

O Wondrous Exchange!

JRR Tolkien's Middle-earth is not a fantasy world as such. It is *our* world, but located in a mythological time in the past. Tolkien says that he wrote his myths not to act as an escape *from* reality, but as an escape *into* reality. The 'logic' of Middle-earth is the 'logic' of our world: a world under God, fallen and yet under grace. Tolkien was, after all, a devout Catholic and a close friend of our late brother Fr Gervase Mathew OP, his fellow Inkling.

So it should not come as too much of a shock that the Incarnation of Christ should intrude into Middle-earth. In a little known tale called *The Athrabeth*, a woman and an elf talk about this mysterious hope among human beings.

'This is the Great Hope: that God will himself enter into the World and heal Men and all the Marring,' [said the woman]
'But still this passes my understanding,' said the elf. 'For how could God enter into the thing that He has made, and than which He is infinitely greater? Can the poet enter his story or the designer his picture? Would it not shatter the World, or indeed all Creation?'

The Great Hope is certainly an astonishing thought. Our brother St Thomas Aquinas OP teaches, 'But nothing is more a source of wonder than the Son of God made man... [that is why] *'His name will be called Wonderful'* (Isaiah 9.6).' God is never compelled. He does not have to take our human nature to himself, and yet he does. Why? On the octave day of Christmas, we sing the *O admirabile commercium*:

'O wondrous exchange: the Creator of the human race, taking upon Himself a body and a soul, has deigned to be born of a Virgin, and, appearing here below as man, has made us sharers of His Divinity'.

Christmas cannot be about mere sentimentality. We cannot gather round the crib, and admire the fluffy animals and the shepherds, or the tree and its lights and the star, and go away simply thinking and feeling warm thoughts. Instead we gather awestruck and dumbstruck, because, as the carol says, 'Lowly in the manger lies / He who made the starry skies'. God-made-man demands an exchange from us. Everything for us must now be different. We must share in this exchange: *What can I give him, Poor as I am? If I were a shepherd I would bring a lamb, If I were a wise man I would do my part, Yet what I can I give Him — Give my heart.*

From all the friars at Holy Cross, I wish you a very Merry Christmas!

Fr Leon Pereira OP, Prior & Parish Priest

4th Sunday of Advent

Year B

21 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 Fabian	Minnie Fitzpatrick, RIP	Fr Peter
8:00am	Fr Isidore	Fr Robert Sharp OP, RIP	Fr Isidore
9:30am Family	Fr Peter	Mr & Mrs C D'Silva, RIP	Fr Euan
11:00am Solemn	Fr Leon	<i>Pro populo</i>	Fr Duncan
4:00pm Old rite	Fr Thomas	Holy Souls in Purgatory	Fr Duncan
5:00pm Students	— —	No Mass for Students until 18 Jan'y	— —
7:00pm	Fr Euan	Jimmie Gallagher, RIP	Fr Leon

OTHER SUNDAY SERVICES	6:00pm Rosary	20 December	Confessions	27 December
9:00am Lauds	6:20pm Compline	Fr Peter	10:30 - 11:30am	Fr Leon
5:45pm Vespers	6:40pm Benediction	Fr Leon	5:00 - 6:00pm	Fr Isidore

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.

Please note that on weekdays (Monday - Friday) from 26 December to 2 January, there will only be one Mass, at 10am, after which the church is closed.

Entrance Antiphon:	Let the clouds rain down the Just One, and the earth bring forth a Saviour.
1 st Reading:	2 Samuel 7:1-5. 8-11. 16
Psalm Response:	I will sing of your mercies, O Lord, for ever. (Ps 89)
2 nd Reading:	Romans 16: 25-27
Alleluia:	Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word. <u>At 11:00</u> - Come Lord! Do not delay. Forgive the sins of your people.
Gospel:	Luke 1: 26-38
Offertory 'O' antiphon (at 11:00):	O virgin of virgins, how shall this be? For neither before thee was any like thee, nor shall there be in the future. Daughters of Jerusalem, why do you marvel at me? What you behold is a divine mystery.
Communion Antiphon:	The Virgin is with child and shall bear a son, and she will call him Emmanuel.

MONEY MATTERS: Last Weekend's collections: Offertory Collection £1028.43; SVP £1.80; Friends of Holy Cross £1.26; Holy Souls £3.53; Grenada £2.25. The collection for Christmas flowers for the church came to £232.56.

Very many thanks for your continuing generosity.

As 2 January will be a time when most people are either busy or away, the next **First Friday Coffee Morning** will be on 6 February.

Fr Leon needs readers for **Midnight Mass**, at least 4. If you plan to attend **Midnight Mass** please contact Fr Leon (252 1501).

Please pray for **Christine Doyle** who died suddenly this week and remember her family and all who mourn her in your prayers. We have no further details at this time.

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.

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.

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.

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 13th 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.



Today's Gospel:
The Annunciation

Year 1	The week ahead...	Psalter Week 4
Monday:	Feria. Anniversary of the Approval of the Order of Preachers in 1216.	
Tuesday:	Feria	
Wednesday:	Advent Feria and Christmas Eve. Times of all Christmas and New Year services are on the separate card, or for times of Christmas services please ring the voicemail service: 0116 255 5552.	
Thursday:	THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD. There is no evening Mass today.	
Friday:	ST STEPHEN, PROTOMARTYR	
Saturday:	ST JOHN, APOSTLE, EVANGELIST	
WEEKDAY MASS IN LATIN. This week, Fr Thomas will say Mass in the older form on Friday at 9:00am, and on Saturday at 8:15am.		
Next Sunday - Holy Family. Readings:		
Ecclesiasticus 3: 2-6. 12-14	Colossians 3: 12-21	Luke 2: 22-40

HOLY CROSS CAROL PARTY. You are invited to come to the party **TODAY, SUNDAY 21 DECEMBER**, in St Clement's Hall at 7.30pm. It will be an informal evening of carols, poems and readings led by the Holy Cross Gospel Choir and accompanied by the Nigerian choir. Punch, tea and coffee will be served, and you are welcome to bring beer and wine. Glasses will be available. We will be pleased to share any traditional Christmas fare you can bring, eg. mince pies, stollen, biscuits, etc.

Mass in the Syro-Malabar rite. From Christmas Day, and thereafter every Sunday, Mass in this rite in the Malayalam language will be celebrated at Mother of God Church, Greencoat Road. On Christmas Day the Mass will be at 3:30pm, and on Sundays it will be at 4pm. Members of our Kerala community especially are invited.

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.

REGULAR 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) / 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.	
HOLIDAYS	
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 nd , 4 th and 5 th 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: holycrosschoirleicester.co.uk	
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