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TEAM VICAR Rev. Kate Smedley 07763473943



Feast of the Presentation January 28th, 2024

The Week ahead:

Today	9.00am	Low Mass
	10.00am	Parish Mass. followed by Patronal Festival Parish Lunch cooked by Canon J
	4.30pm.	OPEN TABLE
	10.00am	West Park Writers
	Evening	Canon J wedding prep
	Am	Canon J with Area Dean
	12 noon	Chapter
	1.30pm	Children's Church
	2pm.	Canon J with Archdeacon
	6.30pm	Choir
Wednesday 31st	10.30am	Mass at St W.'s
	11.30am.	Mass at St P's
	1.30pm	School Meeting in the Parish Room
Thursday	7.00pm	Mass
1 st February		
Saturday 3rd	9,30am.	Mass for St Werburgh's Day
Sunday 4 th February	9am	Low Mass
	10am	Parish Mass

By name we pray for

Stewart Wharton, Iris George, Doris Blurton, Joe, Joan Pugh, Joshua, Margaret, Dulcie Morley, Brian Harbord, Michael Carey, Stephen Bowdler, Marie, Eric and Dorothy Boston, Brian Peake Joshua, Doran

RIP: Walter Lawrence, Joyce Herbert

This week's Gospel : Luke 2 : 22-40

When the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every firstborn male shall be designated as holy to the Lord"), and they offered a sacrifice according to what is stated in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons." Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; this man was righteous and devout, looking forward to the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Guided by the Spirit, Simeon came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him what was customary under the law, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying, "Master, now you are dismissing your servant in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel." And the child's father and mother were amazed at what was being said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to his mother Mary, "This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too." There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day.

At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. When they had finished everything required by the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him.

Canon J's Reflection

Question: Is there anywhere as depressing as a waiting room at the Royal Derby Hospital? It is without doubt one of the most unpleasant buildings its possible to imagine.

Whenever I go there I think somewhere there is an architect who got paid for designing waiting rooms with absolutely no privacy, no natural light, low ceilings, no air, confusing walk ways, you have to shout intimate details through plate glass at a receptionist so the entire room knows if you've had a bowel moment, there's one toilet shared between roughly 200 stressed patients and relatives, which by the way opens directly onto the waiting room, there's no wifi, no mobile signal, tellies everywhere that only show either Good Morning or Bargain Hunter and always the creeping concern that you'll have to re-mortgage to pay for the bloody parking, if you actually got a parking space. I really hate the DRI.

There is something about hospital waiting rooms where one finds oneself truly alone and also utterly powerless, so if there is one place in the world where you cannot escape yourself then it's a waiting room at the DRI. And not being able to escape yourself can get uncomfortable, but much as I try to avoid it, it's when I can't escape myself, that's when God speaks. When the distractions of life stop working and we are confronted by the reality of what's between our ears.

It's amazing how much crap in my life is caused by my inability to get what's in my head, out into the open. So much of the time my mind is like a sort of prison. I am held captive by my own anxiety and inner thoughts. "I'm a rubbish priest, I'm scared about my future, I'm so disorganised, I feel so isolated" Very often those thoughts are rooted in reality, I'd have to be an idiot as a priest in the church not to feel a bit flummoxed and a bit worried. It takes a lot of work for me to get what's in my head out there, even when it's something that I that I really want to share, like how important people are to me or how much I care... it takes a lot.

Simeon today says that Christ has come so that our inner thoughts will be revealed. But do you want your inner thoughts revealed? That's huge, that's pretty scary, knowing that God's grace will pierce our own soul. From the birth of Christ, God began a new movement in the world of getting the stuff that holds us captive in here, out there where it becomes liberation. A breaking down the wall between inside and outside.

The walls we construct are normally built around ideas of purity. It means when we are hurt by another, generally we can stay on the moral high ground, it's the other person who has cocked up, so they can be shamed.

I know this is really sacred stuff I'm talking about but being seen in our fullness, letting the inside get outside, that's the opposite of purity and it has nothing to do with shame. Purity is all about keeping things contained and bottled up. Purity codes crop up in every religion and every legal system and what they share at their core is the desire to keep things in their place through blame and shame and power. Most purity codes are about quite straight forward stuff to do with our bodies. Sex, bodily fluids, cleanliness and going to the loo. The other week I was working late and I hadn't noticed Cedric (my dog) had done a poo right up in front of the high altar. A few days later the present Cedric had left was discovered by Maia and the kids after mass.... WOW it was such an amazing discovery you'd have thought he'd done a golden poo...partly because it gave permission for the kids to say the word poo to me because its taboo.

Everybody here today has been to the loo, because its normal, but we keep what belongs inside inside you don't let it get outside. Purity codes like that are necessary and wouldn't be a big deal if they stayed with simple things like that poo, but they don't. Purity codes have a way of working their way into every facet of our lives. We are as a society extraordinarily sexualised and at the same time hypocritical in our purity codes around sex and intimacy. We are passing laws to keep the impure people out, its actually seen as a positive re-election strategy to spend vast sums of public money deporting people to Rwanda, a place your average Daily Mail racist doesn't care about anyway, treating human beings as if they're some kind of virus. Purity codes aren't a problem in school until nine year olds learn the power of calling someone a faggot ... and where do they learn that? The good news of today's Gospel is that God doesn't come to us through our attempts at purity, God comes to us in the midst of our brokenness and our vulnerability, which is why I hate the fact that today is also called the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The reason the Holy Family went to the temple that day was for a ritual that Mary had to undergo to make her pure after childbirth.

Blood that's supposed to stay inside gets outside in childbirth and its all part of the disgusting taboo around menstruation, which is at the heart of why women are still treated abominably in Church - the overwhelming masculinity of God, the subtle masculinity of language justified by tradition, the unchallenged historical degradation of women, let alone the disgusting reality that the majority of Christendom denies that women can be priests.

My problem is that Mary and Jesus go through with it. If Jesus, God, came to destroy our notions of purity, why didn't the angels come and tell the high priest that there was no reason for his mother to have to be purified? Why didn't Mary stand up and say that a system built on the very notion of blood leaving your body is obviously going to impact at least 50% of the population negatively?

But today's Gospel doesn't really have anything to do with that ritual. Sure, it says that they went through it, but it's a footnote. The stars of the story are these two: Anna and Simeon. When they see Jesus, the usual routine is interrupted. They have been waiting their whole lives for the Messiah, but when this snotty nosed baby enters the purity of the temple, everything changes. They have an epiphany. Maybe God's more like that baby than any of our rules that ensure we keep what's in our heads imprisoning us. Simeon doesn't say that salvation has come only if you believe correctly or only if you haven't cocked up (or been caught more like it) or are married properly or aren't gay or only if you identify with your birth gender or only if you have proper biblical values. Simeon says that salvation has come.

He also says this crazy thing about Jesus being the one who will reveal our hidden thoughts. Now I absolutely do not think that's about washing our laundry in public. I think it's about developing the self knowledge to know who we really are and knowing that's OK, even the stuff that isn't OK is OK. We've all got stuff we need to work on, work through, accept in ourselves, change and more often than not it's those of us who are most aggrieved or who point the finger who are most trapped by what's between our ears, but friends if God didn't send Jesus to condemn anyone then God really doesn't send us to condemn anyone. We're all works in progress, some of us in a bit of a pickle to be fair, but nobody here, absolutely nobody here, nor any single person you have ever met is outside the salvation Simeon proclaims. Just think about that That's pretty amazing.

Now God, let your servant depart in peace. Your Word has been fulfilled for our eyes have seen your salvation, which you have given to all people, a light that brings light to the whole world.

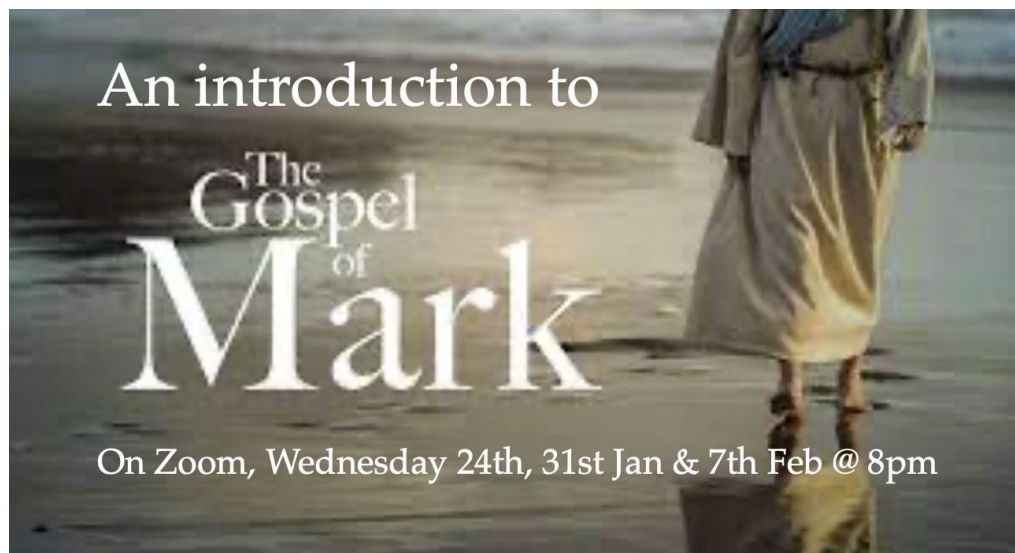


We celebrate Candlemas as our Patronal Festival as its the nearest Sunday to St Werburgh's Day.

Why not join us for lunch cooked by Canon J after Parish Mass

Sign up at the notice board.

LET CANON J KNOW ON SATURDAY
IF YOU JOIN IN OUR LUNCH.



We had a great first session, two more to come.
Just let Canon J know if you want to join in.

Friends last week I put this notice in the newsletter and I have had almost no response. Can you please let me know this week if you want any input at all for Lent.

LENT begins in a couple of weeks. It's always difficult to work out what people actually want to help them journey through Lent. Can you let Canon J know if you'd like any of the following:

- Clergy led (or not) Lent group on zoom or in person
- Stations of the Cross on Saturday afternoon
- Kids worship on a Sunday afternoon (with food)
- An app to access from our phone



Thanks to those who came to hear about our India link and the staff from school who are going to work there. More news in the weeks ahead!

West Park



Writers' Group

*Do you have imagination?
Do you have a pen or pencil?*

*Have you ever wanted to write
or wondered whether you could?*

Why not come and give it a try? New doors may open
for you!

We are a friendly informal group who meet every
Monday morning 10.30am-12.30pm in the Parish Room
of St Werburgh's Church in Spondon.

We have a different workshop every week (presented by
a volunteer group member) on a great variety of
subjects; occasional guest speakers; unthreatening
competitions judged by professional writers. We may
do stories, poems, non-fiction - anything that stimulates
our imagination.

No previous experience is required

For more information ring Bron Rees on 01332 666972
or
leave a message and she will get back to you.

Sunday Rotas to 30th June

Hard copies of these rotas are also available in church.

Sunday	Welcome Team	Reader	Intercessions	Chalice
28/01 Candlemas	2	Joan	-	Stella & Trevor
4/02 2nd before Lent	3	Stella	Rev Eleanor	Charlotte F & Caroline F
11/02 next before Lent	4	Ann Hunt	Karen N	Rob N & James E
18/02 Lent 1	5	Fr Stephen	Joan	Rob L & Molly
25/02 Lent 2	6	Carly	Tess	Fr Harold & Caroline Morris
3/03 Lent 3	7	Granville	Stella	Keith & Janette
10/03 Mothering Sunday	Kids	Charlotte and Dora	-	Kate L & Autumn
17/03 Passion Sunday	8	Angela Pegg	Fr Harold	Lily M & Joe
24/03 Palm Sunday	(1 at school) 3 at Church	Trevor Salt	-	Noah K & Edward F
31/03 EASTER DAY	2	Molly	-	Rachael Dean & James E
7/04 Low Sunday	3	Robert N	-	-
14/04 Easter 3	4	Christine Woodhams	Fr Stephen	Rob L and Karen M
21/04 Easter 4	5	Jack Flint	Robert N	Jack & Carlotte Flint
28/04 Easter 5	6	Trevor Salt	Kate L	Keith & Janette

5/05 Easter 6	7	Angela Pegg	Fr Paul	Caroline F & Caroline Mordecai
12/05 Visit by Bishop Libby	-	Rachael Dean	Edward F	Lily Mordecai & Dorian Kröhl
19/05 PENTECOST	1	Caroline Morris	-	James E & Joan
26/05 TRINITY	2	Rob Laycock	Joan	Kate L & Autumn
2/06 T1	3	Karen Norton	Christine Woodhams	Caroline Morris & Fr Stephen
9/06 T2	4	Rev Eleanor	Stella	Fr Paul & Joe
16/06 T3	5	Kate L	Fr Stephen	Trevor & Stella
23/06 T4	6	Edward F	Karen N	Robert & Karen N
30/06 T5	7	Fr Harold	Rev. Eleanor	Fr Harold & Caroline F

IF IN DOUBT CHECK WITH CANON J BY EMAIL

If a date isn't possible can you try and arrange with someone else and change the rota.

WELCOME TEAMS:

1. Joan, Rob L
2. Tom & Sandra,
3. Pauline & Elaine
4. Jeanne & Mary
5. Louise S & Kathy
6. Autumn & Kate L
7. Sue & Kate L
8. Tess & Joan

So what is the Feast of Candlemas all about?

Candlemas commemorates the ritual purification of Mary, 40 days after the birth of her son Jesus. This day also marks the ritual presentation of the baby Jesus to God in the Temple at Jerusalem.

The Gospel of Luke says that Jesus was met by Anna and Simeon. Simeon held the baby Jesus and called him a Light to the World.

Ritual purification stems back to a Jewish tradition that women were considered unclean after the birth of a child. For 40 days for a boy, and 60 days for a girl, women weren't allowed to worship in the temple. At the end of this time, women were brought to the Temple or Synagogue to be purified. After the ceremony women were allowed to take part in religious services again. (It's important to say that this has NOTHING to do with why we now celebrate Candlemas and this view of women is a deeply negative understanding that still affects Christendom)

The festival is called Candlemas because this was the day that all the Church's candles for the year were blessed. On Candlemas night, many people used to place lighted candles in their windows at home.

Like some other Christian festivals, Candlemas draws some of its elements from Paganism.

In pre-Christian times, it was the festival of light. This ancient festival marked the mid point of winter, half way between the winter solstice (shortest day) and the spring equinox. Some people lit candles to scare away evil spirits on the dark winter nights. People believed that Candlemas predicted the weather for the rest of the winter.

*If Candlemas Day be fair and bright
Winter will have another fight.
If Candlemas Day brings cloud and rain,
Winter won't come again.*

For some people, different superstitions surround this festival. For instance, if a candle drips on one side when carried in church on Candlemas, this denotes a death of a family member during the year. If someone brings snowdrops into the house on Candlemas day it symbolises a parting or death. The Crib should be left up until Candlemas Day and then taken down.



Parish Mass 10am May 12th

Friends here's a date that's a long time away, but please mark it in your diary. On May 12th Bishop Libby, our Diocesan Bishop, is making a visitation to the parish to celebrate Parish Mass with us and very importantly she is going to consecrate our new nave altar, which we had crafted during the pandemic.

This is the first time in over 600 years that an altar has been consecrated in our church and so both historically this is really special and looking forward our nave altar will be a focus in our community for generations to come.

Please put this date in your diary, it will be a very, very special occasion so come and join together with Bishop Libby on this important morning.

Great love, Canon Julian