

## Holy Week. Will you be there?

In Warsaw, in the 1950s, when Communism was strong, three young Communist men were walking past the cathedral on Holy Friday at about noon. The young men realized the significance of the day to Christians and came to the agreement that they ought to go into the cathedral and make a statement, on behalf of "enlightened" communists. They drew straws to decide who would make the statement, and one of the young men went in. So they went in, and, like many young men who don't go to church, felt a little awkward and weren't quite sure what to do.

There happened to be a hierodeacon working in the church between services who spotted the young men coming in and recognized that something was going on. He went up to the young man that was to make the statement, as he was kind of standing towards the front of the group, and asked if he could help him. The young man looked back at his friends, who motioned for him to go ahead and talk to the hierodeacon. The young man, walking with an air of purpose, said, "Yes, we would like to make a statement. We don't believe in all this nonsense, and we would like to make a statement."

"Sure. Sure," the monk responded. He put his arms around the young man and brought him to the front of the temple, where the corpus was still on the Cross, while the other young men watched from a distance at the back of the temple. "I tell you what I think you should do: Look up here at Jesus crucified, and say, "You died for me, and I don't give a damn."

The young man thought about it, decided that that wasn't too hard, and said, in a loud voice, "You died for me, and I don't give a damn!"

"Very good, very good," replied the hierodeacon. "But, of course, in the Orthodox Church we like to repeat things, so go ahead and say it again."

The young man was a bit taken aback by that, because he thought he had finished with his statement, but he looked up at Christ on the Cross again and said, in not so loud a voice, "You died for me, and I don't give a damn."

"Very good, very good," replied the hierodeacon again. "But I was thinking, and if you REALLY want to make a statement that the Orthodox will respect, you should say it one last time, because we are a Trinitarian faith, and the Orthodox are always saying things in threes. Yes, I think you should definitely say it one more time."

This time you could see that the young man was totally beaten down by this last suggestion of the monk, but he pulled himself up for one last "statement." "You died for me," he began, but then collapsed on his knees, sitting on the floor in front of the Cross. "And I care," he whispered and began crying.

Beloved Lord, in Heaven above  
There, Jesus, Thou awaitest me,  
To gaze on Thee with endless love;  
Yes, thus I hope, thus shall it be:  
For how can He deny me Heaven,  
Who here on earth Himself hath given?

I CANNOT THINK UNLESS I HAVE BEEN THOUGHT,  
NOR CAN I SPEAK UNLESS I HAVE BEEN SPOKEN.  
I CANNOT TEACH UNLESS I HAVE BEEN TAUGHT,  
OR BREAK THE BREAD EXCEPT AS I AM BROKEN.  
O MIND BEHIND THE MIND THROUGH WHICH I SEEK,  
O LIGHT WITHIN THE LIGHT BY WHICH I SEE,  
O WORD BENEATH THE WORDS WITH WHICH I SPEAK,  
O FOUNDED, UNFOUNDED WISDOM, FINDING ME,  
O SOUNDING SONG WHOSE DEPTH IS SOUNDING ME,  
O MEMORY OF TIME, REMINDING ME,  
MY GROUND OF BEING, ALWAYS GROUNDING ME,  
MY MAKER'S BOUNDING LINE, DEFINING ME,  
COME, HIDDEN WISDOM, COME WITH ALL YOU BRING,  
COME TO ME NOW, DISGUISED AS EVERYTHING.

~ MALCOLM GUTE

The Parish of  
**STONY  
STRATFORD**  
with  
**CALVERTON**



## Lent, Holy Week & Easter 2016

### What Is Lent?

Lent is the penitential season of approximately 40 days set aside by the Church in order for the faithful to prepare for the celebration of the Lord's Passion, Death and Resurrection. During this holy season, inextricably connected to the Paschal Mystery, the Catechumens prepare for Christian initiation, and current Church members prepare for Easter by a recalling of Baptism and by works of penance, that is, prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

Even in the early Church, Lent was the season for prayerful and penitential preparation for the feast of Easter. Though the obligation of penance was originally only imposed on those who had committed public sins and crimes, by medieval times all the faithful voluntarily performed acts of penance to repair for their sins.

Ash Wednesday is the clarion call to "Repent and believe the gospel" (Mark 1:15). For the next forty days, the faithful willingly submit to fasting and self-denial in imitation of Our Lord's forty-day fast in the desert. It is in these dark and still nights, these desert-times, that the soul experiences its greatest growth. There, in the inner arena, the soul battles the world, the flesh and the devil just as Our Lord battled Satan's triple temptation in the desert. His battle was external, for Jesus could not sin; our battle is interior, but with a hope sustained by the knowledge of Christ's Easter victory over sin and death.

His victory is our renewal, our "spring" — which is the meaning of the Anglo-Saxon word, "lengten" or Lent. In this penitential season we have the opportunity to make an annual spiritual "tune-up", a 40-day retreat with Our Lord. Have we allowed worldly cares and the "daily drama" to obscure our call to holiness? Have self-love and materialism eroded our relationship with God? Then let us renew our efforts, and through our Lenten observance, discipline the body and master it as we "*follow in the footsteps of the poor and crucified Christ*" (St. Francis of Assisi).







Sundays:			
	9:30am	Parish Mass	at St Mary & St Giles
	11:00am	Family Mass	
	4:00pm	'Lenten Meditation and Motets' (21st February only)	at St Mary & St Giles
	6:00pm	Evensong (Sunday 20th March only)	at All Saints
Mondays:	9:30am	'Squeals on Wheels' in the Parish Hall	
Tuesdays:	10:30am	Mass & Homily	at All Saints
Wednesdays:			
	6:30pm	Silent Prayer/Contemplation	at St Mary & St Giles
	7:00pm	Stations of the Cross	at St Mary & St Giles
	7:30pm	Mass & Homily	at St Mary & St Giles
	7:30pm	'A Faith for Skeptics' Course	in the Parish Hall
Thursdays:	10:30am	Mass & Homily	at St Mary & St Giles
Fridays:	8:00am	Mass & Homily	in St Mary & St Giles School
Saturdays:	12:00noon	Lent Lunches	in the Parish Hall (or St Mary & St Giles Church)
	4:00pm	Confessions	
	4:30pm	Vespers (Evening Prayer 1 of Sundays)	

**Our Lenten Charity:**  
This Lent we are supporting the 'Barnabas Fund' and its work in supporting persecuted Christians throughout the world. Collecting boxes are available for the collection of alms at home. Monies raised through our Lenten Lunches on Saturdays will also be added to this appeal.

**Our New Study Course:**  
'A Faith for Skeptics' begins on Wednesday 17th February at 8:00pm in the Parish Hall. In an age when so-called atheism is popular there is a need to recover confidence in an orthodox understanding of Christianity among the Faithful.

Dr Rowan Williams, who says of it: "*I read this book with a rather breathless enthusiasm, carried along by its absolute clarity, its energy and wit, its intellectual and imaginative zest. It is quite simply one of the best brief introductions to the essentials of classical Christian faith I have encountered in years. It has spiritual depth without any sentimentality, rigour without dryness.*"

Each session is aimed to last no more than an hour, and these are the four sessions we shall consider in Lent (with a further four sessions in Eastertide, after Pentecost, early summer and then the final four leading up to Harvest Thanksgiving). Four week sessions with a break between, and avoiding school holidays will, I hope, encourage as many as possible to attend. The first four sessions are:

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|----|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. | The Case of the Disappearing Atheists | (17th February) |
| 2. | Anonymous Agnostics                   | (24th February) |
| 3. | Dangerous Dogmas                      | (2nd March)     |
|    | Church School Governors' Meeting      | (9th March)     |
| 4. | A Misplaced Skepticism                | (16th March)    |



PALM SUNDAY		Our Parish Churches join together for both of today's Services:	
	9:30am	<b>Blessing of Palms, Procession from the London Road Car Park &amp; PARISH MASS</b>	
	6:00pm	<b>Evensong &amp; Benediction</b>	<i>at All Saints</i>
		N.B. It is expected that the Oxford Leg of 'Student Cross' will be staying in the Parish Hall overnight as part of their act of witness in carrying a life-size Cross from Oxford to the Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham.	
Holy Monday	6:30pm	Confessions	
	7:00pm	Stations of the Cross	
	7:30pm	<b>Mass &amp; Meditation:</b> <b>'Father forgive them for they know not what they do'</b>	
Holy Tuesday	9:45am	Confessions	<i>at All Saints</i>
	10:30am	<b>Mass &amp; Homily</b>	<i>at All Saints</i>
	6:30pm	Confessions	
	7:00pm	Stations of the Cross	
	7:30pm	<b>Mass &amp; Meditation:</b> <b>'Today you will be with me in paradise'</b>	
Holy Wednesday	11:30am	<b>Chrism Mass</b> <b>at Lichfield Cathedral</b>	
	2:00pm	Fellowship: Devotional Service	
	6:30pm	Confessions	
	7:00pm	Stations of the Cross	
	7:30pm	<b>Mass &amp; Meditation:</b> <b>'Woman, behold your son.....behold your Mother'</b>	
<b><u>THE TRIDUUM SACRUM</u></b>			
Holy Thursday	9:30am	<b>St Mary &amp; St Giles School End of Term Mass</b> <i>in St Mary &amp; St Giles Church</i>	
	6:30pm	Confessions	
	7:30pm	<b>Mass of the Last Supper</b> & Watch (until Midnight)	
Good Friday	9:30am	<b>Celebration of the Lord's Passion</b> <i>Confessions follow the Liturgy</i>	
	2:00pm	<b>Stations of the Cross &amp; Devotional Service</b> at All Saints, Calverton:	
Holy Saturday	4:00pm	Confessions	
	8:00pm	<b>The Easter Vigil &amp; First Mass of Easter</b>	
EASTER DAY	9:30am	<b>PARISH MASS</b>	<i>at St Mary &amp; St Giles</i>
	11:00am	<b>Family Mass</b>	<i>at All Saints</i>

**The Year of Mercy...**  
As many of you will know the Pope has declared that this year be a year of mercy. In no small part this is because there is such a level of depravity in our world, that it is in danger of facing God's judgement. This initiative has been taken up within the Church of England, for the year reminds us that "*with the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption*" Psalm 130. Christ came to reconcile us with God and has given authority to his priests to forgive sins. As the Book of Common Prayer Ordinal reminds the man about to be ordained priest: "RECEIVE the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands. Whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained. And be thou a faithful dispenser of the Word of God, and of his holy Sacraments; In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."  
"If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves" (1 John 1:8). Therefore, as the Pope himself has said, "*Don't be afraid to go to the Sacrament of Confession, where you will meet Jesus who will forgive you.*"