

Saints Days this Week... 16th - 23rd February

FRIDAY – St Peter Damian Born in Italy. After a career as a professor, he became a hermit monk. Ardent, energetic, and strict he was an outspoken reformer of church life and discipline. He was appointed cardinal-bishop of Ostia and became a diplomat and ecclesiastical statesman. He is remembered as a scholarly reformer possessing a deeply ascetical spirituality.

SATURDAY – Chair of St Peter The chair (cathedra) of a bishop is a pre-eminent sign of his teaching authority and pastoral oversight of a local church. This feast, which was first observed in 4th century Rome, celebrates Peter, first among the apostles, as founder of the see of Rome and the focus of unity in the communion of one faith.

PARISH PRAYER GROUPS AND PRAYER TIMES

Monday Exposition & Rosary ~ St Wilfrid's, 7.30–8.30pm

St Bede's Prayer Group ~ Meets in church, Tuesday 7.30–9.00pm

Mother's Prayers ~ Coming together in each other's homes to pray for families. Further details from the Parish 01606 42440

Divine Mercy Prayer Group ~ Praying for the sick & dying.

Morning Prayer ~ Is prayed each weekday 9.05am, prior to 9.30am Mass.

Eucharistic Adoration ~ Sunday at St Wilfrid's 4.15 – 5.15pm

Exposition & Reconciliation ~ Saturday at St Wilfrid's 11.00-11.50am

Web Sites ~

Parish: www.stjohnvianney.co.uk

Catholic Church in England & Wales: www.catholicnews.org.uk

Prayer Site: www.pray-as-you-go.org

Scripture Reflection: www.wednesdayword.org

Year of the Word: www.godwhospeaks.uk

LENT begins on 26th February. There are loads of resources for adults, teenagers & young children on the Cafod website, including an *Online Lent Calendar* – www.cafod.org.uk

Preparing to hear God's word...

**Next Sunday's Readings:
7th Sunday in Ordinary Time Yr. A
23rd February 2020**

'Be Perfect Just As Your Heavenly Father Is Perfect'



In today's Gospel we continue listening to the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus, speaking with authority, has stated that he has not come to abolish the Law, but to complete it. The observance of God's Law should be deeply planted in our hearts, motivating our every thought and action. In today's passage, we hear how we must live, so as to be God's children.

Psalm 102: *The Lord is compassion and love*

In the **Second Reading:** (1 Corinthians 3: 16-23) Paul exhorts the Christians of Corinth to work for God alone. He reminds them that the Church is God's temple; the Spirit of God lives among them. Christianity has no place for personality cults, or for feathering our own beds. Christ was made man to promote God's glory and Christians, servants of Christ, must do the same. Progress in the Christian life comes from God alone. Let us recognize and be open to the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives and in our Diocese and in the everyday of our Parish Community.

Leviticus 19: 1-2, 17-17

The Lord spoke to Moses; he said: 'Speak to the whole community of the sons of Israel and say to them: "Be holy, for I, the Lord your God am Holy". "You must not bear hatred for your brother in your heart. You must openly tell him, your neighbour, of his offence: this way you will not take a sin upon yourself. You must not exact vengeance, nor must you bear a grudge against the children of your people. You must love your neighbour as yourself. I am the Lord."'

As I settle to pray, I ask the Lord to be open to his word today.

The Book of Leviticus is found in the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament) and it deals solely with the Commandments that Moses received on Mount Sinai (Exodus 20). These 10 Commandments were studied and analysed and thousands of rules and prescriptions, covering every aspect of life, were produced. Today's passage comes from the final section of the book (chapters 17 - 26) and focuses on 'Holy Living'. Basically it answers the question why we should observe the Commandments: **We are called to be holy, as God himself is holy.**

"Love, which is the very nature of God, does not contradict justice, but goes beyond justice. For love is willing the good of the other as other. Hence, it does not expect return; it does not demand reciprocity; it does not look for recompense. Just as God offers his love to the good and bad alike and makes his sun to shine on saints and sinners alike, so we must push beyond a mere economy of exchange and will the good of even those who will respond with hatred. Only in this way will we be perfect just as our Heavenly Father is perfect."

Bishop Robert Barron

Matthew 5: 38-48

Jesus said to his disciples: 'You have learnt how it was said: Eye for eye and tooth for tooth. But I say this to you: offer the wicked man no resistance. On the contrary, if anyone hits you on the right cheek, offer him the other as well; if a man takes you to law and would have your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. And if anyone orders you to go one mile, go two with him. Give to anyone who asks, and if anyone wants to borrow, do not turn away.

'You have learnt how it was said: You must love your neighbour and hate your enemy. But I say this to you: love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you; in this way you will be sons of your Father in heaven, for he causes the sun to rise on bad men as well as good, and his reign to fall on honest and dishonest men alike. For if you love those who love you, what right have you to claim any credit? Even the tax collectors do as much, do they not? And if you save your greetings for your brothers, are you doing anything exceptional? Even the pagans do as much, do they not? You must therefore be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect.'

I come to my place of prayer. I gently become aware of God's presence. When I am ready, I slowly read and re-read the Gospel.

The Law of Talion ... 'eye for eye, tooth for tooth', was a principle developed in early Babylonian law and is found in parts of the bible and early Roman society. It stated that criminals should receive as punishment whatever they had inflicted upon their victims. For many, this makes good sense, even today. But Jesus's teaching is new and leads to the realm of his Father, into holiness: *'Never return violence for violence; Love your enemies, Pray for those who persecute you'*. This is the fulfillment of the Law handed down to Moses, the Law that reveals God to us. Love of neighbour (good and bad) and mercy shown in acts, should always be at the centre of our lives, because God, our Father is love and mercy.

Father, grant me the grace to love and forgive