

Our Lady, Star of the Sea and St. Drostan

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St. Mary's

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Our Lady Star of the Sea & St. Drostan Church, Fraserburgh, and St. Mary's Church, Peterhead, are currently closed until further notice, due to Government regulations in connection with action taken to combat the spread of the Covid 19 coronavirus.

Sun 28 th Feb	2nd Sunday of Lent
Mon 1 st Mar	Monday in the 2 nd Week of Lent
Tue 2 nd Mar	Tuesday in the 2 nd Week of Lent
Wed 3 rd Mar	Wednesday in the 2 nd Week of Lent
Thur 4 th Mar	Thursday in the 2 nd Week of Lent (<i>optional commemoration of St. Casimir, Prince, a patron of Poland</i>)
Fri 5 th Mar	Friday in the 2 nd Week of Lent
Sat 6 th Mar	Saturday in the 2 nd Week of Lent
Sun 7 th Mar	3 rd Sunday of Lent



"This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to Him."

A Lenten Journey with the Angels or, Getting By with a Little Help from Our Friends

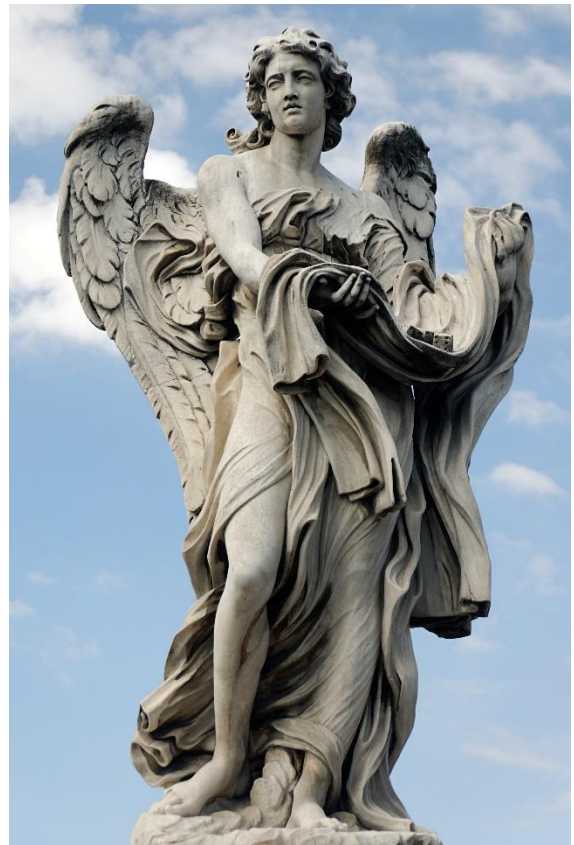
It seems to me that the lyrics of that famous song by the Beatles could be applied to our experience of Lent and, by extension, to the whole of the Christian life ... especially if "I get *high* with a little help from my friends" can be understood in reference to the acquisition of virtue, growth in holiness and the final attainment of heavenly glory. (😊)

Jesus' own "Lenten journey" makes the point very eloquently, framed as it is by three notable encounters with friendly angels.

After being tempted by the enemy (himself an angel, but not a friendly one), we are told that "the devil left Him, and angels appeared and looked after Him" (Matthew 4:11).

At the other end of Lent, we approach Jesus as He endures His dreadful and mystery-loaded agony in the garden of Gethsemane. There too, after resolutely conforming Himself to the Father's will, Jesus is assisted by a heavenly angel. Luke tells us: "And there appeared to Him an angel from heaven, strengthening Him" (22:43).

According to the Bible, the holy angels are "ministering spirits" whose task it is to "serve" (Hebrews 1:14). And that idea – ministering and serving, on God's instructions – resonates closely with what the ancient Jews were familiar with in the sphere of Temple worship. There, in that holy place where the "name" of the Lord "dwells" (see Deuteronomy 12:11, for example), numerous priests and Levites accomplished their daily tasks according to detailed instructions from



A holy angel. Ponte Sant'Angelo, Rome.

Picture courtesy of [Wikimedia Commons](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Angelo_Ponte_Sant'Angelo.jpg)

God (have a look at the book of Leviticus... maybe *before* eating lunch or supper). The Temple was understood to be an earthly model of God's heavenly sanctuary, and the earthly liturgy an echo of that heavenly. Priests performed their offices on earth just as the angels minister in Heaven. In fact, the physical Temple was adorned with statues and carved images of angels (Exodus 25:18-22; 1Kings 6:23-28,29,32) precisely to make this connection.

Now, if we recall that *what* the priests did on earth generally had to do with ritual *sacrifices*, we can see the appropriateness of the presence of angels at Christ's temptation and His agony. These were key moments in Christ's saving mission, which would culminate in the Sacrifice that gave meaning to everything that went before it: His death on the Cross. I suspect that the reason why, in these instances, the angels appeared to Jesus *after* the trial, is similar to the one for which He refused the wine mixed with gall that was offered to Him on the Cross (Matthew 27:34). It was "necessary that the Christ should suffer these things" (Luke 24:26) so that the work of merciful love entrusted to Him by His Father might be accomplished and many souls might not only be set free from sin, but also inspired to generosity in their daily lives.



Lent, and times of trial in general, are a desert-experience.

Picture by William Warby, [flickr.com](https://www.flickr.com/photos/williamwarby/)

But what about us? Well, actually, something similar applies. It has to do with what the Church calls the priesthood of the laity. "For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in His steps" (1Peter 2:21). When we offer up our prayers and sacrifices with patience, we *are* following in His steps, and in some sense we enter with Him into the presence of God in Heaven. And God's angel-ministers are part of this spiritual liturgy. As John the Apostle describes in the book of Revelation, "another angel came and stood

at the altar with a golden censer; and he was given much incense to mingle with the prayers of all the saints upon the golden altar before the throne; and the smoke of the incense rose with the prayers of the saints from the hand of the angel before God" (8:3-4).

Someone will say, Yes, but I need the help of angels *during* the time of trial, not after it. You are in good company. That was exactly what Padre Pio (a great Capuchin Franciscan Saint of the 20th Century) said to his guardian angel. By divine permission, Padre Pio used to suffer diabolical attacks that involved him being physically beaten-up by the evil spirits. He would ask his angel to help him fight off those enemies. But on one occasion, he had a complaint to lodge against his heavenly assistant... The passage from Padre Pio's letters is worth quoting in its entirety:

"I turned to my angel and after making me wait for some while, he finally shows up, flying around me, and singing hymns to the Divine Majesty with his angelic voice. There followed one of those common scenes: I shouted at him harshly for having made me wait so long, since I had not failed to call him to my aid. To punish him, I did not want to look him in the face, I wanted to hold my distance, I wanted to run away and hide from him. But he, poor fellow, approached me, almost crying. He caught hold of me, so that raising my eyes, I might look into his face and find it wholly grieved.

And behold... '... I am always close to you, my beloved youth' – he says – 'I hover about you constantly with that affection which stimulated your gratitude towards the Beloved of your heart. My affection for you shall not extinguish even with your life. I know that your generous heart beats always for our mutual Beloved. You would cross every mountain, every desert to find Him, to see Him again, to embrace Him anew in these extreme moments and to ask Him to break now those chains which hold you bound to the body... that you can suffer no more to be far away from Him, that He take you with Him; to tell Him that separated from Him you gather more sorrow than joy. You would like this very gift from Him; but do not grow weary... for you must wait a bit more. For the present, He cannot give you anything like the ray of a star, the perfume of a flower, the sigh of a harp, the caress of a wind. Yet do not cease to constantly ask Him for it, for His supreme pleasure is to have you with Him. And although at present He cannot satisfy your wish, because providence has willed that you be in exile a little longer, He will finally end up satisfying you, at least, in part...'



Poor dear angel! He's too good. Will he succeed in making me recognize the grave obligation of gratitude?"

(Correspondence, Vol 1, Letter 102.)
[Picture](#) courtesy of Pixy.org

Of course, our guardian angels, and all the holy angels in general, do help us immensely in times of need. So let us not neglect to call on them for assistance.

We are in the midst of a serious trial, as you all know. If you will excuse a final quotation, I would like to offer you some recent words of Bishop Hugh, which make some excellent points:

"It seems true that this second lockdown has felt more difficult for many than the first. We can now begin to see some future relief. In the meantime, though, it's worth saying that this time of closure of churches, and its species of Eucharistic Lent, has not been without spiritual and pastoral positivities... people do speak of their faith being deepened, of prayer at home having intensified, of the sense of belonging having been enhanced as well as attentiveness to others... I also think of how this time could be conducive to increased appreciation of the Bible... The Gospel is the flesh of Christ too. It is holy and wholesome to wish to return to public liturgical and sacramental life, but our faith has many dimensions, and when one is temporarily overshadowed others may emerge. There are opportunities everywhere."

(Message to the clergy of the diocese, 27.02.21.)

Now, if you're still awake, you might be wondering why I said "three encounters with heavenly angels" at the start of this article. Well, I was thinking of the angels that appeared at the empty tomb on the morning of the Resurrection (Matthew 28:2-7; Mark 16:5; John 20:12). Easter is, after all, the destination of our Lenten journey.

Let us stay close to Jesus with the help of the holy angels while we still walk through the desert, and the glorious morning of the Resurrection will surely rise about us soon.

Notices

Resumption of public worship in our churches

The First Minister's announcement last week gives us good **hope** that we will be able to begin to gather again in our churches **in time for Easter**. This, of course, depends – to use the catchphrase – on data, not dates. Moreover, it is unfortunately true that we will probably be restricted in numbers, as before lockdown, when they do reopen. Still, something is better than nothing. More on this when further guidance arrives.

Station Masses

People have found these diocesan online gatherings very moving. Details below.

For any safeguarding concerns or queries, please contact our Parish Safeguarding Coordinator (Fraserburgh), Mrs. Anne Reilly (01171 623029), or the Diocesan Safeguarding Office (01224 319154).

Items for the Newsletter, website and Facebook page should be sent to Bob Watson: rlambwatson@gmail.com

Programme & Date & Location	Links to Live Streaming (they go live just before 6.30pm on the day)
6.30pm: Stations of the cross 7pm: Mass	
19 th February St. Mary's Cathedral, Aberdeen	https://youtu.be/zajG864dhT0
26 th February Our Lady & St. John the Baptist, Ellon	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMRMPqRucadMUiETy91mpfg
5 th March St. Margaret's, Huntly	https://youtu.be/zNjvRpte1Js
12 th March St. Mary's, Beaulay	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoil3nqucRiCPknKm07DC5A
19 th March St. Joseph's, Aberdeen	https://youtu.be/gwMuiSn9Paw
26 th March St. Peter's, Aberdeen	https://youtu.be/ekjihyIBTNQ