

# THE ORATORY—dedicated to THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

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*Registered as a Charity*

## Parish Weekly Newsletter

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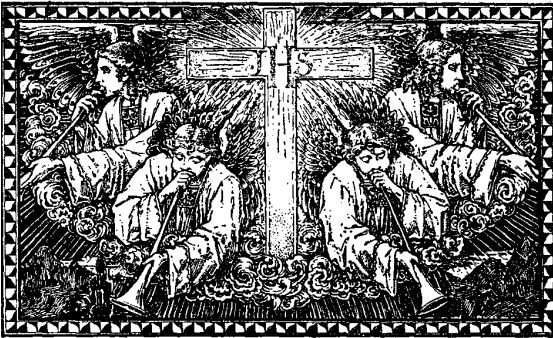
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*This newsletter is available in large-print format. Ask at the Sacristy.*

## December 2nd 2007: The First Sunday of Advent



### ADVENT

When people think about “The End of the World”, if they do, they tend to imagine that it will be ushered in with a gradual crescendo of violent and dramatic signs both in the world of nature and in the human world as our Lord said in the Sunday Gospel a fortnight ago: “Nation will fight against nation...there will be great earthquakes and plagues and famines here and there; there will be fearful sights and great signs from heaven.” Clearly such things are already with us as Our Lord says: “When you hear of these things do not be frightened, for this is something that must happen, but the end is not so soon.” In fact, Our Lord in today’s Gospel goes so far as to warn us that when He does return people will still be “eating, drinking, taking wives and husbands...and suspecting nothing”. Advent comes round once again in order to remind us of the vital truth that Our Lord speaks of in today’s Gospel: “stand ready, because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect”. He uses a simple but effective image when he says: “if you had known the time the burglar was going to arrive at your house, you wouldn’t choose that time to be out, would you?” So, therefore, we must be as ready at all times to meet Our Lord as we would hope to be if we wanted to outwit any prospective burglar. A burglar won’t announce in advance that he is coming, so neither will Our Lord!

### OUR LADY CONCEIVED WITHOUT SIN

Next Saturday we celebrate our patronal feast of the Immaculate Conception of our Lady. God kept her free from sin by the merits of her Son-to-be, so that she could be truly free to accept His invitation to be the Mother of God, and so that she might be the most perfect educator of her Son as He “grew in wisdom and in favour with God and man” (Luke 2:52). So please do come to Mass next Saturday morning, (especially to the High Mass at 11 a.m.), and if possible to the First Vespers on Friday evening at 7.30 p.m. Each other weekday evening at 8 p.m. we will continue our Novena of preparation for the feast, asking God’s blessing, through Our Lady’s prayers, on the Oratory here, on our Parish and on all who come here to worship Our Lord and honour His Blessed Mother.

### THE GOLDEN COMPASS

Obviously more people must read this newsletter than we realise, because the last time I wrote about Philip Pullman it was reported in the papers! Many of you will be aware that a new film adaptation of Pullman’s “His Dark Materials” trilogy is out in the cinemas this week. We have been warned by friends in the States that the film has been made in such a way as to make parents and children want to get the books. Pullman has made no secret of the fact that he has modelled his trilogy on Tolkien and C.S. Lewis. But whereas they were Christian writers, even if not overtly Christian in all their writings, Pullman hates their work and has declared that it is his aim to undermine the foundations of Christian belief. Now I personally have no difficulty in facing Pullman’s assault on faith. There have been many greater minds and writers than he who have attempted to “undermine the foundations of Christian belief”. They have gone to meet their Maker and win whatever reward they have earned for their pains. They have all been answered by greater and holier minds than theirs, as well as by the profound yet simple faith of the ordinary Christian, which is more than adequate to meet these attacks. But whereas most adults might see through the artifice of Pullman’s fiction, children do not necessarily find it so easy to do. I would urge everybody not to go to see this film, or any of its successors, for fear that they stain and darken the imagination and plant ideas that sap the faith of the young and as yet unformed soul and mind. Pullman’s books have not been as great a success as he and his ilk would have liked, which is why they are “puffing” this film so energetically. It is no surprise that his books are nothing like as appealing as Tolkien’s and Lewis’s, for theirs end with hope and joy, but his end in despair and darkness masquerading as freedom from “religion” and what he calls “God”. So give it a wide berth and thumbs down! Spend your precious time and money on better things.

### Sunday December 2nd: The First Sunday of Advent (Purple)

*Year 1 or A of the Lectionary at Mass*

- 8.30 a.m. *Low Mass*
- 10.30 a.m. *Solemn High Mass*
- 12.00 p.m. *(Families with young children)*
- 12.45 p.m. *Tridentine Mass (in the Cloister Chapel)*
- 5.30 p.m. *Sung Congregational Mass*
- *Solemn Vespers and Benediction at 7.30 p.m.*

### The FIRST WEEK OF THE YEAR: Liturgical Calendar

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

*Monday to Thursday: Rosary at 7.45 p.m. Novena before the Immaculate Conception at 8 p.m. Friday: Solemn Vespers at 7.30 p.m. Confessions are heard from 12.30 p.m. and from 5.30 p.m. until the end of Mass*

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

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

**St Francis Xavier** (1506-22) A Basque nobleman, he met Ignatius Loyola while they were at University in Paris, and they were among the founding group of seven who founded the Jesuits in 1534. Francis was sent to the Far East as a missionary and on the way spent time in Mozambique, India, the Philippines and Japan, converting several thousand over ten years despite great difficulties and opposition. He set out for China but died on the island of Sancion, just short of his destination.

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

• **Novena before the Immaculate Conception at 8 p.m. Brothers of the Little Oratory meet after Devotions**

**St John Damascene** (c.679-749) He succeeded his father as the Christian representative at the Caliph's Islamic court in Damascus, but as soon as he could, retired to a monastery in Jerusalem. A theologian, he set his mind to the great debate of whether it was against the First Commandment to have sacred images and he strongly defended their use as holy objects and aids to prayer, a teaching later confirmed by the Second Council of Nicea. He had a deep devotion to Our Lady and wrote many hymns and sermons in her honour.

**Wednesday December 5th: St Birinus, Bishop. (White)**

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

**St Birinus** (d. c.650) Born in Germany, he became a priest then Bishop in Italy. In 634, Pope Honorius I sent him on a mission to England where he preached to the West Saxons and quickly converted King Cynegils and so many followed. The king gave him the area of Dorchester on Thames where he established his see. He built many churches and St Bede said that "He called many by his holy labours".

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

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

**St Nicholas** (d. c.350) The original *Santa Claus*, (i.e. "Sant Niklaus") he has been popular from early times, though little is known of him other than the fact that he was Bishop of Myra in Turkey. He has been adopted as patron of children, merchants, pawnbrokers, sailors and prisoners amongst others.

**Friday December 7th: St Ambrose, Bishop & Doctor of the Church. (White)**

• **FIRST VESPERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION at 7.30 p.m.**

**St Ambrose** (c.340-397) A lawyer and popular Governor of Milan, a dispute which he was asked to settle led to his call as Bishop, despite still being under instruction. However, he was to become one of the greatest Bishops in Church history. He was a profound theologian but simple preacher. He championed the poor and oppressed, and brokered peace between neighbours, even on behalf of his enemies.

**Saturday December 8th: SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, Patroness of this Oratory, (and of the Archdiocese of Birmingham) (White)**

- **Mass at 8 a.m.**
- **SOLEMN HIGH MASS AT 11 A.M. (N.b. No Advent talk today)**
- **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. until the end of Mass**
- **Vigil Mass of THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT at 5.45 p.m.**

**Sunday December 9th: The SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT (Purple)**

**Mass & Service Times:**

- **8.30 a.m. Low Mass**
- **10.30 a.m. High Mass**
- **12.00 p.m. (Families with young children)**
- **12.45 p.m. Latin Mass 1962 Missal (in the Cloister Chapel)**
- **5.30 p.m. Sung Congregational Mass in English**
- **Solemn Vespers and Benediction: 7.30 p.m.**

**Please pray for the sick:** Nick Usher-Somers, George Saunders, Joe Houston, Margaret Casey, Lucia Tambura, Janina Stolarewicz, Frank McGuinness, Jacqueline Griffiths, Desmond Williams, John McCann, Kerry Mooney and Emma Wilson. **Of your charity please pray for the repose of the souls of those who have died recently:** David Moseley and Peter Houghton; **and of the souls of those whose anniversaries occur about now:** Fr Stanislaus du Moulin-Browne of this Oratory, Charles Henry Rushton, Esther Wilk, Marie Jones, Thomas McInerney, Sadie Christie and Tom McNamara

Peter Houghton's funeral is on Thursday at 12.45 p.m. Cremation at Lodge Hill. Reception of remains before Mass

**The following are requested to read next weekend, December 8th /9th:**

*Saturday 5.45 p.m.:* Brigid Hogan  
*Sunday 8.30 a.m.:* Murray Wilson-Browne  
*12.00 p.m.:* Eamon Grant  
*5.30 p.m.:* Jason Mahoney

**Collections:**

*Solemnity of Christ the King, 25th November:*  
Offertory: £1,467

Second: Catholic Youth Service: £382

*Thank you*

**The Second Collection today will be for the Diocesan Development Fund**

**Next week's Second Collection will be for Poor Parishes of the Diocese**

### **TODAY**

**'WALK WITH ME'** The Archbishop's new edition Advent Prayer book is available at the back of the church. Please note that the book is priced at **£1** and the calendar at **30p**. Please buy extra copies for relatives and friends, especially those who are housebound.

**The CHRISTMAS DRAW : Tickets are available at the doors of the church. There are many excellent prizes, including a first prize of £500. Please take and sell as many books as you can;** your help is greatly appreciated. Stubs and money can be handed in the Oratory House or at the sacristy (preferably in an envelope marked 'Christmas Draw') (Tickets: £1 per book or 20p each. )

**CHRISTMAS CARDS, Advent Calendars, Diaries etc** for *Aid to the Church in Need* are on sale at the Piety Stall in the Lower Cloister Hall. There is also a very good selection of books and DVDs, cribs, children's Christmas books, rosaries, statues etc. Still in stock is the life of Cardinal Newman 3 CD set, highly recommended by customers as a Christmas gift. (Please note that the introductory offer has now ceased and we have to sell at the full price of £14).

### **THIS WEEK**

**NOVENA BEFORE THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION**, our Patronal Feast, continues each evening at 8 p.m. (after Rosary at 7.45 p.m.) Please come and join in our prayers to ask Our Lady to inter-

cede for the Parish and Oratory Community.

**ADORATION AT REDNAL** will take place this week on Wednesday, commencing with Holy Mass at 2.30 p.m. We have been given good news that our challenge in the High Court against the Planning Officer's rejection of our Appeal has been upheld! However, we still need to go back to the previous stage and appeal all over again against the Local Authority's refusal of planning permission for our fence in the first place. So please keep up the prayers!

### **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

**ADVENT TALKS** this year are on the subject of PURGATORY: what it is, how we know about it, why it exists, how we can avoid it, how it is possible to help those who are in it to get through it more quickly, and related issues. Due to the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, there will not be a talk this Saturday. The second of the three talks will be on **Saturday 15th after the 11 a.m. Mass (beginning c. 11.30 a.m.);** and will be given by Fr Dermot on **"What does Cardinal Newman teach us about Purgatory?"**

**ST PAUL'S SCHOOL SENIOR CITIZENS' CHRISTMAS PARTY** will be taking place at the school in Vernon Road, on Wednesday 19th December from 1.30—3.00 p.m. If you would like to go, please contact St Paul's on 0121 454 0895.