



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 12 **THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD**

Mon 13 S. Hilary

Tue 14 *feria*

Wed 15 *feria*

Thu 16 S. Fursey

Fri 17 S. Antony of Egypt

Sat 18 S. Margaret of Hungary

Sun 19 **II SUNDAY OF OT**



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

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2025 AQUINAS LECTURE

HOW TO SURVIVE  
YOUR OWN DEATH:  
A THOMISTIC  
APPROACH.

DR GAVEN KERR

TUESDAY 28 JANUARY, 6PM.

*The lecture will be followed by a drinks reception.*

# NICAEA LECTURES AT FISHER HOUSE

## THE CREED: ITS HISTORIC CONTEXT

Rev. Dr Mark Smith

Monday 27 January = 6pm

## I BELIEVE IN GOD

Professor Eamon Duffy

Thursday 6 February = 6pm

## CREATOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH

Very Rev. Dr Aidan Nichols, OP

Thursday 20 February = 6pm

## CONSUBSTANTIAL WITH THE FATHER

Dr Elizabeth Theokritoff

Monday 24 February = 6pm

## INCARNATE OF THE VIRGIN MARY

Rev. Dr Alexander Jensen

Thursday 20 March = 6pm

## THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

“There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God.” Did you recognise that verse from Scripture? It comes from psalm 44. There are rivers that take the shortest, quickest way through the town, business-like, and get away as soon as possible. And there are places where the river winds and lingers though the town, for theirs is a love affair. Cambridge lies in the sweet embrace of her river and shows it her loveliest face; she knows all its modes and its moods, towny and gowny and countrified. Who among us doesn't take pleasure from a walk along the Cam? even if she is more than a tad polluted and in want of a Spring clean, as Teresa likes to remind me. Her poets and philosophers have always swum in her waters, as do my friends Nicky and Angela, two wild swimmers who brave the cold. Have you heard the geese calling as they fly overhead? This might be for some the winter of discontent but there will soon be new life on the river, the first peeps and cheeps and flutters of Spring, and it won't be very long before the daffodils blow beside the path.

Standing water, ponds and pools, have their friends I suppose, but streams and rivers are living water, water of life. The river is a timeless metaphor for the course of a human life that has its hidden beginnings and long winding journey until it loses itself in the sea. In ancient times to cross a river was to move out of the past into strange new worlds, when Caesar crosses the Rubicon he becomes an invader, the die is cast, he says, for there is no turning back, he must conquer or die in the attempt. The people Moses leads must brave the waters of the Nile to escape the cruel Pharaoh and risk the unknown, Joshua leads them dryshod through the Jordan to the land of the Promise. “Out of Egypt I have called my Son” are words spoken by the evangelist of the Christ, to say that he is in himself the new Israel of God, the Christ who steps down now into the Jordan to be baptised by John, so that all righteousness may be fulfilled. To be “righteous” means to have chosen the right way, it means to be just right with God.

In the ancient basilicas like St John Lateran in Rome, the font was originally a great basin let into the baptistery floor, deep enough for an adult to be dipped under like a swimmer dives. Nick and Angela and their kind know they have to be water-babies, active, stay still and you only sink, or lose your footing perhaps and be carried downstream. Swimming is just an organised form of the struggle to be sure you don't drown, isn't it? The Greek for struggle is *agon* which gives us ‘agony’ and the water that is the spring of all life is a double-sided reality for it also spells death, death by drowning, and life, a drink that gives life. That the strong Son of God went down into the death-dealing waters, tells us that he took upon himself our struggle, our breathy human adventure and its enemy Death. That bath is prophetic of that agony which is the suffering of the Cross: “I have a baptism with which I must be baptised” he says, and “how I am pent up until it is accomplished!” Yes, the waters will come in even unto his soul.

“When we were baptised,” says the Apostle, “we joined him in death, so that as he was raised from death by the glory of the Father, we too may walk in newness of life.” We left the one St Paul calls “the old man” behind us in the water like cast-off clothes, we shan't need him anymore. Who can be just a passive victim in the face of the difficulties and challenges that come our way? There is more to the life of the baptised than to suffer alone and discouraged, silent and lonely. But we are baptised believers and lively members of the Body of Christ, one in communion of love. So many fellow citizens feel aimless and unhappy, what can we do about it, who believe that prayer is the spark of action? are our hearts to be the hearthstone of the charity of his heart, that was on fire with love for us and led him from Jordan to Calvary and Golgotha?

When the Christ was baptised he sanctified the waters and opened for us a way. We just are, the baptised: we have put on Christ, we have been made to share in his priesthood. Ours the vocation to serve and give our life for others. A priest offers the offerings of the people to the Lord, and through the ministry of the priest they become the children of grace. “By my ordination I am a priest for you, by my baptism I am a priest with you” – it was Cardinal Hume who said that. This January morning, I think of how the Holy Father in his letter to parents for the year of *Amoris Laetitia*, the joy of love, spelt out Christ's priesthood as the pattern of their caring for their family. Yes we are by baptism a priestly people, that is our dignity and our call to holiness, free and faithful in Christ, already sharers in the victory of God. So praised be Jesus Christ today and for ever. Amen.

*fr* Bob Eccles, OP

## S HILARY OF POITIERS

Hilary was born at the beginning of the fourth century. He was elected Bishop of Poitiers in 350. He fought strongly against Arianism and was exiled by the Emperor Constantius. His works are full of wisdom and learning, directed to the strengthening of the Catholic faith and the right interpretation of Scripture. He died in 367. He was declared a Doctor of the Church by Pope Pius IX in 1851.

## S FURSEY

Born in Ireland, Saint Fursey established a monastery at Rathmat, on the shores of Loch Corrib, and then journeyed to England where he founded another at Burgh Castle, near Yarmouth. He finally crossed over to France and became the abbot-founder of Lagny, near Paris. He was buried in Picardy and his shrine survived until the French Revolution. His life is also famous for his remarkable ecstasies, of which St Bede and others wrote.

## S ANTONY OF EGYPT

S Antony is the originator of the monastic life. He was born in Egypt: when his parents died, he listened to the words of the Gospel and gave all his belongings to the poor. He went out into the wilderness to begin a life of penitence, living in absolute poverty, praying, meditating, and supporting himself by manual work. He suffered many temptations, both physical and spiritual, but he overcame them. Disciples gathered round him, attracted by his wisdom, moderation, and holiness. He gave support to the victims of the persecutions of Diocletian, and helping St Athanasius in his fight against the Arians. He lived to be over a hundred years old, and died in 356.

The Gospels are full of wise sayings of Jesus that seem to be ignored, and one of the most poignant of these was in his meeting with that young man who asked over and over again, insistently, "What must I do to have eternal life?". When, in the end, Jesus told him that if he wanted to be perfect he would have to sell all that he had and give the money to the poor, the young man went away, sorrowing; because he was very rich. What could be more of a waste than that? You tell someone what he has to do, and he is afraid to do it. And yet... 250 years later, St Antony hears the story, and does give away all that he has, and becomes the founder of monasticism. And then again, over 1,000 years later, St Francis of Assisi hears the story, and gives away his possessions (and some of his father's) and revolutionises Christianity again.

Not all the words that we speak are forgotten, even though we cannot see their effects ourselves. Let us pray that those unknown effects may always be good ones.

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## THE PRIORY OF ST MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

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