

THE ORATORY—dedicated to THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

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Registered as a Charity

Parish Weekly Newsletter

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This newsletter is available in large-print format. Ask at the Sacristy.

December 7th 2008: THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT



THE VOICE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS

John the Baptist appears in today's Gospel for the first time this Advent as the herald who announces Our Lord's imminent coming. It can seem all too easy to overlook the Baptist as a rather odd and disquieting figure who makes an annual appearance in our liturgy in the lead-up to Christmas, and can then be forgotten again for another year. Yet Our Lord Himself said that "of all those born of women, there is no one greater than John the Baptist" (Mt 11:11). It is not without significance that Our Lord says this after John's arrest for speaking out against King Herod's immorality, for which he was shortly afterwards to die a martyr's death.

Our Lord makes it clear that John is His Forerunner. While He Himself is the Son of God, the only Saviour, John is the great prophet, God's "mouthpiece", whose special role it was *immediately* to prepare the way for the coming of the Lord. In today's Gospel we hear the very opening of St. Mark, arresting in its suddenness as it plunges straight into the preaching of John with great urgency. Mark immediately quotes the passage of Isaiah which we hear in today's first reading: "*Behold! I am going to send my messenger before you; he will prepare your way.*" The prophet is speaking in God's own voice to one whom He calls "the Lord", as we hear: "*He will prepare your way. A voice cries in the wilderness; Prepare a way for the Lord, make His paths straight.*" It is not until the appearance of John that the identity of this mysterious messenger in Isaiah's prophecy was finally revealed. Moreover, it is not only John's identity that is revealed, but the identity of Him to whom God speaks in Isaiah's prophecy: the Lord Himself—the Redeemer of whom Isaiah says today: "*Here is your God. Here is the Lord coming with power, His arm subduing all things to Him.*"

The Advent message is just such an urgent call to "prepare the ways" and "make the Lord's paths straight". Our Lord is coming "like a thief", as St. Peter reminds us in the second reading. St. Peter also makes the urgency of this message clear: "*...and then with a roar the sky will vanish, the elements will catch fire and fall apart, the earth and all it contains will be burnt up.*" What part does St. John the Baptist play in this drama? He comes as a witness to the Truth (John 1:13). His role in our own lives is to bring us face to face with the Truth that is Christ. There is no proper acknowledgement of Christ without recognising Him as God and as our only Redeemer. Nor can we be redeemed unless we come to understand our total dependency upon our Redeemer for salvation. We cannot save ourselves. John reminds us that we cannot be saved from sin until we acknowledge our sins and turn away from them. We can prepare the way for Jesus to come only by repenting of all our sins and making a good confession of them. May St. John the Baptist help us to prepare in this way for the coming of God the Son—this Christmas, at the hour of our death, and at the Last Day.

OUR LADY CONCEIVED WITHOUT SIN

Tomorrow, Monday, we will celebrate with great joy and thanksgiving to God, the patronal feast of our Parish, the Immaculate Conception of Our Blessed Lady. Cardinal Newman chose this title, of all the many wonderful titles of Our Blessed Lady, under which to dedicate this Church and Oratory to Our Lady. In her total sinlessness Our Lady is the perfect embodiment of what a human person was meant to be by our Creator. In her maternity she not only brought the Saviour into the world, but also became "the Mother of all who live", because life, which was lost by the sin of Adam and Eve, is restored in a wonderful way by the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Mary's Son. So the Church Fathers saw Mary as the "new Eve", the one who reverses the harm done to all her descendants by the first Eve. So by a happy coincidence in Latin, the name "Eva", can be reversed to give us the first word of Gabriel's greeting: "Ave!" *Hail*, which we make especially our own when we pray to her "Hail, Mary, full of grace!"



Sunday December 7th: The Second Sunday of Advent (Purple)

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| • 8.30 a.m. <i>Low Mass</i> | • 12.00 p.m. <i>(Families with young children)</i> |
| • 9.30 a.m. <i>Latin Low Mass (1962 Missal:)</i> | • 5.30 p.m. <i>Sung Congregational Mass</i> |
| • 10.30 a.m. <i>High Mass</i> | • 7.30 p.m. <i>Vespers and Benediction</i> |

THE SECOND WEEK OF THE YEAR: Liturgical Calendar

Year 2 or B of the Lectionary at Mass and Psalter Week 2

Monday to Friday: Masses at 7.30 a.m., 12.45 p.m. and 5.45 p.m.

Rosary at 7.45 p.m.

Confessions are heard from 12.30 p.m. and from 5.30 p.m. until the end of Mass.

Monday December 8th: SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, Our Patronal Feast. (White)

- **Low Masses at 7.30, a.m., 10 a.m. (1962 Latin), 12.45 p.m., 5.45 p.m.**
- **SOLEMN HIGH MASS AT 8 P.M.**

Tuesday December 9th: Tuesday of Advent Week 2. (Purple). Optional memoria of St Juan Diego Cuatitlatotzin. (White).

- **Benediction at 8.00 p.m. Brothers of the Little Oratory meet in St Philip's Chapel after Benediction. New members welcome.**

St Juan Diego (d. 1548) was the simple Mexican peasant chosen by God to have a vision of His Blessed Mother who revealed to him her love for the Mexican people and so helped to convert them. (see Friday's memorial of Our Lady of Guadalupe)

Wednesday December 10th: Wednesday of Advent Week 2. (Purple) Optional memoria of St Edmund Gennings, Priest & English Martyr. (Red)

St Edmund Gennings was born in Lichfield in 1567 and became a Catholic while living in the house of a Catholic gentleman. Subsequently he was ordained a priest. In 1591 he was arrested whilst saying Mass in the house of St. Swithun Wells, having been betrayed by his brother, a fierce Protestant. Edmund was paraded through the streets in his Mass vestments in mockery of his priesthood and eventually put to death. His brother was present at his death and was converted by the experience. He, too, became a priest and eventually was Superior of the Franciscans in England.

Thursday December 11th: Thursday of Advent Week 2. (Purple). Optional memoria of St Damasus, Pope. (White)

St Damasus was a Spaniard born in Rome who was elected Pope in A.D. 366. During his pontificate Christianity finally became the official religion of the Roman State. He commissioned his friend, the scholar St. Jerome, to revise the Latin text of the Scriptures, which is still the basis of the Latin Bible used by the Church to this day. St. Damasus also adorned the shrines of the Roman martyrs and wrote inscriptions to honour them.

Friday December 12th: Friday of Advent Week 2. (Purple) Optional memoria of Our Lady of Guadalupe. (White)

Our Lady of Guadalupe. St. Juan Diego (feast day: December 9th) saw the vision of the Lady who left her image miraculously imprinted on his cloak, which is still preserved in Mexico. Our Lady of Guadalupe is the Patron of the Americas and also of all unborn children.

Saturday December 13th: St Lucy, Virgin & Martyr. Memoria. (Red)

- **Mass at 8 a.m. and 11 a.m.**
- **Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament from 8.30 to 10.45 a.m.**
- **Benediction at 10.45**
- **Confessions from 10.55 a.m. to 12 noon and from 5.30 p.m. until the end of Mass**
- **First Mass of Sunday: The Third Sunday of Advent, at 5.45 p.m.**

St Lucy (d. 304) lived in Syracuse, an important Greek city in Sicily. She was martyred under the last, terrible persecution by Diocletian. Although not a Roman saint, her fame was great enough for her to be mentioned in the Roman Canon of the Mass.

Sunday December 14th: The Third Sunday of Advent, "Gaudete" (Rose)

Mass & Service Times:

- **8.30 a.m. Low Mass**
- **9.30 a.m. Latin low Mass (1962 Missal)**
- **10.30 a.m. High Mass**
- **12.00 p.m. (Families with young children)**
- **5.30 p.m. Sung Congregational Mass in English**
- **7.30 p.m. Vespers and Benediction**

Please pray for the sick: Fr Cownley, Andrew Reddy, Kathleen Devere, Leah Lansbury, Olive d'Silva, Bridget Shields, Kim Potter, Maurice Hynes, Carole Halls, Margaret Casey and Frank McGuinness.

Of your charity please pray for the repose of the souls of those who have died recently: Clare Thomas, Martin Kelly, Jean Dovepen and Margaret Ginely;

and of the souls of those whose anniversaries occur about now: Fr Stanislaus du Moulin-Browne of this Oratory, Kenneth Chavasse, Charles William Nicholls, Thomas McHugh, Charles Henry Rushton, Dorisa Cozzi, Marie Jones, Ivy Green, Brother John Anderson, Thomas McNamara, Arnoldo Marinoni and Gordon Cormack.

Clare Thomas's Requiem will be on Friday at 11 a.m. followed by burial at Edgmond, Salop.

The following are requested to read at Mass next weekend, December 13th/14th, Third Sunday of Advent:

Saturday 5.45 p.m.: Brigid Hogan
Sunday 8.00 a.m.: Margaret Hawkins
12.00 p.m.: Morag Marinoni
5.30 p.m.: Simon Stacey

Collections:

First Sunday of Advent, 30th November:
Offertory: £1,572

Second: Cardinal Newman's Cause: £632
Thank you

TODAY

The **SECOND COLLECTION THIS WEEKEND** is for Poor Parishes of the Diocese. **Next weekend**, it will be for poor families in our own parish.

The **PIETY STALL** is open after all Sunday Masses. Christmas cards, gifts, calendars, diaries etc. including goods being sold on behalf of Aid to the Church in Need, are available in addition to the usual stock. Why not consider a book as a Christmas present? We have a wide selection, including those for children. Also, the 3 CD (Audio) set on the life of Cardinal Newman is still available. Several people, having heard it, have bought second copies as gifts for friends, including their non-Catholic friends.

The **ORATORY CHRISTMAS PRIZE DRAW**: Books of tickets are now available at the doors of the church. **Please take and sell as many as you can.** (Tickets : £1 per book or 20p each). There will be several prizes, in addition to the first prize of £500, and other cash prizes. Please return money and ticket stubs to the Oratory House, or at the sacristy, preferably in an envelope marked 'Prize Draw'.

'**WALK WITH ME**' Archbishop Vincent Nichols's new edition book of prayer and meditations for Advent is available at the back of the church, priced at £1. (Calendars are 30p.) Please buy extra copies for friends and relatives, especially those who are housebound.

THIS WEEK

ADORATION AT REDNAL will take place this week on Wednesday beginning with Mass at 2.30 p.m.

Our ADVENT TALKS, a series on St Paul and his teachings, continue on Saturdays in the Lower Cloister hall at 11.30 a.m. The third will be given by Fr Sebastian this coming Saturday, 15th, on "the Gospel of St. Paul".

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

OPEN AIR CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION in partnership with Birmingham City Council and **Birmingham Churches Together** in Victoria Square on Saturday 13th December beginning at 3.30pm with Children's choir on stage (children from schools and parishes are welcome to join in on the day) and then a Carol Service at 4.30pm. The event ends at 5.30pm. People are welcome to come along anytime during the 2 hours.

CATHOLIC WOMEN'S BOOKCLUB: The next meeting will be on Monday 22nd December, from 12—2 p.m. The guest speaker will be Dr Caroline Farey who will discuss her new book " 'Nativity'. A Visual Meditation", which is available at the Piety stall, as well as on the day.

YEAR OF ST PAUL PILGRIMAGE TO MALTA: Organised by Moseley Travel: 7th—14th February 2009 to mark the Feast of St Paul's arrival on the island, which is celebrated on February 10th. Travelling from Birmingham, the total cost is £395, including half-board in a 4* hotel in Qawra. If anyone is interested in this pilgrimage, please contact Fr Paul.

NOTICES

ANNIE BRIGHT RESIDENTIAL HOME, (for women) Norfolk Rd has **vacancies for two residents**. Please contact Mrs C Buchanan or Sr Anita. (Mass is celebrated most days). **It also has vacancies for one Senior Carer and Two Care Assistants.** Please contact Sr Anita or Mrs Buchanan. Tel: 0121 454 1289

CHRISTMAS STAMPS: the Post Office have now issued both secular stamps and Religious Christmas stamps; but just like last year, you have to stipulate if you want Religious stamps. **We have been told that some Post Offices are denying that they have any religious stamps. Please insist that if they will not obtain them for you, you will go elsewhere. Remember: Each Post Office has been asked to send in to HQ the totals sold (possibly to say that there is no demand for religious ones !)**