



**TIMES OF THE LITURGY**

**Sunday** - 7.45am - Lauds | 8.15am - Low Mass | 9.15am - Dominican Rite Mass (Extraordinary Form) | 11am - Sung Conventual Mass | 6pm - Low Mass | 7pm - Vespers.

**Monday - Friday** - 7am - Lauds | 7.30am - Conventual Mass | 6.15pm - Devotions and Meditation | 6.30pm - Vespers | c.6.50pm - Stations of the Corss. [N.B. First Fridays of the month, Vespers in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament with a period of Adoration from 6.15pm.]

**Saturday** - 9am - Lauds | 9.30am - Conventual Mass | 4.30-6pm - Confessions | 6.15pm - Sung Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary | 6.30pm - Vespers.

**THIS WEEK**

- Sun 28 **EASTER V**
- Mon 29 **St Catherine of Siena**
- Tue 30 **St Pius V**
- Wed 1 **St Joseph the Worker**
- Thu 2 **St Athanasius**
- Fri 3 **Sts Philip & James**
- Sat 4 **The English Martyrs**
- Sun 5 **EASTER VI**



Lauds, Mass, and Vespers are broadcast daily on Radio Maria. To listen visit:

<https://radiomariaengland.uk/>

**SUPPORT US**

Our ministry relies on the generosity of our friends and supporters. If you would like to support us make a donation in the cloister, visit our website, or speak to or email the bursar, Fr Albert.

[cambpriorybursary@english.op.org](mailto:cambpriorybursary@english.op.org)

A lecture by Fr Gregory Pine, OP  
**IS IT POSSIBLE  
TO BE PERFECT?**

Wednesday, 1 May, 7pm,  
at Our Lady of the Assumption  
& the English Martyrs.

HELP NEEDED WITH OUR  
ROSE GARDEN!

Ten new roses have been purchased for the rose garden, but help is needed preparing the garden.

If you can spare some time, please phone

Helen Ross (07803 619 215)  
or Zlata Vrabc (07769 745 014).



Please so not use the surgery car park during the week since it can be very difficult for staff to find parking spaces when they arrive at work if people attending morning Mass at Blackfriars take up parking spaces.

The Dominican Youth Movement are holding a study week called "A Vision for Life: Introduction to Catholic Theology" from 9th to 13th July. Led by a team of Dominican friars and sisters and set in the beautiful grounds of Douai Abbey, the study week offers a systematic overview of Catholic Theology for students and young adults (18-35). It is especially aimed at those seeking to make sense of theology, and integrate it into a sustainable vision of Catholic life. There will be talks, workshops, and discussions, as well as liturgy, walks, and time for personal prayer. For more information and to register, please contact <dym@english.op.org>.

On Saturday 4 May, 9.30 am – 4 pm, at Wesley House (Jesus Lane), the Margaret Beaufort Institute is leading a study day on Eucharistic Prayer. If you are interested in attending the day, please go to <www.mbit.cam.ac.uk/event/study-day-on-the-eucharistic-prayer/> and email Dr Anna Abram at <aa2008@mbit.cam.ac.uk> so that she can book you as her guests, free of charge.

The May edition of the Catholic East Anglia magazine should be available from next week. If you would like to view a digital copy, please visit <www.rcdea.org.uk/first-chance-to-read-the-may-catholic-east-anglia/>

Anointing Fire Catholic Ministries invites you to a Spirit-filled afternoon on Saturday 4 May at Our Lady of Lourdes, Sawston, 4-7pm. There will be Praise & Worship, Talks, Adoration and Healing Ministry, with Br Sales Sebastian, a Catholic Lay Evangelist. Everyone welcome; free parking. More info available from Janeth on 07404 241123.

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## HUMOUR & THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Here's how I began my homily at my father's funeral.

***'My father was seeing me off once when I returned to our Priory in Oxford. We took the bus into town, so I could catch the train. An old man came on to the bus, and fumbled with his change as he paid his fare. My dad said to me, 'I object to these old people coming on buses and wasting every ones time. They shouldnae, (shouldn't) let anyone on a bus who is over seventy.' 'Excuse me Father', I replied in my most serious voice, 'Am I not correct in thinking that you are seventy five years old?' A lesser man would have been crushed by the force of my argument, but not my dad. 'Aye, well they should ban everyone who is over seventy in their head.'***

What would you think of that? Does it seem an appropriate way of starting a funeral homily? There isn't a simple answer to that. It depends on the time and place, and certainly in Scotland, there is a tradition of jokes about death, which might not go down so well elsewhere. In fact I moved on from that to the rest of the homily, by saying, 'He took a long time to become over seventy in his head, but it still happened.' So a change of tone, but not, I would suggest, a move to something more serious. G K Chesterton replies in an essay to Joseph McCabe, a former Franciscan who lost his faith and became a campaigner for atheism. In Chesterton's book, *Heretics*, he replies to McCabe complaining that Chesterton is not taking things seriously, because he is trying to be funny. Gilbert Keith, replies to this as follows:

***'Mr. McCabe thinks that I am not serious but only funny, because Mr. McCabe thinks that funny is the opposite of serious. Funny is the opposite of not funny, and of nothing else.'***

Chesterton argues, quite rightly I think, that humanity as a whole tends to make jokes about important things, rather than trivial things, so that he says,

***'If there is one thing more than another which any one will admit who has the smallest knowledge of the world, it is that men are always speaking gravely and earnestly and with the utmost possible care about the things that are not important, but always talking frivolously about the things that are. Men talk for hours with the faces of a college of cardinals about things like golf, or tobacco, or waistcoats, or party politics. But all the most grave and dreadful things in the world are the oldest jokes in the world — being married; being hanged.'***

The comedian Andy Hamilton remarked that when he read the whole bible in preparation for his radio series, where he played the Devil, 'Old Harry's game', he noticed that there weren't any jokes. I would make a distinction between formal jokes and humour. Imagine if there were jokes with punchlines, which we would have to listen to every year. That would be horrific and would challenge anyone's faith. Humour is different because humour is always a story, and both comedy and tragedy bring us more deeply into life. The bible is full of humour, and jokes of a kind, but they are never trivial jokes.

A good example is the story of Abraham and Sarah, when they have Isaac as their child. When God tells Abraham that his wife Sarah will bear a son, Abraham laughs. The word for laugh in Hebrew is to give Isaac his name, since it means, 'he laughs'. Sarah laughs too at the idea but is embarrassed when she is found out and tries to deny it. Laughter is of its nature something that is shared, and this is what Sarah discovers, when she says,

***Now Sarah said, "God has brought laughter for me; everyone who hears will laugh with me" (Genesis 21:6).***

Very true, but Sarah then contradicts her own wisdom, because when she hears the son of the slave woman Hagar and Abraham, Ishmael, laughing with her son Isaac, she demands that she and her son be sent away. Some translations say that the son of Hagar is mocking, others that he is playing with Isaac, but the word is 'laughing' and the point is that Sarah does not understand her own words. Laughter can drive people out of the community or cut them off

from communicating. This is what happens to St Paul in Athens, when he speaks of the Resurrection, and the people of Athens laugh and go away. This does not stop laughter being a great bonding force too. Laughter is infectious, and also illuminating. We understand better when we laugh. The mistake the people of Athens make is to laugh at the Resurrection as something ludicrous, presumably for them the aspiration was to escape the body and enter a world of pure spirit. There is a joke here, since the reason they wanted to hear St Paul is because they think he is introducing new Gods, since he speaks of Jesus and the Resurrection, both of which they take to be the names of pagan Gods. Yet there is something funny about the Resurrection of the body, because it seems strange that we should live forever in these annoying and very limited clumps of matter. But God hates nothing that he has made, (Wisdom 11:24).

Humour may divide then but it also arouses a desire for unity. When people laugh at something we do not understand, we want to know why, to know what they know. Here is an example of humour from the Gospel of St Matthew then, where we see that those with greater knowledge or a wider and deeper perspective on life can, by humour, lead us into that knowledge. In Matthew 17, Vs 24 to 27, just after Our Lord has predicted his death and rising again from the dead, they come to Capernaum. Peter is asked if his master pays the temple tax. From the high moment of Christ's prediction, we are back in the world of money and Peter is obviously worried. He goes into the house where Jesus is, but before he can raise this practical problem, Our Lord asks him a question.

***"What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tribute? From their children or from others?" When Peter said, "From others," Jesus said to him, "Then the children are free" (Matthew 17:25-26).***

This does not seem very relevant to Peter's problem, but it is good teaching. Then Our Lord tells Peter to catch a fish and he will find a coin in its mouth, which will pay the tax for them both, though only in order to avoid scandal. I think Christ is at his most godlike here. A serene confidence of one who knows that not a sparrow falls to the ground without the Father knowing, (Matthew 10:29). Peter is at his most human, forgetting the Sermon on the Mount and the command not to worry. The gospel does not record what happened when he caught the fish, but I don't doubt that he laughed. In his laughter, he understood Jesus a little better, and in doing so, he understood God a little better, and he understood himself a little better. Laughter is how we grow, but here is another perfectly serious warning from Chesterton,

***'We do not merely love ourselves more than we love duty; we actually love ourselves more than we love joy.'***

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## THE PRIORY OF ST MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

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*<<https://www.blackfriarscambridge.org.uk/mass-service-times/request-a-mass/>>*