

DIARY for WEEK BEGINNING 14th MARCH 2010

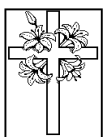
✠ FOURTH SUNDAY of LENT (C) ✠

Sun 14	Saturday	6.30pm	✠ Vigil Mass: Intention of Lee Family
	Sunday	9.30am	✠ Mass: Pro Populo
		11.00am	✠ Mass: Angiolina Fantetti RIP
Mon 15	Feria	9.45am	<i>Morning Prayer</i>
		10.00am	✠ Mass: James Driscoll RIP
Tue 16	Feria	9.45am	<i>Morning Prayer</i>
		10.00am	✠ Mass: Peter Gunthorpe RIP
Wed 17	St Patrick	9.45am	<i>Morning Prayer</i>
		10.00am	✠ Mass: Seamus McCullough
Thurs 18	Feria	7.00am	✠ Mass: Intention of Weller Family
Fri 19	St Joseph	9.45am	<i>Morning Prayer</i>
		10.00am	✠ Mass: Edna Nelson RIP
		7.30pm	<i>Stations of the Cross</i>
Sat 20	Feria	10.00am	✠ Mass: Laura Streatfield
		10.30am	<i>Confessions and Exposition</i>

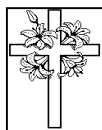
✠ FIFTH SUNDAY of LENT (C) ✠

Sun 21	Saturday	6.30pm	✠ Vigil Mass: Rocco Migliozi RIP
	Sunday	9.30am	✠ Mass: John Saunders RIP
		11.00am	✠ Mass: Pro Populo
		4.00 pm	✠ Mass: For the Malayalam Community

Please pray for the following, whose anniversaries occur this week:



Thomas Smale, Francis Brincat, Bernice Flannery,
James Quirke, Charles Lay, Benjamita Rebello,
Rosaria Formosa, John O'Neill, John Harte,
Darrell Fransz and Mary Hanna.



*May their souls and the souls of all the ✠ faithful departed
through the mercy of God rest in peace.*

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14th March 2010

✠ FOURTH SUNDAY of LENT (C) ✠



WORD OF GOD

It was only right that we should celebrate and rejoice, because your brother here was dead and has come to life; he was lost and is found.

(Luke 15:32)

WORD FOR TODAY

We take it for granted that God will forgive us if we ask for pardon. We sometimes find it harder for other people to be forgiven and we think that they are getting off lightly. But do we ever think of "rejoicing" in the fact of forgiveness? Or is it just a given thing?

DREAM HUSBAND? (19th March)

Mary could be certain that her child was from God, but Joseph only had to believe it because of what he was told in a dream. And when things started to go from bad to worse, Joseph must have had his doubts that God really was in control. After all, he was only human.

But Joseph was a man of faith, a just, hardworking and honest man. He was Jesus' role model as he grew up. And it is that silent presence that Pope Benedict draws our attention to on the feast of St Joseph:

"The silence of Saint Joseph is given a special emphasis. His silence is steeped in contemplation of the mystery of God in an attitude of total availability to divine desires. It is a silence thanks to which Joseph, in unison with Mary, watches over the Word of God, known through the Sacred Scriptures, continuously comparing it with the events of the life of Jesus; a silence woven of constant prayer, a prayer of blessing of the Lord, of the adoration of his holy will and of unreserved entrustment to his providence. It is no exaggeration to think that it was precisely from his "father" Joseph that Jesus learned -- on the human level -- that steadfast interiority which is a presupposition of authentic justice.... Let us allow ourselves to be "filled" with Saint Joseph's silence, in a world that is often too noisy, that encourages neither recollection nor listening to God's voice."



AROUND the PARISH

FIRST HOLY COMMUNIONS Please keep in your prayers our children who made their First Confessions last week.

STATIONS of the CROSS take place every Friday throughout Lent at 7.30pm. We also expose the Blessed Sacrament on Saturdays after the morning Mass for the duration of Confessions. **PARISH LENT VIGIL** The Medway Knights of St Columba will be leading our vigil service on Friday 26th March from 7.30 to 9.30pm. The theme will be "The Year of the Priest". Today is Laetare, Mid-Lent and Mothering Sunday. The organ and flowers are permitted today. ✕ Times and details of our Holy Week and Easter services will be available next week.

TABLE SALE We will again be holding a table sale after both Sunday Masses on 28th March. The proceeds all go to our Building Fund.

AROUND the DIOCESE and BEYOND

FROM the MOUTH of PATRICK (17th March) There's a lot of mythology and glitz surrounding St Patrick. People from all over the world use him as an excuse to celebrate after the dark days of winter. Others embellish his story and claim all sorts of things for him. But did you know that we actually have some original words from his very lips? Our 5th century saint lived in what is now England or Wales and of his life at that time he says: "I did not, indeed, know the true God." As a teenager he was captured by pirates and taken to Ireland and Patrick believed this was a punishment for his lack of belief. He was forced to look after pigs for six years and of this time he writes: "I used to stay out in the forests and on the mountain and I would wake up before daylight to pray in the snow, in icy coldness, in rain, and I used to feel neither ill nor any slothfulness, because, as I now see, the Spirit was burning in

me at that time." Patrick managed to stow away on a boat and escape back to England where he became a priest. But he always wanted to return to Ireland. He writes: "I seemed to hear the voice of those who were beside the forest of Foclut which is near the western sea, and they were crying as if with one voice: 'We beg you, holy youth, that you shall come and shall walk again among us.'" Working in Ireland, spreading the Christian faith, Patrick naturally felt homesick for his friends and family. He says: "How I would have loved to go to my country and my parents, and also to Gaul in order to visit the brethren and to see the face of the saints of my Lord! God knows how much I much desired it! But I am bound by the Spirit." Things weren't always plain sailing. His fellow clergy accused him of wanting to make himself famous. This is how he reacted: "I ought unceasingly to give thanks to God who often pardoned my folly and my carelessness, and on more than one occasion spared his great wrath on me, who was chosen to be his helper and who was slow to do as was shown me and as the Spirit suggested." Of course, there's much more about Patrick from his own lips, but to find out about it you'll need to read his book, called the "Confessio".

VIVALDI'S GLORIA will be performed by the choirs and orchestra of the Rochester Grammar School with the Cantium Singers on Saturday 20th March at 7.30 at St Mark's Church in Gillingham High Street. Tickets are £5 each. See the notice in the porch.

FROM BISHOP JOHN In a recent communication to the clergy from Bishop John Hine, Diocesan Administrator, Bishop John wrote as follows: 'As you know our Chrism Mass this year is scheduled for the Wednesday in Holy Week and will be a celebration of

priesthood, arising from our Holy Father's initiative about the 'year for the priest'. It will also be our opportunity to thank Archbishop Kevin for his leadership of our diocese and to make a presentation to him at the end of the Mass. All parish priests are asked to inform their people of this opportunity to express both our gratitude to him and our sadness that our Archbishop has not been able to continue.' This Sunday, therefore, there is a second collection for Archbishop Kevin. Cheques can be made payable to the 'Archdiocese of Southwark'.

AYLESFORD RETREAT See the notice about a Day Retreat at the Friars on Saturday 27th March.

A DAY WITH MARY on Saturday 27th March at St Joseph's, London SE18. Details on the noticeboard.

DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE to LOURDES See the poster giving details of this year's pilgrimage from 20th-27th August.

FAITH IN FOCUS: PARTY MOOD When the prodigal son came home they held a party to celebrate the fact that he was part of the fold once more. But there was an empty seat at the party; the older brother refused to come and take part. The liturgy, and especially the Mass, is the continuation of that party and festivity. At the eucharist we celebrate the fact that in Jesus Christ we have been redeemed and forgiven, that we are already experiencing a share in the eternal life that God has promised us and that one day we will enjoy seeing God face to face in the never-ending celebration of bliss and happiness in heaven. In the meantime we eat and drink the body and blood of Jesus Christ that was given up and shed for us so that sins may be forgiven. As you sit in your pew in church, are there any empty seats? It would be surprising if there weren't! Most churches struggle to fill

their seats except at the great feasts of the year. Who belongs in those seats? It's tempting to say that they are older brothers' seats, people who have had some sort of gripe with the church and have decided to give Sunday worship a wide berth. To an extent this is true. We are a fallible group of people and we're quite capable of failing each other at crucial times, and of even putting off people to the extent that they no longer darken our doors. What would happen if we reached out to family and neighbours, to friends who feel that the Church has failed them? Is it worth taking the risk of inviting them to the feast, or should we just write them off as a dead loss? Would it shock us if they said yes? And what about the person who's sitting in your seat? Yes, you. Are you the life and soul of the party or are you something of a party-pooper? We never find out whether the father finally managed to get the older brother to enter into the spirit. He could have just gone and sat there with a long face. Just turning up isn't enough. Are you glad to be able to celebrate with your whole being, singing and praying, giving thanks for the forgiveness that God has lavished upon you through no merit of your own? Or should we put the fatted calf on the back burner?

ATTENDANCE We welcomed **317** people to Mass last weekend, and they gave **£594.04** in the collection. Parking for the football match gave a further **£102** - thank you to the stewards. We also received **£35** from the money collected for tea and coffee after Masses - our thanks to the ladies who organise this. Subs for the **50/50** club will be collected this weekend. ♦ This week we have our collection for Archbishop Kevin. Next week there will be a retiring collection to help cover the cost of flowers for the church for the Easter Triduum and beyond into Easter itself.