

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 13th 2008: The Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord



The Epiphany Continued

Last Sunday Fr Paul reminded us that the Epiphany is more than the "Feast of the Three Kings", or Coming of the Magi. "*Epiphany*" is a Greek word meaning "manifestation", or "showing". In the ancient world, when kings visited their people, their arrival was often described as an "epiphany", a showing of their majesty and power. For instance, when the Queen of Sheba visited King Solomon, this was a good example of the impressive power of a royal manifestation. Each of them impressed the other and their respective courts by their wealth and majesty. So it is wholly fitting that the visit of the Magi should be accounted the first such "royal manifestation" by our Lord to all the world as the King and Redeemer of all mankind. That is why we are told that, when they found Him, in great joy the Magi "*fell to their knees and worshipped Him*". Astrologers and pagans though they had been, they had followed God's guiding sign, the Star of Bethlehem, and had come to believe in the King whom that star heralded.

Today we leap forward about thirty years to the end of Our Lord's hidden years and the brink of His public ministry. Although at first that may seem to be a long way from the Epiphany, it makes sense when we remember what the word "Epiphany" means. For at our Lord's baptism by his cousin John, all three Divine Persons of the Blessed Trinity are made manifest in a way nowhere else found in the entire Scriptures. As Our Lord emerges from the waters of the river Jordan, He sees the Holy Spirit come down upon Him from heaven in the form of a dove, while the Father's voice sounds over Him: "*This is my Beloved Son; my favour rests on Him*". The Father speaks this word over His Son. To put it another way, Jesus is Himself the *expression* of the Father, or as St. John says in His Gospel, the "Word" of God. The Holy Spirit can be said to be *poured out* over Jesus in the way that one is anointed with oil in baptism, confirmation, ordination and the sacrament of the sick. Thus the Spirit proceeds from the Father and anoints the Son to mark him out and consecrate Him for His forthcoming sacred work as Redeemer of the world.

Blessed Cardinal Newman?

There was great excitement last week when journalists bombarded the Oratory with phone calls after hearing a rumour that the beatification of Cardinal Newman was imminent. Alas, it is not quite true yet! Cardinal Martins, the Prefect of Causes in Rome, had actually said that he *hopes* that Cardinal Newman will be beatified this year. We still await the confirmation of the miracle by the medical panel. Meanwhile, the rumour has refocused attention on the connection between Birmingham and England's first possible saint (other than martyrs) since before the Reformation. Although the National papers and many international Catholic news services made this headline news, Birmingham shows itself remarkably lacking in interest. In fact it is remarkable that even though the City Fathers have been made aware of Newman's importance, yet they cannot bring themselves to appreciate the *kudos* of having such a man associated with our city, as is shown by their stubborn opposition to allowing us to keep the fence we have put up to protect his grave, already a place of pilgrimage for people from all over the world. **What is wrong with them?** Twice the City turned down our application to keep this fence without even looking at the site! So last May we appealed to the Planning Inspectorate and presented our case for retaining the fence. Yet to our amazement they upheld the City's refusal on the flimsiest of grounds. So we took our case to the High Court where our opponents didn't even attempt to defend their decision, and so the High Court overturned the Inspector's decision. Now we must go back *yet again* to the Appeal stage which we originally thought we had won last May. How will it turn out this time? Can it really be possible that they *want* to see Cardinal Newman's beloved Rednal vandalised over and over again as it was in 2003? Have a look at this week's Catholic Herald (p.2) and Catholic Times (p.3) for a brief account of the present situation, and see if you don't agree that it is bizarre, even scandalous, that we should be forced to keep on spending time and vast sums of money to try and win approval for something the City ought to be grateful to us for doing!

Sunday January 13th: The Feast of the Baptism of Our Lord (White)

Year 1 or A of the Lectionary at Mass

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

Ordinary Time: 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 January 14th: Feria. (Green)

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

Tuesday January 15th: Feria. (Green)

- **Benediction at 8 p.m.**
- **Brothers of the Little Oratory meet after Benediction in St Philip's Chapel.**

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

- **Sung Mass at 5.45 p.m.**

Blessed Joseph Vaz (1651-1711) He was born in Goa of Indian & 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 a journey, on foot, to Ceylon where the Church was suffering persecution by Moslems, protestants and the local pagan king. Despite a great many difficulties and set-backs, he began to succeed and eventually he was responsible for so many converts that fame of his holiness spread and he became known as the "Apostle of Ceylon". By the turn of the century, the Church in Ceylon was thriving. After 22 years, he retired to a life of prayer until his death at Kandy in 1711.

Thursday January 17th: St Anthony, Abbot. Memoria. (White)

St Anthony (c. 230-335) A wealthy Egyptian young man, he gave all his possessions to the poor and then lived a hermitical life: fasting, praying and doing manual work. He earned a reputation as a counsellor and healer, and many were moved by his simplicity and abandonment to God's providence. When he was about 70, he had so many followers that he set up a small community, the beginnings of monasticism as we know it. He was active in the fight against Arianism, supporting his friend St Athanasius, who also wrote Anthony's biography, in which he said: "Anthony was not known for his writings nor for his worldly wisdom, nor for any art, but simply for his reverence toward God."

Friday January 18th: Feria. (Green)

Saturday January 19th: St Wulstan, Bishop. Feast. (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 & from 5.30 p.m. until the end of Mass**
- **Vigil Mass of THE SECOND SUNDAY OF THE YEAR at 5.45 p.m.**

St Wulstan (1009-95) Born in Warwickshire, he studied at Evesham and Peterborough abbeys before joining the Benedictines at Worcester. He was appointed Bishop of Worcester in 1062 and was the only Bishop to retain his see after the Norman conquest. He was famous for his pastoral zeal, caring for the poor, defending the vanquished Saxons' rights, and also fighting the slave trade which operated from Bristol. He also built many new churches and rebuilt the Cathedral. He maintained a monastic regime in his own life, re- founding a monastery. He died during his daily ritual of washing the feet of twelve poor men. He was canonized in 1203.

Sunday January 20th: The SECOND SUNDAY OF THE YEAR (Green)

Mass & Service Times:

- **8.30 a.m. Low Mass**
- **9.30 a.m. Latin Mass 1962 Missal** (Please note new time—now in Church)
- **10.30 a.m. Solemn High Mass**
- **12.00 p.m. (Families with young children)**
- **5.30 p.m. Sung Congregational Mass in English**
- **Vespers and Benediction: 7.30 p.m.**

Please pray for the sick: Tommy Smyth, Marie-Thérèse Jones, Margaret Walshe, George Saunders, Margaret Casey, Jacqueline Griffiths, Thelma Havelin and Desmond Williams.

Of your charity please pray for the repose of the souls of those who have died recently: Philomena Thacker, Catherine Walshe, Halina Zychowicz and Micheline Barrère; **and of the souls of those whose anniversaries occur about now:** Fr Robert Eaton of this Oratory, Fr Arthur Amy, Mary Chavasse, Mary Carless, Paul O'Driscoll and John McCauley.

The following are requested to read next weekend, January 19th/20th: The Baptism of Our Lord

Saturday 5.45 p.m.: Anne Roebuck

Sunday 8.30 a.m.: Murray Wilson-Browne

12.00 p.m.: Dennis Wood

5.30 p.m.: Brendan Cummins

Collections

The Epiphany, 6th January:

Offertory: £1,516

Second: Pro Life Charities: £949

Many thanks

The second Collection today will be for the Diocesan Development Fund

TODAY

CATHOLIC DIARIES & CALENDARS and the 2008 DIOCESAN DIRECTORY are on sale in the Lower Cloister Hall. **All Christmas cards are reduced by at least 20% this weekend only.**

1962 "Tridentine" MASS: please note that the Sunday Mass time and venue are both changed: It is now at 9.30 a.m. in Church for an experimental period.

ORATORY PATRICIANS meet at 3.15 p.m. in the Oratory House. The subject: "Is suicide ever morally justifiable?". All are welcome.

THIS WEEK

ADORATION AT REDNAL will take place this week on Wednesday, commencing, as usual, with Holy Mass at 2.30 p.m., followed by Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, with prayers, and ending with Benediction at 3.45 p.m. Please keep the long-term safety of Rednal as one of your prayer intentions this New Year.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

ORATORY PRIMARY SCHOOL TALKS FOR PARENTS/ Carers: The new season of talks commences on Monday 21st January from 2.00—3.15 p.m. in the Oratory School Hall, on the subject of **Sex Education**, and is open to all parents of children in the school. The title of the introductory talk is: **"Moral Formation : the Internet, T.V. and all that."** The talk will be given by Greg and Aghi Clovis. Greg is the Director of Human Life International. We

hope that, if at all possible, parents will attend these very important talks.

The PARISH COUNCIL AGM is on Monday 21st January at 8 p.m. in the Lower Cloister Hall. Nominations for new and renewable memberships are invited and forms can be found at the doors of the church. *Please ensure that nomination forms are returned by next Friday, 18th January.*

NOTICES

CHRISTMAS DRAW: a List of the Prizes and Winners is on the Notice Boards. If you are a winner, please collect your prize in the Lower Cloister Hall after Mass on Sundays. *Or, you can arrange collection by telephoning 454 0496 during normal office hours, Monday to Friday.*

The ALTAR SOCIETY: On behalf of the Altar Society, Fr Paul conveys very many thanks to all of you who have contributed to the 'Blue Box' (by St Charles' chapel); during 2007, £1,195 was collected. He also asks for new members to the Society, which looks after the flowers, altar linen and also the vestments. In particular, he would be pleased to hear from anyone who is skilled at lace-work and/or repairing vestments.

CONFIRMATION will be administered on March 5th. If there is anyone who wishes to receive the Sacrament, please contact the Parish Priest, Fr Guy, *in writing* as soon as possible.

Finally— If you have not seen the recent Press coverage on the safety of Cardinal Newman's grave, there is a display in the Lower Cloister Hall