

Our Lady, Star of the Sea and St. Drostan

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Fraserburgh AB43 9LR

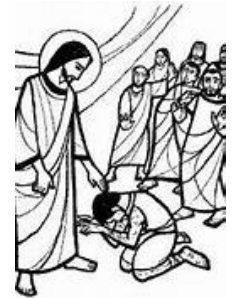
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St. Mary's

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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 14 th Feb	6th Sunday in Ordinary Time	
Mon 15 th Feb	Monday in the 6 th Week of Ordinary Time	
Tue 16 th Feb	Tuesday in the 6 th Week of Ordinary Time	
Wed 17 th Feb	Ash Wednesday	<i>Fasting and Abstinence</i>
Thur 18 th Feb	Thursday after Ash Wednesday	
Fri 19 th Feb	Friday after Ash Wednesday	<i>Day of Prayer for Those who have Suffered Abuse</i>
Sat 20 th Feb	Saturday after Ash Wednesday	
Sun 21 st Feb	1 st Sunday of Lent	



A leper came to Jesus:
"If you want to", he said,
"you can cure me."

Doctors Strange

– Part 2

Some years ago in Staffordshire there was a spate of burglaries by an organised and ruthless team of crooks. They were known for their brazenness. They would walk around people's houses in the middle of a burglary quite calmly while the owners were at home. On top of this they even wore **high-visibility jackets** (like workers in road construction). They didn't try to hide. They stood out. But then, in a way, they *did* hide: they hid in plain sight.

Someone may escape notice even when they are seen because they present themselves in a way that doesn't attract attention. *Seeing* something and *paying attention* to it are not at all the same thing, and, if you're a master burglar, knowing the difference can be... well... Anyway. You get the idea. Better to avoid a life of crime altogether.

Now, something like this might just apply to our second Doctor-with-new-liturgical-memorial (May 10th), **St. John of Avila**.

There we are you see. "John." *How many of them are there?*

And "Avila". Everyone's (slight exaggeration only) heard of Avila... but not in connection with a John, but a Teresa. That "seraphic virgin", as she has quite reasonably been called, shines with such brilliance and warmth in the firmament of the Church that for generations she's drawn to herself almost everything "Avilan". St. Teresa of Avila is also slightly closer to us chronologically. She turned to John of Avila, an older contemporary, for spiritual guidance. And finally, for centuries, John was just "Father John of Avila", or something like that, because his own path to canonisation was considerably drawn out. He died in 1569, but it was only in 1894 that he was beatified, and in 1970 that he was declared a Saint.

Even one of John's claims to fame – that he is the only secular priest (like me... I mean, *secular priest* like me, not Doctor – well, not in that sense anyway...) to have been made a Doctor of the Church – kind of lends to his capacity to hide...



Portrait of Juan de Ávila, 1580, attributed to El Greco

[Wikimedia commons](#)

John was born of pious, well-to-do parents in a little town in Spain, in about the year 1500. Highly gifted intellectually, he left home while still young to study law, but returned before graduating after a profound conversion experience, and began to devote himself to **spiritual reading and prayer**. In 1526 he received priestly

Beautiful picture...

Just look at how the artist has placed compassion, sincerity and gentleness on his face...

ordination, and decided to go to the West Indies as a missionary. But while man proposes, God disposes, as the saying goes. John was talent-scouted by a fervent catechist while waiting for his ship, and the local Bishop persuaded him to stay in Spain to build up the faith of the people of his own country. That was providential.

John remained in Andalusia and, while completing his studies of theology, dedicated himself to **preaching and spiritual direction**. It's true, some of his sermons about the dangers of riches and a worldly way of life did ruffle a few feathers... and he even suffered imprisonment for a while, until a Church tribunal declared his preaching to be in line with Christ's in the Gospel. But it wasn't long before John came to be regarded as "one of the most celebrated and widely esteemed spiritual masters of his time",¹ and many sought his advice as a spiritual director.

His was a **wisdom nourished by a profound life of prayer**, but at the same time very much at home in the affairs of daily life; blessed with "a profound experience of supernatural realities", he was nevertheless "a true humanist endowed with a **healthy sense of realism**".²

In his preaching and spiritual direction, John wanted to help the Holy Spirit bring about a **renewal of hearts**. He addressed fundamental issues head-on, but with gentleness and discretion. Take, for example, the problem of **sentiments of enmity or animosity**:

"I sometimes wonder how anyone can possibly wish evil to others, for our Lord stands between him and them. How can he be harsh towards the body, who loves, or ought to love, the Head? Do you not know, my dear Sister, that when Jesus rose again and appeared to His disciples, He placed Himself 'in the midst of them,' and not at the head or elsewhere? He acted thus to show that He is in the midst of us and that we cannot wish harm, nor do wrong to anyone, without first doing it to Him."³

Benedict XVI, in declaring St. John of Avila a Doctor of the Church, drew special attention to his "**spirituality of trust**".⁴ This is indeed something that appears many times in John's writings, and it is something particularly relevant to us today, when Christianity the world over faces all sorts of serious challenges. John insisted on the need for trust in the life of a disciple of Christ:

"[L]et us confide in God's great love for us, which keeps us safe amid all perils. I have said all this because, as I wish your *belief* in the Catholic faith to be pure from all error, and your *love* for God to be without taint of tepidity, so I would have your *hope* in Him to be free from all distrust and fear."⁵

Sometimes he just launched a sucker-punch: "Those who are tepid and talkative learn little of God's ways."⁶ Oops.

At other times, he would illustrate sublime ideas expansively:

"[W]hat must be the jubilation of the saints, transformed as they are by heavenly love, at beholding that God is so holy, perfect, and rich in excellence? They see that, as Creator of the universe, He, by one single act of His will, gave all things their beauty and being, and upholds them in existence, so that not a single leaf can rustle in the wind but by His consent. Behold the joy 'such as eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the heart of man' (1Co 2:9). This, then, as far as it is possible for us to understand it, is the 'charity' of the just in heaven. From this overflowing river which gladdens the city of God, comes, as a streamlet, their love for their neighbour. Their one longing and joy is to see the God they love so fervently possess all glory and honour, and hence they ardently desire that the Blessed, their companions, may be as full of beauty, and happiness, as they are themselves, because God is thus honoured in them. For this reason they delight more in the perfections of the greatest saints than in their own, because they see that they give God the higher praise..."⁷

You've heard the thing about how, if you teach a man to fish, you give him food for a lifetime? Well, something similar was in John's mind: **To really make an impact in the world, form the future formators**. So, in addition to his work as a preacher and spiritual director, John dedicated himself to education, and especially to the formation of seminarians and the clergy. His ideas and example had an important impact on the Fathers of the Council of Trent and the post-conciliar organisation of seminary formation throughout the Roman Church.

A man, then, of spiritual solidity and gentle disposition. A guide, a formator, a friend. Perhaps most of all, a man of deep prayer. Maybe, this coming Lent, we could ask him to help us to rediscover the beauty of closeness to Christ through humble, heart-felt prayer. St. John of Avila, pray for us!

Notices

Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent

This Wednesday, 17th February, is the beginning of Lent and **a day of fasting and abstinence**.

The bodily discipline of fasting and abstinence helps us enter with our whole heart into Lent: a time of closeness to the Lord, conversion of heart, repentance, growth in holiness, and – Yes, it's true! – real spiritual joy.

¹ Benedict XVI, [Apostolic Letter Proclaiming St. John of Avila, Diocesan Priest, a Doctor of the Universal Church](#) (07.10.2012), n. 3.

² *Ibid.*, n. 8.

³ Letter 16, To a lady of rank, encouraging her to serve God, in *Letters of Blessed John of Avila*, trans. and selected by the Benedictines of Stanbrook, Burns and Oates Ltd., London (1904), pp. 101-102.

⁴ Benedict XVI, *op. cit.*, n. 1.

⁵ Letter 17, To a lady on confidence in God, *Letters*, p. 109.

⁶ Letter 16, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

⁷ Letter 20, To a lady who had asked what charity was, *op. cit.*, pp. 127-128.

Day of prayer for those who have suffered abuse

This coming Friday, the first Friday of Lent, is a day on which the Church's prayers are offered with special fervour for those who have suffered abuse. Among them are many that have been abused by ministers of the Church. Let us offer our prayers and sacrifices for the healing of survivors, for eternal rest for those who have died, and in reparation for the terrible wrongs that have been committed.

For any safeguarding questions or concerns, our parish safeguarding coordinator at Fraserburgh is Mrs. Anne Reilly (01171 623029); or contact the Diocesan Office on 01224 319154.

Lenten homilies by Bishop Hugh

Bishop Hugh will be preaching a series of **5 Sunday homilies** on the *kerygma* (the key content of our faith in the Church's preaching) **from this Sunday 14th February** (available live online, and available to watch later, via the St [Mary's Cathedral web](#) and [FB pages](#)). The themes of the homilies are as follows:

6th Sunday of OT	Healing of the Leper. God's Love
1st Sunday of Lent	Temptation in the Desert. The Dark Side: Sin
2nd Sunday of Lent	Transfiguration. Cross & Resurrection (Eternal Life Revealed)
3rd Sunday of Lent	Cleansing of the Temple. Response in the Spirit (Conversion and Faith)
4th Sunday of Lent	Lifting-up of the Son of Man. Part of a People (Life in the Church)

"St Mary's Cathedral in Aberdeen are also organising **'Fire & Light' Groups** to meet and discuss the homilies. There is a greater need now for us to gather online, especially as we cannot do so in person. We need to be able to meet and support one another, both on a human level and for the sake of our faith.

Fire & Light groups (3-7 people) meet once a week for 5 weeks for 1 to 1 ½ hrs to share thoughts on a series of Sunday homilies given by Bishop Hugh on the *kerygma*, ending with a time of prayer. Anyone is free to join in with these groups and details/sign up are available at:

<http://stmaryscathedralaberdeen.org/groups1/>

Kindle one another's faith. Be light in this darkness!"

'Voices of the Passion': this year's Lenten Course at St. Columba's, Culloden

This series of reflections will be delivered online via Zoom, on **Wednesdays at 7.00pm throughout the Lenten season**, and will focus on some of the major characters of the Passion of Christ. The programme is as follows:

17 February	Peter and Judas
24 February	Pilate and Herod
3 March	Jesus and Barabbas
10 March	Simon of Cyrene & Veronica
17 March	The Women of Jerusalem and Mary Magdalen
24 March	John and Mary

Everyone is welcome to join online. Please contact Fr. Domenico Zanre to register your interest: dzanre1@gmail.com

Stations of the Cross

Here are some suggestions for praying this Lent-perfect devotion from SCIAF:

- Weekly Stations of the Cross videos will be **livestreamed** on SCIAF's Facebook page on **Fridays during Lent at 7pm**, so like [their page](#) and tune in!
- Alternatively, [download](#) SCIAF's recorded PowerPoint of the Stations and pray at your own pace. This resource was produced by Fr. Stephen Reilly and students of The St. Andrew's Foundation Catholic Teacher Education.

Please consider collecting your own Lenten alms for SCIAF.

More great online resources for Catholic formation!

[Word on Fire](#) Catholic Ministries – founded by Bishop Robert Barron of the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, Word on Fire is an evangelical media apostolate that "proclaims Jesus Christ as the source of conversion and new life". It delivers an old message (Jesus') in today's language, drawing on the riches of Catholic Tradition.

Bishop Barron has become one of the biggest names in Catholic apologetics and evangelisation in recent years: a 21st C Fulton Sheen. [You know who Fulton Sheen was, right? 😊] He has [many](#) (about 1000!) excellent videos on YouTube.

[The Bible in a Year podcasts](#). "Read" the entire Bible in a year, with these excellent, **free**, 20-25 min podcasts. Each one contains two or three scripture readings, a reflection by Fr. Mike Schmitz and a guided prayer to help you hear God's voice in His word. Highly recommended.

A message from Mary's Meals – Ethiopia crisis

"Dear friends, in recent weeks you may have heard something of the grave news from Tigray in northern Ethiopia. An armed conflict between the federal and regional governments has escalated into a shocking humanitarian crisis. We are hearing harrowing reports of tens of thousands of families displaced from their homes and that as many as 4.5 million people are without access to basic food, medical and sanitary supplies across the region. We have been working in Tigray for many years where our trusted partners the Daughters of Charity normally serve over 24,000 children with Mary's Meals. We are now working with the daughters of Charity to respond further and provide desperately needed support to the children and families affected by this crisis. As people of faith we are asking you to partner with us by holding the people of Tigray, and the emergency work we are doing there, in your prayers. To find out more about this appeal please visit <https://www.marysmeals.org.uk>. Thank you.

Here too is the link for the live stream of our [Global rosary](#) for Mary's Meals which will take place at 6pm GMT, Thursday 18th February."

God bless, stay safe, and keep in touch! 😊