wednesday of the month in the church meeting room at 2:00pm unless otherwise stated. Open invitation, everyone is welcome. Contact: Margaret Walsh. **Our Next meeting will be on Wednesday 8th March 2023, please join us.**

CATENIANS (Meopham Circle)

First Wednesday each month at 7.30pm at Hartley Country Club. Contact: Les Bober, Membership Officer 07811407386 or Steve Lewis, Secretary, 07305 360305

OFFERTORY COLLECTION 19th FEBRUARY 2023

Envelopes: £43.00 Loose Plate: £25.00

Standing Order: £172.50 Contactless: £10.00

2nd Collection 19th February: £69.20

Thankyou all for your support to the parish

Our 2nd Collection this weekend, 26th February:

ARCHDIOCESE CLERGY SUPPORT FUND

PLEASE READ THE NOTICE IN THE NEWSLETTER

THATCH FUND

Our funding stands at £36,546.02 of the £45,000.00 Target to reach by the end of 2023.

You may deposit your £1 in one of the Thatch Fund Boxes at the back of the church OR set up a £4 monthly/ £52 annual standing order at:

Nat West RCAS Hartley Acc 34363181 Sort Code 60-06-33. If you are a tax payer using the parish Gift Aid scheme, *please* note your GA number to your donation. **Or** donate via our *JustGiving* page www.justgiving.com/St-Francis-de-Sales-Hartley

'PLANNED GIVING' and GIFT-AIDED DONATIONS

The parish relies on contributions to maintain the church building and presbytery, supporting the priest in his ministry which is the Church's Mission.

If you have not already, please consider setting up a Monthly Bank Standing Order. This is most helpful to the parish for budgeting and planning projects for the future – it is non-binding and you may cancel at any time.

Other ways to contribute are: (i) Weekly Gift Aid Envelopes (ii) Use the Contactless Machine in the church (iii) Cash or Cheque payable to RCAS Hartley (iv) One-off Donation envelopes (v) Online transactions to Nat West Bank, Account: RCAS Hartley. Acc 34143580 sort code: 60-06-33 If you are a taxpayer, all donations can be Gift-Aided at no cost to you by joining the Gift Aid Scheme– for every £1 you contribute, an extra 25p can be claimed back for the parish.

Bank Standing-Order and Parish Gift-Aid Scheme information can be found on the parish website www.stfrancisdesales.org.uk Hard copies are on the shelf in the porch. Thankyou

For a newsletter emailed weekly, or to suggest articles/additions, contact the parish secretary: hartley@rcaos.org.uk. **Newsletter items received after 11:00am Thursday may not be included that week.**

Editor reserves the right to edit articles. A parish of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Southwark.

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