



parish newsletter

Second Sunday of Lent (Year B) | 28 February 2021

Reflecting on the Gospel



bringing someone into conformity with accepted protocols doesn't mean their heart and soul come with them.

Peter was a homeless man who lived in a very remote and rudimentary tent community. He was happy to make his daily trip to McDonald's and always welcomed a gift card or two so that he could buy some coffee and something to eat. A generous advocate worked to secure him an apartment in hopes of moving Peter out of his makeshift housing and into something safer. Peter finally got the grand tour of his new "digs," received his own key, remarked how wonderful the place was, closed the door behind him when they left and never returned. He preferred his tent. No matter how much things changed on the outside, Peter was happy where he was. A poignant lesson was learned that day.

How is your Lent going? By now you ought to have a sense of whether you're

really "into it" this year and something transformational is happening. For many, it's only the stuff on the outside that changes for a few weeks and then they return to business as usual. For others, there are some real inner changes happening that are deepening their relationships with God, others, self, and creation. If we are serious about moving to a new place and radiating with the presence of new life and joy, then we have to clear the way to listen for God's call. Then, there is God's request to change things up a bit and order our lives differently. After realising we have been called and given a mission, we have to trust that this is where we need to be. And then, after all of this hard work we are asked to act. The fruit that is revealed will indicate whether our journey is authentic. The brilliance of conversion will begin to shine on our faces as we contemplate the One to whom we are asked to listen.

A pregnant woman was walking in the store and met an old friend. Her friend exclaimed, "You are absolutely beaming!" The new life God placed in her

womb radiated throughout her body. It was brightly visible on her face and in her eyes. Transformation and change usually happen from the

inside out. It is very rare that simply imposing structure from the outside does any good. Yes, it is true that routines and habits can change when

things are done differently. But, for this change to last there has to be an interior renewal and metamorphosis as well. Simply regulating behaviour and

Everyday Stewardship

Tracey Earl Welliver, MTS

It seems to happen every year, like clockwork: we drag a bit, as we enter into the second week of Lent. On Ash Wednesday, we feel a bit like soldiers banging our shields, rushing into battle. "We're ready, God!" our hearts cry out. "Transform us through sacrifice! Your will be done!"

But by now, these Lenten resolutions are no longer novelties—they've joined the ranks of everyday inconveniences, which somehow are the hardest to bear. Because transformation, in real life, happens in inches, just as a battle is won slowly in the crash of one sword against another. It's not always a dramatic thing, to the naked eye. It's the perseverance in prayer despite weariness, or the continual denial of some pleasure even

though there's that nagging voice in our minds saying: go ahead, God doesn't really mind.

It's a week when we all need a shock to the system—and wouldn't you know it, this Sunday God gives us a double-whammy of dramatic sacrificial scenes. We picture Abraham, who also cried "Ready!" when God called, never imagining what He would ask: the surrender of his long-awaited son. We see Christ himself transfigured, as God shows us what He is ready to give up for love of us.

We must remain committed, persevering daily in acknowledging that everything belongs to God. What we sacrifice, we simply give back to Him.

If God is for us, who can be against us? Can we still reply, "Ready!" when we hear the call of God?



Live the Liturgy

Inspiration for the Week

How is your Lent going so far? In changing the circumstances and order of our lives a bit, perhaps we can hear God's voice more clearly and drink more deeply of graced moments we experience. Having God as a friend always involves several things. First, there is God's call. We become attuned to the echo of God's voice in the depth of our souls calling and beckoning us to listen. Second, there is a request. We begin to see that God asks us to do certain things, to order

our lives a particular way, and become more intentional in the choices we make. Third, there is trust. Do we trust this call and request? Trust commits us to the relationship and makes a claim on who we are. Finally, we are asked to act. We find ourselves acting, not in the way we used to, but in a transformed, more enlightened way. Things seem clearer and all that is around us shines with the brilliance of God's presence. God's call came through a cloud, "This is my beloved Son. Listen to him," This is the call and the request. Can we give God our trust and do as God asks?



Repent and believe the Good News.



First Reading

God put Abraham to the test. (Gn 22:1)

Psalm

I will walk in the presence of the Lord in the land of the living. (Ps 115)

Second Reading

If God is for us, who can be against us? (Rom 8:31)

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! From the bright cloud the Father's voice was heard: 'This is my Son, the Beloved, Listen to him.' Alleluia!

Gospel

"This is my beloved Son. Listen to him." (Mk 9:7)

Masses this Week

28	SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT	Gn 22:1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18/Ps 116:10, 15, 16-17, 18-19 [9]/Rom 8:31b-34/Mk 9:2-10
	10.30	Mass St Mary's People of the Parish
	17.00	Mass St Mary's Intentions of Sunderland SVP
1	St David, Patron of Wales	Dn 9:4b-10/Ps 79:8, 9 11 and 13 [cf. 103:10a]/Lk 6:36-38
	12.05	Mass St Mary's Thomas Norman (RIP)
2	Tuesday	Is 1:10, 16-20/Ps 50:8-9, 16bc-17, 21 and 23 [23b]/Mt 23:1-12
	12.05	Mass St Mary's Intentions of Rosemary Corbett
3	Wednesday	Jer 18:18-20/Ps 31:5-6, 14, 15-16 [17b]/Mt 20:17-28
	12.05	Mass St Mary's For Interview and Exams
4	Thursday St Casimir	Jer 17:5-10/Ps 1:1-2, 3, 4 and 6 [40:5a]/Lk 16:19-31
	12.05	Mass St Mary's Intentions of Sister M Scholastica
5	Friday	Gn 37:3-4, 12-13a, 17b-28a/Ps 105:16-17, 18-19, 20-21 [5a]/Mt 21:33-43, 45-46
	12.05	Mass St Mary's Brian Fletcher (RIP)
6	Saturday	Mi 7:14-15, 18-20/Ps 103:1-2, 3-4, 9-10, 11-12 [8a]/Lk 15:1-3, 11-32
	11.00	Mass St Mary's Sheila Ward (RIP)
	18:00	Vigil Mass St Cecilia's Ronnie & Les Mitchinson (RIP 1 st Anniv.)
7	THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT	Ex 20:1-17 or 20:1-3, 7-8, 12-17/Ps 19:8, 9, 10, 11 [Jn 6:68c]/1 Cor 1:22-25/Jn 2:13-25
	10.30	Mass St Mary's Intentions of Dave & Linda Gibson
	17.00	Mass St Mary's People of the Parish

MINISTRY TO THE SICK

Christopher



The victims of COVID-19

If you would like to be added to our prayer list, please email or call the parish office.



Questions for the Week

First Reading: God's request of Abraham to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac seems cruel from our modern perspective. Yet Abraham's obedience rendered divine blessings. Do you think you have such depth of faith?

Second Reading: Paul tries to reassure the Christians in Rome of God's divine providence in our lives. As we continue the Lenten journey, can you recall when have you felt God's protection and comfort?

Gospel: We hear Mark's account of the apostles' witness of the transfiguration of Jesus. How difficult do you think it was for them not to share this event with anyone until after Jesus rose from the dead?



News & Announcements

Lent 2021

Join us online every Tuesday, Thursday and Friday for the Rosary, Adoration and Stations of the Cross. See our parish website for details and to download the booklets so you can pray along with us.

Canon Barrass' 90th Birthday

It was great to celebrate Canon's 90th birthday last week and he send his thanks to everyone for their best wishes and kind cards and gifts. *Ad multos annos!*

Rewiring of St Mary's

Work has now begun on rewiring the St Mary's Church. You'll notice some disruption, especially on weekdays. Until the work is completed in about six weeks' time, all funerals will be held at St Cecilia's.

Flock Notes

This week has been really busy for lots of different reasons, but that just comes with the territory. Two things I've been working on are the Parish Stewardship Committee and the Digital Media Evangelisation Team.

We have to have a finance committee to check the books and to stop the parish priest from going on fact-finding trips to Mauritius (don't laugh...you'd be surprised!). However, stewardship is a more biblical way of looking at our resources. Biblical stewardship is about how we use our time, our talents and our treasure (the 3 Ts) for the work of the Kingdom of God. So we've

drawn together a group of people who will work to see how we can grow in biblical stewardship as a parish and as individual parishioners. God has blessed Our Lady of Mercy Parish with so many different riches. I'm very conscious of what Jesus said: 'from those who have received much, much will be expected.' The PSC is going to be a great resource in living up to those words as a community and as individuals.

The Digital Media Evangelisation Team will look at ways of growing our parish's digital media output. You've already seen some of the early fruits of their work if you've looked at the new parish website, our Facebook page, followed Mass online or prayed one of our Lenten devotions. Their job will be to curate

Additionally, because of the requirement to keep the church clean and COVID-safe for both worshippers and the electricians, certain areas might be blocked off and you may have to sit in different places. Please follow the guidance of the stewards when visiting the church.

Nursery Places in St Mary's RC Primary

There are still some places for entry in September 2021 for children aged 3 years by 31 August 2021. The school offers 15 hours per week during term time. Apply online and contact the school for more information.

Wear Walking in the Light of God

Download our prayer walk from our parish website or on our Facebook page. We also have some printed copies available at the back of church and invite God for a walk with you from the sculpture of the sun to Roker beach stopping for prayer at each of the planet markers.

some of the excellent material that is already available online and to generate our own digital media. One of the consequences of the pandemic is that more and more people are now online (even some people who swore blind they'd never be!). Our parish needs to be there too.

You've heard me say before that our parish must be like both Peter and Paul: looking inwards and outwards. The PSC and DMET will help make sure we are focused on building up our community and reaching out to those who are not yet members. Jesus never asked for volunteers: he just called. What's your response to his call to serve our parish?



Why do we do that?



Question: Why do we use incense at Mass?

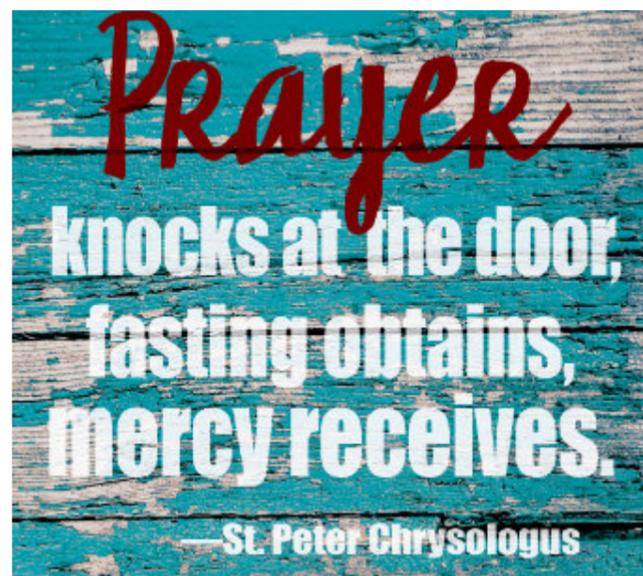
Answer: The use of incense in religious ceremonies and worship is a practice that predates Christianity, and which is also found in many other religious tradi-

tions today.

Incense, which is made from resin infused with aromatic spices and oils, is one of those fundamentally human symbols that incorporates more than one of our senses, helping us to reflect on realities that transcend the everyday details of our lives.

The use of incense in the Church's liturgy—in the Mass, as well as in devotions to the Eucharist and the Liturgy of the Hours—is inspired by the use of incense in the Jewish tradition. In the writings of the Old Testament, we hear about incense being used in the worship of the temple, and Psalm 141 asks, "Let my prayer be incense before you; my uplifted hands an evening offering" (vs. 2). The image here is that, as the incense gently rises to heaven, our prayers also rise to God as something sweet and pleasant.

Another ancient use of incense that has also become part of our Catholic tradition is the idea that when we incense something, it's because it is something special or sacred. This is why the Book of the Gospel is incensed during the Liturgy of the Word and the bread, wine, priest celebrant, and congregation are incensed at the presentation of the gifts. To this, we can also add the incensing of the Blessed Sacrament during eucharistic adoration and benediction, and the body of the deceased at the end of the Mass of the Resurrection (the Funeral Mass).



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