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# THE LAMP

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*"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Psalm 119)*

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## **PBSC TORONTO BRANCH LENTEN QUIET DAY SATURDAY, MARCH 5, 2016**

*Theme: The Classical Teaching about God, and the Prayer Book as a Spiritual Guide*

**Leader: The Revd. Dr. David Smith**

Dr. David Smith grew up in Etobicoke. He studied at Dalhousie University under the legendary Dr. Robert Crouse, among others, and at Wycliffe College. At Dalhousie, he completed his doctorate, with a thesis on St. Augustine. He ministered in the Diocese of Saskatchewan for fifteen years and is now serving in a parish in Prescott, Ontario. His wife, Tracey, and he have two daughters, Carolyn and Katie, both high-school age. Along with parish ministry, he has also taught at the College of Emmanuel and St. Chad in Saskatoon, and at Wycliffe College. He has been a member of the Prayer Book Society since the early nineties. He affirms that the Prayer Book Daily Offices are the cornerstone of his devotional life.

### *Schedule for the day:*

9:30 AM	Morning Prayer (parish service)
10:00 AM	Holy Communion (parish service)
10:30 AM	Coffee and welcome
10:45 AM	<b><i>First talk: The Prayer Book and the Undivided Character of God</i></b>
11:30 AM	Period of silent reflection
12:15 PM	Lunch
1:00 PM	<b><i>Second talk: The Prayer Book and the Just Character of God</i></b>
1:45 PM	Period of silent reflection
2:30 PM	Coffee break
2:45 PM	<b><i>Third talk: The Prayer Book and the Unchanging Character of God</i></b>
3:30 PM	Wrap-up
4:00 PM	Evening Prayer



*Revd. Dr. David Smith*

The Quiet Day will be held at **St. Thomas's Church, 383 Huron Street, Toronto**. St. Thomas's is located a short walk south of Bloor Street, midway between the St. George and Spadina subway stops. A voluntary contribution of \$10 is suggested to cover lunch and refreshment breaks, but you are welcome to pay what you can. Please notify Diana Versegby (416-739-4422) if you intend to come, if possible by February 29 in order to help us plan for the catering.

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# A SERMON FOR ASH WEDNESDAY

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*(This sermon was preached by the Rt. Revd. Richard Chartres, Bishop of London, England, on Ash Wednesday, 2013. Bishop Chartres is the Episcopal Patron of the English Prayer Book Society.)*

Meat has been much in the news. The accusations are flying around. We are doing what we do best – blaming someone else. But as we look anxiously at our burgers and kebabs could it be that Lent will have extra spice this year? A YouGov poll conducted in January revealed that the under 35's are more likely to practice a little abstinence in Lent than the over 35's. The poll suggests that London is foremost in observing Lent and East Anglia the least bothered. Only 2% however are intending to give up meat which used to be at the heart of the Lenten observances. The Carnival has been celebrated so exuberantly over the past two days in Rio's Sambadrome and the word carnival – carnevale – means of course "goodbye to meat". We live in a world however which aspires to perpetual carnival with no ensuing Lent.

Even the modest vestiges of Lent which survive are sometimes softened to accommodate our hectic lifestyles. The United Methodist Church in Michigan, USA is advertising this year "drive thru ashes 7:30-9:00 – no need to exit the car". Thank you for coming to St Paul's instead to give the matter a little more consideration.

Ash Wednesday is itself a mixture of light and shade. It is the beginning of what the holy fathers called the "sad springtime of the Christian year". There is certainly "darkness and gloom" as the prophet Joel declared. We experience the clouds in this great world city. There is a cocktail of anxieties, fear of economic decline, fears about unemployment and the prospects for good work for all our citizens, fear of the consequences of equipping terrorists with the lethal knowledge now so

easily and ironically accessible through one of our greatest technical achievements, the Internet. The fear is concealed of course by a hectic lifestyle which represses a fear of death itself. We live faster and faster in the vain hope that we shall get more out of this short life. At the same time, failure to face the truth about ourselves pushes us to do irrational things, to turn our hatred upon scapegoats.



*Bishop Richard Chartres*

Our Gospel lesson is John 8:1-11. I wonder what influences the crowd in the gospel account were under; the crowd swirling about the Temple in Jerusalem, that world city occupied by a foreign power, a maelstrom of anxiety then as now? They had fastened upon an unfortunate woman caught in the act of adultery. As we cover up our own betrayals and secret cravings, how good to focus on some malefactor caught red handed. We think of the crowds who scream their hatred at paedophiles. Child abuse, like adultery, is a sin. It is a terrible thing to use other people for our pleasure as if they were mere objects to be consumed. But the extreme anger of the homicidal crowd is fuelled from the shadow

world within where an even darker and deeper game is being played out.

The tempest breaks on Jesus Christ. Come on, Jesus, the law says this woman ought to be stoned to death. What does he do? He stoops down and with his finger writes upon the ground. He disengages from the tempest. He bows down and offers a healthful pause.

We are all over-stimulated. Blessed Lent, the sad springtime of the Church's year is the time when we support each other as believers in simplifying our lives; removing fuel from the fires of rage and fear; facing a little more of the shadow world within by laying aside some of our usual comforters that we use to deaden the pain.

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The discipline of Lent in a simpler world used to centre on food. The ancient Christian discipline is salutary for us in a time when there seems to be no joyful rhythm of fasting and feasting but an ultimately unsatisfying 24/7 consumption.

The traditional rule in Lent begins with the burning of last year's palm crosses to produce the ash for tonight's service. 40 days of abstinence follow which traditionally involves meat, dairy products and alcohol. Then in the final three weeks the fast occupies the daylight hours on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Good Friday is a day of total fast. But always practice was adapted to personal circumstances.

In our time however, a break from other forms of mental overstimulation may be even more appropriate. These are matters which you should discuss with your soul friend, but let's take Lent seriously as an antidote to the indigestion which follows the attempt to live according to the modern recipe of growth without limit with no end in view beyond the process itself.

After the disengagement, Jesus lifts himself up and asks with appalling directness, "He that is without sin, let him cast the first stone". Silence and stillness, stooping down to the ground, that is the great education in awareness. Such is the awareness of Jesus Christ that he is able to bring others into his light and up to his level as he lifts himself up. They begin to melt away and Jesus is left alone with the victim who is not allowed to treat

herself as a victim, but he gives her responsibility as he says "I do not condemn thee, go thy way, sin no more".

Seeing things in the light of Jesus Christ, the human face of God and in the silence and stillness – the woman you notice wisely does not say anything except to answer his question with great simplicity – we are convicted and healed in the same instant by the loving compassion of God who desires for us health and that we should be lifted up to his level.

This is a very mysterious world. We have abundance and enough food to feed everyone but we are wasteful and there are vast numbers of people in the world who go to bed hungry. This could be a Paradise in thirty seconds if there were a universal change of heart but instead it is from the heart that the fear and hatreds emerge which expose us all and our children to the dangers of violence. Let us this Lent make some progress to filling our own emptiness with the peaceable spirit of Jesus Christ. Let us at the very least strive to imitate the generosity of God and to share a little of what we have with those who are facing the terrible scourge of renewed flooding in Mozambique with whom we, in the Diocese of London, are united by a covenant ratified in this very Cathedral. This is the way that we enter most profoundly into the truth that God is, "gracious and full of compassion, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy". And that he intends us to find not gloom or fear but delight and fulfillment as we live in harmony with one another and the deep structure of the world he has made.

Let anyone that hath a due sense of religion, and a real desire of happiness, let such a one make trial of our Church for but one year; let him constantly read the Scriptures, in the method that she prescribes; let him constantly use the Common-Prayer according to her directions; let him constantly observe all her fasts and holy-days; let him receive the Sacrament as often as she is ready to administer it, and perform whatsoever else she hath been pleased to command; let any man, I say, do this, and then let him be against our Church if he can; I am confident he cannot. But our misery is, that none of those who are out of the Church, and but few of those that are in it, will make the experiment; and that is the reason that those are so violent against her, and these so indifferent for her. But let others do what they please, and answer for themselves as well as they can another day; as for you who are here at this time, in the especial presence of God, I humbly beseech and exhort you in the name of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ, that as he hath been pleased to admit you into so holy and pure a Church, so you would all endeavour to live up to the rules and orders of it, as many here present do.

William Beveridge (1637-1708), *The Theological Works of William Beveridge*, 1 (Oxford: Parker, 1842), p. 127

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## ONTARIO REGIONAL CYCLE OF PRAYER, APRIL-JUNE

(Over the coming months, please remember the following parishes in your prayers. You might consider using for this purpose one of Prayer #8 or #9, found on pages 43 and 44 of the Book of Common Prayer, or the prayer "For the Parish" found on page 736.)

<b>APR.</b>	<b>3</b>	<i>Easter I</i>	St. Mary's, Walkerville and St. George's, Windsor
	<b>10</b>	<i>Easter II</i>	St. Simon the Apostle's Church, Toronto
	<b>17</b>	<i>Easter III</i>	St. John's, Simcoe and St. Alban's, Delhi
	<b>24</b>	<i>Easter IV</i>	St. Paul's Church, Port Dover
<b>MAY</b>	<b>1</b>	<i>St. Philip &amp; St. James</i>	St. James' Church, Humber Bay (Toronto)
	<b>8</b>	<i>After Ascension</i>	St. Bartholomew's Church, Toronto
	<b>15</b>	<i>Whitsunday</i>	Parishes in the ACNA
	<b>22</b>	<i>Trinity Sunday</i>	St. Paul's Church (Bloor St.), Toronto
<b>JUNE</b>	<b>29</b>	<i>Trinity I</i>	Christ Church, Deer Park (Toronto)
	<b>5</b>	<i>Trinity II</i>	St. Paul's Church, Dunnville
	<b>12</b>	<i>Trinity III</i>	St. John's Church, York Mills (Toronto)
	<b>19</b>	<i>Trinity IV</i>	St. Peter's Church, Scarborough (Toronto)
	<b>26</b>	<i>Trinity V</i>	St. George's Church, Hamilton

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**The Prayer Book Society of Canada** was founded in 1986 by Anglicans who were alarmed at the erosion of classical Anglican doctrine, worship and spirituality that was proceeding alongside the adoption of new liturgies. The Society's aim is briefly to support the continuing use of the Prayer Book for all who value it as their preferred medium of worship, preserving as it does faithfulness to Holy Scripture and adherence to the orthodox Anglican doctrine of the Christian faith. The Mission Statement of the Society, adopted in 1995, is: "To promote the understanding and use of the Book of Common Prayer as a scriptural system of nurture for life in Christ".

The Society operates on two levels: the national level and the branch level. The National Council is responsible for setting policy and direction for the Society, and for overseeing activities with a national scope. All branch presidents are *ex officio* members of the National Council. The branches are individually responsible for organizing local activities and initiatives in their own geographical areas, in support of the aims and objectives of the Society.

**The Ontario Council of PBSC Branches** is an informal coalition of branches in southern Ontario, formed in 1994. It serves as a forum for the planning of joint activities, and provides a network of support for the branches. It publishes this newsmagazine, "**The Lamp**", which appears in the months of March, September and December. Opinions expressed in these pages are not necessarily those of the Society as a whole. Contributions of articles and news items are welcome, and should be sent to the editor (see opposite).

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