

# ParishMonthly

Our Lady & All Saints Catholic Church, Otley

[www.olasotley.org](http://www.olasotley.org)

MARCH 2017



## A Lenten Reflection

Journey to Christ

**My** earliest memories of what Lent actually meant to me as a child are of the Good Shepherd collection at primary school, when throughout Lent we were encouraged to bring in a penny, each day or each week, which gave us a small part of a big picture. It was only at the end of Lent that all those small parts made up the entire picture of tiny children in Africa. And, of course, revealed the real purpose of giving up our pennies. More than half a century later experts agree that world hunger need not exist: that the world produces more than enough food to go around. The sad fact is we simply don't share this abundance fairly, with so much waste in one part of the world and so little to eat in another. Hence the continuing need for Family Fast Day,

In his message for Lent this year, Pope Francis talks about Lent being a perfect time for "opening doors to all those in need and recognising in them the face of Christ". He also urges "Lent is a fitting time for self-denial; we would do well to ask ourselves what we can give up in order to help and enrich others by our own poverty. Let us not forget that real poverty hurts: no self-denial is real without this dimension of penance"

Caroline Farrow, writing in the Universe recently, referred to a 3-day fast she

was undertaking in solidarity with persecuted Christians in the Middle East.

His Holiness himself regularly talks of "solidarity" and the many ways we can show this with others who are in need, particularly through prayer. Perhaps Lent offers us the opportunity to add to prayer the practical support in terms of financial contributions. It might be argued that simply "giving up" cake or chocolate or whatever is of little value unless what we save is shared with those much less fortunate than ourselves.

But Lent can also offer us time to re-evaluate our lives, to seek and find what is missing. Joyce Rupp OSM in her book "Fresh Bread and Other Gifts of Spiritual Nourishment" writes, "Lent can be a searching out and a restoration time, and the means for renewed direction and perspective. If we look closely into our hearts we will find that we have all lost something we value ... We may have lost our integrity, our capacity to understand and accept ... or perhaps our desire to pray. Sometimes we are not even sure what we have lost ... but something gnaws at our insides ... a restlessness, a feeling of not being at

home with ourselves ... an inner ache that won't go away."

Lent is a time to come to know the One who continually seeks **us** out and finds us". I think this could be an interesting variance on a more usual focus and certainly requires us to give up time spent on other pursuits, watching television or whatever, in order to devote to this very personal spiritual searching.

However we define Lent, and whether we opt for giving up something and donating whatever is saved to CAFOD, or doing something extra, perhaps spiritual reading or occasional daily Mass attendance, Pope Francis' words will hold good:

*"Lent is a favourable season for renewing our encounter with Christ, living in his word, in the sacraments, and in our neighbour. May the Holy Spirit lead us on a true journey of conversion so that we rediscover the gift of God's word, be purified of the sin that blinds us, and serve Christ present in our brothers and sisters"*

**Joe McGuinness**

Extract from "Fresh Bread and Other Gifts of Spiritual Nourishment" by Joyce Rupp OSM. Copyright 1985 by Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, Indiana 46556. Used with permission of the publisher.

# Prophets in the Old Testament: Hosea

Some of those who read my last article on Moses may have thought it ended rather abruptly. Well it did, due to page 2 having been omitted! This was rectified on the Parish website but I am reprinting the missing two paragraphs below.

*There is so much more to add to this story and I can only encourage those who wish to know more to read the Book of Exodus. There are some obscure passages but if read selectively it can be very rewarding.*

*The death of Moses is recounted at the end of the Book of Deuteronomy which is where this article started. He fulfilled all the signs of a prophet, his birth story, his unremarkable early life, his call. He spoke God's word to the powerful, he was a leader, he served, he encouraged, but vitally he had a personal experience of God. Until Jesus was born he was perhaps the most important person in salvation history. He was 'the man God knew face to face'.*

My next pen-picture is of the prophet Hosea. The culture of Israel about 720BC when he prophesied has a lot in common with the times in which we live today. Violence abounded, society paid lip-service to religion and the notion of a loving God, immorality was rife. Hosea married a woman named Gomer who bore him two sons and a daughter. She then left him and her children to pursue a life of debauchery, a common enough tale by today's standards. It is Hosea's response to this situation which marks him out as a prophet.

He gave symbolic names to his three children. The first he called Jezreel to symbolise a place of violence and slaughter, the second he called Not-pitied to symbolise that God had lost patience with his people, and the third he named Not-my-people symbolising that God had dissolved the covenant and rejected his people. He divorced his wife for her multiple infidelities which echo the multiple offences of Israel against God.

But then the prophetic call kicks in and having highlighted Israel's alienation from God he goes on to give God's response. The love of God for his people is characterised by the Hebrew word 'hesed' which is hard to translate into English. It is an all-embracing love perhaps best understood if one reads Paul's description in 1 Corinthians Chap.13. Just as Hosea forgives Gomer and restores her as his wife, so God will forgive Israel for its many lapses and restore His people to their place in His love.

Occasionally we sing a hymn in Church (no.842) 'Come back to Me'. This sums up the central thrust of Hosea – the enduring love of God exemplified by the love and forgiveness of a man for his erring wife. Perhaps there are lessons to be learned for today's people in the words of Hosea.

One final thought that you might care to consider. Jesus himself twice asked his listeners to go and reread Hosea. Cf. Matthew. 9:13 and 12:7. Why not do the same? You will find it rewarding.

**Frank Bowe**

## Recommended Reading: Between Heaven & Mirth

The Jesuits "got me" when I was seven. They like to claim that their founder Saint Ignatius of Loyola said "Give me a child when he is seven and he is mine for life". (Actually, there is no evidence that he ever said it, but hey, why let the truth spoil a good story?)

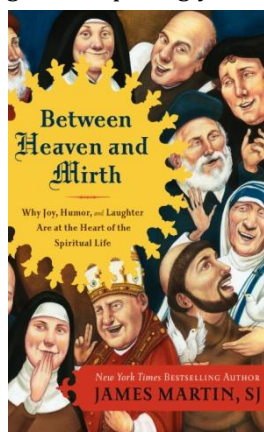
I like Jesuits. I like the way they think and the way they make you think. Blind obedience is no use without discernment and understanding. When I was ten, my Jesuit Headmaster marched into my classroom, pointed at me and asked "You Boy, did you pray to that statue this morning?" "Yes Father." "Then you are a heretic Boy!" he declaimed and marched out. I learned young that Jesuits have a sense of humour. So, discovering a new book by the American Jesuit, journalist and media personality Fr James Martin SJ called "*Between Heaven and Mirth*", I was intrigued.

Fr Martin invites believers to rediscover the importance of humour and laughter in our daily lives and to embrace an essential truth: faith leads to joy. Indeed, his book is sub-titled "Why Joy, Humour and Laughter are at the Heart of a Spiritual Life". Drawing on Scripture, sharing anecdotes and jokes, Fr Martin illustrates how joy, humour and laughter help us to live more spiritual lives, understand

ourselves and others better and fully appreciate God's presence among us. He is not afraid to challenge St Benedict's *The Rule*, and indeed his own Jesuit formation, or even the Gospel writers, for condemning "excessive levity". He assures us that God wants us to experience joy, to cultivate a sense of holy humour and to laugh at life's absurdities - not to mention our own humanity.

Holy people are joyful people, says Father Martin, offering countless examples of healthy humour and purposeful levity in his stories of biblical heroes and heroines, and in the lives of the saints and the world's great spiritual masters. He shows us how the parables are often the stuff of comedy, and how the gospels reveal Jesus to be a man with a palpable sense of joy and even playfulness. In fact, Father Martin argues compellingly that

thinking about Jesus *without* a sense of humour may be close to heretical. So how does the Church establishment react to all of this? Well, The Most Reverend Timothy M. Dolan,



Archbishop of New York is rather well known for his conservative views on Church teaching. He says: "*Between Heaven and Mirth* will make any reader smile, as Father Martin wonderfully writes of the joy that God gives us. Humour and laughter have an important place in the life that God desires for us all. Father Martin reminds us that happiness is God's own goal for us." British spiritual writer Margaret Silf offers: "What a difference it would make if we thought that we might be headed for a sphere of being where laughter, not judgement, would be the norm!"

The book concludes: "Joy, humour and laughter are virtues necessary for a healthy spiritual life. So be joyful. Use your sense of humour. And laugh with God who smiles when seeing you, rejoices over your very existence, and takes delight in you, all the days of your life." If you want a serious, academic theological tome, then this book is not for you. Martin is an American and a journalist. His style, punctuation and spelling are all American. He has the pen of a storyteller, light hearted and anecdotal. Full of jokes, it is a book that you can leave in the loo and dip into.

But if you can get over all those hurdles, it has a lot of important things to say. I loved it. It is a little didactic. But this book is fun. Read it!

**Steve O'Neill**



# Never Give Up

by Danny Cooney

**Many** Parishioners supported Danny Cooney in his “3 Marathons for 3 Charities” fundraising effort and probably marvelled at his achievement in raising over £3,000. But is there something else to this marathon running? Is there perhaps something spiritual there? “Yes definitely” says Danny. “I think life itself is very like a marathon, with its challenges, its up and downs. Sometimes when you’re feeling the pain it’s like hitting a brick wall. Then you hear other people encouraging you as you run by and they somehow give you the energy to keep going. It’s like life too in that you should give everything with your heart, honestly, knowing God is with you every step of the way.

When you’re out running in the countryside, with beautiful scenery all around, it’s difficult not to appreciate God’s creation. And somehow you experience God’s presence in the thousands of other runners, all fundraising for a whole range of good causes.

I ran the Dublin marathon with 20,000 other runners. There is a sense that we’re all “together”. And yet there is only you ... it’s your individual effort, and you experience God’s unique presence, which may be quite different to everyone else’s experience of Him.

“Before the start of the Dublin Marathon, I was seriously doubting whether I could actually run as well as I did in Cork. I was looking for a Catholic church in Dublin where outside I found a homeless man holding a collection box for the SVP. I knew in that moment that I was meant to be there. I was about to run to raise money for the SVP!



It so inspired me I ran my fastest marathon in 3 hours 17 minutes and was warmly greeted by some of our Parishioners at the finishing line!

The slogan for the Lanzarote run was “Never Give Up”. I think that is so appropriate, not just for the marathon, but for so many aspects of life generally. It’s easy to become disheartened when things don’t go our way, and it would be so easy to quit. But I believe God gives us the strength, both physical and emotional, to keep going. Through running the marathons I have discovered strength I didn’t know I had. I’ve pushed myself to the limit – a limit I would not have felt possible a couple of years ago. I knew I would struggle in Lanzarote, just 6 weeks after Dublin, but trusted God would see me home in one piece – just! And He did (thank God!)

So why do I do it? I think it’s because I realise this is something I **can** do to raise some money that will help make a difference, whether it’s for deaf children in India, or terminally ill children here at home. To think my running a marathon in Cork, for instance, raised enough to send a sick child to Lourdes, is deeply humbling and is what helps keep me going. Something, or Someone, gives me that little bit extra to keep on running to the finish.

So ... Yes I would say there is something spiritual in running a marathon. It’s helped me to see the goodness and kindness in people who are running, sponsoring the marathons, or supporting other events so generously. I’d recommend to anyone the idea of raising money to help others, whether by running a marathon or something else. You may surprise yourself at what you can actually do. All you need is to believe in yourself, believe in what you’re doing and amazingly you’ll find things have a way of turning out well.”

**Danny Cooney**

*The final sum raised was £3,205 which will help the three charities – HCPT, Martin House Hospice and St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP). In March Danny is running the Barcelona Marathon to help raise funds for the Lily Foundation who are supporting a little girl called Isla Mellon who suffers from Mitochondrial Disease. Log on to [www.lilyfoundation.org.uk](http://www.lilyfoundation.org.uk) for more information. And if you are able to sponsor Danny look out for the sponsorship form at the back of church soon.*

## Churches Together: The Prayer Breakfast

You may have seen this mentioned in the Parish Bulletin and thought about it but never gone any further. It is an ecumenical event on a monthly basis and attended by most of the Otley Churches, including our own. Each breakfast lasts about an hour starting at 8am on a Saturday and is hosted by a different Church each time.

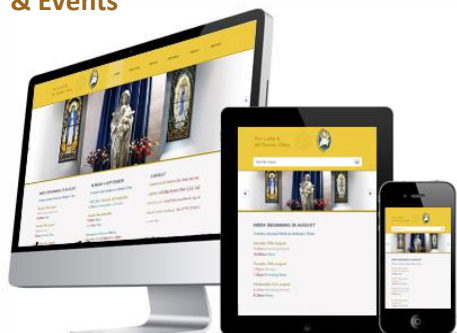
We start with a light breakfast (rolls and tea/coffee) followed by a short period of prayer led by the Church hosting the breakfast. There is also an opportunity to bring attention to any local events which might be of interest ecumenically.

The Prayer Breakfasts have been going on for many years and those attending find them a very rewarding monthly experience. You will always be most welcome; just come along and enjoy. Dates and venues are shown in the Bulletin and on a notice at the back of Church.



**Next meeting:** Salvation Army, New Market, Otley. **1<sup>st</sup> April 8 am.** A friendly gathering and simple prayer service led by Otley's New Life Church.

## Visit the Parish Website for Mass Times, News, Parish History & Events



[www.olasotley.org](http://www.olasotley.org)

## Baptisms

Thomas Luke Harding  
Joanna Smith  
Amelia Rose Monaghan  
Harriet Betty Los

## Recently Deceased

Jane Ronan  
Mary Smith  
Arthur Wilkin  
Derek Hawley

*Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and  
let perpetual light shine upon them.  
May they rest in peace.  
Amen*

## Lent Lunch: Otley Churches Together

For six Fridays during Lent, Christians from different churches in Otley meet for a simple lunch of soup and rolls at 12 noon followed by a talk at 12.30pm. The theme this year is **"Through Younger Eyes"**. All are welcome.

Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> – Methodist Church

**See website for full list of venues**



## Lent Fast Day: Friday, 10th March 2017



Please return this envelope in your parish collection. If you miss it, send it back in the post (cheques only please).

**Mill Hill Missionaries**  
**National Novena to St Joseph**  
10 - 18 March 2017



**NOVENA MASSES**  
will be celebrated at  
St Joseph's Church  
Maidenhead  
&  
Herbert House  
Freshfield  
Liverpool

**Invitation  
to join us in Prayer**

If you would like to receive a Novena booklet please  
send a stamped self-addressed envelope to:

Novena Director  
St Joseph's Missionary Society  
58 Cookham Road  
Maidenhead  
SL6 7HT  
Or email:  
novena@millhillmissionaries.com

For more information about the Mill Hill  
Missionaries, please visit our website:  
[www.millhillmissionaries.com](http://www.millhillmissionaries.com)

The image above is of a hand-drawn card - a gift to the  
Mill Hill Missionaries, in recognition of 150 years of serving  
1886-2016 from the Publishers Missionaries of St Joseph.

Registered Charity No. 220890 & No. SC039829

## Psalms Of The Starving

I am one of 700 million and so am  
easily lost in your view.

There are so many us - mostly third-  
world and non-white, the disposable  
people.

I wander with the rest, like swarms of  
hungry locusts from camp to camp  
when word spreads that there's food.

A handful of grain is given to me,  
to a body that has learned by months  
of hunger to ration it and  
so prolong the play of death.

They say you're on a special diet, and  
selective about what you're served,  
Prefer whole-grain health food, and  
watch your weight.

I dream nightly of the feast that's  
given to your garbage bin.  
I could dine like a prince on your  
leftovers.

I know you would care if I came to  
your door with my skinny bones and  
sunken eyes.

I know you would care - at least I  
would care if I were you.



A short extract entitled "Psalm of the Starving" taken from "Prayers for a Planetary Pilgrim" by Edward Hays. Copyright 1989, 2008 by Ave Maria Press Inc PO Box 428, Notre Dame, Indiana 46556. Used with permission of the publisher.