

Dark Nights of the Heart : Fr.Ronald Rolheiser OMI

There are times when our world unravels. Who hasn't had the feeling? "I'm falling apart! This is beyond me! My heart is broken! I feel betrayed by everything! Nothing makes sense anymore! Life is upside down!"

Jesus had a cosmic image for this. In the Gospels, he talks about how the world as we experience it will someday end: "*The sun will be darkened, the moon will not give forth its light, stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of heaven will be shaken.*" When Jesus says this, he is not talking as much about cosmic cataclysms as of cataclysms of the heart. Sometimes our inner world is shaken, turned upside down; it gets dark in the middle of the day, there's an earthquake in the heart; we experience the end of the world as we've known it.

However, in this upheaval, Jesus assures us that one thing remains sure: God's promise of fidelity. That doesn't get turned upside down and in our disillusionment we are given a chance to see what really is of substance, permanent, and worthy of our lives. Thus, ideally at least, when our trusted world is turned upside down, we are given the chance to grow, to become less selfish, and to see reality more clearly.

Christian mystics call this "*a dark night of the soul*" and they express it as if God were actively turning our world upside down and deliberately causing all the heartache to purge and cleanse us. The great Spanish mystic John of the Cross puts it this way: God gives us seasons of fervour and then takes them away. In our seasons of fervour, God gives us consolation, pleasure, and security inside our relationships, our prayer, and our work (sometimes with considerable passion and intensity). This is a gift from God and is meant to be enjoyed. But John tells us, at a certain point, God takes away the pleasure and consolation and we experience a certain dark night in that where we once felt fire, passion, consolation, and security, we will now feel dryness, boredom, disillusion, and insecurity. For John of the Cross, all honeymoons eventually end.

Why? Why would God do this? Why can't a honeymoon last forever?

Because eventually, though not initially, it blocks us from seeing straight. Initially all those wonderful feelings we feel when we first fall in love, when we first begin to pray deeply, and when we first begin to find our legs in the world. These are part of God's plan and God's way of drawing us forward. The passion and consolation we feel help lead us out of ourselves, beyond fear and selfishness. But, eventually, the good feelings themselves become a problem because we can get hung up on them rather than on what's behind them.

Honeymoons are wonderful; but, on a honeymoon, too often we are more in love with being in love and all the wonderful energy this creates than we are in love with the person behind all those feelings. The same is true for faith and prayer. When we first begin to pray seriously, we are often more in love with the experience of praying and what it's doing for us than we are in love with God. On any honeymoon, no matter how intense and pure the feelings seem, those feelings are still partly about ourselves rather than purely about the person we think we love. Sadly, that is why many a warm, passionate honeymoon eventually turns into a cold, passionless relationship.

Until we are purified, and we are purified precisely through dark nights of disillusionment, we are too much still seeking ourselves in love and in everything else. Therese of Lisieux used to warn: "*Be careful not to seek yourself in love, you'll end up with a broken heart that way!*" We'd have fewer heartaches if we understood that. Also, before we are purified by disillusionment, most of the tears we shed, no matter how real the pain or loss, often say more about us than they say about the person or situation we are supposedly mourning.

In all this, there's both bad news and good news: The bad news is that most everything we sense as precious will someday be taken from us. Everything gets crucified, including every feeling of warmth and security we have. But the good news is that it will all be given back again, more deeply, more purely, and even more passionately than before.

What dark nights of the soul, cataclysms of the heart, do is to take away everything that feels like solid earth so that we end up in a free-fall, unable to grab on to anything that once supported us. But, in falling, we get closer to bedrock, to God, to reality, to truth, to love, to each other, beyond illusions, beyond selfishness, and beyond self-interested love that can masquerade as altruism. Clarity in eyesight comes after disillusionment, purity of heart comes after heartbreak, and real love comes after the honeymoon has passed.



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9th March 2025 First Sunday of Lent C

LITURGY OF THE WEEK: Psalter Week I

**Livestreaming (From Mold on Tuesdays, Fridays, Saturdays
5.30pm & Sundays 11am)**

<https://www.churchservices.tv/mold>

8th March Saturday 5.30pm

Nora Neeson & Eoin Neeson RIP
(Maire Greaney)

9th March Sunday 11am

Pauline Goulding RIP (*Peter Goulding*)

Monday Liturgy of the day **Buckley 9am**
10th Mar

Tuesday: Liturgy of the day **Mold 7pm** **Rosary** from 6.35pm
11th Mar For World Peace (*Anne Cheetham*)

Wednesday: Liturgy of the day **Buckley 7pm**
12th Mar

Thursday Liturgy of the day **Buckley 9am**
13th Mar **Eucharistic Adoration until 10am**

Friday Liturgy of the day **Mold 10am**
14th Mar Anne Ryle RIP (*Teresa & Peter Carberry*)
Eucharistic Adoration until 11am

Second Sunday of Lent C

15th March Sat 5.30pm
Anne Ryle
(*Maura Edney & Family*)

16th March Sun 11am
For People of the Parish

Buckley 9am and 5pm

**Confessions
(in Mold)**
On Saturdays
and Sundays
before the
Mass
(Saturdays
5pm to 5.20
and Sundays
10.30am to
10.50).
Weekdays
after the Mass,
on Request.



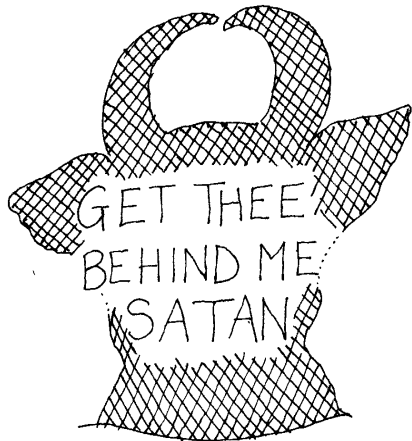
Pob Bendith. God bless you&Keep you. Fr Pius CMI

PUTTING UP RESISTANCE

Temptation always strikes us at our weakest moments. There would be no point otherwise. The same happened to Jesus: his mission just begun, he was feeling apprehensive. Alone in the desert he had been fasting for forty days. The devil knew when and how to pounce. In the next forty days we have the opportunity to look at our own temptations and to work out how to avoid giving in to them.

The first thing is to recognise what they are and when they happen. This gives us the chance to avoid being put in a position where we might give in. Sitting outside a bank at midnight is not the right place to resist an urge for robbery. The bar of a pub is no place to be fighting against a drink problem. For some it might be the company of a particular person that offers temptation, or even something as simple as a DVD player or the internet. How many times during this Lent do we plan to put ourselves

at risk? Watching out and praying is what Jesus tells us to do. Temptation is not a sin; it's just a reminder of our frailty and weakness. Jesus suffered even the most repulsive temptations that assail each of us. He had to if he was to redeem us at



our basest. Yet he was able to resist because the bond that linked him with his Father was stronger than the passing lure of temptation. Prayer is the strongest armament in our arsenal. By ourselves we are powerless; we need the grace of God's Holy Spirit. Knowing our boundaries is crucial. Some people can put themselves in

situations and feel no temptation whereas others are sure to fall victim. There's nothing weak about accepting our own limitations. Knowing our boundaries helps us to appreciate the consequences of what we might do. What seems perfectly reasonable at the time can end up with terrible consequences later. We are tempted to think that anything is right as long as our motives are good but in the cold light of day we realise how damaging our supposed good intentions can be. Lent's a time for doing something to resist our temptations.

What not confide in another person? Why not consider the age-old practice of reconciliation through confession? Why not make the most of these forty days so that you will really feel part of the "Alleluia" when Easter comes?



QR Code for Today's Readings.

News, Notices and Events

SVP Film Club

The next 'silver screen' event will be at 2pm on Wednesday 26th March in St David's Church Hall. The film will be *Conclave*. If you'd like to come along please sign the list in St David's Church porch. Admission is free, and tea and coffee will be served from 1.30 pm. Everyone is warmly welcome!

Mary, Chris and Sr Helen

SVP Collection: There will be a collection at the door for the SVP after masses this weekend. **Chris Walsh**

Stations of the Cross -every Wednesday in Lent at 7pm on Zoom.

Pray the Stations at home, by joining with this link: [https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7767387912?](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7767387912?pwd=dkovd1RvbTNYMTNFOGIReDRIRmJ6dz09)

[pwd=dkovd1RvbTNYMTNFOGIReDRIRmJ6dz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7767387912?pwd=dkovd1RvbTNYMTNFOGIReDRIRmJ6dz09) Stations last between 30 and 45 minutes. Please note that we do record the Stations for those unable to join at the time. For this reason everyone should switch camera OFF, and only the leaders should be 'UNMUTED'. **Mark Philpot MC**

P.S An apology that there was no recording of Stations on Wednesday due to a technical problem.

We remember in our prayer

Those whose anniversaries Occur this week

(8th Mar) Sarah Feeney, Mary Elizabeth White, Patricia Persich, Kathleen Humphreys, Annie Dykins **(9th Mar)** Michael Nasham, Catherine Hannon, Canon Joseph Geraghty, George Herman Rome, Noel Jones, Pauline Goulding, John Harkin, Maureen Edwards **(10th Mar)** Delia Wilde, Margaret Stevens, Margaret Bellis **(11th Mar)** James Kerrigan, Mary Blackshaw, Ann Vaughan, Mary Sylvia Taylor, Francis Oliver, Ann Bunting, Dilys Leonard **(12th Mar)** Anna Doolan, Violet White, Mary Fleming **(13th Mar)** Thomas Nolan, Herbert Jones, Freda Hynes, Carol Bagby **(14th Mar)** Thomas Carroll, Glenys Axford, Trevor Fuller, Lawrence Edwards

Future of Catholic Education in Flintshire

The recent edition of The Clarion mentioned the new proposal for the future of Catholic education in Flintshire. This proposal includes the building of a new facility in Flint catering for 3-18 year olds and, once constructed, the closure of St David's RC primary with the offer to bus local children to Flint. It also involves a 'land swap' whereby the council takes ownership of the land where St David's is currently.

A period of consultation on this proposal is anticipated for the end of March following a cabinet meeting on the 18th. Parents would welcome signatures on a petition being held this weekend after masses in Mold and Buckley. We also ask that people get involved in the official consultation period once that starts. Cllr Chris Bithell for Mold East has agreed to meet parents and parishioners at 6pm on 13th March in the parish hall to gauge and understand our opinions on this proposal. **Ruth John**

LENT YEAR C

The first two Sundays of every Lent take us over familiar territory. We begin by watching Jesus being tempted by the devil and realising that he underwent all the temptations that we do and even more, but was firm in his relationship with his Father that he did not give in. The second Sunday takes us to the opposite extreme: not only is Jesus human but he is divine. The Transfiguration gives us reason to hope that his promises are well-founded and that we too one day will rise in glory if we die to self.

The heart of any Lent is to be found in the third, fourth and fifth Sundays. In year C it is St Luke who is our guide. On the third Sunday we are confronted with something very sober. Repentance is not something we can put off. We may, like the victims of a Jerusalem accident that he quotes, be dead tomorrow and then it will be too late. Yet the fourth Sunday reminds us that to turn to God and ask forgiveness, like the prodigal son, is not something we should dread but should have confidence in. The last "heart Sunday", the fifth, repeats this offer of forgiveness as we, along with the woman taken in adultery, are not judged but given the courage to go and sin no more.

The five Sundays at the heart of Lent in year C show Luke's compassion for the weak and his concern that we should know the type of God who is waiting for us to turn to him. What better guide could we have?