

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

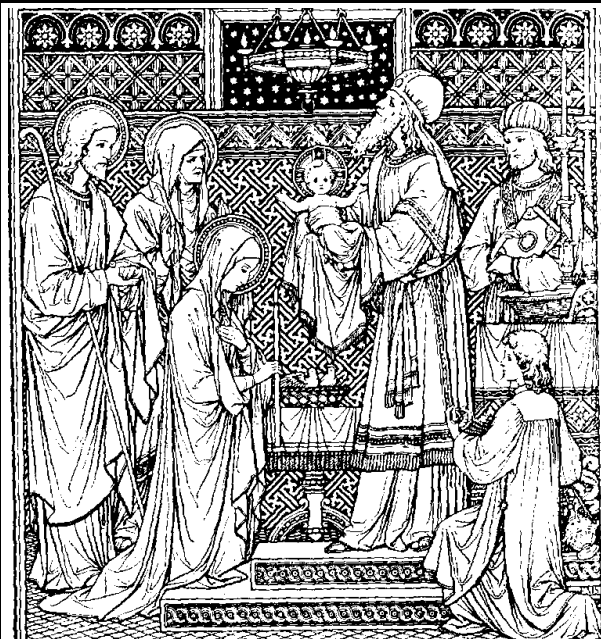
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Oratory Primary School: web.oratory.bham.sch.uk



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

December 28th 2008: THE FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY



THE OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS

In former times the Church celebrated many "Octaves", which are celebrations of great feasts prolonged through eight consecutive days. Nowadays we only celebrate the two greatest of these: at Easter and Christmas. An Octave is like the resonance or echo of a mighty chord on the organ in a vast Cathedral. Like Easter, Christmas is too great to be celebrated fully and worthily in one day. It has too much joy and too much depth for a single day's celebration. So the Church continues to reflect joyfully on the feast for an entire week, looking at different aspects of what Christmas brings us.

The day after Christmas day itself, we celebrate the "Feast of Stephen", a day made famous in J. M. Neale's carol "Good King Wenceslas". St. Stephen was put to death by the Jewish authorities for proclaiming that Christ is God. St. Stephen's martyrdom reminds us that Christ, although He is the "Prince of Peace", cannot bring peace to the world without first encountering and His enemies' rage and opposition and overcoming it with love.

On the following day, by way of contrast, the Church celebrates the only one of the Twelve Apostles who died a natural death, St. John. He was the "Beloved Disciple" who wrote the fourth Gospel, whose wonderful opening we heard as the Gospel on Christmas Day itself, teaching us that Christ is God made man.

On the next day come the Holy Innocents whose death also witnesses to the opposition of earthly pride and fear to God's coming into the world. This year, however, we do not officially celebrate their feast on account of this being the *Sunday* in the Octave, which is the Feast of the Holy Family. In

this feast we are reminded that Christ our divine Redeemer came as one subject to the same laws as the rest of His people. Therefore in today's Gospel we hear of His Presentation in the Temple, as the law of Moses required of all first-born sons, and also we hear of the prophecy by Simeon of His future suffering, and of His Mother's share in that.

On Monday we celebrate one of the glories of the English Church: St. Thomas Becket, whom the poet Chaucer calls "the holy blissful martyr" in his famous "Canterbury Tales", dating back to the time when England was one of the most Catholic lands in Christendom, and known on account of our ancestors' special devotion to Our Blessed Lady as the "Dowry of Mary".

OUR LADY, MOTHER OF GOD

On the eighth and final day of the Octave, the Gospel commemorates the Circumcision and naming of Our Lord on the eighth day after His birth. Nevertheless, from the earliest times in the Roman Church, this day has been kept as a special feast of Our Lady, focusing particularly on her divine motherhood. Since Our Lady is the Mother not of a nature but of a Person, and that person is Almighty God made man, we can put the truth simply but absolutely truthfully, by saying that she is the Mother of God, nothing less.

It is arguable that the most disturbing aspect of these troubled times is not the economic crisis so much as the crisis of humanity itself. This is a subject the Pope has discussed recently, saying that as well as rightly worrying about saving the planet, mankind needs a complete change of heart about *what it really means to be human*. Here in the West, we have all but lost respect for each individual person's inalienable dignity, regardless of age, condition or talents. We have also forgotten the role of love in bringing new life into the world. Our Lady shows us the fullness of humanity in bringing her Son to birth in accordance with God's plan for mankind. Why not consecrate the new year to her by coming to Mass on her feast?



Sunday December 28th: The Feast of the Holy Family (White)

- 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 CHRISTMAS OCTAVE cont: Liturgical Calendar

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

Monday to Wednesday and 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.

For exceptions this week, PLEASE SEE OVERLEAF

Monday December 29th: St Thomas Becket: Bishop & martyr. Patron of the English Pastoral Clergy. Feast (Red)

- **High Mass in the Extraordinary Form at 11 a.m.**
- **Blessing with St Philip's relic at 8 p.m.**

St Thomas Becket (d.1170) was promoted by the Pope to the see of Canterbury at the request of his friend, King Henry II, who thereby hoped to control the Church in England. However, Thomas became a model bishop, caring for the poor and fighting for the freedom of the Church from state control. He so infuriated King Henry that he was forced into exile, but when he returned home the King ordered his knights to deal with "this turbulent priest". He was murdered in his own Cathedral shortly after Christmas. His grave became a famous destination for pilgrimages until it was destroyed by Henry VIII.

Tuesday December 30th: The Sixth Day within the Octave of Christmas. (White).

- **Benediction at 8.00 p.m.**

Wednesday December 31st: Seventh Day within the Octave of Christmas: Optional Memoria of St. Sylvester, Pope. (White)

- **New Year's Eve Vigil : 9.30 p.m. concluding with First Mass of the Solemnity of Our Lady, Mother of God. (Please see below for full details.)**

St Sylvester (d.335) Constantine became Roman Emperor in 312, freeing the Church from persecution for the first time. He gave the *Laterani* family Palace to Pope Sylvester for his use as a residence and as a cathedral. The pope organised public worship in Rome, and dedicated the church to Our Lord and the two Saints John (the Baptist and the Evangelist), both of whom are depicted on either side of Our Lord in the mosaic behind the High Altar.

Thursday January 1st. Octave Day of Christmas: Solemnity of Our Lady, Mother of God. (White) (Bank holiday)

MASS TIMES:

- **(Low) Mass at 8.00 a.m.**
- **Extraordinary Rite Low Mass: at 9.30 a.m. in St Philip's Chapel**
- **SOLEMN HIGH MASS at 11.00 a.m.**
- **No devotions or evening Mass**

Friday January 2nd St Basil the Great and St. Gregory of Nazianzus, Bishops and Doctors of the Church, Memoria. (White)

St Basil (c.330-379) After studying in Athens and Constantinople, he visited various monasteries in the Middle East before founding one for which he wrote the Rules, still standard works in the Eastern Church. He was known for his wonderful preaching and writings, particularly on the Holy Spirit, which are still unsurpassed in Catholic theology. He is one of the four great Doctors of the Church. **St. Gregory Nazianzen** (329-89) was a friend of Basil's and joined him for a while as a monk but returned home to help his aged father whom he succeeded as Bishop of Nazianus (S. Turkey). A renowned theologian, he was called to Constantinople to restore the Orthodox faith after the death of the Arian heretic, the Emperor Valens, but met with great opposition from influential people and so was banished. He returned to Nazianus where he died a holy and austere monk.

Saturday January 3rd. The Most Holy Name of Jesus. Memoria. (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 the Solemnity of the Epiphany: at 5.45 p.m.**

The Most Holy Name of Jesus continues the theme of the Circumcision from January 1st.

Sunday January 4th: The transferred Solemnity of the Epiphany. (White)

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. Solemn Vespers and Benediction**

Please pray for the sick Marie Therese-Jones, Margaret Casey, Carole Halls, Kathleen Devere and Olive d'Silva.

Of your charity please pray for the repose of the souls of those who have died recently: Denis Bates, Helen Koumi and Peggy Roarty.

and of the souls of those whose anniversaries occur about now: Fr Edward Caswall, Fr. Ralph Blakelock and Fr. Francis Etherington, all of this Oratory, Fr. Van Es, Eileen Hegarty, Albert Walker, Peter Mitchell, Mary Mitchell, Alfredo Testa, Susie Wilkie, Nora and Mary Barber and Russell Roebuck.

The funeral of Helen Koumi is on Tuesday at 12.45 p.m. (Reception Monday 4.30 p.m.)

The following are requested to read at Mass next weekend, December 27th/28th, Feast of the Holy Family:

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.: Brendan Cummins

Collections:

Fourth Sunday of Advent, 21st December:
Offertory: £1,565.00
Second: Music Fund: £646.00
Christmas Day
Offertory: £2181.00
Second: For the Clergy: £4366.00
Thank you

The second collection today will be for the Diocesan Development Fund

The second collection next weekend will be the Diocesan Pro-Life Collection.

The Crib collection is for the Apostles of Jesus Seminary at Bukinda in Uganda

TODAY

The **ORATORY CHRISTMAS PRIZE DRAW:** *There are only a few days left before the draw takes place on 6th January, so lease take and sell as many tickets 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'. **Please note that all tickets stubs and money must be handed in no later that 6 p.m. on Monday 5th January.**

The **PIETY STALL** is open after all Sunday Masses. **GIFT VOUCHERS** are now available, The new Diocesan Catholic Directory is also on sale.

THIS WEEK

FEAST OF ST. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY, Patron of the English Pastoral Clergy, Monday. Solemn High Mass in the Extraordinary Form (1962 Missal) at 11 a.m.

NEW YEAR'S EVE VIGIL: Wednesday evening. 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.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

THE SOLEMNITY OF THE EPIPHANY is kept on Sunday next, January 4th. Also, out of devotion, it may be observed on the traditional date, 6th January at the High Mass according to the 1962 Missal.

CHRISTMAS PRIZE DRAW After the High Mass at 8 p.m. on Tuesday, January 6th, the annual Christmas Prize Draw will take place in the Lower Cloister Hall.

Our TALKS On ST PAUL & HIS TEACHINGS will recommence after Christmas, on January 10th, and will be held in the Lower Cloister Hall on Saturday mornings (approx 11.30 a.m.) after the 11 a.m. Mass.

NOTICES

The **SECOND COLLECTION NEXT WEEKEND** is the annual Diocesan Pro-Life Charity collection.

FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN please remember that St. Philip's Chapel is available to you at Sunday morning Masses. There are lovely children's books available there to help arouse or keep your children's interest!

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.