

This Month's Liturgy; March 2023

To keep a true Lent.....

We have already had the two gospels taken from Matthew's account of the TEMPTATION of Jesus (1st Sunday) and TRANSFIGURATION of Jesus (2nd Sunday) – these are the themes of the first two Sundays of Lent every year of the 3 year Cycle; Jesus is tempted to make his Ministry serve Him for his own comfort (' tell the stones to turn into loaves of bread ' on the first Sunday of Lent) and then he is glimpsed by the Apostles Peter, James and John as the fulfillment and perfection of the Law and Prophets of the old covenant – as represented by Moses and Elijah who were talking to him on the mountain about his 'passing' , his death and resurrection which was to take place at Jerusalem. Sacramentally and ritually we commemorate and celebrate this 'passing' in the annual Triduum of Holy Thursday, Good Friday and the great Vigil and First Mass of Easter which is celebrated on the evening of Holy Saturday.

This year we have the Gospel of Saint John to accompany us on the latter Sundays of Lent which lead us through this month of March. They will speak to us of LIVING WATER (3rd Sunday) , RESTORATION OF TRUE SIGHT (4th Sunday) and then the restoration of LIFE for LAZARUS (5th Sunday). They are beautiful texts which accompany those who are preparing for their Baptism at Easter – they speak of Jesus who relieves and fulfills our deepest yearnings, who enables us to see and recognise the actions of God in his world each and every day , and who gives us the renewal and perfection of life.

For those of us who have already received the Sacrament of Baptism – be it recently or be it some years ago (!) – we are invited to accompany, to walk alongside those preparing for their Baptism at Easter. We all need to be constantly renewed in the areas of our life which are highlighted in these Gospel passages – coming to Jesus who will quench our thirst and our longing for those things which are true and eternal, being able to perceive and have insight into the actions of God in our daily living , and cherishing a life which is no mere existence but a full and loving response to the gifts which we have received from God's loving providence. Therefore these Sunday Gospels are shared with all of us as we gather for Mass so that we can reflect on them and then put them into practice, nourished by the 'food for the journey' which is Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.

What is it to keep a good and true Lent? To grow and deepen in our knowledge , love and service.

Have a blessed Lent

Father Philip