

Serving Our Faith Community in Greencastle Parish

Parish Liturgy for April, 2010	St. Patrick's (6.00pm Vigil Mass)	St. Patrick's (9.00am Mass)	Our Lady of the Wayside (11.00am Mass)
Readers	Francis McDermott	Mary Clarke	Brendan McKenna
Prayers of Intercession	Elaine Coyle	Volunteers needed	Volunteers needed
Eucharistic Ministry	Frankie Bradley	Maria Bradley	Josephine Clarke
Collectors	Gerry McCullagh Mary Bradley	Dominic Warnock Leo Donnelly	Pat McGuigan Eoin Clarke
Altar Society	Eileen McKenna, Anne McAleer and Maria Bradley		Anne McDermott

New choir members will always be welcome. Contact Sinead Donnelly for Our Lady of the Wayside
We are grateful to the people who lead singing and music at the special liturgies involving the children and families involved with the 'Do This In Memory' programme in preparation for the sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Eucharist but there is no one to lead us in our other liturgies at St. Patrick's Church, Greencastle

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
31	Saturday 3 rd April (Easter Vigil) The family of Shea McElhatton	Feast of the Lord's Resurrection	Sunday 4 th April The family of Michaela McBride
32	Saturday 10 th April The family of Eunan Morris	Second Sunday of Easter	Sunday 11 th April The family of Noel McKenna
33	Saturday 17 th April* The family of Lauren O'Neill	Third Sunday of Easter	Sunday 18 th April The family of Serene Morris
34	Saturday 24 th April The family of Conan Maguire	Fourth Sunday of Easter	Sunday 25 th April The family of Connor Bradley

*Do This In Memory' Programme week 9

As the wider parish community we support these young people and their families with our prayers and 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.

Friday 16th April. First Reconciliation for the children receiving the Sacrament will be celebrated at 6.00pm in St. Patrick's Church. The parents and families of those children are encouraged to receive the Sacrament on the weekend beforehand

Friday 9th April at 7.00pm. To nurture your own faith and give good witness to the next generation.

Sunday 18th April Bishop Hegarty will be celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation with us at Our Lady of the Wayside Church, Broughderg at 11.00am. The parents, families and sponsors of the candidates of are invited to receive the Sacrament the Sacrament of Reconciliation on the weekend beforehand

Friday 9th April at 7.00pm. – to nurture your own faith and give good witness to the next generation.

The Pope's Intentions for April, 2010 (please remember these in your personal prayer)

General: That every tendency to fundamentalism and extremism may be countered by constant respect, by tolerance and by dialogue among all believers.

Mission: That persecuted for the sake of the Gospel may persevere sustained by the Holy Spirit, in faithfully witnessing to the love of God for the entire human race.

The family of Kitty Fox thank all who helped at her recent 100th birthday celebrations – priests, friends, neighbours and to all who contributed **£1,234** for Marie Curie Cancer Care. *John and Mary Enright*

Episcopal Ordinations: Sunday 28th March is the 28th anniversary of the Episcopal Ordination of our bishop, Most Rev. Seamus Hegarty (1982). Please pray for him today
 Wednesday 31st March is the 36th anniversary of the Episcopal Ordination of our retired bishop, Most Rev. Edward Daly (1974). Please pray for him next Wednesday.

Items for inclusion should be forwarded to the Parochial House by the Wednesday evening prior to publication



Parish of Greencastle, Co. Tyrone (Diocese of Derry)

Saint Patrick's
Greencastle

Our Lady of the Wayside
Broughderg



To do for Holy Week – Read a CTS booklet, available at the Church entrances

As **Holy Week** begins we Catholics are encouraged to understand the significance of this most important time in the Church year. One of the best ways to do this is to participate in the liturgies of this week.

On **Holy Thursday** we re-enact the washing of the feet – a vivid reminder of Jesus' command to love one another as he loved us. We also hear again the story of the Last Supper, which has special significance for the children in our parish who are preparing to receive Holy Communion for the first time.

Good Friday is the most solemn of days. We listen to the story of the passion and death of Jesus and we are invited to venerate the cross.

The Easter Vigil on **Holy Saturday** night is the highlight of all our Easter celebrations, the night when we remember and retell our story from the very beginning. We keep vigil and move from darkness to light; we mark the beginning of new life in resurrection by lighting a new Paschal candle and blessing fresh baptismal water.

Weekly Offerings: Thank you for your generosity to last week's collection which amounted to **£1,020** and for the further **£230** for the Clerical Education and Formation annual collection taken up on St. Patrick's Day (Wednesday 17th March). *Please support your parish by using your envelope even if you must attend Mass outside your parish, thank you. Envelopes received from visitors coming to Mass in Greencastle are returned to those parishes.*

Remembering Our Dead: We pray this week for **Willie Joe Morris** and **Joe Daly** whose anniversaries occur at this time.

Sick and housebound will be attended Monday 5th April. 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.

Next Sunday's Readings: Acts of the Apostles 10:34, 37-43; Psalm 117; Letters to the Colossians 3:1-4
 John 20:1-9 (Lectionary I, page 417) **(Sunday: Year C) (Weekday: Year 2)**

Date of Easter: At the Council of Nicea in 325 the date for Easter was fixed as the Sunday after the full moon after the spring equinox. Sunday 4th April is the feast of Easter this year; it is also the date of Easter according to the Julian Calendar, the calendar in general use before the Gregorian reforms of 1582.

Do This In Memory of Me: Our First Holy Communion parish programme will continue at the Mass of the Lord's Supper in Greencastle on Holy Thursday (1st April).

Thank you for your support for **Solemn Annual Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament** in Saint Patrick's Church, last Sunday. Thank you for your attendance and may you receive many personal blessings in the same way as our parish was also blessed.

Parish Census Forms: Return outstanding forms before Easter.

Prayer Friends for the Confirmation Class of 2010: Thank you for your daily support.

Our Lady of Lourdes PS – Fundraising coffee morning for Trócaire: Tues. 30th March after 10.00am Mass.

The Footprints of God – Retreat for Lent: Church of Christ the King, Strathroy (Monday Evenings 8.00pm – 9.00pm):
Refreshments will be served each evening ... Join us as we walk ...

29th Mar. Crucifixion - *Living with Loss* Easter Week Resurrection - *Reflections on Eternity*

Fr. Shield's GAA Camogie Club Training	Juniors 6.15pm – 7.30pm on Friday	Seniors 7.30pm – 9.00pm on Friday
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Contact Fiona on (028) 8164 7607 for further details

Lotto Results: 9, 16, 19, 23 (3 winners with 3 numbers – £20 each) **Next Jackpot:** £2,000

Upcoming BADA Events

Sunday 28th March
Dance. Music by *Glenshane Country*

Friday 9th April
Table Quiz at 8.30pm

Our Lady of the Wayside Church, Broughderg 25th Anniversary (1st September, 2010): To mark the Jubilee Celebrations plans are in place to produce a *Sanctuary Tapestry*. 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 McDermott, 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 above.

Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes (16th – 21st July, 2010): Cost £629 – payable in instalments. Application forms are now available in the sacristy (Greencastle).or from 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.

Haiti-Peruvian Clothing Appeal: Kay McGerty thanks all who contributed to the success of their appeal. A container left Carrickmore during the past week.

Dean Maguirc College, Carrickmore presents a night of 'MUSICAL MEMORIES' on 13th, 14th and 15th April. Tickets available from the school office on (028) 8076 1272. Book early!

The Priests, with special guest Camilla Kerslake at Millennium Forum, Derry: Tuesday 15th June at 8.00pm. Tickets £19.50/£24.50/£29.50 Box Office: (028) 7126 4455.

Northern Ireland Hospice – Big Walk Week: Saturday 17th April to Saturday 24th April. Check nihospice.org.

Request from Brian Quin: "My name is Brian Quin. I live in Opunake in New Zealand. I'm trying to trace my family ancestry. I am led to believe that possibly my GG grandfather could have come from around Broughderg. His name was Stephen and two of his sons Charles and James headed down under in the 1800(s).I would be truly grateful if any Quin(s) in your parish or maybe a nearby parish could help. .I am planning a trip to your area in early May and we would love to talk to and share some of the Quin history here in NZ quinnee@xtra.co.nz

Our Parish cemeteries are special places providing a focus for our prayerful remembrance of the dead. Please cooperate in their maintenance and care with respect, dignity and honour. Remove flowers and wreaths that have withered. Please do not dump them anywhere in the graveyard. Monumental Sculptors who have completed their work should take rubble away and not dispose of it at the side of the cemetery.

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.

Lenten Messages

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.

Lenten sacrifice: Fridays in Lent are days of abstinence from meat for those of 14 years of age or older. Good Friday (2nd April) this year is also a day of fasting for those aged between 18 and 59, who are limited to one full meatless meal that day. Lent is also a time for voluntary acts of self-denial and acts of prayer and charity, which can include attending daily Mass, Scripture study, Stations of the Cross, almsgiving and showing mercy and kindness to others.

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.

Lenten Messages

The fourteen Stations of the Cross are as follows:

- I. Jesus is condemned to death: Leaving the house of Caiphass, where he had been blasphemed, and the house of Herod, where he had been mocked, Jesus is dragged before Pilate, his back torn with scourges, his head crowned with thorns; and he is condemned to a disgraceful death.
- II. Jesus is made to carry his cross: A heavy cross is laid on the bruised shoulders of Jesus. He receives it with meekness: it is the instrument with which he is to redeem the world.
- III. Jesus falls the first time: Bowed down under the weight of the cross, Jesus slowly sets forth on the way to Calvary amidst the mockeries and insults of the crowd. His agony in the garden has exhausted his body and he is sore from blows and wounds; his strength fails him and he falls to the ground under the weight of the cross.
- IV. Jesus meets his Blessed Mother: Still burdened by his cross and wounded by his fall, Jesus proceeds on his way. He is met by his Mother. What a meeting that must have been! What a sword of anguish must have pierced her heart!
- V. Simon of Cyrene is made to help Jesus carry his cross: As the strength of Jesus fails and he is unable to proceed, the soldiers seize Simon of Cyrene from the crowd and make him help Jesus. The virtue of that cross changed his cross and the compulsory task became a privilege and a joy.
- VI. Veronica wipes the face of Jesus: As Jesus continues on the way and covered with the sweat of death, a woman moved by compassion, makes her way through the crowd and wipes his face with a towel. As a reward of her piety, the impression of his sacred countenance is miraculously imprinted upon the towel.
- VII. Jesus falls the second time: The pain of the wounds and the loss of blood increasing with every step, again his strength fails him and Jesus falls to the ground a second time.
- VIII. The women of Jerusalem weep for Jesus: At the sight of the sufferings of Jesus, some holy women in the crowd were so touched with sympathy that they openly bewailed and lamented him. Jesus, knowing the things that were to happen to Jerusalem because of its rejection of him, turned to them and said: "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children."
- IX. Jesus falls the third time: Jesus had now almost arrived at the summit of Calvary, but before he reached the spot where he was to be crucified, his strength again fails him and falls the third time.
- X. Jesus is stripped of his garments: Having finally arrived at the place of crucifixion they prepared to crucify him. His garments are removed from his bleeding body and he stands naked before the people, while the soldiers cast lots to see who shall keep his garment.
- XI. Jesus is nailed to the cross: The cross is laid upon the ground and Jesus is stretched upon his bed of death. At one and the same time he offers his bruised body to his heavenly Father of behalf of all peoples, and to his executioners to be nailed by them to the wood.
- XII. Jesus dies on the cross: For three hours Jesus hung upon the cross, and in the midst of his sufferings he has forgiven those who condemned him, pardoned the good thief, and committed his Mother and the beloved disciple to each other's care. All is now consummated, and, bowing his head, he breathes his last.
- XIII. Jesus is taken down from the cross: The crowds have left Calvary and none remain except the beloved disciple and some holy women who support Jesus' blessed Mother. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus take down the lifeless body of Jesus and place it in his Mother's arms.
- XIV. Jesus is laid in the Sepulchre: The body of her Son is taken from his Mother and laid in the tomb belonging to Joseph of Arimathea. The tomb is closed and there the corpse remains until its glorious resurrection.

The traditional way of praying the Stations of the Cross in the church is to walk from station to station.

At each station one genuflects or bows and recites certain prayers which include an 'Our Father,' 'Hail Mary' and 'Glory Be to the Father.' People also pray the Stations at home using the same prayers and meditating for a moment on each station.

"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

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 Whittla 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'll post your tickets to you.) [Open seating will be 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 copies of them for the Centenary Display!

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.

Janet Shields (Dalriada Urgent Care) (028) 2566 3502

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.

Study Theology From Home: The Dominicans are offering a theology programme specifically for lay people, offered by distance learning. This means that one can study for a certificate, diploma or degree in theology, and even more importantly, become more educated in the Faith, all from the comfort of home. For more information contact The Priory Institute, Tallaght Village, Dublin 24, Tel: 00353 1404 8124/7 or email enquiries@prioryinstitute.com Visit our website www.prioryinstitute.com

This Week's Calendar of Saints

Thursday 1st April – St. Ceallach (Celsus) (bishop) Was born in 1080. He became abbot of Armagh in 1105 and was ordained priest. He was influenced by the reform then in progress in Munster. He presided at the synod of Rathbreasail in 1111. On a visitation of Munster in 1129 he died and is buried in Lismore in accordance at his own request. Not celebrated this year.

Sunday 4th April – St. Isidore (bishop and doctor of the Church) Not celebrated this year.

Questions people ask:

- Q. If Jesus was the Son of God how could he be forsaken by God the Father?
- A. Since Jesus loved his people to the utmost, he became the victim of sin. In so doing, he suffered the feeling of being forsaken, but in actual fact was not forsaken for one second by the Father ... nobody ever is, even the worst sinner. The sinner might have turned away from God but God does not forsake the sinner. There is always hope. No matter how God-forsaken one might feel, Jesus can be met there because he entered that experience of alienation in Gethsemane and on the cross. Since then it is no longer true that any life is God-forsaken. *Fr. Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap (silvesteroflynn@gmail.com)*

Lenten Messages

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. *trocaire.org*

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.

How to return to the church

- Q. I have two friends who left the Catholic Church years ago, one because he became disillusioned with a priest, and the other just stopped attending Mass. Now they both want to return but don't know how. Someone said they must go through the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults process, which doesn't make sense to me. Another said they must talk with a priest, make a good confession and that is all. I'm sure other former Catholics would also like to know how to come back. **(Maryland)**
- A. You are right. Many Catholics have departed from the practice of their faith and sometime later wish to return, but are discouraged because they envision some complicated process to do so. Most of us don't realise how hesitant and afraid Catholics can be who have been away, perhaps feel some guilt and frequently see themselves as somehow unworthy to be active in the church again. Encouragement and support from people such as you is invaluable. I thank you for being interested in their struggle, and I hope other Catholics who have friends like this will follow your example. The second person you refer to is basically correct. Theoretically, all one needs to do is return to the sacraments — penance and the Eucharist — and resume a prayer life and regular participation in the Mass. In practice, however, most of the time something more is at least helpful, if not practically necessary. If one has been away for a number of years, for example, much may have happened in the intervening time that is unfamiliar; they need to catch up. Particularly, anyone who has not been to Mass for the past 30 years or so will have missed many changes in the liturgies of the Mass and sacraments that will confuse them if they're not prepared. Perhaps most obviously, experiencing and trying to participate in the Mass in English will be puzzling unless someone helps them understand reasons for those changes and how they enhance and enrich our Catholic worship. Another factor in helping them return could be the reason they stopped living a Catholic life in the first place. A real or perceived injury suffered from a priest or other representative of the church, or just a serious misunderstanding, is the reason a huge number of Catholic people stay away, often for years. They need help in healing. Whatever the reason, I believe it is well worthwhile for "former" Catholics to meet with a parish priest or other parish minister to find out what is necessary and ease their return. Of course, a priest will also be able to help such individuals deal appropriately with other possible factors, previous marriages for example, that will necessarily be involved in renewing their practice of the Catholic faith.

Questions for this column may be sent to Father Dietzen at Box 3315, Peoria, IL 61651 or e-mail jjdietzen@aol.com

Catholic News Service

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. *Continued →*

"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?

"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'.

Continued →

"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)

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?

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).

Continued →

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.

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.

"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

MESSAGE FOR TWENTY-FIFTH WORLD YOUTH DAY VATICAN CITY, 4 MAR 2009 (VIS)

The Message of the Holy Father for twenty-fifth World Youth Day has just been published. The Day, which is due to be celebrated in all the dioceses of the world on Palm Sunday 28th March, has as its theme this year: "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

Extracts from the Message are given below:

"The present 25th Youth Day represents a stage on the journey towards the next World Youth Day, which will take place in August, 2011 in Madrid, Spain, where I hope many of you will come to experience that event of grace.

"To prepare ourselves for this celebration, I would like to suggest some reflections on this year's theme: "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?", taken from the Gospel account of Jesus' meeting with the rich young man, a topic already considered in 1985 by Pope John Paul II in a most beautiful Letter, addressed to young people for the first time".

1. Jesus Meets a Young Man

"The Gospel narrative effectively expresses Jesus' great concern for young people. ... His desire is to meet with you personally and establish a dialogue with each one of you".

2. Jesus Looked at Him and Loved Him

"In the evangelical narrative, St. Mark stresses how 'Jesus looking at him, loved him'. The Lord's gaze was at the core of that very special encounter, and of all Christian experience. In fact, Christianity is not primarily an ethic, but an experience of Jesus Christ Who loves us personally, young and old, poor and rich; He loves us even when we turn our backs on Him".

"The awareness that ... Christ loves everyone and always ... enables us to overcome any trial: ... sins, suffering or discouragement. In this love lies the source of all Christian life and the fundamental reason for evangelisation; for if we have truly found Jesus, we cannot but bear witness to Him to those people who have not yet encountered His gaze".

3. Discovering a Plan for Life

"The rich young man asks Jesus: 'What must I do?' The stage of life you are currently experiencing is a time of discovery: discovery of the gifts that God has lavished on you, and of your responsibilities. It is, moreover, a time of fundamental choices to create a plan for your lives. It is a moment, therefore, to question yourselves about the authentic meaning of existence and to ask: 'Am I satisfied with my life? Is there something lacking?'"

"Do not be afraid to address these questions! ... They await answers, answers that are not superficial but able to satisfy your authentic expectations of life and happiness. To discover the life plan that can make you fully happy, listen to God, Who has a plan of love for each one of you.

4. Come and follow me!

"The Christian vocation springs from a proposal of love from the Lord, and can only be fulfilled through a response of love. ... Dear friends, following the example of so many disciples of Christ, joyfully accept His invitation to follow, in order to live intensely and fruitfully in this world.

"The sadness of the rich young man of the Gospel is that which arises in the heart when a person does not have the courage to follow Christ, to make the right choice. However, it is never too late to respond to Him!

"In this Year for Priests, I would like to exhort boys and young men to be attentive as to whether the Lord is inviting them to a greater gift ... in ordained ministry, and generously and enthusiastically to make themselves ready to accept this sign of special predilection, undertaking with a priest or spiritual director the necessary path of discernment. Do not be afraid, dear young people, if the Lord calls you to the religious, monastic or missionary life, or to a life of special consecration: He is able to give profound joy to those who respond with courage.

"Moreover, I invite all those who feel the vocation to marriage to accept it with faith, committing themselves to laying solid foundations for a love that is great, faithful and open to the gift of life, which is a source of richness and grace for society and the Church".

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5. Oriented to Eternal Life

"To ask ourselves about the definitive future awaiting each of us gives full meaning to existence, because it orients our life plan toward horizons that are not limited or fleeting, but broad and profound; horizons which lead us to love the world so loved by God himself, to dedicate ourselves to its development, but always with the freedom and joy born of faith and hope. These horizons help us not to make absolute values of earthly realities, aware that God is opening greater prospects for us. ... Dear young people, I exhort you not to forget this perspective in your own lives: We are called to eternity".

6. The Commandments, the Way of Authentic Love

"Jesus also asks you if you know the commandments, if you are concerned to form your conscience according to divine law and if you will put it into practice. These are certainly questions that go against the tide of the present-day mentality, which presents freedom as disconnected from values, rules and objective norms, and invites us to reject any limitation to momentary desires".

"God gave us the commandments because He wants to educate us to true freedom, because He wants to build with us a Kingdom of love, justice and peace. To listen to them and to put them into practice does not mean to be alienated, but to find the path of authentic freedom and love, because the commandments do not limit happiness, but show how to find it".

7. We Have Need of You

"Young people today find themselves facing many problems arising from unemployment, and from the lack of solid ideals, and of concrete prospects for the future. ... Despite the difficulties, do not let yourselves be discouraged and do not give up your dreams! Rather, cultivate great desires of fraternity, justice and peace in your hearts. The future is in the hands of people who know how to seek and discover powerful reasons for life and hope"

"In my recent Encyclical 'Caritas in Veritate' on integral human development, I listed some of the great modern challenges, which are urgent and essential for the life of this world: the use of the resources of the earth, respect for ecology, the just division of wealth, the control of financial mechanisms, solidarity with poor countries, ... the struggle against hunger in the world, the promotion of the dignity of human work, service to the culture of life, the building of peace between peoples, inter-religious dialogue, and the correct use of the social communications media.

"These are challenges to which you are called to respond in order to build a more just and fraternal world; challenges that call for an exacting and passionate life plan, into which to pour all your richness according to the design that God has for each one of you".

"In this Year for Priests, I invite you to study the lives of the saints, especially those of saintly priests. You will see that God guided them and that they found their path day after day, in faith, hope and love. Christ calls each of you to commit yourselves, with Him, and to assume your responsibilities to build a civilisation of love".

MESS/WORLD YOUTH DAY/...

VIS 100316 (1270)

The Deep End – Online in Touch?

Who would think that the Internet is threatening the jury system! Well, it seems it is, according to England's most senior judge. The more people use the Internet, and the more people who use it, the fewer there are who get their information by listening. You go down the tubes and YouTube takes your place. So, sitting down for a long listen, concentrating on what's being said to evaluate its content may well become an art-form alien to a gadget-groping generation.

What, then, to make of today's first reading (Isa 50:4-7)? The Lord has given me the tongue of a teacher ... to sustain the weary with a word. Morning by morning he wakens my ear. Use the Internet to get that sustaining word across? Well, it would get it out for sure, but across is another matter entirely. Getting something across means getting it in. It means entering someone's mind with a thought, a value, an understanding, perhaps even a vision and leaving it there. It means penetrating someone's heart to lay a gift of life-giving inspiration, of uplifting hope, of reassurance of one's worth before God, but above all to lay down his gift of shared love. That's what a teacher's tongue can do, coming from the hand of God. That's what an ear can hear and a mind can comprehend when open to the Teacher's word. The question is: can that be done online? Should liturgy be in cyberspace, not sacred space? Would a virtual reality Palm Sunday skirt a real life Golgotha? The jury needn't be out too long on that.

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Seeing your life through the lens of the gospels – Luke 23:1-49:

This passage is a very rich one and it would be a mistake to attempt to pray each and every part of it. Almost every phrase has something new: actions, images, symbols, words. When you read the passage, stay with whatever part of it resonates with your own life, but make sure when you pray it that you stay with the passage until you get beyond the violence and the horror to find a good news lesson for you. A few specific points taken at random are:

1. In this scene of great tragedy, there are people helping others, either reluctantly or with compassion: Simon, the women of Jerusalem, the criminal on the cross, and Jesus himself. Note the differences in the manner in which the help's given (as a burden, with sympathy, etc). What has been your experience of helping and being helped?
2. Despite the persecution by the leaders Jesus still shows forgiveness. When have you seen that spirit of forgiveness in yourself or in others? In your experience what is the effect of a forgiving spirit ... or the absence of that spirit?
3. Towards the end there is a ray of light. Jesus says 'Father, into your hands I commend my spirit'. His relationship with his Father was one of trust, even at a moment like this. What difference has it made to you in times of difficulty or pain to have a relationship of trust with God, or with someone else?

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