

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.

January 25th 2009: THE THIRD SUNDAY OF THE YEAR

Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul



SAUL THE PHARISEE RECEIVES GOD'S GRACE

Although today is kept as the Third Sunday of "Green" (Ordinary) Time, January 25th is usually the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul. Since this is the Year of St. Paul, the Holy Father has given permission for all churches throughout the world to celebrate one Mass in honour of the feast today, in place of the Sunday Mass. We will do so at the High Mass at 10.30 a.m.

Nevertheless, since St. Paul is so central to this year's meditations, today gives us a good opportunity to reflect a little on this truly astounding event, which was to bring about such an enormous influence on the Christian Church.

The basic facts are quite well known. Saul, a young and fanatical pharisee, was a rising star in the Jewish world. He was a Jew of the "diaspora", one of the many Jewish families that had lived for generations in cities of the Greco-Roman world beyond the Holy Land. He came from Tarsus, a city near the Mediterranean coast in modern Turkey, and was born with the distinction of being a Roman citizen, a great privilege with many advantages, which few Jews enjoyed. He had also benefited from a very good education under the famous Rabbi Gamaliel. It was Gamaliel who had famously argued before the Sanhedrin that it was foolish to fight against the Christians because if they were not of divine origin they would die out naturally; but if, on the other hand, they were of divine origin, then not only could no earthly power defeat them, but the Jewish authorities might even find themselves fighting against God Himself. (v. Acts 5:34-42)

Yet this was what Saul, Gamaliel's star pupil, tried to do. He poured his considerable energy and zeal into organising the persecution of the followers of Christ, treating them as heretics from the purest form of Jewish religion. In after days, when he had become Paul the Apostle, he would describe very powerfully his former zeal as a pharisee, and his hatred for Our Lord. The rest of his life he saw as a wonderful opportunity given by God, and totally undeserved, to make amends for all the harm he had done, by being a follower and preacher of Christ, and offering all his sufferings and trials for love of Our Lord, and the success of His Church on earth. But this is to ahead!

Having assisted in the stoning of St. Stephen the Deacon and first martyr (v. Acts 7:57-60), Saul "worked for the total destruction of the Church; he went from house to house arresting both men and women and sending them to prison". (Acts 8:3). But even this was not enough, for in accordance with Our Lord's words to His followers: "if they persecute you in one place, flee to another", many disciples had fled the fierce persecution in Jerusalem and taken refuge in the safety of the chief city of Syria, Damascus. Hence, Saul, who was still "breathing threats to slaughter the Lord's disciples...had gone to the High Priest and asked for letters addressed to the synagogues in Damascus, that would authorise him to arrest and take to Jerusalem any followers of the Way, men or women, that he could find." (Acts 9: 1-2).

It was outside the gates of Damascus that his famous conversion occurred. He was blinded and heard the voice of One who said to him: "Saul, why are you persecuting me?" (Acts 9:4). Saul asked, "who are you, Lord?" recognising the voice as One of great authority. The voice replied: "I am Jesus, and you are persecuting me". This extraordinary experience convinced Saul that Jesus was not only truly alive and reigning in glorious power and light, but that He identified Himself with His persecuted followers: "why are you persecuting *me*? - not *persecuting my followers*. From this announcement Paul was to develop his entire understanding of the Church as the Body of Christ, united in Him, the Head, as His members.

After this, the blinded Saul was taken into the city, helpless and there met Ananias, a Christian who was told in a vision to baptise Saul. Once baptised, Saul regained his sight, so showing that Baptism is the sacrament of *enlightenment*, by which we see the truth of God's teaching. For faith is just that—the gift of spiritual sight and light. Out of the darkness of sin and unbelief, Saul the Pharisee became Paul, the great Apostle and teacher of the gentile nations. **Thanks be to God!**

Sunday January 25th: The Third Sunday of the Year (*Green*)

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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 of the feast of the Conversion of St. Paul</i> | • 7.30 p.m. <i>Vespers and Benediction</i> |

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 January 26th: Sts Timothy & Titus (Bishops) (White)

- **Blessing with St Philip's relic at 8 p.m.**

St Timothy and St. Titus were disciples and companions of St. Paul and were appointed Bishops of Ephesus and Crete respectively. Three of St. Paul's Epistles were written to them to aid them in their work as "successors of the Apostles".

Tuesday January 27th: Feria. (Green). Optional memoria of St Angela Merici, Religious (White) or of St. Edward Oldcorne, English martyr

- **Benediction at 8 p.m. Brothers of the Little Oratory meet in St Philip's Chapel**

St Angela Merici (1474-1540) was born on the shore of Lake Garda. Orphaned at an early age, she joined the Franciscan tertiaries and began giving Catechism lessons to the children of her village which led her to dedicate her life to the education of girls. She was joined by several companions who assisted her in founding the Ursulines, the first teaching order for women in the church, although it was some 25 years after her death that the Order developed into a community of nuns with vows and religious habit.

Bl. Edward Oldcorne (d. 1606) In 1588, after studying at the English College in Rome, he became a Jesuit priest working in Worcestershire. He won many converts by fasting and prayer. He was eventually captured, taken to London and racked before being hanged at Worcester.

Wednesday January 28th: St Thomas Aquinas, Priest & Doctor of the church. Memoria. (White)

St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-74) was an Italian nobleman who joined the Dominicans. Through his extensive studies of theology and philosophy, including the writings of Aristotle and the Islamic philosophers, he became one of the greatest theologians of all time earning him the title "Angelic Doctor". He also composed many beautiful hymns. Despite his learning, he was a humble and prayerful man.

Thursday January 29th. Feria. (Green).

Friday January 30th. Bl. Sebastian Valfré, Oratorian Priest, Feast (White)

The Mass at 5.45 p.m. will be a sung Mass

Blessed Sebastian Valfré (1629-1710) A priest of the Turin Oratory, he became the most sought-after spiritual director of the city. He was particularly loved for his tireless care of the sick during the great siege of Turin by the French army.

- **Triduo for Candlemas begins at 8 p.m.**

Saturday January 31st. St John Bosco, Bishop & Doctor of the Church. Memoria. (White). or St. Alban Roe

- **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 the Third Sunday of the Year: at 5.45 p.m.**

St. John Bosco (1815-88) Born of a peasant family, he became a priest and moved to Turin where he began his lifelong work in the education of boys. His aims were clear, to educate through love and encouragement, not repression. He soon had helpers and in 1854, he set up an Institute under the protection of Our Lady Help of Christians and St. Francis de Sales, to whom he had a great devotion, (hence the *Salesians*). Boys from all sections of the society were educated and taught trades, and the needs of girls were not overlooked; in 1872, with (St.) Mary Mazzarello, he began a congregation for similar work, which was also an immediate success. Many well-attested miracles were attributed to Don Bosco during his

Sunday February 1st: The Fourth Sunday of the Year (Green)

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: Mary Yates, Mary Cunliffe, Patricia Healey, Raymond Colqhoun, Marie-Therese Jones, Margaret Casey, Carole Halls, Peter Burt, Margaret McKenna, Margaret and Gregory Coryn, Ingeborg Parkes, Patrick Fullerton and Kim Potter.

Of your charity please pray for the repose of the souls of those who have died recently: Father Eldred Leslie and Jack Harrington
and of the souls of those whose anniversaries occur about now: Patrick Malone, Joshua Dearn, Peter Wright, Deacon John Hawkes, Margaret Allen, Teresa Power, Lilian Powell, Josephine Davies, Monica Brunt, Peter Tallis, Annie McCarrick, Tom Harte, Hugo Ramsey & John Baynes.

The following are requested to read at Mass next weekend, January 31st/February 1st, 4th Sunday of the Year:

Saturday 5.45 p.m.: Anne Roebuck
Sunday 8.00 a.m.: Murray Wilson-Browne
12.00 p.m.: Dennis Wood
5.30 p.m.: Simon Stacey

Collections:

Second Sunday of the Year: 18th January, 2009
Offertory: £1511.00
Second: DDF : £430.00
Thank you

The second collection today will be for the DDF

TODAY

HIGH MASS today is of the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul. **To Mark THE YEAR OF ST PAUL & THE CONCLUSION OF CHURCH UNITY WEEK** there will be an Ecumenical Evening Prayer Service (Vespers) on Sunday 25th January at St Chad's Cathedral at 5 p.m. Archbishop Nichols will preside and Bishop Tom Wright, Bishop of Durham, will preach. There will be light refreshments afterwards in the Grimshaw Room. **The PIETY STALL** is open after all Sunday Masses. (The 2009 Diocesan Directory is on sale.)

THIS WEEK

ADORATION AT REDNAL please note that this week Adoration is expected to take place on **Tuesday**, commencing with holy Mass at 2.30 p.m. and ending with Benediction. However, due to the winter weather and illnesses at present, please Kindly telephone (454 0496) on Tuesday morning to confirm that adoration is taking place there.

TRIDUO for CANDLEMAS: the three days of prayer in preparation for the feast which marks the anniversary of the foundation of this Oratory (February 2nd) begins on Friday evening at 8 p.m., comprising prayers and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. **Our TALKS on ST PAUL & HIS TEACHINGS** continue on Saturday in the Lower Cloister Hall after the 11 a.m. Mass (approx

11.30 a.m.) The subject of the talk, to be given by Fr Guy, will be: "The Letters to the Thessalonians".

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

PAULINE MISSION PROJECT 2009 invites people from the Deanery Parishes, members of different Catholic organizations or groups, and individuals who may be interested in giving time (2 to 3 hours a week) to help with visiting homes and families in the city centre parishes. To look at the possibilities a meeting has been arranged at Cathedral House, St Chad's on Wednesday 4th February at 7 p.m.

The ANNUAL MASS WITH ANOINTING OF THE SICK will take place on Saturday 7th February at 11 a.m. Full details and booking forms for lunch will be available shortly.

CONFIRMATION. The Sacrament of Confirmation will be administered here by Bishop Pargeter on March 10th 2009. Anyone other than children at the Oratory Primary School wishing to be confirmed should give their names in writing to Fr. Guy no later than Sunday February 1st.

NOTICES

Father Paul regrets that the Pilgrimage to Malta will NOT take place.

SERVERS: volunteers are still wanted for all Sunday Masses. Please see one of the Fathers.