



St. Elizabeth's Parish, Minsteracres

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Monthly Newsletter

March 2021

Lent: our special season, the season of the church that every Catholic remembers. Some remember the strict fasts of years gone by; for others it is a time of special devotion and purple clothes. But what does Lent really do to us? Just as spring brings trees to full life, so the season of Lent brings us back to full life. The number 40 recalls several great moments of faith: the flood of Noah lasted 40 days, the wandering of Hebrews in the desert lasted 40 years, and Jesus himself fasted in the wilderness for 40 days. Forty is clearly special. Forty days or forty years seem sufficient to accomplish something worthwhile by way of preparation and purification. What then do we seek to accomplish in these 40 days? In essence it is to become the people God wants us to be. The great pillars of Lent—prayer, fasting and almsgiving—complement one another and work together to pull us away from ungodly influences. It is better to start small, to search for one new way or extra way of praying, fasting and almsgiving that we can work at faithfully, day after day, for 40 days. May this Lent be a day-by-day grace that opens up God's love for you and your love for others. God help you to grow in faith, hope and love.

Jenish CP

Monthly Newsletter

If you have anything you would like included in the newsletter, please send it to the parish email address. April content to be received by 28 March.

Sunday collections

The emphasis on hand hygiene means that parishioners may be wary about handling cash. If desired, offerings may instead be paid directly into the Parish account:

Barclays Bank
Account Name:
Passionists Minsteracres
Sort Code: 20-40-09
Account no: 30171697

Sunday masses

Sunday masses at 8.30am and 10.30am continue. Places may be booked as normal using the Heavenfield Partnership website.

The 8.30am mass is available streamed live each week. If you are unable to attend in person, you are encouraged to join the online congregation.

Go to: www.youtube.com/minsteracres

Access to Minsteracres

New signs discouraging use of the Estate roads as a through route have appeared at the South Entrance. Parishioners should be reassured that they are not relevant to those visiting the Church or Retreat Centre, which can be accessed freely from either direction as ever.

Fr. Ignatius Spencer

On 9 February 2021 Pope Francis authorised the Congregation for the Causes of Saints to promulgate a decree advancing the cause for the canonisation of the Servant of God Fr. Ignatius Spencer. The Congregation, which is responsible for handling all Causes leading to Beatification and Canonisation, having examined both the historical and theological context of Fr. Ignatius Spencer, have declared that there are no objections to the Cause of Fr. Ignatius being progressed. Furthermore the decree states that he lived a life of heroic virtue. Consequently, from now on Fr. Ignatius will be referred to as the "the Venerable Fr. Ignatius Spencer." In order for him to be declared Blessed (the next stage in the process) a physical miracle is now required.

Despite his aristocratic background, his possible canonisation will be due to the life he lived rather than because of whom he was related to. Both Sir Winston Spencer Churchill and Lady Diana Spencer were members of the same family.

Fr. Ignatius Spencer (1799-1864) was born into one of the wealthiest and most influential families in England. Educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge, he was ordained an Anglican priest, with the strong probability that eventually he would be made a Bishop in the Church of England. However, close examination of the early history of the Church led him to decide to enter the Roman Catholic Church in 1830, with the loss of an annual income of £3,000. His journey of faith was very similar to that of his contemporary St. John Henry Newman.

After a course of studies in Rome he was ordained in 1832, and returned to work in England, initially in the Black Country. Any spare time he had after his parish work, was spent working for Christian unity, in particular begging for prayers to fulfil the prayer of Jesus: "That they may be one."

In 1847 he entered the Passionist Religious Order, and for a time lived with Blessed Dominic Barberi (1792 – 1849). For the next 17 years Ignatius spent his life giving missions in England and Ireland, and spent several months at a time traversing Europe begging for prayers for Christian unity. Central to his preaching was the need for each individual to be personally converted before they could look to converting others.

Fr. Ignatius died at Carstairs Junction, Lanarkshire, on 1 October 1864. He is now buried in Sutton, St. Helens beside his co-workers Blessed Dominic Barberi and Venerable Elizabeth Prout (1820 – 1864).

Fr. Ben Lodge CP

Feasts and Solemnities in March

- 1st St. David, Patron of Wales
- 4th St. Casimir (Kazimierz)
- 7th Third Sunday of Lent
- 8th St. John of God
- 14th Fourth Sunday of Lent
- 17th St. Patrick, Apostle of Ireland
- 18th St. Cyril of Jerusalem
- 19th St. Joseph, Patron of the Holy Family & the Church
- 20th St. Cuthbert of Lindisfarne
- 21st Fifth Sunday of Lent
- 25th The Annunciation of the Lord
- 28th Passion Sunday (Palm Sunday)

March anniversaries

Paul Liddel
Alan Whaley
Dorothy Anderson
Terence Peter Nicholson
Margaret Gabrielle Barker
Rosemary Evelyn Grierson
Mary Josephine Noble
John McDougall

March birthdays

Fiona Maria Boby
Frances McGhee
Kevin Mooney
Minnie Fraser
Veronica Anderson
Larry Mitchell
Doreen Moore
Tish Simon
Alex Somerville
Christine Fenwick
Steph
Elaine Somerville
Catherine Metcalf
Jessica Whitelaw
Erin Collins

Dear Parishioners,

In the last newsletter I wrote of the Parish Council meeting for its annual review day (previously known as away day), which was conducted via Zoom. We missed the tradition of 8:30 mass in the Chapel and Frank Balloch cooking us bacon sandwiches, but we got through a packed agenda from the comfort of our homes. We spent a little time looking back over 2020, however the main focus of was a discussion on how we would engage with you, now and outside of lockdown, the groups we have and any new groups we would like to develop. I think we have an opportunity to learn from our experience to take what is best of what we did and what we want to do. There is no doubt that we at St. Elizabeth's are known best for our sense of community, and therefore that remains our priority. We would love to hear your thoughts too. The minutes of the meeting will be available to view on our webpage.

Speaking of webpages, the Retreat Centre is developing a new website. We have reviewed the use of the parish page, how easily it is to access, upload information etc., and we have agreed for St Elizabeth's to have its own website which is now in development ... Watch this space for more information

I had the pleasure of joining the St Valentines Quiz; it was lovely to see so many faces on the screen. My score was poor but I had a good time, so thank you to the Social Committee—in particular Camille for setting the questions and Jim Darlington for being such an excellent quizmaster.

Daylight is getting longer, crocus, snowdrops and the smell of wild garlic as we take our daily walks are all signs that Spring is on its way. These signs and the news about vaccine numbers and the Government roadmap means we can start to discuss the numbers for each mass. We will keep you up to date through emails and this newsletter.

Susan Collins
Chair of the Parish Council