



Third Week of Lent (Year B): 7th / 8th March 2021

Podcast – Mgr Daniel McHugh: Journey of Faith – Life from Holy Mass -

Station Churches of Rome – Sts Cosmas and Damian 11 March 2021

Hallo, Monsignor McHugh, Podcast for the third week of Lent

One of the customs in Rome during Lent is that of the Station Churches, starting with the Pope going to the beautiful Dominican Church of Santa Sabina on the Aventine Hill. Normally there is a Procession, which reflects the Penitential Processions of earlier times, and celebratory Mass in the Station Church for that day. In addition, a Litany is prayed during the Procession and the relics of the saints are venerated.

Station comes from the latin ‘statio’, meaning ‘standing’; we use the word of course in more secular context for places trains and buses stop. The term Station Masses grew up in Ireland in the 18th Century, in Penal Times, when Masses were held in different places (station stops if you like), usually people’s houses at the time when it wasn’t possible to have public Masses. Similarly, there were Mass Rocks, where Mass was celebrated and these are still venerated today.

In relation to Penance it was to refrain “stay from” food; and in the times when the Pope went to the different Churches in Rome on the days of Lent it came to signify his standing as Pastor with the people in different locations, signifying his unity with the Parishes of Rome.

I thought it would be good to remember one of the Station Churches in my Podcast this coming week, as a way of marking our unity with the Holy Father, Pope Francis, and the Church in Rome where so many were martyred for the Faith in the early centuries.

On Thursday 11 March, the Station Church is Sts Cosmas and Damian. This year the celebratory occasion will be very muted as Rome is, like us, in lockdown, due to the Pandemic. Sts Cosmas and Damian were martyred at the end of the 3rd Century or the beginning of the 4th Century in Syria. They were Physicians or Doctors and were known for their generosity to the poor, and later the miracles worked through their intercession, especially at their tombs. Their remains were brought to Rome and their tombs are in the Church dedicated to them in the 500s. It is in the Roman Forum, close to the Colosseum, where the Pope usually conducts the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday.

In marking this Station at Sts Cosmas and Damian during Lent, we are reminded of the important part caring for the sick had in the ministry of Jesus, and we thank God for the wonderful dedication shown by many medics during this time of the Pandemic. Catholic Doctors and Chemists join the Guild of Sts Cosmas and Damian, now called the Catholic Medical Association, dedicating their ministry to Our Lord, as those great martyrs did.

Monsignor Daniel McHugh

Co-ordinator for Ethnic Chaplaincies in the Archdiocese



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Ethnic Chaplaincies

We pray for Doctors, for the sick and all who care for them, while renewing our commitment to care too.

The reading I have chosen is one of those for the Station at Sts Cosmas and Damian. The reading is from the Prophet Jeremiah Chapter 7 : 1-7 where we are reminded that Lenten Observance must reflect a change of heart, not just be for external show.

I conclude with the prayer which is the Collect for the Station Mass of Sts Cosmas and Damian.

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Monsignor Daniel McHugh

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