

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 10th 2010: THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD



YOU ARE MY BELOVED SON

The celebration of the Epiphany continues with today's Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord. The last few weeks have all been marked by celebrations of Our Lord's infancy and childhood, so it may seem strange at first that we bring Christmastide to an end today with the first event of His maturity.

As we were reminded last week, the Epiphany does not only consist of the coming of the Magi. It is a celebration of our Lord's "manifestation" to the world as our Saviour, a manifestation that took place in several ways.

In fact, today's is a uniquely great Manifestation. As Our Lord prayed after His baptism in the River Jordan, He heard His Father's voice from heaven proclaiming: "You are my beloved Son, my favour rests on You". Our Lord did not need to be told that He was the Father's Son. That is not the reason why He heard the voice. The reason for this announcement from heaven is to be found in what also happened at that same moment: the

Holy Spirit descended upon Christ at the same moment "in bodily shape, like a dove".

What does this descent of the Holy Spirit, coupled with the Father's words, actually mean? They tell us that Our Lord's relationship to the Father is perfectly expressed by the bond of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit, in the form of a dove, was sent from heaven to strengthen the bond that already existed between Christ the man and His Father in heaven. In His created humanity, Christ grew to maturity and increased in stature and in favour with God and man. Therefore it is His sacred humanity which is anointed with the Holy Spirit. This anointing was most fittingly given to Our Lord on the occasion of His baptism to show that it was on this occasion that He truly took upon Himself the "sins of the world" and showed Himself as "the Lamb of God". This was so because He needed no repentance for sin. John had even tried to dissuade Him from accepting baptism, knowing as he did that Christ was totally without sin. Yet Our Lord had insisted on being baptised, in order to show that He accepted humanity even in its sinful state, and that by being baptised as though He were a sinner, He could thereby prepare Himself to take all human sin upon His shoulders.

This divine manifestation at the Jordan is unique because it is the only occasion in the Gospels when all three Persons of the Blessed Trinity are manifested at the same time. It shows Christ as the Divine Son, anointed by the Holy Spirit just as His public ministry was about to begin.

Our Lord's Baptism also prepares the way for our own Baptism. St. John the Baptist had said that he was only able to baptise with water, but that Christ would baptise with the Holy Spirit and with fire. In His own Baptism, Christ shows us that it is He who pours out the Holy Spirit on the baptised, and in that anointing each one of us is marked out by the Father as His "beloved son", adopted by Him. In the words of one of the Prefaces of the Missal, God the Father sent His Son so that He might see and love in us what He sees and love in His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Our baptism is the first step in the long road that must make us more and more like our Saviour. The fire of the Holy Spirit must penetrate our whole being in order to change us from sinners to saints.

Sunday January 10th: The Baptism of Our Lord (*White*)

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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</i> | • 7.30 p.m. <i>Vespers and Benediction</i> |

Liturgical Calendar

Year 2 of the Lectionary at Weekday Mass and Psalter Week 1 in the Divine Office

Monday to Friday: Masses at 7.30 a.m., 12.45 p.m. and 5.45 p.m.

Rosary at 7.45 p.m. Benediction on Tuesday. Exposition on Saturday : 8.30—10.45 a.m.

Confessions are heard from 12.30 p.m. and from 5.30 p.m. until the end of Mass.

Monday 11th January: Feria (Green)

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

Tuesday 12th January: Feria. (Green) Optional memoria of **St Aelred of Rievaulx, Abbot. (White)**

- **Benediction 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.

Wednesday 13th January: Feria. (Green) Optional memoria of **St Hilary, Bishop & Doctor of the Church. (White)**

St Hilary (315-367) was Bishop of Poitiers in France. A convert from paganism, he became the most important Western defender of the orthodox faith against the Arians who denied the divinity of Our Lord, and for which he was exiled to the East by an heretical Emperor. His treatise "on the Trinity" is one of the most important early theological studies of the doctrine before St. Augustine.

Thursday 14th January: Feria. (Green)

Friday 15th January: Feria. (Green)

Saturday 16th January: Blessed Joseph Vaz, Oratorian Priest. (White)

- **Masses 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 & from 5.30 p.m.**
- **First Mass of Sunday (The Second Sunday of the Year) 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.

January 17th: 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 in English**
- **7.30 p.m. Vespers and Benediction**

Please pray for the sick Philip Kilroy, Pat Cartwright, Leroy McCoy, Carolyn Knight, David Pritchard, James Foynes, Michael McCann and Philip McCann.

Of your charity please pray for those who have died recently: Msgr Graham Leonard, Brian Harper and Mary Mueller,

and of the souls of those whose anniversaries occur about now: Mary Chavasse, Erminia Boffa, John McAuley, Fr Arthur Amy, Maureen Ralphs, Katherine Hodgkins, Peter Job and Reginald Thomas.

The following are requested to read at Mass next weekend, January 16th/17th, The Baptism of Our Lord:

Saturday 5.45 p.m.: Jenni Hardwick
Sunday 8.30 a.m.: Murray Wilson- Browne
12.00 p.m.: Dennis Wood
5.30 p.m.: Simon Stacey

Collections:

Feast of the Epiphany: 3rd January, 2010
Offertory: £1,277
Second: Maintenance of our Church: £808
Thank you

TODAY

THE PIETY STALL will not be open this weekend, but the **2010 DIOCESAN DIRECTORY, DIARIES & CALENDARS** will be on sale in the Cloister Hall after Sunday morning Masses today.

THE SECOND COLLECTION THIS WEEKEND will be for the Diocesan Development Fund

There is also the annual "WHITE FLOWER" RETIRING COLLECTION taken up for **SPUC (Society for the Protection of Unborn Children)**.

CARDINAL NEWMAN HERITAGE PROJECT: The Oratory Primary School's exhibition which covers aspects the history of life in Ladywood at Christmastide .can still be viewed in the Cloister Buildings.

THIS WEEK

The LIST OF WINNING TICKETS from the EPIPHANY PRIZE DRAW is posted in the Notice Board to the right of the main church doors. If you are a winner, please collect your prize from the Lower Cloister Hall after Sunday Masses, or telephone the Oratory House to arrange for collection.

ADORATION AT REDNAL will not take place this week.

The ALTAR SOCIETY next meets on Tuesday 12th at 2.30 p.m. in the Oratory House.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The ANNUAL SERVICE OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY organised by the Edgbaston and Ladywood Christians together takes place next Sunday, January 17th, at 3 p.m. at the Church of the Redeemer, Monument Road.

The ANNUAL MASS WITH ANOINTING OF THE SICK will take place on Saturday, February 6th at 11 a.m. Forms for those eligible and who wish to receive the Sacrament are available at the doors of the church. Lunch will be available after Mass at a cost of £5. *This must also be booked by completion of the appropriate section of the form.*

ORDER OF MALTA PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES 30th April-7th May: Sick, disabled and aged people are invited to take part in a pilgrimage £250 is asked towards the cost, but anything over that amount is welcomed from those who can afford it. Accommodation in the Accueil Notre Dame. Contact Anthony Brown on 01823 480441 or email: alison-anthony@battensfarm.fsnet.co.uk

YEAR FOR PRIESTS—a reflection by Pope Benedict XVI

This deep personal identification with the Sacrifice of the Cross led St John Vianney – by a sole inward movement – from the altar to the confessional. Priests ought never to be resigned to empty confessionals or the apparent indifference of the faithful to this sacrament. In France, at the time of the Curé of Ars, confession was no more easy or frequent than in our own day, since the upheaval caused by the revolution had long inhibited the practice of religion. Yet he sought in every way, by his preaching and his powers of persuasion, to help his parishioners to rediscover the meaning and beauty of the sacrament of Penance, presenting it as an inherent demand of the Eucharistic presence. He thus created a "virtuous" circle. By spending long hours in church before the tabernacle, he inspired the faithful to imitate him by coming to visit Jesus with the knowledge that their parish priest would be there, ready to listen and offer forgiveness. Later, the growing numbers of penitents from all over France would keep him in the confessional for up to sixteen hours a day. It was said that Ars had become "a great hospital of souls". His first biographer relates that "the grace he obtained [for the conversion of sinners] was so powerful that it would pursue them, not leaving them a moment of peace!". The saintly Curé reflected something of the same idea when he said: "It is not the sinner who returns to God to beg his forgiveness, but God himself who runs after the sinner and makes him return to him". "This good Saviour is so filled with love that he seeks us everywhere".