

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.

November 30th 2008: THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT



KEEP WATCH!

Our Lord's urgent message in today's Gospel would have had a very special place in the minds of our Catholic forebears only a few hundred years ago. Anyone who has visited Harvington Hall will recall the wonderfully ingenious priests' hiding places and the small chapel in the attic with windows overlooking the drawbridge, the only entrance from the outside world. This was a house built for *vigilance*, designed with permanent watchfulness in mind. When a priest arrived, always in disguise and known as a priest only to a very few trusted persons in the house, preparations would be made for confessions and Mass to be celebrated as quickly as possible lest word got out, or some servant betrayed the priest for the sake of the large reward offered by the government for information leading to the capture of any priests. All the time, a trusted servant, a Catholic of course, would be posted at the window overlooking the drawbridge so that if any sudden posse of armed men came to search the house, hoping to capture the priest, there would be time hurriedly to hide the Mass vestments and vessels, and, even more importantly, the priest himself. After all, once a priest was found, Catholics knew that there was little chance he would ever escape custody, but would be put on trial for treason and executed by hanging and quartering.

No wonder these words of Our Lord meant so much to them. Vigilance was the price you paid for your faith and for the lives of your priests. The great Catholic composer William Byrd, who lived in those dark times, wrote a wonderful setting of these words in which we can sense the urgency and pain of those days for Catholics: "*What I say to you, I say to all: Watch!*"

Nowadays, we feel no need for such vigilance. Our lives and the lives of our priests do not seem to depend on our keeping such a constant and careful look-out for danger. Yet Our Lord said those words not only to His immediate followers, but to all people. "*What I say to you I say to all!*" How can these words apply to us, then? Well, I suppose for a start that if anyone had said to you this time last year that within a year we would find ourselves in a most serious financial crisis, maybe even more serious than the recession of the 1930's, we might have been rather sceptical. If, then, someone were now to predict even more dire events and circumstances fast approaching, would we be so dismissive? Our prosperity, our security, our way of life, all these things have seemed so safe and sound until recently. Yet now we cannot be so sure. But then we should never put our trust in such things anyway. Everything in this world is passing away. It's just that they now seem to be passing away far more quickly than we ever expected.

Advent is upon us once more. In the first instance, Advent is not about looking back to the first coming of the Saviour two thousand years ago, which we will celebrate once more at Christmas. Advent opens a new year of the Church's life by looking forward to Our Lord's Second Coming. Last Sunday we reminded ourselves that we proclaim our belief in this future event every Sunday in the Creed. Today, which is a new beginning, Our Lord urges us to be vigilant, watchful—so that we will be ready to meet Him.

How are we to be vigilant? Think about it in terms of someone who learns that he or she is going to die soon. Wouldn't that knowledge change the way you looked at things? Even those who don't believe in God or in His judgement find the idea of imminent death a sobering one, to say the least. But for those who *do* believe in the Judgement, that should make us live every moment of our lives more carefully and watchfully. How will what I have done today and in all my past days look when I go before my Judge?

Of course, we are not thinking today only about our own personal judgement, though that is a pretty urgent and serious prospect for us all! No. Today Our Lord is talking about His Final Coming, when the entire human race will be judged, and not only humans, but all the angels as well. That Second and Final Coming will be sudden and unexpected and will usher in the glory and unending joy of heaven for those who are judged to be worthy. If we wish to be among those, then we must be watchful now of the way we live our lives. We must all become more spiritual, less worldly in our outlook and interests. We must take our faith more seriously. Our ancestors would have understood this urgency more easily than we do.

The first thing we need to do to put Our Lord's words into action is to make a good *examination of conscience*. That is like "putting our affairs in order" before death. Then having done that we should make a good and thorough confession. Better to do it now than leave it till the last minute! It may seem alarming to put it like that, but then, what else can Our Lord be trying to tell us?

Sunday November 30th: 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*

THE SEASON OF ADVENT, THE BEGINNING OF THE LITURGICAL YEAR: Liturgical Calendar

Year 2 or B of the Lectionary at Mass and Psalter Week 1

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 1st: St Edmund Champion, Priest & English Martyr. Feast. (Red)

- **Novena before the Immaculate Conception at 8.00 p.m.**

St Edmund Champion (1540-81) Although born to Catholic parents, he was an Anglican. An outstanding scholar, Queen Elizabeth had heard him speak at Oxford University and had intended him for high office, but his studies convinced him of the truth of the Catholic Church and he converted, going to Europe where he joined the Jesuits. In 1580, seven years later, he returned and set up a secret printing press to issue propaganda for the Faith and to expose government lies about religion. He preached wherever he could, converting many and he became the object of one of the biggest manhunts in English history. When he was eventually captured, his trial was a travesty, and it is recorded in contemporary documents that whilst the jury were considering their verdict, the judge inexplicably had blood on his hands which he could not wash off and such was his horror that he showed it to several witnesses. St Edmund was hanged, drawn and quartered at Tyburn.

Tuesday December 2nd: Tuesday of Advent Week 1. (Purple).

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

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

- **Novena before the Immaculate Conception at 8.00 p.m.**

St Francis Xavier (1506-52) Co-founder of the Jesuits with his fellow countryman, St Ignatius of Loyola, Francis became a missionary travelling in Goa, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Japan and is perhaps the most successful individual missionary since St Paul.

Thursday December 4th: Thursday of Advent Week 1. (Purple). Optional memoria of St John Damascene, Priest & Doctor of the Church. (White)

- **Novena before the Immaculate Conception at 8.00 p.m.**

St John Damascene (c.676-749) Having succeeded his father as the Christian representative at the Caliph's Islamic court in Damascus, he became a monk in Jerusalem. A theologian, he set his mind to the great debate of the time which was whether it was against the 1st Commandment to have sacred images. He strongly defended their use as aids to prayer, a teaching confirmed by the Second Council of Nicea in 787.

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

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

St Birinus (d. c.650) A Roman priest, he came to continue St Augustine's mission to the Anglo-Saxons and was very successful. He was given Dorchester on Thames as his See.

Saturday December 6th: Saturday of Advent Week 1. (Purple). Optional memoria of St Nicholas, Bishop. (White)

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

St Nicholas (d. 350) Bishop of Myra in present day Turkey, he has been a very popular saint since early times and is the patron of sailors and prisoners as well as children.

Sunday December 7th: 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 Mass in English**
- **7.30 p.m. Vespers and Benediction**

Please pray for the sick: Patrick Hurley, Kathleen Devere, Leah Lansbury, Olive d'Silva, Bridget Shields, Marie-Therese Jones, Kim Potter, Maurice Hynes, Carole Halls, Margaret Casey, Clare Thomas and Frank McGuinness. **Of your charity please pray for the repose of the souls of those who have died recently:** Francis Barker and Irene Facey; **and of the souls of those whose anniversaries occur about now:** Patrick Logan, Cyril Harrison, Do-reen Norton William Corbett, Kitty McQuaid and Sadie Christie
Irene Facey's funeral is on Wednesday at 12.45 p.m. Reception of remains: Tuesday at 4.30 p.m.

The following are requested to read next weekend, December 6th/7th: 2nd Sunday of Advent:

Saturday 5.45 p.m.: Jenni Hardwick
Sunday 8.00 a.m.: Murray Wilson-Browne
12.00 p.m.:
5.30 p.m.: Simon Stacey

Collections:

Christ the King, 23rd November:
Offerory: £1,453
Second: Catholic Youth Service: £351
Thank you

The SECOND COLLECTION THIS WEEKEND is for Cardinal Newman's Beatification Fund.

TODAY at 6 p.m. there is a programme on Radio 3 about music at the three English Oratories, featuring pieces sung by our choir and some conversation about the history of music at the Oratory here and in London.

The PIETY STALL is open after all Sunday Masses. It has a large selection of Advent calendars and Advent Wreaths, Christmas cards, gifts, calendars, diaries etc. including goods being sold on behalf of Aid to the Church in Need, in addition to the usual stock and a wide selection of books.

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). Please return money and ticket stubs to the Oratory House, preferably in an envelope marked 'Prize Draw'. With regard to additional prizes, we are grateful for your contributions, however, **please note that we can only accept items which are new. Also, if any item you donate is foodstuffs (such as biscuits, chocolates etc,) please note that they must be well in date as at 6th January 2009!**

'WALK WITH ME' Archbishop Vincent Nichols's new edition book of prayer and meditations for Advent is available at the back of the church. The book is priced at £1 and the Calendars to accompany the book are 30p. Please consider buying 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.

NOVENA BEFORE THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, our Patronal Feast, continues weekday nights at 8 p.m. (following the Rosary at 7.45 p.m.). Please come and join our prayers to ask for Our Lady's intercession for our Parish and Community.

ADVENT TALKS; the second in our series on St Paul and his teachings, which will continue after Christmas up until Easter, will be held on Saturdays in the Lower Cloister hall at 11.30 a.m. It will be given by Fr. Paul and the subject will be "St Paul the Missionary and Preacher"

SOCIETY OF ST HUGH meets on Saturday at 10.15 a.m. in the Oratory House. **All are welcome.**

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

NEW YEAR'S EVE VIGIL; many of you will be already making plans for your Christmas and New Year celebrations. Why not consider seeing in the New Year with Our Lord? Exposition will be 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 will be at 11.45 p.m. Refreshments will be served after Mass.

NOTICES

CHRISTMAS STAMPS: This Christmas the Post Office are to issue both secular stamps and Religious stamps; but just like last year, you have to stipulate if you want Religious stamps. Each Post Office has been asked to send in to HQ the totals for each (possibly to say that there is no demand for the latter !) **So please ask for Religious stamps in order to keep Our Lord at the centre of the event.**