

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 11th 2009: THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD

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The Provost writes:

Last week we were reminded of an ancient tradition whereby, on the Feast of the Epiphany, three different manifestations or “showings forth” of Our Lord to the world were commemorated. That is, His adoration by the Magi, His Baptism in the Jordan River, and the first of His miracles, when He changed water into wine at the wedding feast at Cana.

This weekend, the Church's Liturgy concentrates on the second of these great signs which reveal Our Lord's presence. The years have sped by – we are no longer at the Crib in Bethlehem in front of a new baby. Now Our Lord is a mature man and He is about to begin His public ministry, that work of proclaiming the Gospel and offering Himself for poor sinners – the very reason He had been born in the first place.

This public ministry is prepared for by Our Lord submitting to the baptism offered by his cousin, St John the Baptist. It is very easy for us to get confused here. We tend to think of our own baptism and what that was for – our being set free from original sin, being made a temple for the Holy Trinity, given the gifts of faith, hope and charity, and becoming a member of the Catholic Church. Obviously Our Lord's Baptism did not achieve for Him the same as it did for us. What then was the point of it?

Our Lord joins the people who are going out to John the Baptist in a gesture of repentance, in sorrow for their sins. He joins them, not because He too is a sinner, but in order to show us that this is the only true and authentic way in which to approach our heavenly Father. Our Lord goes to the Baptist to reveal to us that at the heart of the Mystery of our salvation lies mercy, the mercy of a loving and forgiving Father. Our Lord, through His act of humility and submission, calls us to share in His relationship with the Father, which is announced from the heavens. Through our reception of God's mercy, we too become His beloved sons and daughters. As Our Lord acknowledges His Father as the fount of mercy, so we too are taught never to hesitate to do the same.

Our Lord's baptism is also a moment when He reveals His utter obedience to his Father's will for Him, and His complete acceptance of His mission to be the Suffering Servant. In a very real way the baptism in the Jordan anticipates Our Lord's death on the Cross, when He who had no sin became sin in order to liberate us and to set us free from our many sins. Our Lord's baptism therefore teaches us the supreme importance of fidelity to God's will, even when that is going to be difficult and painful. It teaches us too that through our own baptism we have each received a mission in life,

which is ours to fulfill. The graces we received in baptism are there to help us do what God wants of us – that in our own lives we work to proclaim the Gospel and live in love for God and neighbour. It sounds so very simple, and yet we can find it so difficult to do. As we think of Our Lord's baptism this weekend, and of our own baptism too, let us ask the Holy Spirit to renew in us the gifts of His grace, and so help us in this year 2009 to be effective apostles of the Gospel of life and salvation.

MICHAEL SHIELS

Many people have been shocked at the news of Michael Shiels' death which occurred the weekend after Christmas. Michael had been associated with the Oratory for forty years and was very much part of the Oratory “family”. Born in Ireland in 1937, he served in the Irish Army, especially as part of the United Nations peace-keeping force in the Congo. Moving to Birmingham, he worked for a while at Davenports' brewery before becoming, at Fr Geoffrey Wamsley's invitation, our Assistant Sacristan in 1968. Eventually Michael succeeded the late Philip Holland as principal Sacristan, a position he held until ill-health led to his retirement. It proved a busy retirement, however, as Michael kept a fatherly eye on the Sacristy right up to his death, and he was involved in many other parish activities, the Legion of Mary and the APF being only two out of many one could mention. May he now

Sunday January 11th: The Baptism of Our Lord (*White*)

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| • 8.30 a.m. Low Mass | • 12.00 p.m. (Families with young children) |
| • 9.30 a.m. Latin Low Mass (1962 Missal:) (3rd Sunday after Christmas) | • 5.30 p.m. Sung Congregational Mass |
| • 10.30 a.m. High Mass | • 7.30 p.m. Vespers and Benediction |

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 January 12th: Feria. (Green)
Optional Memoria of St Aelred of Rievaulx, Priest. (White)

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

St Aelred of Rievaulx (1109-1167) He was the son of a Saxon priest and was educated at Roxburgh where he was known for his intellectual talents. His first position was as a steward to King David of Scotland, but he resigned to join the Cistercians at Rievaulx. He was sent to Revesby in Lincolnshire to become the first abbot of Rievaulx's daughter house, but later returned to Rievaulx to become abbot there. He was a noted spiritual guide and writer. The last ten years of his life were marked by suffering due to very poor health.

Tuesday January 13th: Feria. (Green).

Wednesday January 14th: Feria. (Green)

Thursday January 15th. Feria. (Green)

Friday January 16th. Blessed Joseph Vaz, Oratorian Priest. Memoria. (White).

- **Sung Mass at 5.45 p.m.**

Blessed Joseph Vaz (1650-1711), Apostle of Sri Lanka: Born in Goa of Indian and Portuguese parents. Following his ordination, he joined with a small group of priests and founded an Oratory at Goa. His missionary zeal led him to journey on foot to Sri Lanka (Ceylon) where the Church was suffering persecution by the Moslems, protestants and the local pagan king. He disguised himself as a labourer and lived in poverty, whilst ministering to the Church in secret. He also tended those suffering from smallpox, most of whom had been left to die in deserted places. Despite great difficulties and many set-backs, he began to succeed in his ministry and was eventually deemed responsible for so many converts that fame of his holiness spread. By 1700, the Church in Ceylon was thriving. He retired to a life of prayer until his death at Kandy.

Saturday January 17th. St Anthony, Abbot. 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 Second Sunday of the Year: at 5.45 p.m.**

St Anthony (c.230-335) From a wealthy Egyptian family, he gave all his possessions to the poor and then lived a hermetical life, fasting, praying and doing manual work, and eventually, moving to live in the desert. He earned a reputation as a counsellor and healer, and many were moved to conversion by his simplicity and abandonment to God's providence. By the age of seventy, he had so many followers that he set up a small community, the beginnings of monasticism as we know it. He was active in the fight against Arianism, supporting his friend (St) Athanasius, who also wrote Anthony's biography in which he said: "Anthony was not known for his writings nor for his worldly wisdom, nor for any art, but simply for his reverence toward God"

Sunday January 18th: The Second 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 Cunliffe, Patricia Healey, Raymond Colqhoun, Marie-Therese Jones, Margaret Casey, Carole Halls Peter Burt, Margaret McKenna and Kim Potter. **Of your charity please pray for the repose of the souls of those who have died recently:** Joan Parish Maureen Reidy and Peter Fox; **and of the souls of those whose anniversaries occur about now:** Fr Robert Eaton of this Oratory, Mary Chavasse, Erminia Boffa, Eugenio Cozzi, Joan and Catherine Hodgkins, John McAuley, Nora Quinton, Maurice Ralphs, Minnie Saxon and Reginald Thomas.

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

Michael Shiels's funeral is on Friday at 12.45. Reception of remains: Thursday at 4.30 p.m.

The following are requested to read at Mass next weekend, January 16th/17th, 2nd Sunday of the Year:

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

Collections:

Feast of the Epiphany (transferred), 4th January:
Offertory: £1,520
Second: Diocesan Pro-Life: £530

Thank you

The second collection today will be for the SPUC

TODAY

The SECOND COLLECTION is for the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC)

The ORATORY CHRISTMAS PRIZE DRAW: A list of prize winners is in the Notice Board to the right of the door of the church. If you are a prize winner, please collect your prize from the Lower Cloister Hall after Sunday Mass; otherwise, please telephone the Oratory during normal office hours to arrange collection from the parish secretary. (Do not turn-up at the Oratory on spec, to save you having a wasted journey).

The PIETY STALL is open after all Sunday Masses. There are a few calendars and diaries left. The 2009 Diocesan Directory is also on sale.

THIS WEEK

The ALTAR SOCIETY meets on Tuesday at 2.30 p.m. in the Oratory House

ADORATION AT REDNAL will NOT take place this week

Our TALKS on ST PAUL & HIS TEACHINGS continue on Saturday mornings in the Lower Cloister Hall after the 11 a.m. Mass (approx 11.30 a.m.) The subject this coming Saturday's talk, given by Fr Philip, will be: "St Paul on Grace".

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The PARISH COUNCIL AGM is on Monday January 19th, at 8p.m. in the Lower Cloister Hall. Nominations for new and renewable memberships are invited and forms are to be found at the doors of the church. *Please note that forms must be returned by this coming Friday, 16th January.*

CATHOLIC WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB (Edgbaston) resumes on Friday 23rd January from 12-2 p.m., to read 'The Cassandra Curse' by Fiorella Nash. New members welcome. For details, please contact Jackie Parkes: 688 4154 or rosary@blueyonder.co.uk

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.

NOTICES

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! Books suitable for children to bring to Mass are also on sale on the Piety Stall.

SERVERS: volunteers are still wanted for Sunday 8.30 a.m. Mass. in particular, but also for other Masses. Please see one of the Fathers.