

## John the Baptist and the Church

IT'S not surprising that when the charismatic preacher, John the Baptist, attracted such large crowds, people wondered whether he was the answer to all their hopes and longings?

Israel was occupied by the pagan Romans. The Jews naturally longed for God to deliver them from this oppression. And the prophets had foretold that he would send his anointed one – his Christ or Messiah – who would come to set his people free. Then there would be an idyllic age, when God's peace would reign. And there's a Jewish tradition that the great prophet Elijah would return to introduce the messianic age.

Even the Jerusalem religious authorities were curious about John's identity and mission. John could so easily have accepted everyone's adulation, but he didn't. Instead, he denied that he was either the Christ, or Elijah returned or even a prophet. He was not the one to satisfy their expectations.

Instead, he pointed away from himself and towards the 'one who was to come.' John was not God's eternal Word, but a voice crying in the wilderness of our lives, 'Prepare the way of the Lord.' John didn't even consider himself worthy to perform the slave's menial task of unfastening his master's sandals. Although John had a vital role to play in God's plan of salvation he realised that he must decrease, so that Jesus could increase and take the centre stage in the drama of salvation. It takes the humility of a great person to promote someone above himself.

John the Baptist's mission sums that of the Church and of each of us, its members. As we long for Christ to come into each of our lives and into the whole world we must prepare the way of the Lord. We must recognise our need for a saviour, and must remove the roadblocks of sin and indifference, which keep him at a distance. Like John the Baptist, our task is to promote Christ, not ourselves. We are called to serve, not to be served. We are to be voices crying in the wilderness of a world, which doesn't recognise its need for a saviour.

And yet Advent is a joyful, holy season. God has already come into our troubled, violent world. He has already defeated evil. Now we long for the whole world to share in his victory. Only then will God's peace reign throughout creation. But in the meantime we must be like John and prepare to make our saviour really welcome.

Isidore O.P.

Gaudete Sunday (3<sup>rd</sup> of Advent)

Year B

14 December 2008

### The Newsletter of HOLY CROSS PRIORY CHURCH, LEICESTER

Serving Leicester's Catholics since AD 1247



Sunday Masses	This week	Mass Intentions	Next week
6:00pm Vigil	Fr Isidore James Henry, RIP, & O'Briens, RIP		Fr Fabian
8:00am	Fr Thomas Ashberry family & friends, RIP		Fr Isidore
9:30am Family	Fr Peter <i>Pro populo</i>		Fr Peter
11:00am Solemn	Fr Leon Book of Prayer intentions		Fr Leon
4:00pm Old rite	Fr Duncan Holy Souls		Fr Thomas
5:00pm Students	– – <b>No Mass for Students until 18 Jan'y</b>		– –
7:00pm	Fr Fabian O'Connell family, RIP		Fr Euan

OTHER SUNDAY SERVICES	6:00pm Rosary	13 December	Confessions	20 December
9:00am Lauds	6:20pm Compline	Fr Peter	10:30 - 11:30am	Fr Peter
5:45pm Vespers	6:40pm Benediction	Fr Duncan	5:00 - 6:00pm	Fr Leon

There is a series of short Advent talks on 'The Poetry of Christmas' being given after both Masses on Fridays in Advent, apart from the last one. This week Fr Peter will speak on 'Journey of the Magi' by T S Eliot.

Full details of services over Christmas and the New Year are given on a card, available by the doors. Please take as many as you need (and please don't ring the Priory for this information...). There will also be an anticipated Midnight Mass in the Dominican Rite at 9pm on 24 December.

Entrance Antiphon:	Gaudete in Domino semper! Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice! The Lord is near.
1 <sup>st</sup> Reading:	Isaiah 61: 1-2. 10-11
Psalm Response:	My soul shall exult in my God. (Luke 1)
2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading:	1 Thessalonians 5: 16-24
Alleluia:	The spirit of the Lord is upon me; he has sent me to preach good news to the poor. <u>At 11:00</u> - O Lord, rouse up your might; O Lord, come to our help.
Gospel:	John 1: 6-8. 19-28
Offertory (at 11:00):	O Lord, you once favoured your land and revived the fortunes of Jacob; you forgave the guilt of your people.
Communion Antiphon:	Say to the anxious: be strong and fear not, our God will come to save us.

**MONEY MATTERS:** Last Weekend's collections: Offertory Collection £850.51; SVP £4.70; St. Martin's Missions £3.03; Holy Souls £6.27; Grenada £3.72. The collection for new and poor parishes came to £228.01, and the collection at the Advent Carol Service on 3 December came to £104.77. We are still calculating the costs associated with last Sunday's Parish lunch, but should know the proceeds by next week.

There will be a retiring collection today for Christmas flowers for the church.

Very many thanks for your continuing generosity.

**Christmas Tree Star Appeal for Asylum Seekers & Refugees:** After its outstanding success for the last two years, this is being repeated this year during Advent. The tree will carry stars, each star having the name of a gift, some cheap, others a little more expensive. You choose a star, or more than one if you wish, buy and wrap the gift(s) named and return it (them) to the church with the stars attached. Your star gifts will go to someone in need, and arrangements will be made to deliver them. Presents must be ready please by **TODAY, SUNDAY 14th December.**

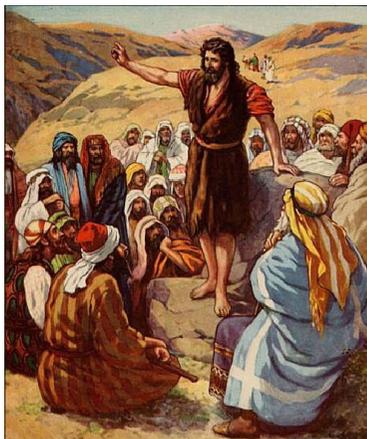
The Novena to Our Lady is every Saturday at 10:30 in the morning, just after the 10 o'clock Mass.

The Divine Mercy Chaplet on Wednesdays will now begin at 11:45am, and be followed by the Rosary, and then Benediction.

**City of Sanctuary 'Seasonal Celebration'** - this is planned for Monday 22 December, 12 noon till 6pm, at Trinity Life Church Hall (Tichborne St). It is an attempt to help asylum seekers and refugees and their children have a Happy Christmas; BUT there seems nothing but fun and games and no presentation of Christmas at all. Do you have any ideas about presentations of who Santa Claus is (Saint Nicolas) and why we give presents (the Magi)? If you can help, please contact Fr Duncan.

**Refugees and Asylum Seekers - Leicester City of Sanctuary.** The Red Cross remain desperate for food and personal goods and we would ask you to be as generous as you can. No clothing or alcohol please but tins, rice, soup, pasta &c as per lists in previous Newsletters. If you want a list please e mail [b-hawcroft@ntlworld.com](mailto:b-hawcroft@ntlworld.com).

**Missed last week's Newsletter and want to catch up?** Back copies of last week's Newsletter, and many older ones, are generally available on the Choir's website <http://holycrosschoirleicester.co.uk/> on the 'Links' page.



**Today's Gospel:** St John the Baptist explains he is not the Christ.

Year 1	The week ahead...	Psalter Week 3
Monday:	Feria	
Tuesday:	Feria	
Wednesday:	Feria	
Thursday:	Feria	
Friday:	Feria	
Saturday:	St Dominic of Silos, abbot - <i>optional</i>	
WEEKDAY MASS IN LATIN. This week, Fr Thomas will say Mass in the older form on Tuesday and Wednesday at 8:30am, and on Saturday at 8:15am.		
<b>Next Sunday - 4<sup>th</sup> of Advent. Readings:</b>		
2 Samuel 7:1-5. 8-11. 16	Romans 16: 25-27	Luke 1: 26-38

If you have any event or information you would like publicising in this Newsletter and/or on the noticeboards, please hand in posters/information to the Priory, marked 'Newsletter'. In the case of events and other dated material please try to give 4 weeks' notice for inclusion in the Newsletter. All publicity depends on space available, and the deadline for Newsletter items is Tuesdays.

**Compline**, the Evening Prayer of the Church, is sung here each Sunday evening at 6:20pm in the traditional Latin form of the Dominican Rite, much of the chant and ceremony probably going back to the earliest days of the Order in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Members of the congregation are very welcome to take part, and instruction can be given to anyone who wishes to do this regularly. See Fr Leon or Bernard Marriott.

**Leicester Street Pastors** is a Christian project working on the streets of the city centre, to reach out to all people showing compassion, care and helping to create a positive atmosphere in our city at night time. Anyone eighteen years old or over can train to become a street pastor.

*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 opportunity for a chat with members of the Dominican Community and with parishioners.*

*We particularly welcome newly-arrived students and other visitors to our Parish.*

SERVICE TIMES	
MONDAYS TO FRIDAYS	
8.00	Lauds
10.00	Mass
12.30	Mass
17.45	Vespers
Old Rite Masses as announced.	
The church is open from 8.00 to 15.30 (winter) or 16.00 (summer)	
WEDNESDAYS	
10.30	Exposition until 12.30
11.45	Divine Mercy Chaplet, Rosary & Benediction
SATURDAYS	
9.00	Lauds
10.00	Mass
10.30	Novena to Our Lady
10.30	Confessions until 11.30
12.30	Mass
17.00	Confessions until 18.00
17.45	Vespers
18.00	Vigil Mass for Sunday
Old Rite Masses as announced.	
HOLYDAYS	
18.00	(previous day) Vigil Mass
8.00	Lauds
10.00	Mass
12.30	Mass
17.45	Vespers
19.00	Mass
BANK HOLIDAYS	
8.00	Lauds
10.00	Mass, after which the church is closed
SUNDAYS	
8.00	Mass
9.00	Lauds
9.30	Mass (Family)
11.00	Mass (Solemn: Latin on 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> and 5 <sup>th</sup> Sundays)
16.00	Mass (Old rite in Latin)
17.00	Mass (for Students, term time only)
17.45	Vespers
18.00	Rosary
18.20	Sung Latin Compline
18.40	Benediction
19.00	Mass
Leicester Royal Infirmary Catholic Chaplaincy: For urgent visits, ask ward staff to bleep the Roman Catholic Chaplain.	
For non-urgent visits leave message at the Priory or the LRI Chaplains' Office. Messages may not be picked up until the end of the day.	
Website for past Newsletters: <a href="http://holycrosschoirleicester.co.uk">holycrosschoirleicester.co.uk</a>	
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