

The church is open every day from just before Midday and remains so until after the evening Mass. The **Saturday Holy Hour** is now streamed. It begins at 4.45pm leading into the 6pm Vigil Mass. A focus for some quiet prayer.

The annual **LENT FAST DAY** for the work of **CAFOD** is on Friday 26th February and a collection will be taken at the end of all Masses over the weekend 27th/28th. The parish CAFOD representative **Elizabeth Carey** had prepared an introduction to the theme of this year's fast day which will be found on the website: please read it and respond as generously as you can to help the poorest in our world.

The Funeral Mass for **Paul Sutherland** (a professed religious of the Order of Malta) which had been scheduled for this Tuesday has had to be delayed. The Funeral for **Doctor Martin Kazuka** takes place in Bromley on Friday. **RIP**

Under the Government's current legislation places of worship may remain open during this phase of lockdown but this concession has to be read in conjunction with the requirement that no unnecessary travelling should be attempted. Hopefully, we will be able to remain open, but we must be very careful in ensuring the safety of those who come into our building either for individual prayer or corporate devotion. Social distancing must be maintained and masks worn by everyone (except those clinically exempt). It is important that people do not gather to chat inside or outside church.

A prayer before a crucifix:

"Behold, O good and kind Jesus, I bow my knee before thee, and with all fervency of spirit pray and beseech thee to imprint on my heart a lively sense of faith, hope and charity, true repentance for my sins and a most steadfast purpose of amendment: while with deep affection and sorrow of heart I ponder in my mind and inwardly contemplate thy five most holy wounds, having before my eyes that saying which David the prophet put ready into thy mouth concerning thyself, O good Jesus: "they pierced my hands and my feet; I may tell all my bones".

If you can help the parish either by a one-off donation or by a commitment to regular giving, it would be greatly appreciated. More information from the parish office, the website, or use the bank details set out below:-

HSBC 69 Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5EY

Sort code: 40-05-20 Account no: 91094394 WRCDDT Spanish Place

St James's Roman Catholic Church - Spanish Place -

22 George St, London W1U 3QY

**FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT
21st February 2021**



Our Youtube link for any streamed event is

<https://www.youtube.com/c/St.JamessSpanishPlace>

Readings (and other material) can be found at www.universalis.com

TODAY'S LITURGY

Genesis 9:8-15

*There shall be no flood
to destroy the earth again*

**Your ways, Lord,
are faithfulness and love
for those who keep your covenant.**

1 Peter 3:18-22

*The water on which the Ark floated is
a type of the baptism which saves you now*

St Mark 1:12-15

*Jesus was tempted by Satan,
and the angels looked after him*

**Music
at 10.30am**

Missa
Emendemus in melius
Palestrina

Ne irascaris *Byrd*
Civitas sancti tui *Byrd*

Prelude and Fugue
in C minor
(BWV 546) *Bach*

The Reverend Christopher G. Colven (Rector)

The Reverend Canon Stuart Wilson

The Reverend Mark Elliott Smith (in residence)

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The Rector writes

Temptation can be defined as *“that which incites us to sin”* The annual Lenten season which leads us into the celebration of Holy Week and Easter commemorates the long period Jesus spent in the Judean wilderness before beginning his three years of public ministry. Each of the three Gospel writers who record these forty days and forty nights speak of them as a time of temptation. *“Then Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by Satan”* (Matthew 4:1). Saint Mark’s witness is even more compelling: *“the Spirit drove him out into the wilderness”* where he was *“with the wild beasts and the angels looked after him”*. For Saint Luke, Jesus was *“led by Spirit”* for the whole of the desert experience during which *“he ate nothing”*. Clearly this long period of retreat was central to Jesus’s understanding of himself and his mission and the Scriptural witness is to it being a very difficult time when varying options presented themselves with disturbing force.

Over the next weeks, we will be reflecting on the temptations which were put before Jesus but *“the physical setting of the fast and temptation deserves comment. The desert or wilderness of Judaea is an awesome place. It is very hilly, rocky and arid. Lying between the Judean Hills and the Jordan Valley, it extends for approximately 75 miles north and south and for about 10 miles east and west. It is dangerous for a solitary traveller to leave the road and walk into the desert. There are steep cliffs, and the terrain is extremely rugged. It is easy to sprain or break an ankle and be unable to return. Some, to be sure, learn their way around the desert, and it has served as a haven for the persecuted and also for thieves, as in the Parable of the Good Samaritan”* (E Sanders). This harsh environment provides a fitting context for the struggle during which everything Jesus had come to understand of himself through the *“hidden years”* of his upbringing in Nazareth were to be tested. When the disciples of John the Baptist ask *“are you the one who is to come, or have we got to wait for another?”* they encapsulate the central theme of Christ’s self-questioning in the desert – which will return to hit him with even more devastating force in the final Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane.

The abiding and impenetrable mystery of the Jesus we acknowledge as *“True God from True God”* who, at the same time, shares our humanity in its fullness, is revealed in the starkest of ways through the temptation in the wilderness. The Letter to the Hebrews explains the significance of what is happening: *“it is not as if we had a high priest who was incapable of feeling our weaknesses with us; we have one who has been tempted in every way that we are, though he is without sin”* (4:15). In writing to the Corinthians, Saint Paul goes further: *“God made the sinless one into sin, so that in him we might become the goodness of God”* (2.5:21). If Christ

endures the de-humanising consequences of sin in order to show the rest of us that there is a way through even the most complex of our choices (which would seem to be the understanding of the New Testament writers) then we must never underestimate the burden of sin imposed on him which Christ carried as his own. *“Through his wounds you have been healed”*, declares Saint Peter, but those wounds, not just physical, but emotional, psychological and spiritual, mark the humanity of Christ into eternity. He understands who we are because the force of evil has touched every part of his being – he knows what it is to be *“incited”* to sin.

The sinlessness of Christ is part of the givenness of our faith (God could never act against his own nature) - we believe that in every instance he did make the right choice – but the cost of harmonising his human will with that of his Father was, at times, excruciatingly hard and the temptation to do things his own way weighed on his heart and his conscience. Jesus’s decision-making was authentic and because he was utterly free of the inherited bias towards self which the rest of us share, it was all the more sensitive and acute. As he laid the foundations of the new Kingdom, Jesus was all too aware of the reconciliation which could only be achieved through his own humanity. Eternally begotten of the Father, the Son of Man lived within the limitations imposed by his incarnation and this meant that the force of evil was a devastating reality in his life. Because of who he was, the temptations which dogged Christ’s journey were all the more insidious and all the more painful.

Christopher Colven

NOTICES

Details of our parish **Lent programme** are available on separate sheets. The first of **Canon Wilson’s** reflections on **Saint Joseph** will be streamed from 6.45pm this Tuesday (and will be preceded by a short organ recital). **Stations of the Cross** will be streamed on Fridays after the 6pm Mass.

At present, the confessionals in church are not being used for the **Sacrament of Reconciliation** but please feel free to ring at The Rectory door at any reasonable time and ask for a priest to hear your confession in the house parlour.

Mass is offered daily Monday to Friday at 12.30pm & 6pm. Masses on Saturday are at 10am and 6pm (vigil of Sunday). On Sundays there are public Masses at Midday, 4pm & 7pm. A Solemn Mass is streamed at 10,30 with the choir but this has, for the present, to be without a congregation. Both the 8am & 9am Sunday Masses are suspended – we hope to return to the normal pattern as soon as we can.