



# BLACKFRIARS SUNDAY, 4 AUGUST, 2024

## CAMBRIDGE

XVIII Sunday of Ordinary Time / IX Post Oct. Trin.

### TIMES OF THE LITURGY

**Sunday** - 7.45am - Lauds | 8.15am - Low Mass | 9.15am - Dominican Rite Mass (Extraordinary Form) | 11am - Sung Conventual Mass | 6pm - Low Mass | 7pm - Vespers.

**Monday - Friday** - 7am - Lauds | 7.30am - Conventual Mass | 6.15pm - Devotions and Meditation | 6.30pm - Vespers. [N.B. First Fridays of the month, Vespers in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament with a period of Adoration from 6.15pm.]

**Saturday** - 9am - Lauds | 9.30am - Conventual Mass | 4.30-6pm - Confessions | 6.15pm - Sung Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary | 6.30pm - Vespers.

### THIS WEEK

Sun 4 **SUNDAY XVIII**

Mon 5 *feria*

Tue 6 THE TRANSFIGURATION

Wed 7 *feria*

Thu 8 **OUR HOLY FATHER**

**S. DOMINIC**

Fri 9 S. TERESA BENEDICTA OF  
THE CROSS

Sat 10 S. LAWRENCE

Sun 11 **SUNDAY XIX**

**RADIO MARIA**  
ENGLAND

Lauds, Mass, and Vespers are broadcast daily on Radio Maria.

To listen visit:

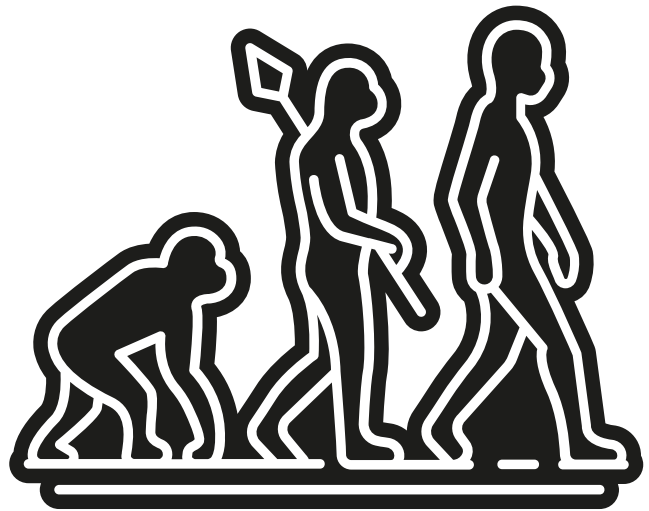
<https://radiomariaengland.uk/>

### SUPPORT US

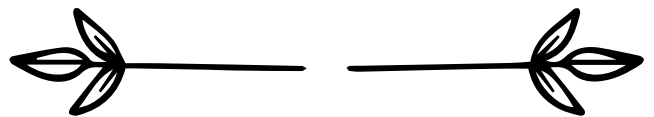
Our ministry relies on the generosity of our friends and supporters. If you would like to support us make a donation in the cloister, visit our website, or speak to or email the bursar, Fr Albert.

[cambridge.bursar@english.op.org](mailto:cambridge.bursar@english.op.org)

## EVOLUTION, CATHOLICISM, & THE UNITY OF TRUTH



Professor David Ronderos  
Monday, 12 August, 7.30pm in the Old Library



The Medjugorje Apostolate Annual Pilgrimage to Walsingham will take place on Bank Holiday Monday 26 August 2024. The day will begin at 1.15pm with a talk by Fr Zvonimir Pavičić OFM followed by Mass at 3.45pm.

## THE OLD TESTAMENT & THE CHANGING PAST

The novels of Walter Scott almost created that historical sense which we now all take for granted, and by which we often condemn Scott himself. Of course, he makes historical blunders and even treasures historical illusions. But he, first of men, taught us the feeling for period. Chaucer's Trojans are mediaeval people. Shakespeare's Romans are Elizabethan people. The characters in Otranto are so patently Walpole's contemporaries that no one could now believe in them. Scott everywhere—insufficiently, no doubt, but he was a pioneer—reminds us that our ancestors were different from ourselves. I have high authority for my statement. It was the Master of Trinity, Professor Trevelyan, who first pointed out to me the difference in this respect between the *Decline and Fall* and Macaulay's *History*. Gibbon, he said, writes as if every Roman emperor, every Gothic chieftain, and every hermit in the Thebaid, was an eighteenth-century man. But Macaulay is always pressing upon us the difference between his own age and the age he depicts. *'And I attribute this almost wholly'*, said the Master, *'to the fact that the Waverley Novels had come in between.'*

The above quotation is from C S Lewis on Sir Walter Scott. I think it is largely true that much literature before Scott did fail to see that *'The past is a foreign country; they do things differently there'* to use the famous quotation from L P Hartley's novel, *The Go-Between*.

The fact that Hartley thought that was worth saying suggests that we still have difficulty in understanding that people in the past thought in different ways because they were concerned with different problems. It is not entirely true that no-one saw the past as different in ancient literature but in fact the problem was that they saw it as too different. Before the age of human beings there was the age of heroes, as in Homer, who seemed to be much greater than modern human beings. Once that age was past, humanity would not change.

What about the Old Testament? The documents of the Old Testament tell a story of a past which is to be preserved through generations. There are two Hebrew words which are often translated as 'generation', used in slightly different ways but both used to stress the necessity of passing on the past to the future.

***He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children (Psalm 78:5-6).***

This might sound like there is no change in the Hebrew view of the past, but the continuity is the law of God, the Torah, a law which is taught not just as a set of rules to be kept but in the historical context which explains that the Torah is a gift from God. The law is not supposed to be seen as changing, but the law itself is later than the covenant of Abraham with God. Before Abraham, there was something like the ages of mankind as in Greek mythology, but the changes all come down to the decision of Adam and Eve. Though the first twelve chapters of Genesis suggest a gradual decline of human life span, this is just the working out of the effects of the original catastrophe. With Abraham, we are now with human beings as they are to this day. What changes is the structures of the lives of the descendants of Abraham, and here the Old

Testament shares in Sir Walter Scott's understanding of history. Abraham is called the Patriarch, because he is the father of a family. An extended family compared to modern families, but with time the family will become the twelve tribes of Israel. It is in Egypt, where Jacob goes with his sons, that they become twelve tribes. They depart from Egypt at the Exodus but only manage to take control of the Promised land in fits and starts. This leads to the development of the monarchy, which right from the start is seen as a possible danger to the people of Israel. There is ambiguity about the divine sanction for the monarchy, since God allows the monarchy to come into being, and even develop a sacral aura. Yet at the outset, he warns the Prophet Samuel, when the people ask for a king,

***And the LORD said to Samuel, "Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them (1 Samuel 8:7).***

The kingdom splits after the death of Solomon, into the kingdom of Israel seen as ten of the twelve tribes of Israel as was, and Judah based in Jerusalem which represents the other two tribes, the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. Eventually both kingdoms fall to invaders. The ten tribes of Israel fall to the Assyrian empire and seem to vanish from history. Judah falls in the next generation to Babylon, but after the Persian empire defeats and absorbs the Babylonian empire, some Jews are able to return to Promised land. It is usually said that at this time Judaism as a religion begins but this should not be taken to mean that the historic continuity of the people was lost. It does mean that the process of preserving their identity requires a continual looking back at their past, as the different writings either preserve or comment on their past. The past becomes of vital importance for those who seek to maintain the covenant made by Abraham with God. What matters is fidelity, but the story the Hebrew bible tells is one of many breaches of the covenant, with often only a handful of faithful adherents to the covenant. The Hebrew bible is translated into Greek, and for many Jews now living in various parts of the Empire, it is the only bible they know. New writings appear in Greek which become used by many as sacred scripture, and which are acknowledged as such by the Catholic Church.

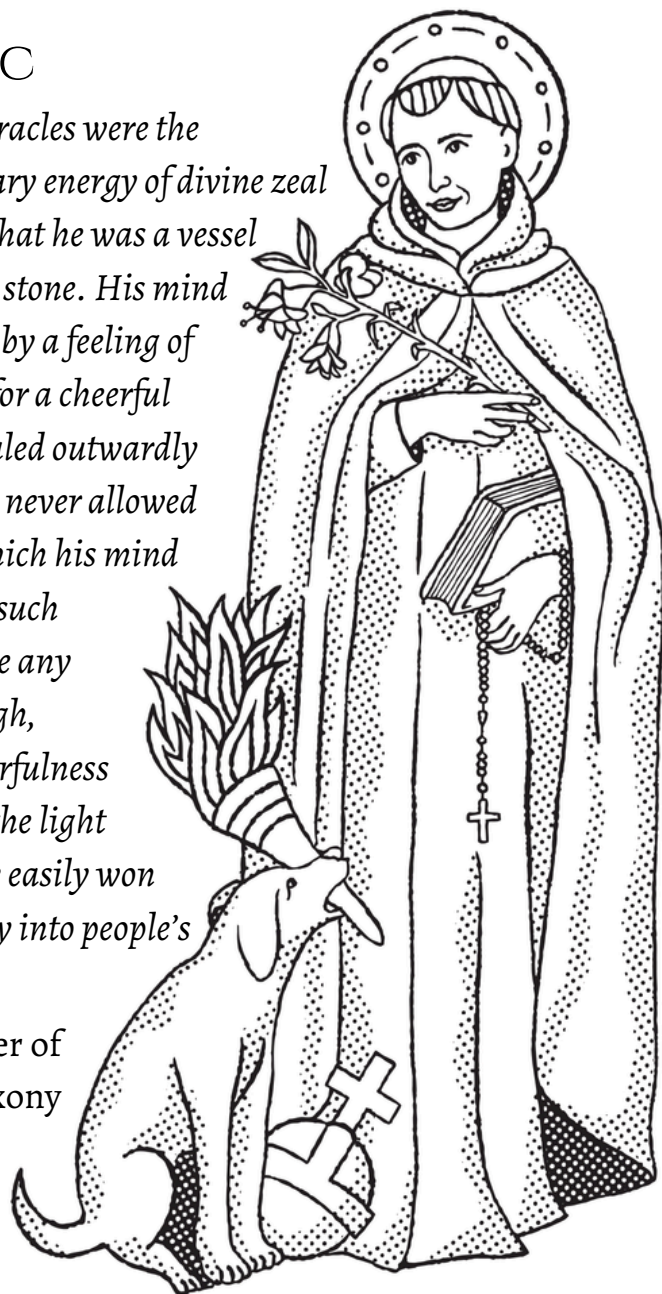
The history of the Jewish people is taught in a way that shows they changed as a people. Abraham lives a very different life from the kings of Israel, and the complex nature of Israelites society is seen in the background of the New Testament. There is a strong sense of history in the Jews understanding of their own past. What then about the pagans who surrounded them in Israel, and who dominated their lives after the fall of the kingdom? Did they change as much as the Jews? To some extent, the empires which affected the lives of the Jews, were seen as more of the same. They are measured by their hostility to Israel, so that there is little distinction between the Egyptians of the Book of Exodus and the Assyrians and the Babylonians. The Greeks and the Romans are seen as just more examples of the enemies of Israel. In attacking Israel, they are instruments of God to punish Israel for her infidelity, while Cyrus, king of the Persians, who allows some Jews to return to Palestine is regarded as an instrument of God's forgiveness. It is only when the later books of the Bible start to consider the possibility that God may have some concern for the Gentiles that we are seen as changing in history. The book of Daniel tells this story in a deliberately fabled fashion which is not to be seen as straight history, even though it

refers to historical characters. The various empires which Daniel encounters or sees in visions of the future will change, and some rulers are forced to respect Judaism. Yet each new empire begins the same process of persecution, becoming even more corrupt but Daniel always wins. Judaism itself has become very diverse by the time of Christ, as we see in the New Testament. Christianity tries to see itself as unchanging and at the Reformation, all sides claimed to represent a primitive and perfect Christian. This was not really sustainable even for Catholics. Cardinal Newman in 'An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine' makes a distinction between development in doctrine and the sort of change which it is impossible for the teaching of the Church to undergo. Newman was a great lover of Walter Scott's novels, which explains - in part - why his idea of doctrine was so thoroughly bound up with history.

## OUR HOLY FATHER, ST DOMINIC

*Far more impressive and splendid than all Dominic's miracles were the exceptional integrity of his character and the extraordinary energy of divine zeal which carried him along; these proved beyond all doubt that he was a vessel of honour and grace, adorned with every kind of precious stone. His mind was always steady and calm, except when he was stirred by a feeling of compassion and mercy; and, since a happy heart makes for a cheerful face, the tranquil com-posure of the inner man was revealed outwardly by the kindness and cheer-fulness of his expression. He never allowed himself to become angry. In every reasonable purpose which his mind conceived, in accordance with God's will, he maintained such constancy that he hardly ever, if ever, consented to change any plan he had formulated with due deliberation. And though, as has been said, his face was always radiant with a cheerfulness which revealed the good conscience he bore within him, 'the light of his face never fell to the ground.' By his cheerfulness he easily won the love of everybody. Without difficulty he found his way into people's hearts as soon as they saw him.*

From the *Libellus* On the Beginnings of the Order of Preachers by Blessed Jordan of Saxony



## THE PRIORY OF ST MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

Blackfriars, Buckingham Road, Cambridge. CB3 0DD.

[www.blackfriarscambridge.org.uk/](http://www.blackfriarscambridge.org.uk/) | Phone: +44 (0) 1223 741251

Please send any enquiries to [prior.cambridge@english.op.org](mailto:prior.cambridge@english.op.org) | To request a Mass to be said for a specific intention visit  
<<https://www.blackfriarscambridge.org.uk/mass-service-times/request-a-mass/>>