

Oblates of St Gregory the Great and St Frances of Rome Meeting Saturday 22nd June 2024

A small group of us met at St Benedict's Church in Stratton on the Fosse on Saturday 22nd June. The number did not reflect the quality of our meeting and the joy of being together again. We began with Mass in the church which was concelebrated by Fr James and Fr Martin and was offered up for Bishop Bosco, the new Bishop of Clifton, and Bishop Declan for his retirement and health. We also remembered Fr Duncan and his wife Barbara, who has been in hospital; we prayed for both of them.

Some parishioners joined us for mass and for coffee afterwards in the hall. We began with *lectio*, focussing on the coming Sunday's gospel: 'The calming of the storm'. It was poignant to be reminded that Jesus is right there in the boat with us through the stormy and uncertain periods of our lives. One of our number pointed out that as oblates and as a monastic community we have been in turbulent waters with the move from Downside and the uncertainties about the future; we gave thanks for the reassurance that we are not alone and that it is very clear from the gospel account that it is the Lord who invited his disciples to join him in the boat and cross to the other side; in time he will calm the waters. In the second part of the morning Fr James shared his thoughts on 'Searching for God' which was one of the themes discussed at the Oblates' Congress in Rome a few months ago. Our reflection dwelt on verses from the Prologue as well as chapter 20 - Reverence in Prayer and chapter 72 - The Good Zeal, as well as parts of chapter 55 of Isaiah and a number of psalms. Our morning concluded with the singing of the Midday Office in the church.

We enjoyed lunch together before sharing thoughts on the Liturgical Year from 12th - 34th Sunday. This is the year of St Mark, but from 17th - 21st Sunday, the gospel is taken from chapter 6 of St John, the Eucharistic Discourse.

We fixed the dates for our next meetings: September 26-28 September, retreat at Buckfast, and 30th November, 25th January, 29th March 2025 at Downside. Please let Fr James know, as soon as possible, if you'll be attending the retreat at Buckfast.

There was enthusiasm for a possible pilgrimage to Rome in 2025, a Jubilee Year. Some remembered fondly the last Oblate Pilgrimage to Rome with Fr Alexander.

Tina Quinn
Oblate