



THE ARCHANGEL

Church of St Michael Archangel • Harts Lane • Burghclere • RG20 9JW • stmichaels@fsspx.uk

No.70

February 2024

Perseverance

The feast of Candlemas celebrates the Presentation of our Lord in the Temple. A mysterious old man named Simeon, who was just and devout, was led by the Holy Spirit to the Temple, and there met Mary and Joseph. Long ago God had promised him that he would not see death before first holding in his arms the consolation of Israel, the Messiah, the Anointed One, Christ the Lord. Graced with such favour, Simeon was able to recognise Mary's Child. He took Him in his arms and prophesied that He would be the Light of the Gentiles and the glory of His people, Israel.

Another mysterious person was also visited by the Holy Ghost. Anna, a woman of four score and four years, who served in the Temple with prayer and fasting day and night, was also brought to Mary and Joseph and before them confessed the Lord, and spoke of Him to all who looked for the redemption of Israel.

Simeon's sombre prophesy of our Lady's future sorrows often leads us to neglect other lessons that this Gospel episode contains for us. Simeon and Anna are archetypes. They represent faithful souls, hidden and insignificant, of whom the world knows little or nothing, whom God singles out to be witnesses and bearers of a message for generations to come.

Simeon and Anna were faithful guardians of a message and a promise entrusted to their people. They lived in an idolatrous world and perhaps more alone still in a nation that had emptied the Old Testament revelations of all spiritual significance and replaced them with interpretations to the tune that the Jews would one day rule the world. And yet, with frequent fasting and assiduous prayer, their minds and hearts revolved around the Temple and fed upon the preaching and counsels of the Prophets and Holy men of old.

No doubt, Simeon and Anna's lives were long and lonely, one an old man, the other a widow of many years. They were in a land occupied by an idolatrous

enemy. They watched as the old faith grew faint and shallow in the hearts of Abraham's descendants. They worried as the caste of the Pharisees grew strong and influential, warping the old faith and twisting tradition in order to subdue the people. True, Herod had adorned the Temple and made it great again, but for political purposes only. Was he not an Edomite, descendant of Esau, a usurper of David's throne and a curse to God's elect?

Yet, despite the spiritual desolation of God's People and the apparent futility of decades of prayer and penance, Simeon and Anna persevered in the practice of their faith, aspiring and patiently waiting for the coming of Israel's future glory. Their fidelity to the old traditions and teachings of the prophets made them wise and ready to receive the inspirations of the Holy Ghost. To Simeon was given a personal revelation that he would see the Promised Messiah in the flesh. To Anna was given a simplicity of heart and openness of mind that allow her to suddenly understand the discreet scene she witnessed. She recalled Malachi's prophecy: "Presently the Lord, whom you seek, and the angel of the testament, whom you desire, shall come to his temple. Behold he cometh, saith the Lord of hosts," (Mal. 3:1) and recognised and confessed the Child in Simeon's arms as the Lord. And she spoke of Him to all who looked for the redemption of Israel.

For Simeon and Anna, a single morning and a single encounter made right a lifetime of trial and patient longing. Their painful perseverance in the Faith bore fruit in a single instant. Along with the gift of discovery, they also received an inspired understanding of the nature of the redemption God had finally brought to Israel. The Messiah was a fellow Jew in flesh and blood, not the nation taken as a whole, destined to world dominance. His mission was not temporal or political, but spiritual, supernatural, and universal. The Messiah was to be a light and guide for the whole world, whom

Continued on page 3

QUARANT'ORE - THE FORTY HOUR DEVOTION

The **Forty Hours** refers to a period of devout prayer sustained by adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, solemnly exposed on the altar of a church for 40 hours. Traditionally, this form of prayer takes place in the hours that precede the beginning of Lent, from Quinquagesima Sunday to the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday, but it may be arranged at other times of the year as well.

History

In the time of the Middle Ages, the faithful used to keep a 40 hour Vigil in church before a representation of Christ's sepulchre during Holy Week, from the time of his death—at None of Good Friday—until His resurrection, which was celebrated by the Paschal procession in the early morning of Easter.

In many places, the clergy lay the Body of Christ to rest in a tomb along with a host after the Mass of the Presanctified on Good Friday, and it was this host that was taken from the tomb and led in solemn procession to be placed triumphantly on the altar on the morning of Easter. This symbolic number of 40 hours spent by Christ in death harkens back to an old tradition already reported by St. Augustine (*De Trinitate* IV, 6): "From the hour of His death to the dawn of the resurrection are forty hours, counting in also the ninth hour itself. And with this number agrees also His life upon earth of forty days after His resurrection".

The veneration of Christ in the tomb—which in many parts of medieval Europe became a veritable military guard of the Eucharistic Body at the tomb awaiting the resurrection—was repeated outside of Holy Week beginning in the 16th century, in response to the Protestant denial of the Real Presence of Christ in the Sacred Host outside the Mass.

The Forty Hours—at first considered as an exceptional devotion—appeared in Milan in 1527 amidst wars and calamity, the sack of Rome and the French invasion of the Duchy of Milan. They were instituted by Giovanni Antonio Bellotti for the beginning of each trimester until 1529. In 1537, the Milanese Capuchin Giuseppe da Ferno took up the practice and made of it a series of solemn prayers with a Eucharistic procession: when one parish ended its Forty Hours, another took its place, such that the Holy Sacrament was adored perpetually (this practice is the origin of perpetual adoration). St. Anthony Mary Zaccaria (1502 † 1539), the founder, also at Milan, of the Clerks Regular of St. Paul (the Barnabites) promoted them with great zeal.

The Capuchins and Barnabites rapidly diffused the Forty Hours beyond Milan. In 1550, St. Philip Neri introduced them in Rome. At Messina, besieged by the Turks in 1552, it was the Jesuits who organised them to beg for and obtain the liberation of the city. Beginning in 1556, the Jesuit order was used to making the Forty Hours prayer from Quinquagesima Sunday to the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday, in order to expiate the faults committed during Carnival.

In 1575, the archbishop of Milan, St. Charles Borromeo, in a pastoral letter on the sacredness of Septuagesima, deplors the sad state of those lukewarm Christians who use these precious days so poorly, when they should be giving themselves over especially to prayer and good works. To that end, he ordered the organisation of Forty Hours in the largest diocese of Europe: the Blessed Sacrament would be exposed for three days before Lent, in the cathedral of Milan, and in thirty other churches in the city; in the morning and evening there would be a solemn procession, and the parish priests would distribute the hours of the day for their parishioners, in such a way that there would always be a large number of adorers before the Most Holy Sacrament.

In 1592, Pope Clement VIII organised the Forty Hours in the city of Rome. The Pope asked that the prayer of Forty Hours be made for three intentions: For the salvation of the Kingdom of France (at that time rent by the succession of Henry III) for the victory of Christianity against the Turks and for the unity of the Church.

In 1731, Pope Clement XII finally published what is known as the **Clementine Instruction** which fixed the liturgical order of the Forty Hours devotion in Roman churches and is today the norm for all Quarant'Ore devotions throughout the world. The instruction prescribes, among other things, processions of the Blessed Sacrament at the beginning and end of the devotion and the chanting of the Litanies of the Saints on both occasions.

Symbolism of the Number 40

The number 40 is mentioned many times in Scripture, and often in relation to an encounter with God. We list the principal occurrences below:

- ❖ The rain of the Deluge lasted 40 days and 40 nights (Genesis 7:4, 12, 17). At the end of 10 months of the Deluge, the waters began to recede and after 40 days Noah opened the window he had made in the ark (Genesis 8:6).

- ❖ Isaac (Genesis 25:20) and Esau (Genesis 26:34) were married at the age of 40.
- ❖ Moses stayed 40 days and 40 nights on Mount Sinai in the presence of God without food or drink, and at the end of this period he received the tables of the Law (Exodus 24:18; 34:28; Deuteronomy 9:9,11, 18, 25; 10:10).
- ❖ Moses' messengers explored the land of Canaan in 40 days (Numbers 13:26), then Israel was condemned to wander in the desert for 40 years (Numbers 14:33-34; 32:13; Exodus 16:35; Deuteronomy 8:2-4; Joshua 5:6).
- ❖ In the Mosaic Law the number of stripes given to punish a criminal could not exceed 40 (Deuteronomy 25:3; II Corinthians 11:24).
- ❖ The reigns at the apogee of the Jewish kingdom, that of David (I Samuel 29:27) and that of his son Solomon (1 Kings 11:42), both lasted 40 years.
- ❖ The prophet Elijah crossed the desert during 40 days to meet God on Mt. Horeb (1 Kings 19:8).
- ❖ The prophet Jonah calls Nineveh to repent under pain of destruction at the end of 40 days (Jonah 3:4).
- ❖ Our Lord Jesus Christ was presented in the Temple of Jerusalem, in conformity with the Law of Moses, 40 days after his birth (the feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin on the 2nd of February – Luke 2:22; Exodus 13:2, 11-16; Leviticus 12:2-4, 6-8).
- ❖ Christ began His public ministry with a fast of 40 days and nights (Matthew 4:1-2; Mark 1:12-13; Luke 4:1-2), and His Ascension took place 40 days after the Resurrection (Acts 1:3), which, according to a tradition recorded by St. Augustine (cf. supra De Trinitate 46), took place after he passed 40 hours in death.

It is by means of the Quarant'ore that the Church asks her children to offer Eucharistic adoration in reparation for public sins. Today, the loss of faith and the silent apostasy of entire sections of humanity, the civil laws contrary to the Decalogue, and the various forms of revolt against God and against His Christ must mobilise the prayer of supplication. The 40 hour devotion serves to implore the mercy of Jesus Christ on the Church, on society, and on the world.

Today we have much to pray for. Let us heed St Charles Borromeo's encouragement, that we exchange our ordinary and often selfish pursuits for a few Hours of adoration before our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. ❧

*Adapted from an article by Henri de Villiers,
Schola Sainte Cécile.*

all men must look upon and listen to. It would be then left to each one of us to choose or reject Him. Christ would become indeed a stumbling block, established for the rise and fall of many. "He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth." (Luke 11:23)

Had Simeon and Anna lived another thirty years, they would have shared our Lady's burden and frustration. As our Lord began to reveal Himself and the nature of His mission to the world, Mary suffered at the sight of so much misunderstanding and slowness of comprehension. They would have a king of Israel, but He was a Redeemer of mankind. They would have a life of abundance and ease, but He spoke to them of the beatitudes. They complained of material want, and He bid them look to their spiritual needs. They resisted Cesar, but He would have them resist Satan and sin. Our Lord's public life revealed to the world the shallowness of God's Chosen People. There were too few Simeons and Annas.

In these times of Church crisis, may there be many Simeons and Annas.

Fr John Brucciani, Prior

*Note on the 40 Hours: for the first time we will host this devotion. 11-13th Feb. **There must be two adorers/hour minimum.***

Please [sign up online](#) or in the vestibule so we can ensure that the devotion is able to take place.



**Save the Date!
- 16th March -**

Pilgrimage to the National Shrine of St Joseph at Farnborough Abbey

In thanksgiving for the new church.

10:00 Solemn High Mass at St Michael's.

15:00 : RDV at the abbey shrine & recitation of the rosary.

280 Farnborough Rd, Farnborough, GU14 7NQ



Friday 23rd February, 7pm

St Michael's School

Conference by James Bogle,
Barrister, Historian

on

Catholic Recusancy

The challenges of balancing loyalty to the Crown and fidelity to the Faith.

Ash Wednesday is a fast day for all persons aged 18-59.
One meal and 2 snacks allowed. No meat.

The Ash Wednesday fast is of grave obligation.

Tertiaries of the SSPX should fast on Ember Days and every Friday in Lent.



Christian charity dictates that we leave certain parking spaces for those who need them. Lazy persons don't need them.

REMINDER

Every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation, mass is celebrated "pro populo" - for the spiritual and temporal needs of the faithful for whom the priory has pastoral care.

Every First Thursday, Holy Mass is offered for the Companions of St Michael.

Every First Friday, Holy Mass is offered for benefactors of Operation Philomena.

Once a month, Holy Mass is celebrated in each priory for the repose of the souls of deceased members of the Society and benefactors.

The Companions of St Michael are those who have donated £10K+ to the Church Building Fund. To become a Companion of St Michael, contact the prior.

Benefactors of Operation Philomena are those who donate via monthly standing order to St Michael's School. See envelopes in church vestibule.

A little late...



The December Winter Ball organised by the Young Roman Catholics (YRC), raised the handsome sum of £2670 for the Church Building Fund. Thank you to the organisers and guests for such wonderful support.

Liturgical Calendar - February 2024 **Confessions before Saturday and Sunday Masses & during 1st Friday Holy Hour.**

1	St. Ignatius of Antioch, Bp & Martyr	7:15
2	Purification of the BVM	7:15 / 18:30 (sung)
3	Saturday of Our Lady 1st Sat.	7:30/12:00
4	Sexagesima Sunday	7:30, 9:00
	<i>2nd Collection for District Seminary Fund</i>	18:00 Benediction
5	St. Agatha, Virgin & Martyr	7:30
6	St. Titus, Bishop & Confessor	No mass (Priests' Retreat)
7	St. Romuald, Abbot	
8	St. John of Matha, Confessor	
9	St. Cyril of Alexandria, Bp, Conf & Dr	
10	St. Scholastica, Virgin	17:00
11	Quinquagesima Sunday	7:30, 9:00
	-- 40 Hours Devotions --	15:30 Benediction
12	Seven Holy Founders of Servites of Mary	05:00/07:30/ 19:00
13	Feria (Mass of Deposition - end of 40h)	7:30
14	Ash Wednesday Fasting & Abstinence (grave obligation)	7:30 / 19:00
15	Feria	7:30
16	Feria	7:30
17	Feria	7:30/12:00
18	First Sunday of Lent	7:30, 9:00
		18:00 Benediction
19	Feria of Lent	7:15
20	Feria of Lent	7:15
21	Ember Wednesday	7:15
22	Chair of Saint Peter, Apostle	7:15
23	Ember Friday of Lent	7:15
24	Ember Saturday of Lent	7:30 / 12:00
25	Second Sunday of Lent	7:30, 9:00
		18:00 Benediction
26	Feria of Lent	7:15
27	Feria of Lent	7:15
28	Feria of Lent	7:15
29	Feria of Lent	7:15

SUNDAY COLLECTION - Set up your standing order Ref. « Sunday coll. »

Account name:
BURGHCLERE PRIORY
Society of St Pius X
Sort Code: 16-26-18
Account number: 10191331



Remember: GIFT AID!