

THE ORATORY—dedicated to THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

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Registered as a Charity

Parish Weekly Newsletter

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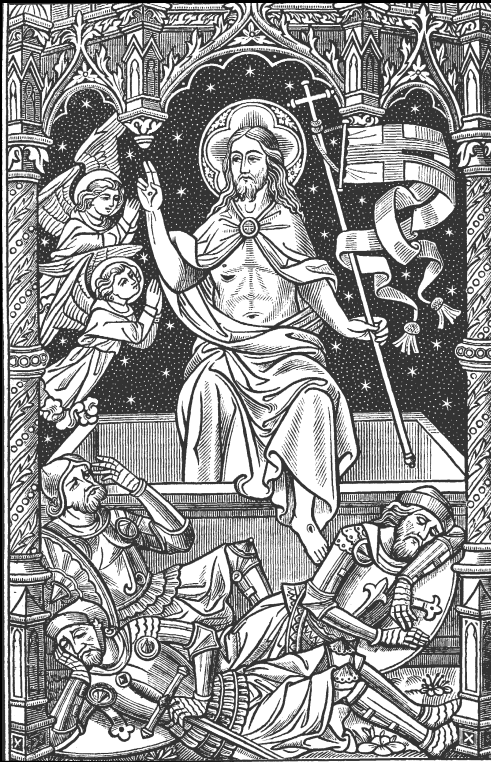
Web-site: www.theoratory.org.uk

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

March 23rd 2008: EASTER DAY



“I have risen and am still with you!” Alleluia!

These words which begin the Entrance Antiphon at Mass on this Day of the Resurrection come from psalm 138, which figures greatly in the liturgy of Easter night. It is a psalm which speaks of God's most intimate knowledge and love of us in all circumstances. Wherever we go, whatever we suffer, we cannot be outside God's all-embracing sight. Applied to our Lord, these words of course indicate the drama and contrast of His death and resurrection, and can be understood as a prayer addressed by the Son to His heavenly Father: “*You know my lying down and my rising up*” (v.2), and “*If I sleep in Sheol (the world of the dead) you are there, and if I ascend to the heavens, you are there*” (v.8). For when our Lord died on the cross, His soul was sundered from His body. While His body was buried in the tomb, His soul went, not to heaven, but as St. Peter tells us in his first epistle, “*Christ...being put to death in the flesh [was] made alive in the spirit, in which He went and preached to the spirits in prison.*” (1 Peter 3:18-19)

This is the meaning of those words in the Apostles' Creed that can seem so strange to us: “*He descended into hell*”. “Hell” in this sense is not the dwelling-place of Satan and the damned, but of those “spirits in prison” of whom St. Peter speaks, the souls of all those who had ever lived and died before Christ's coming as the Redeemer. For it is most important to remember that **before the death and resurrection of Christ, no human person was in heaven**. Even good men and women, like the Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and countless others, though they had faith in God and had lived in accordance with His laws and commandments, nevertheless could not go to heaven when they died, because of Adam's sin, in which they and all mankind share. So they were in a state apart from God, though not eternally damned. This state is what the Old Testament Jews called “*Sheol*”, the dark underworld of dead souls.

Thus the psalmist says : “*If I say, 'let only darkness cover me, and the light about me be night', even the darkness is not dark to You, the night is as bright as day; for darkness is as light with You!*” (ps. 138: v. 11-12) This phrase was sung at the Easter night-time Vigil in the *Exultet*, the wonderful chant in which the Deacon joyfully proclaimed the Resurrection of Christ to the congregation in the darkened Church, lit by the light of the Paschal Candle which dispels the darkness of night and death, and sheds the bright ray of God's life and light. This is why we celebrate the Resurrection, at first sight oddly enough, at night time in the darkness—so that the light of Christ's resurrection may be seen to scatter the darkness of death. Christ rising from the dark tomb and returning from Sheol is symbolised by the Paschal Candle which now burns in a prominent place in the Sanctuary for the whole of Eastertide.

So it was necessary that Christ should die and that His soul should enter the dark world of the dead so as to “preach to them in prison” and bring them freedom from Adam's sin. Yet redemption was not complete until His body and soul were reunited at the resurrection. It was not until after the Resurrection that the holy and just souls of all the dead could enter heaven in the company of the glorified Lord Jesus. So when Our Lord on the cross promised Paradise to the repentant thief, this was not yet what we call “heaven”. It was a state of bliss in immediate preparation for the heaven **which even Christ's soul did not enter immediately after His own death**. Moreover, until our bodies have risen again on the last day, even in heaven we will not yet be completely what Our Lord intends us to be. For without our bodies our human nature is not complete. Our Lord's Resurrection reminds us of the vital truth that we are made not to become “disembodied souls” as some pagan religions believe, set free from bodily matter. Nor will our risen bodies be simply a resumption of these we have now, but they will be glorified in a way that the Resurrection of Jesus shows us – surpassing the limits of time and space.

Sunday March 23rd: Easter Day (White)

Year 1 or A of the Lectionary at Mass

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| • 8.30 a.m. Low Mass | • 12.00 p.m. (Families with young children) |
| • 9.30 a.m. 1962 rite Mass (in the church) | • 5.30 p.m. Sung Congregational Mass |
| • 10.15 a.m. Solemn High Mass | • Solemn Vespers and Benediction at 7.30 p.m. |

EASTER WEEK: Liturgical Calendar

Monday: Bank Holiday: Masses at 8 and 11 a.m. only

Tuesday 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 March 24th: Easter Monday (White) BANK HOLIDAY

- **Mass at 8 a.m. and 11 a.m. only. No evening Devotions.**

Tuesday 25th March: Easter Tuesday (White)

- **Benediction at 8 p.m.**

Wednesday 26th March: Easter Wednesday (White)

Thursday 27th March: Easter Thursday (White)

Friday 28th March: Easter Friday (White)

Saturday March 29th: Easter Saturday (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 a.m.**
- **Confessions from 10.55 a.m. to 12 noon and from 5.30 p.m. until the end of Mass**
- **First Mass of Sunday: Divine Mercy Sunday at 5.45 p.m.**

(N.b. British Summer Time begins tonight. Clocks go forward one hour)

Sunday March 30th: Divine Mercy Sunday (White)

Mass & Service Times:

- **8.30 a.m. Low Mass**
- **9.30 a.m. Latin Mass 1962 Missal**
- **10.30 a.m. Solemn High Mass**
- **12.00 p.m. (Families with young children)**
- **4.30 p.m. (As part of Divine Sunday afternoon—please see below)**
- **5.30 p.m. Sung Congregational Mass in English**
- **Vespers and Benediction: 7.30 p.m.**

Please pray for the sick: Teresa Lee, Margaret Ginelly, Lorna O'Shea, Danuta Slyzyk, Jon Jarvis, Vivian Beesley, Wyn Xenaky, Derek Butowski, Marie-Thérèse Jones, Dorothy Price, Ellen Westwood, Margaret Casey, Jacqueline Griffiths, Sandra McCann and Desmond Williams. **Of your charity please pray for the repose of the souls of those who have died recently:** Andrew Smith, Christopher Florance, Mary Regan, Mary Smith, Jan van de Heiden and Moira Gordon; **and of the souls of those whose anniversaries occur about now:** Philippa Mary Glanvill and Florence Pope.

Mary Regan's funeral is on Tuesday at 12.45 p.m.
Reception of remains: before Mass

The following are requested to read next weekend, March 29th/30th: Feast of Divine Mercy

Saturday 5.45 p.m.: Tracey Butler

Sunday 8.30 a.m.: Margaret Hawkins

12.00 p.m.: Peter Leather

5.30 p.m.: Jason Mahoney

Readers required for Saturday & Sunday evening Masses. Please post your name & contact details, in writing, to the Oratory House.

Collections

The Palm Sunday, 16th March:

Offertory: £1,669

Second: Diocesan Development Fund: £482

Good Friday: Holy Places: £1050

Lenten Alms (Fr Hudson's Society): £454

Thank you

The Second Collection today is the Easter Offering for the Clergy

TODAY

The second collection today is the Easter Offering for the Clergy.

EASTERTIDE: NEW 'WALK WITH ME': The Archbishop has produced another lovely booklet to guide prayer life from Easter to Pentecost. These are available by the back door of the church and cost £1. There is also a calendar for children: cost 30p.

The PIETY STALL is open in the Lower Cloister Hall with a large selection of books, including for children, gifts for occasions of baptism, First Holy Communion and Confirmation, rosaries, DVDs, CDs, statues etc. **Now available: "Benedict and Chico", a beautifully illustrated life of Pope Benedict XVI written by his cat.**

THIS WEEK

ADORATION AT REDNAL will take place this week on Wednesday commencing with Mass at 2.30 p.m. Weather permitting, there will be a Blessed Sacrament Procession around the grounds.

REMEMBER that the CLOCKS GO FORWARD one hour next Sunday when BST begins!

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

DIVINE MERCY SUNDAY AFTERNOON: *Next Sunday, March 30th.* will be observed here by an afternoon of prayer, commencing at 2.30 p.m. with adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. There will also be the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, the Rosary and Benediction. Mass will be at 4.30 p.m. Confessions will be heard throughout the afternoon from 2 p.m. **A Plenary Indulgence is attached to this Devotion, under the usual conditions.** If you have friends or members of your family, who have lapsed or who perhaps, have difficulty going to confession, please try to encourage them to take advantage of the great Graces which Our Lord wants to bestow on us.

The ANNUAL EASTER MONDAY MEN'S MASS, celebrated by the Archbishop, takes place at 9 a.m. in St Chad's Cathedral.

The SOCIETY OF ST HUGH meets in the Oratory House on Saturday, 5th April at 10.15 a.m. *All are welcome.*

EX CATHEDRA is performing Handel's "Messiah" on Saturday April 5th in Symphony Hall. For tickets telephone 0121 780 3333

HIS EMINENCE CARDINAL CORDES, President of the Pontifical Council, *Cor Unum*, will be giving a lecture on the Pope's encyclical "Deus Caritas Est" God is Love, at Maryvale, Old Oscott Hill on Tuesday, 8th April at 2.30 p.m. *Please reserve seats in advance by telephoning 0121 360 8118 or e-mail: enquiries@maryvale.ac.uk*

NOTICES

GIFT AID: 1. To those of you who already donate to us by this method, we are very grateful indeed since the tax we can reclaim is of great help. However, from April 6th, the start of the new tax year, our income from this source will be reduced by 11% due to changes in tax rates. Therefore, if you are able to increase your current donations, it would be very much appreciated. **2.** To those of you who are tax payers (at the basic or higher rate) and who do not yet donate your amount to the collections by this method, may we appeal to you to do so? It costs you no more (and in the case of higher rate tax payers, there is a benefit to you too). Gift Aid forms are to be found at the back door of the church.

HOLDERS OF APF RED BOXES: The quarter comes to an end on 31st March, so please have your boxes ready when your collector contacts you. Many thanks.

FOR FAMILIES & CHILDREN AT SUNDAY 12 o'clock MASS: Parents can find it difficult to know what to do with young children during Mass. Perhaps some of you feel concerned or even embarrassed if others may find it difficult to pay attention to what is going on, especially during the sermon! So we would like to remind you that St. Philip's Chapel (near to the Plough and Harrow Road entrance) is available especially during the 12 noon Mass for parents to take young children. There is a collection of picture books with prayers for the Mass and stories about the Saints and the Scriptures. But if you do take your children into the chapel please stay with them. Please remember that the Chapel is not a playground, **and is only intended for use by children with their parents and not for any child who has received First Holy Communion.**