



**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. [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 5 **EASTER VI**
- Mon 6 *feria*
- Tue 7 *feria*
- Wed 8 *feria*
- Thu 9 **THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD**
- Fri 10 St Antoninus of Florence
- Sat 11 **The English Martyrs**
- Sun 12 **EASTER VII**



**THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD**

*Thursday 9 May - A holy day of Obligation.*

7am - Lauds | 7.30am - Conventual Mass | 6.15pm - Devotions and Meditation | 6.30pm - Vespers | 7.30pm Mass (Dominican Rite)



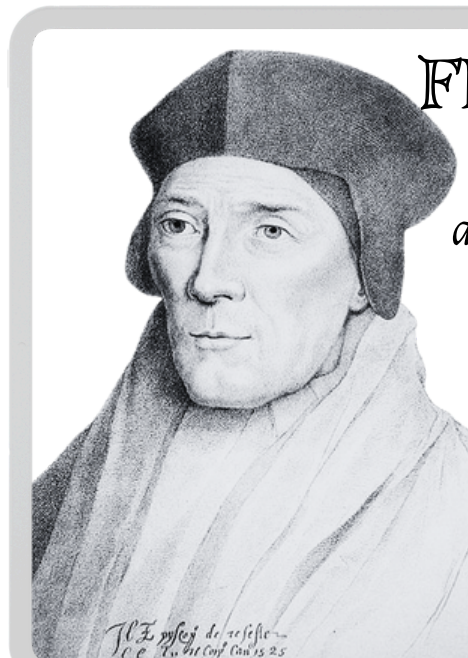
Lauds, Mass, and Vespers are broadcast daily on Radio Maria. To listen visit:

<https://radiomariaengland.uk/>

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



**FISHER MASS**

*Monday 6 May, 12 noon,  
at The University Church.*

**CARDINAL**

**VINCENT**

**NICHOLS**

*Celebrant and Preacher.*

# WALSINGHAM PILGRIMAGE

SUNDAY 19 MAY

DOMINICAN PROVINCIAL PILGRIMAGE.

For details of lifts and additional information, please see  
the poster in the cloister.



On Sunday 2nd June, there will be a Corpus Christi procession in the garden, followed by a garden party. We hope you are able to join us and share a picnic lunch.

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>.

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 Vrabec (07769 745 014).

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## HUMOUR AS A VIRTUE

Every so often, an article or even a book will appear in Catholic circles about the supposedly forgotten virtue of humour or playfulness. This is often referred to by the Greek word, *Eutrapelia*. I am not sure why. Perhaps it is because the word sounds rather pleasant, but I think it is probably because the virtue is different from merely having a sense of humour. That is a quality which some people have to the point where they know how to be funny, most people have to the extent that they can understand a joke, but as the internet has revealed, some people are so lacking that they don't seem to know what a joke is. *Eutrapelia* is not a sense of humour as such but an attitude to other people.

This is not quite how St Thomas Aquinas sees the virtue. He refers it to play, 'ludus' in the *Summa Theologiae*, in Question 169, from the *Secunda Secundae*, the second part of the second part of the *Summa*, where he deals with virtues. He is aware of the Greek word, 'eutrapelia', and quotes it from Aristotle, but justifies the virtue from a quotation from St Augustine. As regards the virtue, he says that the Philosopher, (Aquinas' customary term for Aristotle) posits a virtue of *eutrapelia* regarding games or play, which we call *iucunditas*.

The quotation which Aquinas takes from St Augustine moves away from Aristotle's thought on the virtue. From Augustine on music, is the following quotation:

***'I want to spare you nevertheless, for it is fitting for the wise person to sometimes remit their focus on the things they are bent on doing.'***

Aquinas follows this line in his reasoning about Eutrapelia by concentrating on the idea of relaxation, which was certainly a theme of Latin philosophers. If you try too hard then you fail. For Aquinas, play is about relaxation, which serves the intellectual life in particular.

However, this is not where Aristotle sees the main point of humour, or its purpose. Aquinas had written a commentary on Aristotle's Ethics, 'The Nichomachean ethics', and while he is aware of what Aristotle is saying, he shows that he is more interested in play as a kind of relaxation. Aristotle sees it more in terms of our relationship to others, and our attitude to them. As always, Aristotle sees a virtue in terms of a middle ground between two extremes. This theory of virtue is, to my mind, often misunderstood. The middle ground is not a point in a spectrum, but a point where opposite concerns are reconciled. The brave person is someone who like the coward wishes to preserve his life and wellbeing, but like the rash person, knows that simply running away is not the best way of doing this. Sometimes we have to risk our life, for the sake of the good, but the rash person risks their life without considering if it is truly for the sake of the good. For Aristotle, playfulness is a matter of wanting to give other people pleasure. This is a virtue if it shows some concern for whether others want to have this pleasure, so that the one extreme is the one who makes jokes without regards for others, becoming at worse not only inappropriate but a mere mocker. The other extreme is perhaps a sort of morose character who does not only lack a sense of fun, but causes pain to others by his lack of humour.

***'But the lout (agroicos) is useless at these conversations, contributing nothing and making everyone uncomfortable. Nevertheless, recreation and jest seem to be necessary for human life.'* Nichomachean Ethics, Book 4, Chapter VIII.**

Conversation in the above quotation is more than just talking to each other. It is rather the interaction between human beings that makes life liveable. It is a way that people reach others, and so for Aristotle it is necessary. He is aware though, that some people may lack the capacity to be humorous, but what makes humourlessness a vice, is when it comes from an indifference to others emotional wellbeing. Aquinas would not disagree with this, and he speaks of a virtue called Affabilitas, which gives us the modern word, Affability, which is for him a sort of justice, since it is the ability to speak to other people in the right way, to be pleasant to them, and he mentions smiling at people as a way of being affable.

Aristotle in another work, the Eudemian Ethics, says that friendship is a part of the larger virtue of justice. Aquinas did not know this work, which is perhaps just as well, because he puts friendship under the virtue of Caritas or love. This enables him to see friendship with other people as a natural effect of friendship with God, the fullest meaning of Caritas. I think this is why Aquinas seizes on rest as the key point of playfulness. In this life, friendship with God is demanding, as we have no vision of God and are affected by the effects of Original Sin. We need

to rest from time to time, so that we can more fully give ourselves to contemplation of God and the great things of God, (Acts 2:11). Aristotle is more concerned with human society and would only see religion as indirectly contributing to community. That humanity was called to a great destiny of eternal friendship with God and with all those rational beings who will share in the love of God, was beyond his imagination.

There is a problem with Eutrapelia, at least the word, which is that St Paul seems to condemn it as a sin. He does this in Ephesians 5:4, but in the context he is clearly thinking of mockery and obscenity but he does use the word 'eutrapelia'. This is not so far from Aristotle, who remarks that the earlier comedies had been much more obscenity than later comedies. Always for Aristotle, humour is about perception of other people, which is why he calls eutrapelia, a cultured hubris, in his work on Rhetoric. Hubris is a Greek concept which goes with a sense of physical fitness, a sort of rude health, and in the Rhetoric, Aristotle sees the young as particularly prone to humour. But it has to be a cultured, or educated hubris. This culture is the way that people understand each other. Humour can be a sort of violence or abuse, but I don't think this is the real point of humour. The key to good humour is that when someone makes a joke, they are actually complimenting us on our ability to understand. This is why the clever joke usually gets the biggest laugh, where we all feel flattered by the suggestion that we would get it. Humour, or play are therefore ways of making us feel that we are together. So a good example of that sort of humour is in St Paul, when he refers to himself in the 2nd Epistle to the Corinthians.

***I myself, Paul, appeal to you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ-- I who am humble when face to face with you, but bold toward you when I am away! (2 Corinthians 10:1).***

That is a lovely moment. St Paul may well have been quite shy in person, as many writers are, but he shows that he knows what his beloved Corinthians are thinking. His letters are stern, but he is doing this on behalf of the gentleness of Christ. He mocks himself, but the point is well made, and I hope the Corinthians laughed. In laughter, we become more than ourselves, we become truly part of each other.

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## THE PRIORY OF ST MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

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