

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.

November 29th 2009: THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT



THE KING WHO IS TO COME

Today a new year of the Church's life begins. Yet this new beginning for the Church does not look backwards to the beginning of all things, but rather forwards toward their end, which is, of course, still to come. Our Lord speaks in today's Gospel of the end times as something fearful. Yet despite the terror of the "nations in agony", the "clamour of the ocean and its waves" and the menace caused by the breaking up of the powers of the heavens, all this will only usher in a far greater event—the Return of the Son of Man, our Lord and Saviour, in all His infinite majesty and glory.

Advent, as we remind ourselves each year on this its first Sunday, is a time of waiting for Christ to come again. When He came the first time to this earth, the Son of God emptied Himself of all His majesty. As St. Paul teaches us, Christ took upon Himself the condition of a slave. So He lived and even more wonderfully still, so He died in astonishing self-abasement. At the end of this Advent season we will once again commemorate that first coming over two thousand years ago in Bethlehem.

Yet just as that first coming was no legend, but utterly true—so will the second be. Nevertheless, the difference will also be very great; for whereas His first coming was in the stillness of night in a very brief time of peace on earth, His second coming will take place at the end of this pe-

riod of most fearful agony in the world, and not only on this earth, but in the whole universe as well.

Writers of science fiction often dwell on the vastness and emptiness of space, and upon the existence of huge forces such as black holes which are capable of annihilating our world in an instant were we to come anywhere near them. These writers portray the cosmos as terrifying not only in the contrast between its vast emptiness and its catastrophic power, but especially as utterly impersonal. The collision of galaxies, the explosions of stars of breathtaking magnitude and blinding brightness—beside which our little sun and its solar system of planets seem puny, let alone the earth which is such a small part of that system—all impress upon our imaginations the insignificance of our tiny world and our short lives.

Yet the message of Advent Sunday is quite different. Behind its startling imagery of chaos and disorder Our Lord is telling us that He will especially manifest His power and glory at the time of greatest apparent disintegration of the entire universe. It seems unimaginable to us, but the Lord who was born in Bethlehem and died on the cross both created the entire universe of which we know but a fraction, and sustains it all at every single moment by his sovereign will. And not only will He show His infinite power at that time, but He will also bring all human existence to its climactic completion. On that day, history will end— but not by dissolving into nothingness or endless chaos—not at all. On that final day the created heavens and the earth will shrivel up not by its own internal power, but by the living presence of the One who made them all. On that day, that living, personal, powerful presence will bring every human being whom He has made since our first parents to stand before Him and be judged worthy of being eternally in that presence, or not.

No wonder the message He gives us today is so very urgent. He says that we must "*stay awake, praying at all times for the strength to survive all that is going to happen, and to stand with confidence before the Son of Man*". We cannot afford to ignore this call to wakefulness and watchfulness. But how are we to be "watchful"? By being careful for ourselves—not giving ourselves over to the cares and pleasures of this world which will only *coarsen* us. Think how many people have ceased to practise their faith because they have become too fond of this world's goods! Reflect on how many people no longer believe in the Judgement that God will give each one of us after we die! The very thought of these things will help to stop us from being coarsened. The Second Coming of our Saviour is a fact as real and sure as His first Coming. It is different principally in that it has not yet happened. Yet every year that goes by sees us, inevitably, one year nearer its fulfilment. How are we preparing ourselves *now* for that day, and for the eternity which follows it?

Sunday November 29th: The First Sunday of Advent (Purple)

- 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**
- 7.30 p.m. **Vespers and Benediction**

FIRST WEEK OF ADVENT: Liturgical Calendar

Year 2 of the Lectionary at Mass and Psalter Week 1 in the Divine Office

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

NOVENA BEFORE THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION AT 8 P.M.

Exposition on Saturday: 8.30– 10.45 a.m.

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

Monday 30th November: St Andrew, Apostle & Martyr. (Red)

- **Novena before the Immaculate Conception at 8 p.m.**

St Andrew (1st cent) He was the first Apostle and the older brother of St Peter. He evangelised Asia Minor and Greece, and was martyred by crucifixion in the position represented by the "X". In addition to Scotland, he is patron of Russia and Greece.

Tuesday 1st December: St Edmund Campion, Priest & Martyr. (Red)

- **Novena before the Immaculate Conception at 8 p.m.**

St Edmund Campion (1540-81) He was born into a Catholic family but became a protestant. Educated at Oxford, he was a brilliant student and Queen Elizabeth I intended him for high office. He became an Anglican deacon but his studies convinced him of the truth of the Catholic faith and he converted, going into exile to join the Jesuits. On his return, after seven years in Prague, he set up a secret printing press and travelled greatly, converting many in the process. He was captured and tortured before eventually being hanged, drawn and quartered at Tyburn with two other priests, St Ralph Sherwin and St Alexander Briant. During St Edmund's trial, which was a travesty of justice, the judge inexplicably had blood on his hands. Dismayed, he showed it to several witnesses, and though he tried to wipe it away, it returned.

Wednesday 2nd December: Wednesday of Advent Week. (Purple)

- **Novena before the Immaculate Conception at 8 p.m.**

Thursday 3rd December: St Francis Xavier, Priest. Memoria. (White)

- **Novena before the Immaculate Conception at 8 p.m.**

St Francis Xavier (1506-1552) He and St Ignatius Loyola, both Basques, met whilst they studied in Paris, and together founded the Jesuits in 1542. Francis went as a missionary to Goa and from there to Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Japan. Although he met with severe difficulties, he was in the end very successful and is regarded as perhaps the greatest individual missionary since St Paul.

Friday 4th December: Friday of Advent Week I. (Purple) . Optional memoria of St John Damascene, Priest & Doctor of the Church.

- **Novena before the Immaculate Conception at 8 p.m.**

St John Damascene (c. 676-749) He succeeded his father as the Christian representative at the Islamic Caliph's court in Damascus, but was not comfortable with politics and retired to a monastery in Jerusalem. He became a great theologian and as such, set his mind to the great debate at the time, which was whether it was against the First Commandment to have sacred images. He strongly defended their use as aids to prayer and worship, a teaching confirmed by the 2nd Council of Nicaea in 787. He had a deep devotion to Our Lady and wrote many hymns and sermons in her honour.

Saturday 5th December: St Birinus, Bishop. Feast. (White)

- **Masses 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 a.m.**
- **Confessions from 10.55 a.m. to 12 noon & from 5.30 p.m.**
- **First Mass of Sunday (Second Sunday of Advent) at 5.45 p.m.**

St Birinus (d.350) A Roman, he became a bishop to the Western Saxons and soon converted the king whom many followed. He set his see at Dorchester-on-Thames.

December 6th: The Second Sunday of Advent. (Purple):

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 in English**
- **7.30 p.m. Vespers and Benediction**

Please pray for the sick Franco Muro, Geoff Jones, David McLean, Frances Ratcliffe, Veronica Nash, Hazel Sawford, David Pritchard, Leroy McCoy, Carolyn Knight, Paul Beesley, James Foynes, Michael McCann, Philip McCann, Ray Colquhoun, Mauricio Lima, Celia Reddy, Tony Farmer and John Murphy.

Of your charity please pray for the repose of the souls of those who have died recently: Marlin Brown

and of the souls of those whose anniversaries occur about now: Fr Joseph du Moulin-Browne, Clare Thomas, Patrick Logan, Angela Pearson, William Corbett, Andrew Leek and Marie Jones.

Joan McClelland's funeral is on Tuesday at 12.45 p.m.
Reception of remains: Monday at 4.30 p.m.

The following are requested to read at Mass next weekend, December 5th/6th, Second Sunday of Advent:

Saturday 5.45 p.m.: Anne Roebuck
Sunday 8.30 a.m.: Murray Wilson-Browne
12.00 p.m.: Chris Sammons
5.30 p.m.: Jason Mahoney

Collections:

Christ the King: 22nd November, 2009
Offertory: £1,560
Second: Catholic Youth Fund: £479

Thank you

The Second Collection this week will be for the expenses of Cardinal Newman's Cause.

Next weekend it will be for the Poor Parishes of the Diocese.

TODAY

EPIPHANY DRAW tickets are at the Church Doors. Please take as many as possible for yourselves and to sell to others. Please return counterfoils and money in an envelope marked "Prize Draw" to one of the Fathers or to the Oratory House.

THIS WEEK

ADORATION AT REDNAL with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament will take place on **Monday, (please note different day!)**, commencing with Mass at 2.30 p.m. and ending with Benediction at c. 4.30 p.m.

THE ORATORY PRIMARY SCHOOL invites you all to a Cardinal Newman learning event on Tuesday, December 1st from 10 a.m. to 12 noon. This will be an opportunity for many children, parents and other local groups to show their recent work in the Cardinal Newman heritage project that the school is currently undertaking.

ORATORY YOUNG ADULTS' GROUP (for ages 20-35) meets on Thursday, for a Holy Hour in the Cloister Chapel at 7.45 p.m. followed by mulled wine and mince pies.

OUR ADVENT TALKS continue on Saturday at 11.30 a.m. in the Lower Cloister Hall. The second talk will be on "Newman and Conscience" and will be given by Fr. Philip.

HALF DAY OF PRAYER & REFLECTION at ST CATHERINES', Bristol St, on 'The Hospitality of God' on Saturday, 5th December, from 1-5 p.m. Please take sandwiches/food to share for 12 noon.

SOCIETY OF ST HUGH meets Saturday at 2 p.m. Oratory House. All are welcome.

NOTICES

The PIETY STALL is open after Saturday 11 a.m. and 5.45 p.m. **Masses and all Sunday Masses. Advent Calendars, Books and other items for children, Advent wreaths, Cribs, Christmas cards, diaries, DVDs and other Christmas and gift items are on sale**, including those we are selling on behalf of Aid to the Church in Need.

TEACHING VACANCY

THE ORATORY PRIMARY SCHOOL has a vacancy for a **Year 3 Key Stage 2 Teacher from January 2010** Group 2 Salary Range: MPS 21,102 - 24,602. The Governors are looking to recruit a highly motivated, committed, practising Roman Catholic teacher to share in the continued strategic improvement of this very popular, one form entry school. Informal visits to the school are most welcome. Please contact the Head Teacher, Mrs C. Dickinson, on 0121 454 0600 to make an appointment. **Closing Date: Friday 4th December, 12 noon.**

YEAR FOR PRIESTS—a reflection by Pope Benedict XVI

St John Vianney arrived in Ars, a village of 230 souls, warned by his Bishop beforehand that there he would find religious practice in a sorry state: "There is little love of God in that parish; you will be the one to put it there". As a result, he was deeply aware that he needed to go there to embody Christ's presence and to bear witness to his saving mercy: "[Lord,] grant me the conversion of my parish; I am willing to suffer whatever you wish, for my entire life!": with this prayer he entered upon his mission. The Curé devoted himself completely to his parish's conversion, setting before all else the Christian education of the people in his care.