

A Sign from the Lord

How many signs do you think can be found in Holy Cross Church? I haven't counted all the signs myself, but I imagine if you spent some time looking around the Church you would find dozens. I'm not talking necessarily about written signs; rather look at the various objects in the Church: the altar, the cross, the lectern, the baptismal font, statues, the angels, the stations of the cross. The Church is itself a sign, built in the shape of a cross, with its roof and tower reaching towards heaven.

In today's first reading from Isaiah he hear how the Lord commands King Ahaz to ask for a sign. Ahaz refuses on the grounds that he will not put the Lord to the test. In response, through the Prophet Isaiah, Ahaz is told that the Lord will himself provide a sign: "It is this: the maiden is with child and will soon give birth to a son whom she will call Emmanuel, which means 'God-with-us'" (Isaiah 7:14).

Ahaz refuses to ask for a sign out of fear that it will bring judgement upon him. A newly born child would seem to be anything but a threat; yet for a King who fears to lose his crown a child and the hopes carried in that child could present a major challenge.

It is God who provides this sign and in so doing He has chosen a sign that is universal. Some signs only make sense within a particular culture, but the sign of a child is a sign that speaks to all peoples. Although the nativity stories are set in a particular place two thousand years ago they still speak powerfully to us today, and the message proclaimed in the birth of the Child Jesus has lost none of its significance.

As we look forward to celebrating the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ each one of us is challenged by this sign. A child signifies hope for the future, a new beginning and new life. But a child can also remind us of our own mortality, that our generation will pass away and new generations will take our place. The infant Jesus is a sign of God's generosity and love for each one of us, but he is also a sign of our mortality. Let us welcome Him into our hearts confident that He will bring new life and transform our fear into joy.

David Goodill OP

4th Sunday of Advent

Year A

23 December 2007

The Newsletter of HOLY CROSS PRIORY CHURCH, LEICESTER

Served by the Dominican Order: website <http://www.torch.op.org>

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Sunday Masses	This week	Mass Intentions	Next week
7:30pm Vigil	Fr Isidore	Lawrence family intention	Fr Tony
8:00am	Fr Duncan	Ashberry family and friends, RIP	Fr Isidore
9:30am Family	Fr David	For the People	Fr Tony
11:00am Solemn	Fr Leon	David and Michael Lyons, RIP	Fr Duncan
7:00pm	Fr Fabian	Margaret O'Reilly	Fr Duncan

Full details of CHRISTMAS SERVICES and CONFESSIONS are given on the cards by each entrance.

Please take one, rather than ringing the Priory to enquire.

SUNDAYS IN TERM: MASS FOR STUDENTS AT 5pm (in the Church).

No Mass today; the first Mass of next term will be on Sunday 13 January.

Sunday Evening Services	22 December	Confessions	29 December
5:45 Rosary	Frs Fabian & Leon	10:30-11:30am	Fr Isidore
6:15 Sung Latin Compline	Fr David	4:00-5:00pm	Fr Tony
6:40 Benediction	Fr Duncan	7:00-7:20pm	Fr Euan

Entrance Antiphon:	Let the clouds rain down the Just One, and the earth bring forth a Saviour.
1 st Reading:	Isaiah 7: 10-14
Psalm Response:	Let the Lord enter! He is the king of glory. (Ps 23)
2 nd Reading:	Romans 1: 1-7
Alleluia:	The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and they will call him Emmanuel a name which means "God-is-with-us". At 11:00 - Come Lord! Do not delay. Forgive the sins of your people.
Gospel:	Matthew 1: 18-25
Communion Antiphon:	The Virgin is with child and shall bear a son, and she will call him Emmanuel.

MONEY MATTERS: Last Weekend: Offertory Collection £1028.62; SVP £4.62; St. Martin's Missions £4.04; Holy Souls £7.08; Grenada £3.87.

The First Friday Coffee Morning has raised £100, for which many thanks to all involved.

Very many thanks for your continuing generosity.

This week's Feasts		
Monday:	Advent feria	
Tuesday:	THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD - for Mass times, see cards which are available by each entrance. No evening Mass.	
Wednesday:	St Stephen, protomartyr. Only one Mass today, at 10am, after which the church will be closed. No Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.	
Thursday:	St John, apostle, evangelist	
Friday:	The Holy Innocents, martyrs	
Saturday:	Fifth Day in the Octave of Christmas	
Next Sunday's Readings		
Ecclesiasticus 3 :2-6, 12-14	Colossians 3: 12-21	Matthew 2: 13-15, 19-23

Chaplain of Honour: HH Pope Benedict XVI has appointed Rev John Hadley as Chaplain of Honour to His Holiness with the title Monsignor. This is in recognition of Monsignor Hadley's contribution to the work of the Ongoing Formation Committee for the Clergy of the Diocese and other duties undertaken by Mons Hadley both for the Diocese and the Church in England and Wales. Congratulations are extended to Mons Hadley on this well-deserved award.

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Fr Gordian Marshall, OP, who died just after last week's Newsletter went to press. Many parishioners will remember him from his time at Holy Cross in the late 1980s when he was Bursar and involved in much interfaith work. RIP.

MANY THANKS for the wonderful response to the Wish Upon a Star appeal! We have collected 250 gifts to go to the refugees, asylum seekers and other groups of disadvantaged and needy people in Leicester. To every one of you who gave a gift - Thank you!

Midnight Mass. Fr Tony needs readers, at least four, for midnight Mass. Could readers who plan to come to midnight Mass and would like to read the scriptures please contact Fr Tony (252 1501).

Training for Reading at Mass. A new formation course for both existing and prospective readers. Fr Tony has details of a Saturday event in Leicester in early February which will be the first presentation of the diocese's course for those who read at Mass or would like to become readers. The course will be repeated.

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY 2008: 2008 marks the 100th anniversary of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity organised by Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. The theme for 2008 is 'Pray Without Ceasing'.

St Paul's School will celebrate its 30th Anniversary on the evening of Saturday 28 June, at the school. The event is open to all past pupils who are over the age of 18, staff and friends. For more details ring 241 4057, visit www.st-pauls.leicester.sch.uk or e-mail stpaulsrcschool@netscape.net. Do let anyone who is coming home for Christmas know!

2008 is the 150th anniversary of the apparitions at Lourdes. The Diocesan Pilgrimage, led by Mgr McGovern, will take place from 13 or 14 July (depending on mode of travel) until 20 July. Air pilgrims will depart from the East Midlands Airport, with coach pilgrims going from Newark and Leicester and returning via St Bernadette's shrine at Nevers. For a brochure and booking form (one per person) write to the Pilgrimage Office, Willson House, Derby Road, Nottingham NG1 5AW or telephone 07971 625764.

The National Board of Catholic Women (the consultative body for women to the Bishops' Conference for issues such as Education, Health, Marriage and the Family, Social Justice etc) is holding its AGM in Nottingham on 21-22 June 2008. In order to prepare for that meeting there will be a discussion session at Rearsby convent, 61 Station Road, Rearsby on Saturday 5th January from 10am - 4pm. Fair trade refreshments and a light lunch will be included - Contact Christina Mottram 0116 221 3066 cj.mottram@ntlworld.com to book or for further information.

COME HOME FOR CHRISTMAS. Do you know of someone who used to belong to the Catholic church and doesn't any more? Chances are you do. You might like to give them one of the Come Home for Christmas leaflets you'll find by the entrances. It's an excellent leaflet, realistic, warm and encouraging. It may do someone in your life a power of good.

International Young Leaders Network. There will be a training session held at Blackfriars, Oxford, in July 2008. See noticeboard.

Please join us in the Parish Hall after the 9:30am and 11:00am Sunday Masses for tea, coffee, fruit-juice etc. The Hall is in Wellington Street. There is the chance for a chat with members of the Dominican Community and with parishioners. We particularly welcome visitors to our Parish.

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 Services at Holy Cross during the week:  
**Mass: Monday and Thursday - Saturday, at 10:00am (with sermon) and 12:40pm.**

**Tuesday - see special card.**

**Wednesday - at 10am only, after which the church will be closed.**

**NO Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament on Wednesday.**

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 During the winter months the church will be open from 8am each ordinary weekday until 3:30pm.
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