

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.

December 20th 2009: THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT



BLESSED IS SHE WHO BELIEVED

The Gospel of the Last Sunday of Advent always draws our attention to Our Blessed Lady, as we, like her, await the birth of her Son. This year we hear what happened immediately after the Annunciation, when she had consented to God the Father's request, communicated to her by the Angel Gabriel, to become the Mother of His only-begotten Son.

Our Lady had been at first perturbed by the Angel's message, yet she did not doubt it, that is, *she did not disbelieve it*. Having asked the Angel how it was possible for her to conceive a son whilst remaining a Virgin, she was perfectly content to accept God's Will, saying: "*Behold the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done to me according to your word*".

The final proof of her complete trust in God's message was her response to the news the Angel gave her about her kinswoman Elizabeth. Learning from Gabriel that Elizabeth, who was now well past childbearing age, was expecting a son, she set off immediately without thought for her own comfort, in order to be a support and helpmate to her cousin, and to share in her joy that she was no longer childless.

The Gospel reading we hear today begins at the point where the Angel had just left Mary. The scene we witness is that of the meeting between the two cousins. Both were expecting their firstborn sons. Elizabeth had conceived wonderfully, despite being past the usual age of childbearing and having been barren all her life. Mary, however, had conceived miraculously, through the power of the Holy Spirit "*without losing her glorious virginity*" as a Preface in the Missal puts it.

The first thing we are told about Mary's arrival is that she greeted Elizabeth.

This greeting brought about an extraordinary effect in Elizabeth. We are told that she "*gave a loud cry and said, 'Of all women you are the most blessed.'*" This ecstatic reaction is grace-filled. Elizabeth herself was filled with the Holy Spirit upon Our Lady's coming into her presence and greeting her. Wherever she goes, Our Lady brings the Holy Spirit who had overshadowed her. So Elizabeth went on to say, "*Blessed is the fruit of your womb!*" She was given the grace to recognise the special status Mary enjoys in God's sight because of the divine child Mary had accepted from God. Elizabeth was overwhelmed at the presence of the person whom she was given grace to recognise as "*the Mother of my Lord*". How privileged she felt to receive such a person into her own home!

Our Lady does the same for us, too, when we make her welcome. When we pray to her, she answers by bringing us into the presence of her divine Son and of the Holy Spirit who dwelt in her heart. Elizabeth, who had conceived St. John the Baptist as a special gift of God's grace, was also given grace to recognise that Mary was "*Blessed because she believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled*". That promise was not for Mary only, but for all who accept her Son as the Saviour of the world, born in our hearts at Christmas.

CHANGES AT THE ORATORY continued

As was announced last week, Fr Paul begins new fundraising work in the United States in February next year. On 2nd February, the normal date for new appointments in the Oratory, Fr. Richard Duffield will take over from Fr Paul as Provost of the Oratory and Actor for the Cause of Cardinal Newman's Canonisation. Fr. Richard has now moved to Birmingham in order to have plenty of time to prepare for his new responsibilities.

Sunday December 20th: The Fourth Sunday of Advent (*Purple*)

- 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*

FOURTH WEEK OF ADVENT: Liturgical Calendar

Year 2 of the Lectionary at Weekday Mass and Psalter Week 4 in the Divine Office

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

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

PLEASE SEE OVERLEAF FOR EXCEPTIONS THIS WEEK

Monday 21st December: Weekday of Advent 21st December. (Purple)

'O Oriens': O Star of the Morning; brightness of Eternal Light and Sun of Justice; Come! And enlighten those who sit in darkness of the shadow of death.

- Blessing with St Philip's relic at 8.00 p.m.

Tuesday 22nd December: Weekday of Advent 22nd December. (Purple)

'O Rex Gentium': O King desired by the nations, You are the cornerstone that builds up unity from what was divided; Come! And save man who You formed from the dust of the earth.

- Benediction at 8 p.m.

Wednesday 23rd December: Weekday of Advent 23rd December. (Purple)

'O Emmanuel': O Emmanuel, our King and Lawgiver, the One awaited by the nations, and their Saviour; Come! And save us, Lord our God.

Thursday 24th December: Weekday of Advent 24th December. (Purple)

Christmas Eve Mass at 7.30 a.m. and 12.45 p.m.

SOLEMNITY OF CHRISTMAS

Thursday: Christmas Eve continued:

- CONFESIONS WILL BE HEARD ALL DAY FROM 10 a.m. TO 10 p.m.
- 4.00 p.m. 1962 Missal "Midnight Mass".
- 6.00 p.m. "VIGIL MASS" of Christmas (Both these Masses fulfil the Christmas Day obligation)
- 11.15 p.m. CAROLS followed by MIDNIGHT MASS at 12 midnight

Friday 25th December: Christmas Day: Holyday of Obligation (White)

- (Low) Mass at 8.00, 9.00, 10.00 a.m.
- 1962 Missal Low Mass at 9.30 a.m. in St Philip's Chapel.
- SOLEMN HIGH MASS at 11.00 a.m.
- Final (Low) Mass at 12.30 p.m.
- SOLEMN BENEDICTION at 5.30 p.m.

Saturday 26th December: St Stephen, Deacon, First Martyr. Feast. (Red)

- Masses at 8 a.m. and 11 a.m.
- Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament & Benediction between the Masses
- Confessions from 10.55 a.m. to 12 noon & from 5.30 p.m.
- First Mass of Sunday (The Feast of the Holy Family) at 5.45 p.m.

St Stephen is the first "martyr", that is, "witness" to faith in Christ. He believed so firmly in Christ the Saviour that he was prepared to lay down his life in defence of that truth.

December 27th: The Feast of the Holy Family (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 in English
- 7.30 p.m. Vespers and Benediction

Please pray for the sick: Pat Cartwright, Geoff Jones, Francis Ratcliffe, Leroy McCoy, Carolyn Knight, James Foynes, Michael McCann, Philip McCann and Celia Reddy. Of your charity please pray for the repose of the souls of those who have died recently Nora Murphy; and of the souls of those whose anniversaries occur about now: Alfred Nicklin, Maud Heron, Peter Mitchell, Joan Hodgkins, Eileen Heraghty, Vera Job, Brian White, Michael McGuire, Lucy O'Driscoll, Denis Bates, Thomas Cunningham and Thomas McNamara.

Nora Murphy's funeral is on Wednesday at 11 a.m.. Reception of remains: Tuesday at 4.30 p.m.

The following are requested to read at Mass next weekend, December 26th/27th, Fourth Sunday of Advent:

- Saturday 5.45 p.m.: Anne Roebuck
- Sunday 8.30 a.m.: Margaret Hawkins
- 12.00 p.m.: Morag Marinoni
- 5.30 p.m.: Brendan Cummins

Collections:

- 3rd Sunday of Advent: 13th December, 2009
- Offertory: £1,549
- Second: Poor of our Parish: £874

Thank you

TODAY

THE SECOND COLLECTION THIS WEEKEND will be for our branch of the SVP (Society of St Vincent de Paul).

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR SERVICES: Please take a leaflet, available at the church doors, which gives details of all services over this period.

EPIPHANY DRAW tickets are at the Church Doors. Please take as many as possible for yourselves and to sell to others. Please return counterfoils and money in an envelope marked "Prize Draw" to one of the Fathers or to the Oratory House. We would be glad to receive donations of unwanted Christmas presents to offer as prizes. (Please note that the items must be unused!)

The PIETY STALL is open after Saturday 11 a.m. and 5.45 p.m. Masses and all Sunday Masses. Cribs and other Christmas decorations, DVDs, Books and other items for children, Christmas cards, diaries and Christmas gift items are on sale, including those we are selling on behalf of Aid to the Church in Need.

THIS WEEK

The SECOND COLLECTION AT CHRISTMAS MASSES will be for the Fathers of our Oratory.

The CRIB COLLECTION will be for SURVIVEMIVA, the Association which provides vehicles for Missionaries throughout the world.

ADORATION AT REDNAL will not take place this week.

The UNION OF CATHOLIC MOTHERS will meet as normal on Tuesday in the Lower Cloister Hall after Benediction.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

NEW YEAR'S EVE VIGIL: Many of you will be making plans for your New Year celebrations. Why not consider seeing in the New Year with Our Lord and Our Lady? Exposition will be from 9.30 p.m. with prayers, as requested by Our Lady at Fatima, for peace, the conversion of sinners and reparation for 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.

The SOCIETY OF ST HUGH of LINCOLN are having their Christmas Party at 2 p.m. on Saturday 2nd January in the Oratory House. All are welcome.

NOTICES

CARDINAL NEWMAN HERITAGE PROJECT: The Oratory Primary School has set up an exhibition in the Cloister Buildings which can be viewed over the next few weeks. It covers the recent visit by Deacon Jack Sullivan, whose miraculous healing has made Cardinal Newman's beatification possible, and other aspects of life in Ladywood at Christmastide.

APF RED BOX HOLDERS are reminded that the quarter comes to an end on 31st December. It would be appreciated if you would cooperate with your collector in the exchange of your box. Many thanks.

YEAR FOR PRIESTS—a reflection by Pope Benedict XVI

St John Vianney's devout biographer [in describing his "living" in his church all day] should not blind us to the fact that the Curé also knew how to "live" actively within the entire territory of his parish: he regularly visited the sick and families, organized popular missions and patronal feasts, collected and managed funds for charitable and missionary works, embellished and furnished his parish church, cared for the orphans and teachers of the "Providence" (an institute he founded); provided for the education of children; founded confraternities and enlisted lay persons to work at his side.