



ESKER REDEMEPTORISTS

February 14th – 20th
Our trust in God

Fixing his eyes on his disciples Jesus said: “How happy are you who are poor; yours is the kingdom of God. Alas for you who are rich; you are having your consolation now”. Isn’t this a very difficult teaching to accept, even when we know that it comes from Jesus? And because it is difficult, we can tend to ignore it and go on our way. Obviously Jesus is not promoting poverty. Rather he is saying that when we are poor we know that we depend on God. When we have riches we put our trust in them even though in reality we still depend totally on God for everything including our next breath. The task of every human person is to let go of our self-importance and enter into the wonderful love relationship God wants to have with us. We will then use our resources, material and spiritual, for the well-being of each other.

Turn away from sin - be faithful to the Gospel
Wednesday next, Ash Wednesday, we begin Lent 2010. It is nothing new — it is as old as the Church itself, it is part of the Church. The length of it and the externals of it have changed over the centuries, but it has always been in the Church.

It is the 40-day period of penance in preparation for Easter. On its own it has no meaning — it is not an end in itself, it leads somewhere. It leads to the Paschal feast and so can be rightly understood only in the light of Easter.

We must always remember that Easter is the foundation-feast of the Church; it brings to mind the basic facts on which the very existence and life of the Church rests. We must remember too that the Christian religion is not a mere collection of doctrines and moral precepts; it is the great action, uniting us to God through Christ. Christ, the Son of God, lived on this earth and then on Good Friday He died on the Cross only to rise again to new life on Easter Sunday. That is the heart of our religion, of our salvation. But it was not only something personal to Jesus — this Redemption won by Christ was made available to all those who wanted it. The entry to it was through the Sacrament of Baptism. And so every baptised Christian has, so to speak, been inserted into Christ, sharing in His Death and Resurrection.

So, you can see now that Lent is not something like remembering 1916 or the Battle of the Boyne, some past event alive only in the history books and the memories of people. The celebration we prepare for at Lent is a reliving of the mystery of Redemption in all its fullness which means renewing in us the power of the Redemption - renewing in us the life won for us by Jesus Christ in his Death and Resurrection. It is for you and me and every other member of the People of God, the Church. Lent is a collective retreat of the whole Church; a time of renewal for all.

Each year then we ought to see our Lent in an old and also a new way. We should see how it leads to our own Easter. Christianity contains stubborn sanities, those reminders of our weakness and sinfulness, of our coming glory through the Cross of redemption.

So, beginning next Wednesday, God leads His people back to their roots. It is the time to join our Leader, Jesus Christ in His journey to the Cross and ultimately to Easter. He brings us with Him. It can be painful and uncomfortable unless we enter it in the right spirit. It is a time for realism.

Weekly Masses Special Remembrance

Mon. 15th Feb. to Sun. 20th. 2010

Mass at 8.00 and 10.00 each morning, Monday to Friday, is offered for all those whose names are on the list of Mass intentions. If you wish to have someone mentioned specifically - for an anniversary, a recent death, an illness - please leave the name at the Reception Office.

In the Novena Masses on Saturday at 8.00 and 10.00 we remember especially all those who have sent in petitions and those attending the Novena.

Mon. 10 am: Jane & Edward Egan R.I.P.
Sonny Gardiner

Tues. 10 am: Tom & Margaret Gleeson R.I.P.

Sat. 10 am: Kitty Larkin R.I.P.

THE SICK

Please pray for
Fr. Brian Foley,
Fr. Seán Mullin,
Mossie Whelan,
Bro. Nicholas Healy

ASH WEDNESDAY

FEBRUARY 17TH

During the coming week:

In The Retreat House:

Feb. 19-21: Net Ministry Athenry

Feb. 19-21: Prayer weekend - St. Alphonsus

Feb. 21: Clonfert Pioneers

In The Youth Village:

Feb. 18-19: Athenry Orchestra Camp

Parish Missions & Novenas in Ireland & Abroad.

Feb 13-20: Collooney Parish Mission.

Feb 20-27: Clonard Parish Mission,
Wexford

Feb 20-27: Ballygawley Parish Mission.

Feb 20-27: Portlaoise Parish Mission.

Feb 20-27: Solohead & Oola Parish
Mission, Co. Tipperary.

*Please share in this Redemptorist
Apostolic Work by praying for its success.*

Suggestions for Ash Wednesday to make it meaningful.

Be generous today; help someone in need.

Look for ways to be helpful throughout the day.

Do a job that needs being done without being asked.

Be courageous; walk away from any backbiting situations today.

Always be doing something for others or for your own spiritual growth.

Go out of your way today to help or talk to someone who is usually difficult.

Volunteer for an extra job today.

Say a Rosary today for someone fighting a compulsion.

Visit someone who is sick or lonesome today. Offer to say the Rosary with them.

Our Baptism - our entrance into the Church

The key to understanding the meaning of Lent is simple: Baptism. Christian Baptism is, according to the Bible, an outward testimony of what has occurred inwardly in a believer's life. Christian Baptism illustrates and causes the believer's identification with Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. The Bible declares, "Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life" (Romans 6:3-4). The Christian's spiritual life begins in Baptism. Our Baptism is the entrance into the Church and its life. We are radically transformed in Baptism. The other six sacraments follow it and are only meaningful for those who have acquired the **new life**.

Preparation for Baptism and for renewing Baptismal commitment lies at the heart of the season. Since the Second Vatican Council, the Church has re-emphasized the Baptismal character of Lent, especially through its Lenten rituals. Our challenge today is to renew our understanding of this important season of the Church year and to see how we can integrate our personal practices into this renewed perspective.

Why is Baptism so important in our Lenten understanding? Lent as a 40-day season developed in the fourth century from three merging sources. The first was the ancient paschal fast that began as a two-day observance before Easter but was gradually lengthened to 40 days. The second was the catechumenate as a process of preparation for Baptism, including an intense period of preparation for the Sacraments of Initiation to be celebrated at Easter. The third was the Order of Penitents, which was modeled on the catechumenate and sought a second conversion for those who had fallen back into serious sin after Baptism. As the catechumens (candidates for Baptism) entered their final period of preparation for Baptism, the penitents and the rest of the community accompanied them on their journey and prepared to renew their Baptismal vows at Easter. Lent, then, is radically Baptismal.

Every year at the Easter Vigil celebration the Christian community renews its Baptismal Promises. It is a time for spiritual stocktaking - for seeking God's forgiveness for past failures and seeking His help to amend its sinful ways in the future.

