



CATHOLIC CHAPLAINCY TO THE LIVERPOOL UNIVERSITIES

The University Church of St Philip Neri Church ~ "The Oratory Church"

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23rd February 2025

Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year C)



Events for Students and University Members:

Masses & Services This Week:

Monday: 8.15 Mass at the [Missionaries of Charity](#) house, 55 Seel street L1 4AZ, – students are always welcome!

Tuesday: Mass 5.30pm

Wednesday: Lunchtime prayer at Faith Express, 1pm
5.30pm Mass at the chaplaincy *

Thursday: 5.30pm Adoration *

Sunday: Confessions 5.15-5.30pm; Mass 6pm

*events in the chaplaincy; enter via the Blackburne Place entrance

Today Canon Sean Riley will be celebrating the 6pm Mass- I know you will give him a warm welcome!

Faith Express: Wednesday lunchtime: Join us for lunch (bring your own!) and a reflection on the Sunday Gospel, preceded by Prayer during the Day. 1pm.

Tuesday Evening: House Prayer & Fellowship in the Student House
6.30pm
(30 Catharine St)

Tuesdays: I am happy to restart Morning Prayer at 8am, followed by breakfast this semester, if there is a demand for it – if so, please let Fr Neil know.

Update on paying by card or at the Philip Neri Online Shop – unfortunately this facility is not available at the moment; we hope to have thing up and running again in due course, but for now, please pay either by bank transfer (Fr Neil, Kasia or Arran can give you details) or by cash.

Thanks to everyone who took part in our weekend retreat at St Joseph's, Formby. I'm writing this before we set off, but I am sure we will have had a great weekend. So thanks to all, especially to Sr Susan PSMG and the staff at St Joseph's, and to Sisters Angela Marie and Bernadette Marie for leading us once again! Fr Neil

Ash Wednesday is not far away (Weds. 5th March) !
Mass will be in Church at 6pm with imposition of ashes...



...and the night before (Shrove Tuesday – our traditional pancake-making social!!)



The Gospel and Human Justice

A Reflection by Chaplaincy Assistant Arran

There is a very easy link that can be made between today's first reading from Samuel and our Gospel from Luke. In the former we see David, hunted by Saul, entering his enemies camp and being presented with the opportunity to kill the King, which he refuses to do because he "would not put out my hand against the Lord's anointed." In Christ's instructions to his disciples, we hear him say "Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you." His commandment is difficult, but not in the way we might imagine. It would be incoherent, almost an impossibility, to ask David to 'like' Saul.

That is sometimes what we mistake Love to be: some general expression of friendliness. How could David be on good and friendly terms with Saul? How could he like a man, who had made his mission in life to kill him? The answer is simple – such a thing could not be expected of David. Christ does not make absurd demands, even if they seem so at first reading. He asks us to Love our enemies, not to like them. This is what David demonstrates in his actions. He is tempted to have Saul killed when the opportunity presents itself, but something stays his hand. That something is Love, which David feels compelled to display towards 'the Lord's anointed.' Now David was a flawed man, a deeply flawed man, and his knowledge here is also imperfect; informed by the Jewish Law, which was not worthless, but which had much to be desired, and much that could be exploited within it, as it was in Christ's own times. Still for all its shortcomings and David's own flaws he is still brought to this remarkable decision, which depends on the instincts and natures of human beings, and offers a glimpse of the Eternal Law, which Christ proclaims in our Gospel.

The relationship between our human law and the eternal law is a difficult one to pin down. In Matthew Christ urges us not to think "that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them." There is a sense then, that 'the law' - our human conception – is serving some generally good end. It is liable to be abused, and that is fundamentally because it is a human institution, formulated by human beings and enforced by human beings. The

higher Law about which Christ speaks is one that calls us not to ignore our human law, but to recognise it for what it is: something that deals with the sin that is a constant in our world and which will be necessary to our world so long as we fail to fully listen and obey the call of Christ. It is the thing that acts for today – the thing that equally distributes punishment to the faithful and the faithless, and which sets, in theory at least, a blind benchmark necessary to the maintenance of a cohesive society.

As Christians however, we are not called to obedience to that law – that is already assumed. We are called through our faith, to something much higher, and much more difficult. Human law can inform us of what evil is, and it can try to mitigate and deter us from it. But it cannot change us: it cannot form us to step beyond sin itself. That is the path of sainthood, to which all members of the Church are called. The Law that is 'written on our hearts' takes human law in its stride and then advances by many further steps towards eternity. In short, Christ calls us to His example: he calls us not just to avoid sin, but to overcome it.

That is what Virtue is: it is a very literal process of re-moulding: becoming more Holy, becoming more like our true selves, and ultimately becoming more like Christ. This is, to draw in the as not yet mentioned Second Reading, precisely what St. Paul is arguing. There is an essential tie between Adam, the first man, and Christ, whom he calls "the last Adam." When He came to earth Christ, of heaven, was still formed of dust, just like Adam, and just like us. Just as we have "borne the image of the man of dust" so now have we been granted "the image of the man of heaven." The human laws we must obey are those that have been formed by sinners, for sinners. But Christ, all Man and all God, a human being like ourselves who demonstrated full obedience to the law of heaven, demonstrates to us the new possibility – which is that we do not need to stay as we are, as Adam was, and have the possibility instead of overcoming sin itself. What was glimpsed by David has been shown to us in fully in the Gospel.