

THE ORATORY—dedicated to THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

141 Hagley Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B16 8UE

Registered as a Charity

Parish Weekly Newsletter

Telephone: 0121 454 0496

Fac simile: 0121 455 8160

E-mail: parish@theoratory.org.uk

Web-site: www.theoratory.org.uk

Oratory Primary School: web.oratory.bham.sch.uk

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



December 14th 2008: THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT "GAUDETE"



REJOICE IN THE LORD!

In the Gospel John the Baptist continues to give witness to Christ by telling those sent to him by the Chief Priests that though he is not himself the Messiah (the "Christ" or the "Anointed One"), the Messiah does already stand in their midst, "unknown to them". John has prepared the way for the Messiah both by his preaching and his baptising. He tells the messengers from Jerusalem that the true Messiah will baptise not merely with water, but with the Holy Spirit.

St. Paul, in the second reading (which is taken from the first Epistle to the Thessalonians), encourages us to "*be joyful at all times*". This is not the same as the secular call: "Don't worry; be happy!" The call to Christian joyfulness is made in the Entrance Antiphon whose first word "*Gaudete!*" (*rejoice!*) has given this Sunday its name. It is a spiritual gift and quality and is not incompatible with some difficulties in life and even pain and sorrow. This is clear from Our Lord's teaching in the Beatitudes: "*Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted*", and "*Blessed are you when men revile you and speak all kinds of calumny against you on my account—rejoice and be glad...*"

True Christian rejoicing means a profound, and not a superficial joy. It is seen in the difference between those, on the one hand, who know the inner peace which comes from closeness to God and the doing of His Will at any cost, and on the other hand those who *only* seek entertainment and distraction from the tedium or problems of their daily lives in shops, bars and clubs. As Christmas draws nearer, there are so many people in the latter category. For us, the call to "rejoice" is the invitation to find the God of peace in our preparations for His coming at Christmas. It's not that God doesn't want us to enjoy Christmas, rather that He wants us to enjoy His Son's coming, for which we can only prepare by keeping this Advent as a time of prayer and sacramental practice, above all Mass and confession. What a terrible shame it is when Catholics are eager to go out partying on Saturday night but cannot be bothered to go to Sunday Mass!

Rejoicing in the Lord is only possible when we remain *watchful*, as we were reminded on the First Sunday of Advent. We must be vigilant over ourselves—being careful of the way in which we spend our time—watching the kind of thoughts and actions we allow ourselves to indulge. Being watchful means staying alert—not allowing ourselves to waste valuable time and opportunities to grow in love of God and neighbour. Prayer is essential here, and don't forget to make at least one good confession for Christmas!

O, THAT YOU WOULD COME QUICKLY!

For many people looking over the page at 17th December onwards, the appearance of short passages beginning with "O" will be puzzling. What are they? There are seven of them altogether, each allocated to a day in the last week before Christmas. They are all "Antiphons"—short passages which both precede and follow the singing or recitation of the Canticle of Our Lady known as the "Magnificat", which the Church sings at Vespers each day. Each of these antiphons is a prayer of longing—(hence the cry: "O!" which begins each of them). The Church longs for Christ her Saviour to come and set her free from sin, from oppression, from the darkness of waiting in a world which has abandoned God and has got lost deeper and deeper in sin. These antiphons are very ancient and by long tradition are sung solemnly on each of the last seven evenings leading up to Christmas Eve. We will actually sing the fifth of these, "*O Oriens*" at Vespers on the Fourth Sunday. That antiphon calls Christ the "Rising Sun", reminding us on the shortest day that although it is the darkest time of year, the light will now gradually return, albeit imperceptibly at first. That sign gives us hope that in the darkest moments of human life, God is still present, though hidden and imperceptible to all but the faithful.

In a country like ours which has turned its back on God and on the Church He founded, this time of darkness and waiting is very real for us. These seven short prayers can be the heart of our own prayer to Christ each day of the last week before Christmas. As the prophet Isaiah said in last Sunday's reading: "*O, that you (God) would tear open the heavens and come down!*" Isaiah also knew the heartache of waiting during a time when the Chosen People, had forgotten God and turned their backs on religion. We must take heart from Our Lord's words to the Apostles: "*Blessed are your eyes, for they see what many prophets longed to see, and never saw it!*" All that the Apostles saw and heard, we can see and hear when we receive the Sacraments carefully and reverently.

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

- | | |
|--|--|
| • 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 THIRD WEEK OF THE YEAR: Liturgical Calendar

Year 2 or B of the Lectionary at Mass and Psalter Week 3

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 15th: Monday of Advent Week 3. (Purple) Blessed Anthony Grassi, Oratorian Priest. Memoria. (White)

- **Sung Mass at 5.45 p.m** in honour of Blessed. Anthony Grassi
- **Blessing with St Philip's relic at 8 p.m.**

Bl. Anthony Grassi (1592-1671) He joined the Oratorians in Fermo, Italy at the age of seventeen and soon proved himself to be a student of fine intellect. As a young priest, he was struck by lightning whilst praying at the shrine of Our Lady of Loretto, to whom he had a special devotion. Grateful for his recovery, he considered his life now belonged entirely to God. Renowned for his serenity, he became a sought-after confessor and adviser, even to cardinals. Despite his obvious humility, he kept the Oratorian constitutions, and once he became Provost, ensured that his community did likewise. He was considered to be truly like St Philip Neri.

Tuesday December 16th: Tuesday of Advent Week 3. (Purple).

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

Wednesday December 17th: Wednesday of Advent : 17th December. (Purple)

'O Sapientia': O Wisdom who come forth from the mouth of the Most High; reaching from end to end and powerfully ordering all things; Come! And teach us the way of prudence.

Thursday December 18th: Weekday of Advent: 18th December. (Purple)

'O Adonai': O Mighty Lord, and Leader of the House of Israel, Who appeared to Moses in the flame of the burning bush, and gave him the Law on Mount Sinai; Come! And redeem us with outstretched arm.

Friday December 19th: Weekday of Advent: 19th December. (Purple)

'O Radix Jesse': O Root of Jesse, standing as a banner of the nations, before Whom kings will keep silent, and to Whom the Gentiles will make their prayers; Come! to deliver us—tarry no longer!

Saturday December 20th: Weekday of Advent: 20th December. (Purple)

'O Clavis David': O Key of David and Sceptre of the House of Israel, What You open no man can shut; what You close no man can open; Come! And bring out of prison the captive sitting in darkness and the shadow of death.

- **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 Fourth Sunday of Advent, at 5.45 p.m.**

Sunday December 21st: The Fourth Sunday of Advent. (Purple) 'O Oriens'

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**

'O Oriens': O Star of the Morning, brightness of Eternal Light and Sun of Justice; Come! And enlighten those who sit in darkness of the shadow of death.

Please pray for the sick Monica Webbley, Andrew Reddy, Kathleen Devere, Olive d'Silva, Bridget Shields, Carole Halls, Raymond Coloquhoun and Margaret Casey. **Of your charity please pray for the repose of the souls of those who have died recently: and of the souls of those whose anniversaries occur about now:** Esther Wilks, Michael Berg, Lucy O'Driscoll, James Colquhoun, Nance Dunn, Pearl Harper, John Winterton, Mary Scranage, Mary St George Parker, Ingeborg Willis, John Osborne and Thomas McAlinden.

Margaret Ginnelly's funeral is on Thursday at 12.45 p.m. Reception of remains: Tuesday at 4.30 p.m.

The following are requested to read at Mass next weekend, December 20th/21st, Fourth Sunday of Advent:
Saturday 5.45 p.m.: Morag Marinoni
Sunday 8.00 a.m.: Murray Wilson-Browne
12.00 p.m.: Dulcie Robinson
5.30 p.m.: Brendan Cummins

Collections:
Second Sunday of Advent, 6th December:
Offertory: £1,590
Second: Poor Parishes of the Diocese: £485
Thank you

TODAY

The **SECOND COLLECTION THIS WEEKEND** is for poor families in our own parish this Christmas.

The **PIETY STALL** is open after all Sunday Masses. **GIFT VOUCHERS** are now available, plus 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 going rather slowly so **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'.

THIS WEEK

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

Our ADVENT TALKS on St Paul and his teachings, continue on Saturday in the Lower Cloister hall at 11.30 a.m. The fourth will be given by Fr Dermot this coming Saturday, 20th, on "St. Paul on Christ". Please also note that the talks will recommence after Christmas, on January 10th.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

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.

ST. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY is the patron of the English Pastoral Clergy. There will be a High Mass here on his feast day, Monday 29th December according to the 1962 Missal at 11 a.m.

NEW YEAR'S EVE VIGIL: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament from 9.30 p.m. with prayers (as requested by Our Lady of Fatima) for World peace, the conversion of sinners and in reparation for the sins against her Immaculate Heart. Mass of the Solemnity of the Mother of God (January 1st) will be at 11.45 p.m. Refreshments will be served after Mass.

NOTICES

APF RED BOX HOLDERS: The quarter ends on 31st December. Your collector will contact you in due course to make arrangements for collection and exchange of your box. Many thanks for your co-operation.

ANNIE BRIGHT RESIDENTIAL HOME, (for women) Norfolk Rd has **vacancies for two residents. 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 Daily Telegraph reported on Saturday that, just as many of you have already discovered, complaints are coming in from all over the country that religious stamps cannot easily be found. It seems as though the Post Office is deliberately thwarting demand for these stamps so as to phase them out in coming years. **However, it is still possible to order these stamps online from Royal Mail.** Enter "Royal Mail" in your search engine, click on "Christmas at Royal Mail", but be warned—DO NOT click on "Christmas Stamps"! Instead look for "shop" in the "top links" menu. Now click on "stamp sheets" and scroll right down to the very bottom (!) to find the religious Christmas stamps which you can only order in sheets of 50. Talk about making things difficult!