

THE ORATORY—dedicated to THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

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Registered as a Charity

Parish Weekly Newsletter

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December 9th 2007: The Second Sunday of Advent



SPE SALVI—Saved by Hope

The Pope's new encyclical letter entitled "Saved by Hope", has just been published in time for Advent. He reminds us that of the three great theological virtues, Faith, Hope and Charity, Hope is probably the least understood nowadays. The Pope sees the problem in modern "individualism", especially in the so-called "post-Christian" world. We tend to believe that justice is something we human beings can devise and impose upon ourselves and . Rather than trust in God's power and love, we turn inwards towards human integrity and institutions. Then when these fail us, as they always do, then we lose hope. So we become prey to cynicism and despair.

In order to counteract this slide into hopelessness, the Pope rather surprisingly takes us back to the imagery of the Last Judgement, which is so often ignored today except as a subject in religious works of art. He reminds us that at the Last Judgement the real value of everything that has ever been done will be revealed, and so justice will be done. In one obvious sense this is frightening, as are the traditional artistic representations of the "Doom", (as our mediaeval English ancestors called the Last Judgement). The word "Doom" has remained in our language as suggesting final destruction, yet in origin the word means simply "Judgement". The Pope reminds us that, *for the faithful* judgement brings hope. Here he brings in the doctrine of Purgatory. Of course, he says, the Last Judgement will see the final destruction of all those who have worked against God and His faithful servants, but it will also bring about the final restoration of those who, during this life, have tried to love God, though imperfectly. God's forgiveness, says the Pope, does not wipe away the stains of sin and imperfection "like a sponge" wiping the slate clean, but by "fire", as St. Paul teaches us in the first Letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 3:13). This idea is at the root of our understanding of "Purgatory", with which we are dealing in our current series of Advent talks. Purgatory is not principally concerned with *punishment*, as many have believed in the past, but with *purification* from the stains of sin which separate us from God's holiness. Hope saves us by teaching us that human history is not "doomed" to self-destruction, but that God has already definitively stepped in to save us in Christ. Christ's life, death and resurrection are the means by which we are saved from self-destruction and from the misery of the unredeemed human condition. In Advent we are reminded once again to refocus our whole Christian life on the image of Christ as the One who will "come again in glory to judge the living and the dead" and so bring justice and life to all His faithful. So we pray, "Amen! Come, Lord Jesus!" (Apoc. 22:20)

OUR LADY QUEEN OF LIFE

It is through Our Lady that this hope has come into the world. Yesterday we celebrated our patronal feast of her Immaculate Conception. This means the creation of Our Lady without any sin. Mary is God's masterpiece. She is the "Mother of all who live", as Eve had been before her, but in a far greater way. For where Eve failed, Mary won. It might seem at first that Mary's freedom from sin would make her *less* free. For in our consumerist society we tend to associate freedom with choice, and the greater the range of choices we are given, the greater the freedom we have. We may therefore be tempted to think that because Mary was free from sin, this meant that she was *obliged* to follow God's will. But that is because our reckoning is darkened by sin. We think that freedom to choose means *having* many objects to choose from, and seeing them as all of equal value. But what if there is one *overwhelmingly wonderful object* presented to us that we have the power to choose or resist? Then we would surely and unhesitatingly want to choose it. So it was for Mary at the Annunciation. She was wholly free from sin and so was wholly free to see the *real worth and value of what God was offering to all mankind, so long as she agreed and accepted His invitation*. Hence Mary chose life—God's life. She gave her own created life to the Creator and He became her Son. This week we will celebrate Our Lady of Guadalupe, as she revealed herself to St Juan Diego, the Aztec convert (see the Calendar for Wednesday). There Our Lady freed her children from fear and desperation and gave them instead the Lord of Life. Please take a prayer card today so that we can pray to her for society to be set free from the despair of so-called "pro-choice" which merely means choosing death—and to find God's will and perfect freedom in choosing life, which is the incomparable good God offers us in each individual human being He creates.

Sunday December 9th: The Second 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.

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 December 10th: Monday of Advent Week 2. (Purple) Optional memoria of St Edmund Gennings, Priest & English Martyr. (Red)

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

St Edmund Gennings (1567-91) Born in Lichfield, he was a convert who studied for the priesthood abroad. On returning to England he sought out his brother who betrayed him. He was arrested whilst saying Mass and in mockery of his priesthood was dragged through the streets in his vestments. On refusing to denounce the Faith, he was thrown into a small hole until his particularly brutal execution. His brother converted after witnessing it and became a Franciscan, eventually becoming the Provincial in England.

Tuesday December 11th: Tuesday of Advent Week 2. (Purple). Optional memoria of St Damasus, Pope. (White)

- **Benediction at 8 p.m. Brothers of the Little Oratory meet after Devotions**

St Damasus (d.384) A Spaniard, though born in Rome, he was elected Pope in 366. During his Pontificate, Catholicism became the religion of the Roman state and his devotion to the early martyrs led to many previously neglected religious sites and churches being restored. He preserved the papal archives and commissioned his friend St Jerome to correct the Latin bible. However, his pontificate was not without problems and he had to deal with an anti-pope and the Arian and Donatist heresies.

Wednesday December 12th: Wednesday of Advent Week 2. (Purple). Optional memoria of Our Lady of Guadalupe. (White)

Our Lady of Guadalupe: In 1531, Our Lady appeared to St Juan Diego on the site of the Aztec Temple to *Tonantzín*, the "mother of gods". The Aztecs, resentful of the Spanish invaders, were reluctant to give up their idolatry and convert to Catholicism. But Our Lady said: "I am the perfect, forever Virgin, Holy Mary, Mother of the True God...He is the Master of Heaven and Earth". Her image was emblazoned on Juan Diego's cloak.

Thursday December 13th: St Lucy, Virgin & Martyr. (Red)

St Lucy (d.304) She was from Syracuse, an important Greek city in Sicily, and was martyred during the Diocletian persecution, the most fierce in the early Church. Her name is included in the Roman Canon of the Mass. She is the patron saint of the blind.

Friday December 14th: St John of the Cross, Priest & Doctor of the Church. (White)

St John of the Cross (1542-91) He was a Carmelite friar in his native Spain, and a friend of St Teresa of Avila. She asked him to help reform the Carmelite order, and he suffered much persecution by his community who were resistant to change. He wrote many mystical works including *Ascent of Mount Carmel* and the *Dark Night of the Soul*, and is known as the 'Mystical Doctor'.

Saturday December 15th: Saturday of Advent Week 2. (Purple) Blessed Anthony Grassi, Oratorian Priest. Memoria. (White)

- **Mass at 8 a.m. and Sung Mass at 11 a.m. (N.b. Advent talk afterwards)**
- **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 THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT at 5.45 p.m.**

Blessed Anthony Grassi (1592-1671) As a young Oratorian at Fermo in Italy, he was nearly killed by lightning whilst praying at Our Lady's shrine in Loreto. Renowned for his serenity he was a sought-after confessor and adviser even to Cardinals. Despite his obvious humility, he kept the Oratorian constitutions, ensuring the community did likewise. He was considered to be truly like St Philip in all ways.

Sunday December 16th: The THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT "Gaudete" (Rose)

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.**

N.b. the 1962 Mass will be celebrated at 9.30 a.m. in Church from December 30th

Please pray for the sick: Nick Usher-Somers, George Saunders, Joe Houston, Margaret Casey, Lucia Tambura, 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:** Molly Rigby and Michael Brundle; **and of the souls of those whose anniversaries occur about now:** Kenneth Chavasse, Charles William Nicholls, Ivy Green, Alfred Nicklin, Dorisa Cozzi, Michael Berg, John Winterton, Thomas McHugh and Lucy Driscoll.

The following are requested to read next weekend, December 15th /16th:

Saturday 5.45 p.m.: Tracy Butler
Sunday 8.30 a.m.: Margaret Hawkins
12.00 p.m.: Peter Leather
5.30 p.m.: Simon Stacey

Collections:

First Sunday of Advent, 2nd December:
Offertory: £1,540

Second: Diocesan Development Fund: £461
Thank you

The Second Collection today will be for Poor Parishes of the Diocese

Next week's Second Collection will be for Poor families in our Parish

TODAY

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.)

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

The NEW CATHOLIC DIRECTORY IS NOW ON SALE at the piety stall (in the Lower Cloister Hall) **together with CHRISTMAS CARDS, Calendars, diaries, books** for *Aid to the Church in Need*; also a large selection of books, DVDs, cribs, children's books, rosaries, statues etc. We recommend the life of Cardinal Newman 3 CD set as a Christmas gift. It includes interviews with Fr Paul and Fr Guy, amongst others.

THIS WEEK

ADORATION AT REDNAL will take place this week on Wednesday, commencing with Holy Mass at 2.30 p.m. Please keep praying for the permanent safety of Cardinal Newman's and the Fathers' graves!

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. The second of the three talks will be next *Saturday 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?**" Copies of last week's talk by Fr Guy will be available at next week's talk.

CATHOLIC WOMEN'S BOOK CLUB next meets Tuesday 11th December, 12-2pm. We meet in Edgbaston to complete the Pope's Book '*Jesus of Nazareth*'. All are welcome. Contact Jackie Parkes tel 0121-688-4154 rosary@blueyonder.co.uk

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

THE HELPERS OF GOD'S PRECIOUS INFANTS will be making a short appeal for new members at all Masses next weekend, (*This is not an appeal for money*). The Helpers meet at the back of Church every Saturday after the 8 a.m. Mass to go and pray outside the Calthorpe Clinic on Arthur Road. Their witness is of great importance outside one of the busiest death-factories in the country. They ask you; "*Please come and join us, or support us in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, on Saturday mornings.*"

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 as soon as possible.