

Parish of Greencastle, Co. Tyrone, Diocese of Derry St. Patrick's Church, Greencastle Our Lady of the Wayside Church, Broughderg The Second Sunday of Lent (28th February, 2010) The Parochial House, 164, Greencastle Road, Sheskinshule, Omagh, BT79 7RU Website: greencastleparish.com Tel: (028) 8164 8474 Email: greencastlepp@yahoo.com			
Some practical suggestions for Lent: There are many ways to keep a good Lent, here are a few: Try to abstain from a particular food or pleasure II Do something extra, like attending the Monday evening Retreat in Strathroy or visiting the sick II Spend some time reflecting on your own baptism...asking God to renew the gifts you have already received II Take part in penitential services and the Stations of the Cross II Whatever you do or give up, do it with joy and moderation.			
Liturgy Schedule for the Second Week of Lent (28th February, 2010 – 7th March, 2010)			
Saturday Evening	St. Patrick's	5.30pm Confessions 6.00pm Vigil Mass for Sunday	
Sunday 28th February	St. Patrick's	9:00am Mass: 'Misso Pro Populo'	
Second Sunday of Lent	Our Lady of the Wayside	10.30am Confessions 11:00am Mass 11:00am Mass: Requiem for Rose Morris	
Monday 1st March	St. Patrick's	10.00am Mass	
Second Week of Lent	Sick and housebound visits		
Tuesday 2nd March	St. Patrick's	10.00am Mass	
Second Week of Lent			
Wednesday 3rd March	St. Patrick's	10.00am Mass	
Second Week of Lent			
Thursday 4th March	St. Patrick's	10.00am Mass	
Second Week of Lent			
Friday 5th March	St. Patrick's	7.30pm Stations of the Cross for and lead by children 8.00pm Mass: Noel McLaughlin – 9 th Anniversary	
Second Week of Lent			
Saturday 6th March	St. Patrick's	10.00am Mass	
Second Week of Lent			
Saturday Evening	St. Patrick's	5.30pm Confessions 6.00pm Vigil Mass for Sunday: Patrick Donnelly – 10 th Anniversary	
Do This In Memory' Programme			
Sunday 7th March	St. Patrick's	9:00am Mass: 'Misso Pro Populo'	
Third Sunday of Lent	Our Lady of the Wayside	10.30am Confessions 11:00am Mass	
Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread – Trócaire's Lenten theme for 2010: Please give the Trócaire box a prominent place in your home. Make this Lent another record breaker for your generosity. Thank you for everything you have given to previous Lenten campaigns, first established in 1973. Please Check out trocaire.org			
Weekly Offerings: Thank you for your generosity to last week's collection which amounted to £1,030 . Please support your parish by using your envelope even if you must attend Mass outside your parish, thank you. <i>Envelopes received from visitors coming to Mass in Greencastle are returned to those parishes.</i>			
Remembering Our Dead: We pray for Rose Morris (Carnanrancy) who's Requiem takes place today, we offer prayerful support to all who mourn her. We also pray for Teresa McCullagh, Kathleen Warnock, Noel McLaughlin and Sarah Ann McCullagh whose anniversaries occur at this time.			
Sick and housebound will be visited Monday 1st March . Please let them know if you live nearby. If you know of anyone who is sick or housebound and would like a visit please inform Fr. Hasson.			
Parish Census Forms: Thank you for your cooperation. Please return them today or as soon as possible.			
Carmelite Retreat Centre (Termonbacca, Derry) – Monthly Devotions in Honour of Our Lady. Tuesday 2 nd March beginning with confessions at 7.30pm, followed by Rosary and Mass. Concludes at 10.00pm <i>All are welcome to attend</i>			
Our Lady of Lourdes PS – Cookery Lessons: In the school on Thursday 4 th March from 7.00pm until 9.00pm.			
Faith Friends: Thank you to everyone praying for the young people who will be confirmed in our parish on Sunday 18 th April.			
Pioneer Total Abstinence Association Meeting: Tuesday 2 nd March at 7.00pm.			
Do This in Memory of Me: Our First Holy Communion parish programme will continue at the Vigil Mass in St. Patrick's on Saturday 6 th March.			
Next Sunday's Readings: Exodus 3:1-8, 13-15; Psalm 102; 1 Corinthians 10:1-6, 1-12; Luke 13:1-9 Lectionary I, page 228 (Sunday: Year C) (Weekday: Year 2)			
Lotto Numbers: 12, 15, 16, 17 (1 winner with 3 numbers – £50) Next Jackpot: £1,800			

Parish Liturgy for March, 2010	St. Patrick's (6.00pm Vigil Mass)	St. Patrick's (9.00am Mass)	Our Lady of the Wayside (11.00am Mass)
Readers	Anne Coyle	Lucy Hood	Anne McDermott
Prayers of Intercession	Volunteers needed	Kevin Clarke	Volunteers needed
Eucharistic Ministry	Mary Tracey	Eileen McKenna	Mary McCrory
Collectors	Francis McLaughlin Seamus Keenan	Peter Tracey Colm Tracey	Tony Donnelly Brendan Daly
Altar Society	Rosemary, Shauna and Ciara McNally		Anne McDermott
Offertory Gifts: The Year 4 and 7 classes of 2009 / 2010 and their families taking responsibility for presenting the Offertory gifts at each Sunday Mass are as follows:-			
Week	6.00pm Saturday Vigil	Offertory Gifts Rota	9.00am Sunday Morning
27	<u>Saturday 6th March</u> *** The family of Jamie Wilkinson	Third Sunday Of Lent	<u>Sunday 7th March</u> The family of Shauna Morris
28	<u>Saturday 13th March</u> The family of Aileen Tracey	Fourth Sunday Of Lent	<u>Sunday 14th March</u> The family of Jack Tuohey
29	<u>Saturday 20th March</u> The family of Luke Breslin	Fifth Sunday Of Lent	<u>Sunday 21st March</u> The family of Sean and Tara Conneely
30	<u>Saturday 27th March</u> The family of Matthew Conway	Palm Sunday of the Lord's Passion	<u>Sunday 28th March</u> The family of Eoin Keenan
*** 'Do This In Memory' Programme week 7			
As the wider parish community we support these young people and their families with our prayers, we thank them for what they are doing for us. If you are unable to attend ensure that you have arranged with another family for the gifts to be presented.			
Unique Celebration: Kitty Fox of Maryville will D.V. celebrate her 100 th birthday on 10 th March at the GAA Community Centre with a celebration of Mass at 6.00pm followed by music and refreshments. Her relatives Mary and John Enright would like all neighbours and friends to join her. They would like to know who is coming so please RSVP to (028) 8164 7836. In lieu of personal gifts they would prefer, if you desire, donations to <i>Marie Curie Cancer Care</i> who will attend this event.			
The Footprints of God – A Retreat for Lent: Church of Christ the King, Strathroy, Omagh. Monday Evenings 8 – 9 pm Each Monday evening of Lent we will journey with Jesus as he makes his way to Jerusalem. Reflecting on his journey, where he suffered and died for us, we grow in understanding the journey of our own lives finding nourishment and guidance for our pilgrimage through life. <i>Refreshments will be served each evening</i> ... Join us as we walk in the Footprints of God ...			
1 st Mar.	Jesus Tempted - <i>Living with Temptation</i>	22 nd Mar.	Gethsemane - <i>Living through Crises</i>
8 th Mar.	Jesus Transfigured - <i>Finding Light on a Dark Road</i>	29 th Mar.	Crucifixion - <i>Living with Loss</i>
15 th Mar.	Jesus Stills a Storm - <i>A Quiet Mind</i>	Easter Week	Resurrection - <i>Reflections on Eternity</i>
Our Lady of the Wayside Church, Broughderg 25th Anniversary (1st September, 2010): To mark the Jubilee Celebrations plans are in place to produce a <i>Sanctuary Tapestry</i> . The proposed image requires a wide variety of colours of small pieces (approximately 1/2 yard size) of cotton material. If you think that you have anything suitable to donate you can contact any of the following committee members - Anne Mc Dermott, Teresa McCrory, Sarah Coyle, Mary McKenna, Josephine Clarke or Fr. Hasson. If you received any of the sacraments on your spiritual journey there (Baptism, First Holy Communion, Confirmation, Marriage) and have a photograph or a story you would like to share with our community contact the people above.			
Broughderg First Responders Scheme: The role of a First Responder is to attend, when possible a patient who has collapsed and administer CPR and / or defibrillation whilst awaiting for an ambulance crew to attend. The Broughderg First Responders are volunteers who live and work in the local area they are fully trained and are fully insured. When an appropriate 999 call is received from the area covered by the First Responder Scheme; the volunteers are notified and try to attend to provide whatever care is reasonable. First Responders will only attend when dispatched by Ambulance Control. They have no role in the diagnosis or management of illness apart from the collapsed patient. There will always be a 999 ambulance in attendance. Volunteers are clearly identifiable as they will have ID with them. They will provide whatever care is reasonable and will endeavour to assist either doctors or members of the Ambulance Service as appropriate. If you require any further information about the scheme please do not hesitate to get in touch. <i>Janet Shields (Dalriada Urgent Care) (028) 2566 3502</i>			
Creggan Drama Circle – Be My Baby by Amanda Wittington: Creggan Old Hall at 8.00pm on Thursday 4 th , Friday 5 th and Saturday 6 th March, and at 8.30pm Sunday 7 th March. <i>Tears of laughter and tears of sadness all in one show</i>			
Haiti Peruvian Annual Clothing Appeal: The organisers intend to continue the clothing collection at St. Columille's GAC in Carrickmore for another few weeks. <i>Your support for this worthy cause would be much appreciated</i>			
Greencastle Youth Club: The youth club has now ended for this year, we take this opportunity to thank Jacinta McElhatton, Sandra McElhatton, Helen Tracey, Gemma Fox, Gerry Tuohey, Mickey Kelly, Frankie Bradley, Sean Warnock, John McCullagh, Daniel Tuohey, Emmett Bradley, Michaela Fox, Anita McDermott and Danielle Coyle for their help and support as leaders: .			
Upcoming BADA Events		Usual fortnightly dance. Music by Cascades.	Sunday 28th February
Items for inclusion should be forwarded to the Parochial House by the Wednesday evening prior to publication			

Youth 2000 Retreat in Ballymena: Youth 2000 will host a youth retreat in St. Patrick's College, Ballymena from 12th to 14th March for 16 to 35 year olds. Newcomers are very welcome. The programme includes dramas, music, workshops, inspiring talks and games – donation only. Residential – so please bring a sleeping bag! For more information contact Carla 07514 820 572 or check out youth2000.ie. Booking is essential.

Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes (16th – 21st July, 2010): Cost £629 – payable in instalments. Application forms are now available in the sacristy (Greencastle) or from the Pilgrimage Office, Derry. Telephone: (028) 7126 0293. Special arrangements are made for the youth who will be lead by the Pilgrimage Youth Team.

Loreto House (Linsfort, Buncrana, Co Donegal) – Holy Week Retreat: 28th March until 3rd April. With Fr. Colm Lavelle S.J. To book a place call 00353 74 / 9362204 or email info@loretolinsfort.com Cost: €380 residential and €200 non-residential. **Prayer Meetings every Monday in Lent:** Beginning 22nd February from 8.00pm to 9.00pm.

Institute of Irish Leadership (20 The Diamond, Pomeroy): A social evening on Saturday 13th March at 8.00pm celebrating the Irish Language, with traditional music and supper. Admission is £5.00. *Everybody is welcome to attend.* An Irish Language Quiz night (Tráth na gCeist): Friday 12th March at 7 30pm. Admission at door.

Parenting Apart - Free 4 Week Programme: Practical advice and guidance on what children need to know, and what parents can do to meet their children's needs. Wednesday 10th February to Wednesday 3rd March from 6.00pm to 8.00pm. Parents Advice Centre (028) 7137 2006 (*funded by Northern Ireland Family Mediation*)

IHCPT Derry Group 30th Anniversary Celebration Dinner Dance: To celebrate 30 years of taking young people with special needs on their annual Easter Pilgrimage to Lourdes Group 110 of the Irish Pilgrimage Trust (The 'Derry' Group) will be holding a celebration dinner dance in the City Hotel on Saturday 27th February, music provided by the Odyssey band. The group would like to invite anyone who has travelled with us over the years, young people or group carers, their families and all those who have supported and helped us in any way to join us in what should be a great evening to meet old friends and relive memories of some very special times. Tickets cost £25 and can be obtained from Stephen Browne at 07912500195.

Medjugorje Irish Centre: Every week for a year we are giving away one weeks free apartment accommodation for up to 4 people. Text the word PILGRIM followed by your name and county to 60777 or phone us and we can enter you into the draw for free. Special introductory offer E260 package. Website www.med-irishcentre.com Tel: (028) 82241888.

Knock Marriage Introduction Bureau: The aim of the Bureau is to introduce people considering marriage to a suitable marriage partner. Over 800 marriages have taken place as a result of these introductions. If you are searching for a suitable partner, why not consider applying? For further information contact the Bureau at Knock, Co. Mayo. Phone 00353 94937 5960 or visit our website at www.knockmarriagebureau.com and read about the workings of the Bureau.

The Columba Community (Columba House, 11 Queen Street, Derry) in conjunction with the YARD project will be hosting a 2 day Family Support Programme on the 13th and 14th March at Columba House. The programme is for anyone over 18 years of age who has been affected by or is concerned about the abuse of alcohol, drugs or gambling of a family member or friend. The programme will help people understand addiction and through support, encouragement and information it aims to help you learn new ways to cope and improve the quality of your life. This is an introduction to the 12 Step programme way of living. For more information or to book a place on the course please contact Claire on (028) 7126 9113 / (ROI) (048) 71269 113) or email the yardproject@btinternet.com.

The Catholic Chaplaincy QUB Centenary Dinner Dance: Tickets are now available for the Centenary Dinner Dance, which is taking place on 22nd April in the Whitla Hall at Queen's. If you remember the Chaplaincy Discos, Céilidh or Mrs. Mac famous sandwiches, Liam, Noel, Mary or Anne, Lough Derg pilgrimages, packed Ash Wednesday Masses or a wealth of other Chaplaincy memories then come along and celebrate with us. The Dinner is open to past and present students and staff of the University, their families and friends and all who consider themselves friends of the Chaplaincy. Take the opportunity to arrange to meet with classmates and friends. The tickets cost £40 each and can be purchased from the Chaplaincy at 28 Elmwood Ave or from the Welcome Centre at QUB (or if you send a stamped addressed envelope and a chq made payable to "The Catholic Chaplaincy" we will post your tickets to you.) [Open seating will be the norm but Tables of 8 can be arranged]. For any further info please contact the Chaplaincy on (028) 9066 9737 or email cc@qubcc.org. Check out qubcc.org. If you have any Chaplaincy related photos we would love to have copies of them for the Centenary Display!

Camara recruiting for the Africa 2010 Programme: Camara, the Irish charity which takes in used computers, refurbishes them and sends them to schools in Africa is currently recruiting 50 volunteers from Ireland to spend 4 weeks sharing their IT skills with teachers in schools that have received the computers. Volunteers will spend 4 weeks, in either July or August, working in one of the following countries Lesotho, Zambia, Tanzania, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and possibly Ethiopia. Volunteers are required to:

- Have skills as IT teachers, networking or computer maintenance.
- Fundraise €2,500 / £2,250 for their trip
- Spend 50 hours of training/workshop hours prior to departure. These will take place over a minimum of 3 weekends, plus some additional hours in the workshop.
- Attend a 2 day orientation for short term volunteers at Dtalk
- Complete medical check up and course of vaccinations

For more information visit the Camara website camara.ie or email africa10@camara.ie There will be an information evening in Belfast on Tuesday 2nd March at 6.00pm in the Camara Workshop, Unit 23 Townsend Enterprise Park, Townsend Street, Belfast, BT13 2ES. Contact Ann Fitzpatrick 9033 2470 or email belfast@camara.ie.

Lenten Messages

Lent is the season of grace and conversion, of penance and reconciliation, of renewal of our baptismal promises. Lent is marked with seriousness, consciousness of the poorest of the poor, attention to prayer and liturgy, attentive listening to the word of God, and "with the gladness spiritual desire await holy Easter".

Holy Rule of St. Benedict (Chapter XLIX [49])

Lenten Guidelines: Fasting is to be observed on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday by everyone aged 18 years of age and older, who has not yet celebrated their 59th birthday. On a fast day, one full meal is allowed. Two other meals, enough to maintain strength, may be taken, according to each one's needs, but together they should not equal another full meal. Eating between meals is not permitted, but consuming liquids, including milk and juices is allowed. **Abstinence** is observed by everyone 14 years of age and older. On days of abstinence no meat is allowed. Note that when health or the ability to work would be seriously affected, the law does not oblige. Ash Wednesday, all the Fridays of Lent, and Good Friday are days of abstinence. If a person is unable to observe the above regulations due to ill health or other serious reasons, other suitable forms of self-denial are encouraged.

Give Us This Day Our Daily Bread – Trócaire's Lenten theme for 2010: Please give the Trócaire box a prominent place in your home. Make this Lent another record breaker for your generosity. Thank you for everything you have given to previous Lenten campaigns, first established in 1973. Please check out trocaire.org

PAPAL MESSAGE FOR LENT 2010 VATICAN CITY, 4 FEB 2010 (VIS)

Made public today was the 2010 Lenten Message of the Holy Father Benedict XVI. The text, dated 30th October, 2009, has as its title a passage from St. Paul's Letter to the Romans: "The justice of God has been manifested through faith in Jesus Christ". The full English-language translation of the document is given below:

"Each year, on the occasion of Lent, the Church invites us to a sincere review of our life in light of the teachings of the Gospel. This year, I would like to offer you some reflections on the great theme of justice, beginning from the Pauline affirmation: 'The justice of God has been manifested through faith in Jesus Christ'.

"First of all, I want to consider the meaning of the term 'justice', which in common usage implies 'to render to every man his due', according to the famous expression of Ulpian, a Roman jurist of the third century. In reality, however, this classical definition does not specify what 'due' is to be rendered to each person. What man needs most cannot be guaranteed to him by law. In order to live life to the full, something more intimate is necessary that can be granted only as a gift: we could say that man lives by that love which only God can communicate since He created the human person in His image and likeness. Material goods are certainly useful and required - indeed Jesus Himself was concerned to heal the sick, feed the crowds that followed Him and surely condemns the indifference that even today forces hundreds of millions into death through lack of food, water and medicine - yet 'distributive' justice does not render to the human being the totality of his 'due'. Just as man needs bread, so does man have even more need of God. St. Augustine notes: if 'justice is that virtue which gives everyone his due ... where, then, is the justice of man, when he deserts the true God?'

"The Evangelist Mark reports the following words of Jesus, which are inserted within the debate at that time regarding what is pure and impure: 'There is nothing outside a man which by going into him can defile him; but the things which come out of a man are what defile him. ... What comes out of a man is what defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts'. Beyond the immediate question concerning food, we can detect in the reaction of the Pharisees a permanent temptation within man: to situate the origin of evil in an exterior cause. Many modern ideologies deep down have this presupposition: since injustice comes 'from outside', in order for justice to reign, it is sufficient to remove the exterior causes that prevent it being achieved. This way of thinking - Jesus warns - is ingenuous and short-sighted. Injustice, the fruit of evil, does not have exclusively external roots; its origin lies in the human heart, where the seeds are found of a mysterious co-operation with evil. With bitterness the Psalmist recognises this: 'Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me'. Indeed, man is weakened by an intense influence, which wounds his capacity to enter into communion with the other. By nature, he is open to sharing freely, but he finds in his being a strange force of gravity that makes him turn in and affirm himself above and against others: this is egoism, the result of original sin. Adam and Eve, seduced by Satan's lie, snatching the mysterious fruit against the divine command, replaced the logic of trusting in Love with that of suspicion and competition; the logic of receiving and trustfully expecting from the Other with anxiously seizing and doing on one's own, experiencing, as a consequence, a sense of disquiet and uncertainty. How can man free himself from this selfish influence and open himself to love?

"At the heart of the wisdom of Israel, we find a profound link between faith in God who 'lifts the needy from the ash heap' and justice towards one's neighbour. The Hebrew word itself that indicates the virtue of justice, 'sedaqah', expresses this well. 'Sedaqah', in fact, signifies on the one hand full acceptance of the will of the God of Israel; on the other hand, equity in relation to one's neighbour, especially the poor, the stranger, the orphan and the widow. But the two meanings are linked because giving to the poor for the Israelite is none other than restoring what is owed to God, who had pity on the misery of His people. It was not by chance that the gift to Moses of the tablets of the Law on Mount Sinai took place after the crossing of the Red Sea. Listening to the Law presupposes faith in God who first 'heard the cry' of His people and 'came down to deliver them out of hand of the Egyptians'. God is attentive to the cry of the poor and in return asks to be listened to: He asks for justice towards the poor, the stranger, the slave. In order to enter into justice, it is thus necessary to leave that illusion of self-sufficiency, the profound state of closure, which is the very origin of injustice. In other words, what is needed is an even deeper 'exodus' than that accomplished by God with Moses, a liberation of the heart, which the Law on its own is powerless to realise. Does man have any hope of justice then?

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"The Christian Good News responds positively to man's thirst for justice, as St. Paul affirms in the Letter to the Romans: 'But now the justice of God has been manifested apart from law ... the justice of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction; since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, they are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as an expiation by His blood, to be received by faith'.

"What then is the justice of Christ? Above all, it is the justice that comes from grace, where it is not man who makes amends, heals himself and others. The fact that 'expiation' flows from the 'blood' of Christ signifies that it is not man's sacrifices that free him from the weight of his faults, but the loving act of God Who opens Himself in the extreme, even to the point of bearing in Himself the 'curse' due to man so as to give in return the 'blessing' due to God. But this raises an immediate objection: what kind of justice is this where the just man dies for the guilty and the guilty receives in return the blessing due to the just one? Would this not mean that each one receives the contrary of his 'due'? In reality, here we discover divine justice, which is so profoundly different from its human counterpart. God has paid for us the price of the exchange in His Son, a price that is truly exorbitant. Before the justice of the Cross, man may rebel for this reveals how man is not a self-sufficient being, but in need of Another in order to realize himself fully. Conversion to Christ, believing in the Gospel, ultimately means this: to exit the illusion of self-sufficiency in order to discover and accept one's own need - the need of others and God, the need of His forgiveness and His friendship.

"So we understand how faith is altogether different from a natural, good-feeling, obvious fact: humility is required to accept that I need Another to free me from 'what is mine', to give me gratuitously 'what is His'. This happens especially in the Sacraments of Reconciliation and the Eucharist. Thanks to Christ's action, we may enter into the 'greatest' justice, which is that of love, the justice that recognises itself in every case more a debtor than a creditor, because it has received more than could ever have been expected. Strengthened by this very experience, the Christian is moved to contribute to creating just societies, where all receive what is necessary to live according to the dignity proper to the human person and where justice is enlivened by love.

"Dear brothers and sisters, Lent culminates in the Paschal Triduum, in which this year, too, we shall celebrate divine justice - the fullness of charity, gift, salvation. May this penitential season be for every Christian a time of authentic conversion and intense knowledge of the mystery of Christ, who came to fulfil every justice. With these sentiments, I cordially impart to all of you my apostolic blessing".

MESS/LENT 2010/...

VIS 100204 (1480)

"We need a little bit of silence. We need a space without the constant bombardment of images."

Pope Benedict XVI encouraging the priests of the Rome diocese in fasting from words and images this Lent

Workout for the Soul in Search of God

Interview with Official from Ignatian Exercises Federation

By Antonio Gaspari

ROME, FEB. 5, 2010 (Zenit.org) Every year, a countless number of Catholics escape from their typical activities and take days to retreat into prayer following the system of the Ignatian spiritual exercises.

The Pope himself is one of these Catholics; Benedict XVI's annual spiritual exercises with the Roman Curia begin Feb. 21.

Just prior to the Holy Father's retreat, the Italian Federation of Spiritual Exercises will hold their annual assembly. The president of the Pontifical Council for Culture, Archbishop Gianfranco Ravasi, will be one of the participants in the three-day meeting to discuss the relationship between spiritual exercises and the people of the Church.

In order to understand better the history, timeliness and modern practice of spiritual exercises, ZENIT spoke with Passionist Father Stanislao Renzi, national secretary of the federation.

ZENIT: Many young people don't even know what the spiritual exercises are or why they are done. Can you explain them briefly?

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Father Renzi: It's true that many young people no longer even know what the spiritual exercises are or why they are practiced: Today youth live in a world that loves noise, not silence and recollection, and many want to be free of laws and discipline. It is difficult to speak to them of the "search for the will of God in deciding their own life."

However, there are many [young adults] -- between 20 and 30 years old -- who do the spiritual exercises by assiduously attending courses in retreat houses, at times on weekends. The representatives [of these retreats] offer the young people the possibility to pray and to reflect individually or in community, so that they discern their choices in life and make their own spiritual journey in the Church. The courses are open to all young people who wish to make their own lives mature according to God's plan.

It should also be remembered that, according to St. Ignatius, the spiritual exercises are not a time of study or of simple recollection and prayer. They are a search: "As walking and running are physical exercises, so any form of preparing and disposing the soul to get rid of all disordered affections and, after being rid of them, to seek the will of God in deciding on one's own life, for the salvation of one's soul, is called spiritual exercises." (Es. Sp. Ann.1).

ZENIT: Can you tell us the history of the spiritual exercises? When did they begin? What does the Bible say in this respect? Who are the saints who practiced the spiritual exercises?

Father Renzi: Spiritual exercises were already done by the Desert Fathers, but those we call the classic exercises go back to St. Ignatius of Loyola, who began to write them in a book in 1522 and perfected them in 1548. The book by posing first fundamental questions: For what has God created us?

The object of the exercises, in St. Ignatius' thought, is to order one's life according to God's plan, as man was created to serve God and only through this can he attain salvation.

He recommended that the exercises be done in a place other than one's usual environment. There were in fact "houses of exercises," where silence and stillness helped the exercises to be made.

St. Ignatius took from the Bible the ideas for the gradual composition of the book of spiritual exercises, in which are reflected his feelings when finding the secret to discern the will of God. Hence the Bible is a fundamental text for all types of spiritual exercises.

It would take a long time to find all the passages of the Bible that [could be referred] to the exercises. I find one concretely in Psalm 118:47-64. The Psalmist tells the Lord he has scrutinized his ways and will direct his steps to the Commandments; he says he is prepared to keep the secrets of the Lord. Finally he asks the Lord to show him his will, given that the earth is full of the Lord's love. Analogous is the itinerary of the one doing the exercises, who revises his own life to direct it in the sense of the will of God.

Other references might be the Virgin Mary, who meditated in her heart everything that happened around her. Mary, in fact, listened to and meditated the Scriptures, linking them to Jesus' words and to the events she went discovering in her history in relation with her Son. Another is Jesus' invitation to the disciples to withdraw in solitude to rest, which is spiritually salutary. Finally, the reference to the Scriptures in the conversation with the disciples of Emmaus, so that they understand what happened in his Death and Resurrection. St. Ignatius' exercises go over the whole life of Jesus as it is narrated in the Gospels.

In addition to St. Ignatius, many saints practiced the spiritual exercises as a renewal of Christian life. I will mention only a few: St. Dominic, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Paul of the Cross, St. Alphonsus Mary Liguori. All were tireless in preaching and in the confessional as ministers of God's mercy, helping men to find themselves, to struggle against sin and to advance on the way of the spiritual life.

ZENIT: In a world such as today's which is so secularised, what reasons do you give to promote and practice spiritual exercises?

Father Renzi: [Citing Benedict XVI] secularization, which often becomes secularism, abandoning the positive meaning of the secular, harshly tests the Christian life of the faithful and pastors. ... Today it is a providential challenge to which convincing answers must be given to man's questions and hopes.

Spiritual exercises, insofar as [they are a time of] listening to the Word of God dwelled upon for a long time, allow one to discern the will of God and, conforming oneself to it, to overcome the mentality in which God is absent and, at the same time, to apply oneself to living in communion with God and with neighbor.

For this reason the Federation of Spiritual Exercises promotes the exercises and urges those in charge to plan exercises every year for each category of persons: priests, religious, laity, young people, the elderly, with a view to the renewal of Christian life, to give an answer to the serious challenges posed by secularised society and religious indifference.

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"Don't ever forget that the exercises are an insistent petition, which the Church addresses not only to its sacred ministers, to men and women religious, to all consecrated persons, but also to those who wish to enter into themselves, to dedicate time to God with their soul open to the hope of finding him on their way, to love him and follow him more" (John Paul II, Audience to FIES on the 25th anniversary of its foundation).

In regard to the present importance of the exercises, Paul VI expressed it thus: "The practice of the exercises constitutes an invigorating and restorative pause for the spirit, in the midst of the dissipations of chaotic modern life, but also a school that even today is irreplaceable to introduce souls to greater intimacy with God, to the love of virtue and to the science of life, as gift of God and as response to his call."

In 1967 the bishops of Triveneto, Italy, wrote a letter on the "Validity of the Spiritual Exercises," and they recommended "perseverance in this apostolate, which day by day shows itself to be more important."

Without excluding the determination to experience ways that are adapted to our times, we insist "on the classic structure of the Ignatian Exercises, so valid and providential in their climate of reflection and profound silence"

Pietro Schiavone, S.J., "Il Progetto del Padre," pp. 12-13

This Week's Calendar of Saints:

Monday 1st March – St. David (bishop) Patron Saint of Wales, where he was an abbot and bishop in the 6th century. Several Irish Saints were his pupils and he influenced monastic development in Ireland. Died around 601.

Thursday 4th March – St. Casimir (1458-1484) strove to promote peace and the unity of Western Europe. Though a young prince, he chose a life of prayer and penance. Patron Saint of Poland.

Friday 5th March – St. Kieran (bishop) Kieran of Saigir was born in Cape Clear in Co. Cork. He is numbered among the pre-Patrician saints of Ireland. He went to the Continent, where he was baptised and later ordained priest and bishop. He returned to his father's territory, Ossory, where he lived as a hermit. Disciples soon joined him and Saigir became a well-known monastery.

Seeing your life through the lens of the gospels – Luke 9:28-36:

1. The transfiguration experience was one that affirmed Jesus' identity as the beloved disciple of God and strengthened him for the future. What have been the experiences, the moments of insight, that have clarified your sense of who you are and being beloved by God?
2. On the mountain the disciples saw Jesus in a new way. Sometimes in friendships there are moments of sharing in which we get to know a friend in a new and deeper way. Have you had that experience in human friendship, or in your relationship with Jesus, with God, or with the Spirit of God within? Recall when it happened and what it was like for you?
3. For the disciples, the experience also served as a reminder that their task as they accompanied Jesus on the road to Jerusalem was really to listen to him. This puts our Lenten efforts in context. What have you found helpful to get you to listen and to understand more deeply the meaning of the life and teaching of Jesus?

John Byrne OSA (john@orlagh.ie)

Questions people ask:

Q. Why is the glorious story of the transfiguration always read during the penitential season of Lent?

A. Penance is better when it wears a happy face and is inspired by the desire for God's light and glory. The three apostles who witnessed the glory of Jesus would later witness his fear and agony in Gethsemane. Their memory of the day of light would sustain them in the night of darkness. Treasure your times of light when you feel close to God as you will be able to draw strength from memory in times of darkness.

Fr. Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap (silvesteroflynn@gmail.com)

The Deep End – *Identi-kit*:

If we regard all information gathered up to 1900 as one unit, since then that unit has doubled every ten years.

We have shot dramatically from Stone Age to Information Age. But at heart we're still hunter-gatherers.

Nowadays we 'hunt' for knowledge by gathering information. We've replaced spears with technology.

Take, for example, those wishing to establish paternity. A do-it-yourself DNA test-kit was due shortly in pharmacies across the UK, according to one newspaper's report last August. Costing £29.99 with a £129 lab fee you would be able to establish paternity in less than five days.

If we read the Bible we can establish paternity in less than five minutes, and at no cost – financial, that is. But it's faith not technology that recognises knowledge found in scripture as truth found in life. In today's Second Reading (Phil 3:17-4:1) Paul speaks of our citizenship. He could just as easily speak of our paternity. He says: our citizenship is in heaven. We belong to another order of reality because that's the origin of our paternity. This is what the Gospel reading (Luke 9:28-36) is telling us too. A voice from the cloud addresses the transfigured Jesus as my Son, my Chosen.

Being baptised in Jesus' name we share in his paternity, but by adoption. Jesus tells us to call God Father when we pray. So, as we pray this Lent, let's listen to our Father's word in scripture so that we accept ever more maturely and humbly a paternity that no *identi-kit* can establish – unless the D in DNA stands for 'divine'.

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