



Lent 2012

TAIZE PRAYER Ash Wednesday

22nd February

at 8:00pm

In

College Chapel

You are invited to join with the Carmelite and Chapel Community at Terenure College to mark the beginning of Lent. On Ash Wednesday, the Folk Group (12noon Mass) will lead us in Prayer around the Cross through the music of Taizé. There will also be the opportunity to receive Ashes and to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. A reflective time at the beginning of Lent to reach out and touch God, allowing God to embrace you and love you.

“The Gospel, as always on the First Sunday in Lent, is the story of Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness. The first temptation, when Jesus is tempted to turn stones into bread, corresponds to the attraction of ease and self-indulgence. The second, to throw himself off the temple, is perhaps the temptation to the sin of pride, ambition and self-seeking. The third, to worship the tempter, may be understood as the worship of any idol which deflects us from fidelity to God. On each occasion, the response of Jesus is to say “No” to the temptation of putting Himself at the centre and “Yes” to putting God at the centre. There is a short passage in 2 Corinthians in which St Paul says: “With Jesus it was never Yes and No: with Him it was always Yes, and however many promises God made, the Yes to them all is in Him” (2 Cor 1: 19) St Paul proposes that Christ’s unequivocal “Yes” to His Father be the model of the Christian life.

These are positive and challenging thoughts with which to embark on our Annual Lenten Renewal. Lent is a time when we not only try to improve our lives because of our ambiguities (our “Yes’s” and our “No’s”) but we also clarify our vision. Our minds need to be re-directed by contemplating the person of Jesus and everything He stands for. He stands for the big “Yes” to God. He endorses it throughout His ministry and particularly His journey to Calvary and His breaking out of the grip of death to live to God and to enable us to do the same

The Christian life is about that. Being the Body of Christ, His Church, we are called to live his “Yes”. It is part of the daily mystery of surrender, dispossession, letting go in order to change and be changed. Unfortunately, it is not easy for us. We have plenty of “No’s” to God. That is our sinfulness. We want to go off in different directions, most of them fairly wayward. Our Lenten discipline needs to be about our “No’s”, so that our “Yes’s” may expand. May I suggest that we could use the three ancient pillars of Lent as the structure for our discipline, Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving:

PRAYER: Try and give more time to it. It may mean saying “No” to other things. Decide on a definite time and place where you can pray each day, however long or short, and don’t just fill the time with words ~ silence is a powerful way in which God speaks to us. Keep in mind that prayer is at root about presence ~ the presence of God to us and our response to it by

making it our priority. Prayer helps to put the whole of the human around us in its true perspective.

FASTING: Especially on Fridays. When we learn to say “No” and deprive ourselves of unnecessary food. This will enable us to give generously to Trocaire or equivalent charities, and will give us a chance to express some solidarity with a vast number of our brothers and sisters who have little or no food.

ALMSGIVING: This is a challenging and generous using and sharing of all the gifts we have. It may mean giving money to those in need; it may mean visiting or helping others through our time and friendship; it may be giving service in all sorts of ways to those around us in these straightened times.

Finally I would like to add that an ancient custom for Lent is celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation. I urge you to use this Sacrament of Mercy. We all need it and it is a powerful way of enabling us to say “Yes” to God a little more often.

Whatever we undertake in Lent, we are challenging our sinfulness and expanding our ability to say “Yes” to God.

May God grant you every grace, blessing and mercy as we prepare to celebrate the Lord’s great “Yes” in His death and resurrection. “

(Bishop T. McMahon – Pastoral Letter, Lent 2012)

