



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. On Fridays in Lent, Stations at 6.50pm. [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 16 **LENT I**

Mon 17 **S PATRICK**

Tue 18 *feria*

Wed 19 **S JOSEPH, PATRON OF
THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH**

Thu 20 *feria*

Fri 21 *feria*

Sat 22 *feria*

Sun 23 **LENT III**



The Solemnity of

SAINT JOSEPH

SPOUSE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY &
PATRON OF THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

TUESDAY 18 MARCH - STATION MASS AT OLEM

Our Deanery Station Mass with Bishop Peter will be a Vigil Mass of St Joseph. 6pm Confessions | 7pm Solemn Mass
followed by light refreshments in the parish hall.

WEDNESDAY 19 MARCH

7am - Lauds | 7.30am - Conventual Mass | 6.15pm - Devotions and Meditation | 6.30pm - Vespers.

JUBILEE TALKS ON HOPE & MERCY

To celebrate the Jubilee Year, we will be holding a series of half-hour talks. The first talk will be next Sunday 23 March immediately after the 9.15am Mass, around 10:15am. Our prior, Fr Robert will speak on:

'In Reasonable Hope: Some Reflections on Ultimate Meaning'

RADIO MARIA
ENGLAND

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<https://radiomariaengland.uk/>

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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

STATIONS OF THE CROSS

Every Friday in Lent after Vespers (at around 6.50pm), the community at Blackfriars will have Stations of the Cross.

SURGERY CARP PARK CLOSED

On Sunday 23 March 2025, the surgery car park will be closed. It is therefore advisable to allow some extra time if you are planning to come by car to Mass at Blackfriars that Sunday. If you park on the road, please make sure not to block the entrance to the car park (as someone did last month) as this will make it difficult for the gardeners to gain access.

BLACKFRIARS COMMUNIO GROUP

The Communio Group meeting will next take place on Wednesday 26th March 2025 at 7.30 pm in the Old Library, Blackfriars Cambridge. We will be discussing “Can Humility and Obedience be Trinitarian Realities?” by Guy Mansini OSB. Sr Magdalene Eitenmiller OP will introduce the article and lead the discussion. Do let us know if you’re coming to the meeting and/or bringing a friend - please email <cambridge.communio@english.op.org>.

We would be grateful if you would refrain from leaving the front door to the priory open before and after Mass – this will reduce the risk of children wandering into the road unsupervised.

You are very welcome to come to confession before Mass, but if you wish to do so, we would be grateful if you could arrive at least 10 minutes before Mass begins, especially if you have children who would like to go to confession.

MENS’ SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

Mens’ Spiritual Exercises, 30 March – 4 April 2025: At the Christian Heritage Centre, a 5-day version of the Ignatian Exercises is being offered specifically for men. One-to-one direction will be offered alongside the talks. For more information and to book please visit <<https://christianheritagecentre.com/events/mens-spiritual-exercises/>>.

SEARCH FOR MEANING

This Conference is inspired by the life and work of Edith Stein (St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, OCD), with a team of speakers, including Prof Peter Tyler, Professor of Pastoral Theology and Spirituality at St Mary’s Catholic University, Twickenham, and author of *The Living Philosophy of Edith Stein*. Open to All. 9 - 11 May 2025. Attendance can be full residential, daily attendance, or online. £250 for full Residential attendance (includes Friday dinner and overnight stay until Sunday). NB: If NOT able to attend in person, or online, or are contacting us from abroad, beyond our own UK time-Zone, you will be sent recordings of the Talks.

THE IMPORTANCE OF FUNERALS

Here is a long quotation from the Penguin Handbook of Ancient Religions:

'No rock art can be attributed to Neanderthals. Excavators have found only a few scratched bones or stones, but these cannot be related, even remotely, to religious thought. There is, however, evidence of another kind that has attracted researchers' attention. They buried their dead, or at least some of them did – there is indisputable evidence for only a few burials. When they did bury, as at the sites of La Chapelle-aux-Saints, Le Roc de Marsal, La Ferrassie and Le Moustier in France, Teshik-Tash in Uzbekistan, Kebara in Israel and Shanidar in Iraq, they buried people of all ages, from the 'old man' (about fiftyish) of La Chapelle-aux-Saints to foetuses at La Ferrassie. Both men and women were buried.'

The writers go on to say that these burials are only traced back to about 60 to 30 thousand years ago, and human beings lived long before that. Nonetheless it seems significant that human beings have taken such trouble for so long to do something for the dead bodies of those they had known in life. The meaning of this is not clear. It has been said that the burial of the dead was out of fear that they might return in some way, which is certainly a recurrent fear in much of human history, but I would have thought that such a fear would have led to burning of bodies, which has happened often enough in history. The Church insisted on the burial or preserving in enclosures of bodies, following the Jewish practise for many years but that has changed. The Church permits the cremation of the bodies of Catholics now but still wishes the ashes to be reserved, not necessarily buried, in a sacred place, which could be a blessed grave. If Catholics have scattered ashes of their loved ones through an unawareness of this rule, then they have not committed sin, though we should try to keep informed of the wishes of the Church. It would be a sin though, if the scattering of ashes was done as an act of contempt or denial of the Resurrection. Since our own bodies change the material of our bodies quite a lot, it is clear that the risen body does not need to have a dead body to rise again, nor do we necessarily use the elements of our dead body to rise again.

I was brought up near a road which led to a cemetery and crematorium. The road went to no further than these two places, as there was a river beyond them, and no bridge was built there. The road lead from a roundabout where there were a few shops and was supposed to be a mile from there to the cemetery. That was probably not quite true, but I still estimate distances in terms of that supposed mile. Many members of my family are buried there, and whenever I think about death, I imagine myself looking down that mile of road. That there is no bridge over the river seems to have been because the middle-class area on the other side objected to a through road into our housing estate. Annoying as that is, the road that ends at the graves seems to me a symbol of the mystery of death. The dead will pass on by another road, across a bridge that only our faith can see. I have been back there to do a few services since, and I still look down that road, thinking to myself that into the woods beyond, over the river of my childhood there is another world, a place to go and that is my hope. I didn't always have that faith, but when my grandfather was dying when I was nine, I knelt on my bed and prayed fifteen decades of the rosary, which seemed to take a lifetime. He still died and after that I felt numb more than sad. One day though on the road to the cemetery, I felt a great burst of joy, and the sky seemed to be filled with an assurance that your grandpa is alive. I lost faith in other parts of the faith of the Church later for a while but there was a sense that there was life after death. Yet perhaps not a full life. That comes only with Christ.

Years later I found myself in Glasgow, a parish priest in a church near to a memorial to the nine people killed in the Stockline disaster after a gas explosion in a factory. The memorial was a space with nine small standing stones in a ring, with the names of the dead. Every year I would conduct a prayer service at the rings, with others, and offer mass for the Catholic families at the regular Sunday mass. For the tenth anniversary, there was a special service in the community centre with various politicians and dignitaries. Since I had now preached two sermons, one in our church, and one at the memorial, not to mention a mass in the Catholic chaplaincy, I was surprised to find that I was expected to make a speech at the community centre too. Instead of a speech, I read from Seumas Heaney's poem 'Funeral rites,' though I did start by saying that it was a poem witnessing to the fact that for so many thousands of years, we had always cared for the bodies of the dead. The poem is about his helping to carry a coffin as a boy, (I shouldered a kind of manhood) but now 'as news comes of each neighbourly murder', referring to the killings in Northern Ireland at the time, he imagines all Northern Ireland going to the 'great chambers of the Boyne', to the megalithic tombs there. This would be an act of unity for all the North. As I said introducing this poem, it is about the fact that we have always honoured the dead. Heaney insisted that he believed that after death there is only extinction, though he did have a Catholic funeral. His poem though is a poem of hope. I understand that the fake megalithic stones of the memorial, were not unreasonable in a divided age. We Catholics had our Church and our prayers. Still, I will not despair of our civilisation as long as we continue to keep some reverence for the places of the dead. Cemeteries are not depressing places for me. The angels who can be in many places at once and who are always eager to serve watch over the graves of Christians, and they are seedbeds of the Resurrection. Here are the last lines of 'Funeral rites' a sense of hope being in them, even for those who do not understand that Jesus is the Resurrection. The poem calls the dead man in the ancient tomb Gunnar, and says of him that though dead by violence,

Men said that he was chanting

Verses about honour

And that four lights burned

In corners of the chamber

Which opened then, as he turned

With a joyful face

To look at the moon.

As Seumas Heaney texted his wife just before he died, 'Noli timere', words of Christ which means do not be afraid. May he rest in peace with all who have died until we rise again.

fr Euan Marley, OP

THE PRIORY OF ST MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL

Blackfriars, Buckingham Road, Cambridge. CB3 0DD.

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

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