

→ **SCRIPTURE DISCUSSION GROUP WILL MEET ON MONDAY, 25 JUNE 2018 AT 5:00 PM AT THE RYE SOCIAL CLUB. Scripture Readings: Wisdom 1: 13-15 & 2:23-24 and Mark 5:21-43. → ALL ARE WELCOME!**

Franciscan Guests This Summer: We are happy to announce some visitors this summer in Rye. The first is former parish priest, Fr. Aidan Walsh, OFM Conv. who will be here from 1 August through 16 August. The second visitor will be Fr. Jobe Abbass, OFM Conv., one of the temps you had in AD 2015, who will be here from 25 September through 28 September.

I have also invited some student friars to come so that you can meet more friars and they can meet you. We will also have a second collection that weekend for the support of the education and formation of the student friars, both priests and brothers.

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THE FEAST OF OUR LADY OF WALSINGHAM: 24 SEPTEMBER 2018

As I have stated before, one of the goals I have here at St. Anthony is to strengthen the bonds between Bl. Angelus of Pisa Custody and the parish. In line with this, I would like a small group to travel to the National Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham to meet the friars who have recently moved there. The Greyfriars are returning to Walsingham after hundreds of years of absence. The rector, Msgr. John Armitage and Bishop Alan Hopes, Bishop of East Anglia, have made us a generous offer for us to return.

I would like to bring some gifts with us such as a nice picture of St. Anthony of Padua, some local souvenirs, some local delicacies, and other such items.

Here is the bonus: We will be there for the Feast of Our Lady of Walsingham: 24 September! We will leave here on Sunday, 23 September and stay for two nights and return to Rye on Tuesday, 25 September. It will be fantastic to be there on Mary's day, important to all of England, Mary's Dowry.

BUT WE MUST DECIDE QUICKLY! Since it is her feast day, there will be large crowds there. I have reserved 7 basic rooms (sink, shared facilities; £33 per night, inc. breakfast) and 3 ensuite rooms (one of which is mine; £47 per night inc. breakfast). I can reserve more rooms if there is interest and we do it quickly. We will most likely car pool it to get there and back.

AND ANOTHER SURPRISE: Fr. Jobe Abbass, who was here for two weeks during the pastoral interlude when you did not have a parish priest, will be at Walsingham at the same time. He would like to come to Rye for a few days and we can give him a ride back.

WE MUST DECIDE QUICKLY! I AM ASKING THAT YOU DECIDE WITHIN TWO WEEKS, BY SUNDAY, 8 AUGUST. I DON'T LIKE PUTTING PRESSURE ON PEOPLE, BUT WE MUST GET THIS ORGANIZED WHILE THE ROOMS ARE STILL AVAILABLE. THANK YOU!

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FINANCIAL REPORT: The parish income for AD 2017 was £39,603 which was a small increase from AD 2016 of £895. Expenses of £59,227 were marginally more than last year's by £1,270. The spending on the renovation of the church and friary was £8,652. Since I arrived here in AD 2015, we have spent, I estimate, over £30,000 on making our church more beautiful and safer, and this does not include hours and hours of volunteer time. It was worth every pence that we spent, but now our donations have been exhausted. The largest donation was from Jan Peter and Dorothy Van Heuven of £25,000 supplemented by a few parishioners who gave £1,000 or more and some of my friends from the USA who gave about \$1050.00 (£770.96). There were other generous donations of £100 - £500. The major part of our renovation is finished. It would be nice to redecorate the sacristies and get the garden in working shape. We hope to use the garden a lot more this summer.

There are plans to put a donation box in the back of the church so that parishioners, tourists and visitors can contribute to keeping our church the envy of the diocese and the custody.

Charity-wise, we donated £995 to three different charities collected from the St. Anthony candles.

The bottom line is that we began AD 2018 with a bank balance of £17,263. So, we are doing OK, but we must be careful in how we spend our money. I promise to eat less this year to help us stay in the black.

I have put the entire renovation project under the care of St. Joseph the worker. So, say a prayer to him from time to time so that we and he can continue

to make our church a magnificent House of Prayer and worship. He has done a great job so far. Thank you for your continued material sacrifices to our parish!

Homily for June 24th - The Birth of John the Baptist

by Fr. Tommy Lane

Today we celebrate the birth of St. John the Baptist. He was the son of Zechariah and Elizabeth. Luke tells us the angel Gabriel announced his birth to his father Zechariah and gave him the name John, which means "God is gracious." (Luke 1:8-23) Even while still in his mother's womb he recognized the presence of Jesus by leaping when Mary visited Elizabeth (Luke 1:41). It is the moment when John the Baptist was cleansed of original sin. The angel Gabriel had previously promised Zechariah that John would be filled with the Holy Spirit even while in the womb (Luke 1:15), and this promise was fulfilled when he was cleansed of original sin when Mary visited his mother Elizabeth.

John left his parents to live the life of a prophet in the desert. He preached in the desert dressed like an Old Testament prophet, wearing a garment of camel-skin and eating locusts and wild honey (Mark 1:6; Matt 3:4). He proclaimed the kingdom of God and a coming judgment, and invited people to accept baptism as a sign of their repentance. His ministry resembled that of the prophets in that he disturbed the comfortable and comforted the disturbed. We see him disturbing the comfortable when he said to the Pharisees and Sadducees, "Brood of vipers, who warned you to flee from the coming retribution? Produce fruit in keeping with your repentance and do not presume to tell yourselves we have Abraham as our father." (Luke 3:7-8) His message obviously disturbed people so some of the powerful did repent, including tax-collectors and soldiers. Tax-collectors asked him what they must do and he replied, "Exact no more than the appointed rate." (Luke 3:13) Soldiers also repented, and his advice to them was "No intimidation! No Extortion! Be content with your pay!" (Luke 3:14) His message spread far and wide. Mark says all Jerusalem and Judea made their way to him and as they were baptized in the Jordan they confessed their sins (Mark 1:5).

We see John's humility when he did not want attention on himself but directed people to Jesus. People began to wonder if John was the Messiah so he reassured them that he was not. He declared that his ministry was preparing for the coming of the Messiah, "I have baptized you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." (Mark 1:8) When Jesus came to John asking for baptism, John recognized Jesus at once and said, "Look, there is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." (John 1:29) These words have found their way into the prayer of Mass; when the priest holds up the Sacred Host as we prepare for Holy Communion he says, "This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world..." Jesus began his public ministry after he had been baptized by John. An expectation had developed among the Jews that the prophet Elijah would return to earth once again to prepare them for the coming of the Messiah and Jesus later declared that John was that Elijah type person they were expecting (Mark 9:13). After Jesus' baptism once again we see John turning the attention to Jesus as he declared, "He must increase, I must decrease." (John 3:30) We are reminded of this fact celebrating John's birth just days after the summer solstice since the daylight will now decrease and we will celebrate the birth of Jesus just days after the winter solstice when the daylight will increase.

We see John's great courage in condemning the marriage of Herod to Herod's brother's wife. This is a reminder to us that not everything that is allowed by law is morally right, e.g. divorce and abortion. Herod had John arrested and put in prison. John stood up for the truth and unfortunately like many who stand up for the truth today he had to pay a price. John's courage in upholding the dignity of marriage and condemning the adulterous relationship of Herod and Herodias was to result in his death by beheading in prison.

History repeats itself, and John the Baptist's beheading was repeated in another saint, St. Thomas More. He was born in London in 1478. He studied law and entered Parliament in 1504. When no offspring resulted from the marriage of Henry VIII and his wife Katherine of Aragón, Henry divorced her and married Anne Boleyn so that there would be heirs to the throne. Parliament passed a law forcing clergy to acknowledge Henry as the supreme head of the Church. Shortly afterwards Thomas More resigned his post as Lord Chancellor. He was aware that just because something is lawful does not mean it is morally right. On April 14th 1534 he was summoned to Lambeth and asked to take the oath which he refused and he was imprisoned in the Tower of London. He was tried for treason in [Westminster Hall](#) and found guilty. He was beheaded on July 6th 1535. His final words were, "The King's good servant, but God's first." He was canonized by Pope Pius XI in 1935.

John's courage in upholding the truth about marriage, and his subsequent beheading as a result, challenges us in a time when it is not popular to speak the truth or live by the truth. Both he and St. Thomas More remind us that just because certain behaviour is enshrined in the law of the land does not mean that is morally right. John turning attention away from himself towards Jesus reminds us to do the same also in our lives. In each of us, we ourselves are to decrease and Jesus is to increase. St. John the Baptist, pray for us.

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O Mary, Mother of God and Cousin to Zechariah, Elizabeth and John the Baptist, pray for us, pray for the Church and pray for the world which needs to hear John's words afresh!