

### From the Rector...

If you've not yet booked your tickets for New Orleans' *Mardi Gras*, or for Venice's *Carnival*, you're probably too late by now! The names of those two bits of bacchanalian revelry, of course, both refer explicitly to the liturgical precipice we stand upon this morning, ready in a few days' time to dive deeply into Lent.

*Mardi Gras* is just the Frenchman's way of saying 'fat Tuesday'; the more sober and sedate English traditionally refer to the day as 'Shrove Tuesday.' The latter name refers to the custom of making one's confession on this day (to *shrive* is to hear confessions and grant absolution), whereas the adjective *fat* suggests that the object of the day is to eat as much as one can so as to store up some reservoirs before Lent begins the next day. (Our tradition of eating pancakes on this day is because making pancakes was a good way of using up the last of the lard in the pantry; the pancake races that are still run in some places were started by housewives feverishly trying to get the pancakes cooked whilst the church bell was already summoning worshippers.) *Carnival* comes from Latin roots meaning "farewell to meat." This name reminds us of the austerity with which Lent was traditionally observed, even down to fairly recent times.

Everyone has heard sermons about how Lent ought to involve "taking on" rather than "giving up." There is a measure of truth in this suggestion. But for people as materially well-off and pampered as we are what we need, I'm sure, is a season of abstinence, of fasting. A few days of over-indulgence beforehand may well contradict the spirit of the season they're meant to prepare us for; but a contemplation of how much we have, of how much we indulge ourselves most of the time, has to be salutary.

I do agree, though, with those who urge us not to approach Lent in a spirit of legalism, measuring out how much we are allowed as if for forty days we are enrolling in a spiritual version of Weight Watchers. The question for us ought to be not what we can be allowed, but what we need in order to supply our bodies' needs rather than to sate our digestive systems.

And besides meat and other kinds of fat there may be in our lives other kinds of superfluity we could profitably consider setting aside in this season, and, indeed, beyond it. We might like to consider giving churlish anger and intemperate speech a much-needed rest; we might well make a point of not indulging our penchants for vitriolic and sarcastic retorts, putting bridles on our tongues so that they will be our servants and not our masters.

Both Old Testament and New Testament assume that fasting is part of the mature spiritual life. But both testaments also know that fasting engaged in in the wrong manner can be spiritually deleterious. So you might like to contemplate these passages as we enter into Lent: Isaiah 58.1-12; Zechariah 7.5-14; Matthew 6.16-21; James 3.1-18

And finally, from the priest-poet of the Commonwealth and of the Restoration, Robert Herrick (1591-1674), here are some suggestions for keeping the coming forty days:

<i>Is this a fast, to keep The larder lean And clean From fat of veals and sheep?</i>	<i>No: 'tis a Fast to dole Thy sheaf of wheat And meat Unto the hungry soul.</i>
<i>Is it to quit the dish Of flesh, yet still To fill The platter high with fish?</i>	<i>It is to fast from strife And old debate, And hate; To circumcise thy life.</i>
<i>Is it to fast an hour, Or ragg'd to go, Or show A down-cast look and sour?</i>	<i>To show a heart grief-rent; To starve thy sin, Not bin; And that's to keep thy Lent.</i>

—Father David McConkey

## THE PARISH MESSENGER

### Sunday 19th February 2012

#### SUNDAY (19<sup>TH</sup>) - 7TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

S. Mark	10.30 am	Sung Mass
	12.30 pm	Holy Baptism
S. Saviour	9.00 am	Sung Mass
S. Luke	7.45 am	Low Mass
	10.30 am	Sung Mass

#### MONDAY (20<sup>TH</sup>) - FERIA

S. Mark	6.00 pm	Low Mass
---------	---------	----------

#### TUESDAY (21<sup>ST</sup>) - S. PETER DAMIAN

S. Aldhelm	10.45 am	Low Mass
S. Saviour	7.00 pm	Low Mass

#### WEDNESDAY (22<sup>ND</sup>) - ASH WEDNESDAY

S. Mark	7.45 am	Low Mass
	7.30 pm	Sung Mass
S. Saviour	9.30 am	Low Mass
S. Luke	9.30 am	Low Mass
S. Aldhelm	12 noon	Low Mass

#### THURSDAY (23<sup>RD</sup>) - FERIA

S. Mark	7.45 am	Low Mass
S. Luke	9.30 am	Low Mass

#### FRIDAY (24<sup>TH</sup>) - FERIA

S. Aldhelm	12 noon	Low Mass
King's Court	11.00 am	Low Mass

#### SATURDAY (25<sup>TH</sup>) - FERIA

S. Mark	9.30 am	Low Mass
---------	---------	----------

#### SUNDAY (26<sup>TH</sup>) - 1ST SUNDAY IN LENT

S. Mark	10.30 am	Sung Mass
S. Saviour	9.00 am	Sung Mass
S. Luke	7.45 am	Low Mass
	10.30 am	Sung Mass

PARISH NOTICES

**TODAY** The Rector is celebrant and preacher at the low mass at St Luke's and at the sung masses at St Mark's and at St Saviour's. Fr Andrew Cooper is celebrant and preacher at the sung mass at St Luke's.

**WORK CONTINUES** this week on the lighting of St Mark's. All the wiring in the church will be renewed as part of this exercise. The firm undertaking this work, Anthony Smith of Gloucester, will endeavour to keep disruptions to a minimum. We can look forward in a few weeks' time to a completely re-lighted church.

**PALM CROSSES** if you have not already done so, please return your palm cross to church as soon as possible, in order that ashes can be prepared for Ash Wednesday (*this Wednesday*).

**SHROVE TUESDAY** (*this Tuesday*) a **Children's Pancake Party** will be held at St Luke's beginning at 4 pm. All are cordially welcome to attend. A **Pancake social with quiz** will be held at St Saviour's at 7.30 pm. Come along and pit your wits against Sandy, the quizmaster.

**ASH WEDNESDAY MASSES**, each with the Imposition of Ashes for those who desire, will be offered at St Saviour's and at St Luke's at 9.30 am. A low mass will be offered at St Mark's at 7.45 am, and a sung mass for the entire parish will be offered at St Mark's at 7.30 pm. A low mass will also be offered in St Aldhelm's Chapel at 12 Noon.

**LENT LUNCHESES** will take place on Fridays during Lent, in St Aldhelm's Centre from 12.30 pm onwards. The first will take place *this* Friday. St Saviour's and St Luke's will host the lunch on 2nd March, and St Mark's will host on 30th March. Teams of helpers will be needed on each of these days. Please come every week, though, and enjoy a simple lunch. Profits from donations will be shared between Christian Aid and CAFOD. There will be a mass offered in St Aldhelm's Chapel each Friday of Lent at 12 Noon, beginning this Friday 24th February.

**TWO BIBLE STUDIES** will be offered for the parish during Lent. On Tuesday evenings at 7.30 pm in St Saviour's (beginning 6th March for four weeks) on the prophet Jeremiah. On Thursday afternoons at 3 pm in St Mark's (beginning 8th March for four weeks) on the prophet Hosea. All are welcome to either or both of these studies. No previous experience necessary. Bibles will be available, or you can bring one of your own.

**DEANERY SYNOD** meets Tuesday 28th February at 7.30 pm in St John's Church, Whitbourne Avenue, Park South. Parish deanery synod representatives, please take note!

**ELECTORAL ROLL REVISION:** Notices advertising the revision are posted in each of our churches. The Revision will take place from Sunday 4th March until Sunday 18th March. Following the Revision the Electoral Roll will be posted for two weeks prior to the APCM, which is to be held on Thursday 12th April. Existing members of the Roll need not reapply, but if you have changed address since last year please let us know. All persons who are baptised, are over 16, and are either a communicant member of the Church of England and live in the Parish, or don't live in the Parish but have habitually worshipped in the Parish for a period of six months, may apply. Forms are available from Julie Emmett, Evelyn Hart and John Bishop.

**ST MARK'S BELLRINGERS** rang a Quarter peal of 1260 Plain Bob Doubles in 44 minutes on 6th February, in recognition of the 60th Anniversary of the Accession of our Sovereign Lady, Queen Elizabeth II. The ringers were: 1. Christina Edwards, 2. Maureen Edwards, 3. Julie Miles, 4. Mark Edwards, 5. Simon Edwards, 6. Anthony Edwards. Conducted by: Simon Edwards. An Edwards family Quarter, plus a friend.

MOTHERS' UNION

**MASS** will take place at 9.30 am *this Wednesday*, Ash Wednesday, at St Saviour's. It will

be followed by a Wave of Prayer.

SWINDON FOODBANK

**SHOPPING LIST:** currently there is a need for long-life fruit juice, long-life milk and tinned tomatoes.

AROUND THE TOWN

**WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER** will take place on Friday 2nd March at 10 am, at Bath Road Methodist Church. The theme this year is 'Let Justice Prevail'. All are welcome—men, women and young people.

**A POPULAR MUSIC CONCERT** by Geoff Walters Choral Ensemble 'Encore', in aid of Willows Counselling Service, will take place on Friday 2nd March at 7.30 pm in St John's Church, Haydon Wick. Tickets cost £5.00 and are available from Jakki on 426650 or by email at admin@willowscounselling.org.uk.

PLEASE PRAY FOR...

**CRITICALLY ILL AND THOSE IN HOSPITAL:** Albert Bailey, Josie Ball, Rex Barnett, Christine Bean, Carol Blacklaws, Christopher Browne, Muriel Butler, Peter & Sue Davis, Ruth Day, Doreen, Jim Evenett, Sybil Joan Frostick, Fran Gilles, Edward Glass, Jane Keeton, Patricia Lawrence, Susannah Lock, Sheila Maslin, Riley Howard Nichols, Joan Raynes, Dick Slade, Pam Thompson and Doris Wild.

**LONG TERM SICK AND HOUSEBOUND:** Monica Axford, Elaine Baker, Lorraine Banister, Lyn Bishop, Barbara Blake, George Blake, Christopher Browne, Charlotte BurrIDGE, Kath Carter, Tamsin Davis, Shirley and David Driver, Pat Giles, Mary Greenslade, Pam Gunter, Evelyn Hart, Cecilie Hogden, Jean Holley, Diana Law, Cyril Legg, Betty Mitchell, Syd Povey, Alex Prosser, Gayle Royle, Kelvin & Geoffrey Rumming, Ruth, Joyce Sherman, Sam Slade, Dennis Smith, Eveline Steele-Davis, Margaret Stevenson, Barbara Taylor, Terry Venn-Adams and Clive Viner.

**THANKS:** Evelyn Hart would like to thank the members of St Saviour's for their kindness during her recent illness. It has been much appreciated.

**RECENTLY DEPARTED:** Sheila O'Reilly, Joyce Moss.

**YEARS' MIND:** [19] Sidney Burden, Stanley Whale (priest), Leslie Beddow (priest), Margaret Godsell; [20] Mary Rees, Jack Richards; [21] Dorothy Collins; [22] Allan Nicholls, Ernest Mulcock, Mary Pyper, Annie Burchell; [23] William Exton, Marjorie Bond, Ezra Walter Burton, Kenneth Daubney (priest); [24] Rose Homer, Mary Holliday, Elsie Lester, Gladys Poletti, Edith Annie Goddard, Norman Lambert (priest); [25] Emily Wright, Marjorie Mills, Eleanor Mary (Elma) Bristow, Hilda Morris.

**FLOWERS** are given to the greater glory of God and in loving memory of Kathleen Winslow (SM).

NEXT SUNDAY

1ST SUNDAY IN LENT

Genesis 9.8-15; Psalm 25; 1 Peter 3.18-22; Mark 1.12-15

SACRAMENTS

**HOLY BAPTISM:** Either in one of the sung masses or in a separate service once monthly at 12.30 pm. Contact the Parish Office for application form and scheduling.

**HOLY MATRIMONY:** Pat Mortimer coordinates wedding arrangements. Contact the Parish Office to book an appointment with her.

**CONFESSION:** Any of the Parish clergy will be happy to hear your confession or to help you prepare for your first confession, by appointment. Times for confession are announced near major holy days.