

The Newsletter of
HOLY CROSS PRIORY CHURCH, LEICESTER
Serving Leicester's Catholics since AD 1247



IT'S tempting to think that morality is all about education: if people really knew what the right thing was to do, they would do it. Parents make this mistake a lot, especially in judging themselves negatively – if my children do things wrong, it's because I've been a bad parent and not brought them up properly.

The truth is, as we know from our own case, we usually know what the right thing in a situation is, and too often we don't do it. We achieve this by a kind of moral amnesia. We push to the back of our minds the inconvenient truth that we know that what we're doing is wrong, and we focus on some immediately satisfying reason for doing the wrong thing. And maybe we tell ourselves a story as to why it's perfectly OK to ignore what is right.

The people in today's Gospel think John the Baptist must be the Christ, when all he is doing is telling them things they already know. The tax collectors know they shouldn't cheat their own people. The soldiers know they shouldn't practise extortion. But hearing it out of someone else's mouth is challenging. John isn't calling them to a radically different life. He does tell the tax collectors to stop collecting taxes. He doesn't tell the soldiers to give up soldiering. He simply calls them to do what they already know to be right.

There's nothing foolish in these people's wanting to go to someone else, who sees their moral situation more clearly and can say the things they know to be true, but have conveniently forgotten. And they respond to being recalled to themselves, reminded of what they already know, with a certain kind of awe.

John, however, knows that that will not be, on its own, enough, that what he offers is not the transformation that they really need. Repentance, which is John's message, is a very important part of what we all need, but it will only be part of what will save us; and when I say "save us", I mean primarily from ourselves, from the moral forgetfulness that we've willed upon ourselves, and the terrible harm we do to ourselves and others when we act from that forgetfulness.

We are waiting with eager anticipation for the coming of Jesus Christ at Christmas because God in Christ is offering us far more than that. Jesus is not just setting us back on our feet, recalling us to the faithful following of God's law. He is doing that, but he offers so much more.

The tax collectors of our Gospel might well have gone away and tried a bit harder to straighten out their lives, but inevitably, the world they had made for themselves was so full of temptations to injustice, and as we all know from our own case, no doubt they would slide back into their old ways, and stand in need of another call to repentance.

Christ's coming does much more than call us to repentance. It does call us to repent, but it involves so much more. Christ baptises with the Holy Spirit and with fire. That baptism is much more than a sign of repentance, much more even than a simple forgiveness of sins, if by that we just mean a wiping of the slate clean. We're not just set back on our feet: the love of God is poured into our hearts.

The birth of a baby brings hope to his or her parents, to their family and friends. Children are a sign of hope for the future, and they bear within themselves that hope of so many great possibilities, as yet unfulfilled. The birth of the Christ-child brings not just hope for himself but real hope for us. We've most of us squandered the hope of our births, and for that we need to repent and find forgiveness. But the hope Christ brings is a new birth, not just a second chance. It's a return to the hope of our childhood and even more: a new and certain hope of life with God, of being a child of God, in this life and forever.

Fr Peter, OP

Sunday Masses	This week	Mass Intentions	Next week
6:00pm Vigil	Fr Isidore	Carmel Furey, RIP	Fr Thomas
8:00am	Fr Isidore	Relatives & friends of Ashberry family, RIP	Fr Fabian
9:30am Family	Fr Fabian	Special intention	Fr Duncan
11:00am Solemn	Fr Peter	Eileen Martinez, RIP	Fr Leon
12:30pm Old rite	Fr Thomas	Holy Souls	Fr Thomas
5:00pm Students	----	No Mass now until next term	----
7:00pm	Fr Duncan	<i>Pro populo</i>	Fr Peter

OTHER SUNDAY SERVICES	6:00pm Rosary	12 December	Confessions	19 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 Fabian

TIMES OF SERVICES OVER CHRISTMAS AND THE NEW YEAR. There are cards by the doors giving full details. Please take as many as you need, and please do not ring the Priory asking about service times...

Christmas Tree Star Appeal for Asylum Seekers & Refugees: The tree carries 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. Gifts need to be left before this Wednesday.

Entrance Antiphon:	Gaudete in Domino semper! Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice! The Lord is near.
1st Reading:	Zephaniah 3: 14-18
Psalm Response:	Shout, and sing for joy, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel. (Isaiah 12)
2nd Reading:	Philippians 4: 4-7
Alleluia:	<u>At 11:00</u> – O Lord, rouse up your might, O Lord, come to our help. <u>Otherwise</u> – The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; he has sent me to preach good news to the poor.
Gospel:	Luke 3: 10-18
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 £1103.71; SVP £33.26; Friends of Holy Cross £17.40; Holy Souls £27.97; Crib restoration £2.95. The McNabb Appeal fund stands at £4046.97. Last week's collection for new and poor parishes raised £322.04.

This week there is a retiring collection for Christmas flowers for the church.

200 Club. Last month's winners were: 150, C Johnson £150; 175, E Lubek £100; and 38, S Henry £50. Congratulations!

Very many thanks for your continuing generosity.

Short Advent Talks: Born as Priest. The popular annual series of talks takes place again this year after the 10am and 12.30pm Masses each Friday in Advent. This week, Fr Peter will speak on "Christ, the Eternal High Priest". We hope you will be able to stay for this talk.

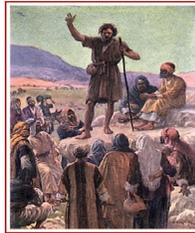
Parish Christmas Carol Party: Sunday December 20th, 7.30pm - 11.00pm in the Centre (bar open). Please bring a 'Christmassy' snack to share – perhaps a traditional food from your own culture. All are welcome, including children. No entrance fee or ticket required, just turn up. Feel free to sing or read something of your own choice, or just join in.

"Ringing the changes at Holy Cross". This is the headline of the latest issue of *The Black Friars*, Newsletter of the English Dominican Province. Get up to date with all the news by taking a copy as you leave the church.

CaFe (Catholic Evangelisation Services) Retreat Day 'Life to the full' will take place on Saturday 23 January at the Church of the Good Shepherd, Woodthorpe, Nottingham. Details from Pauline Payne on 288 0025.

'Much Ado about Christmas' – A Christmas Extravaganza! St Paul's School, Evington, are having a special free performance tomorrow, Monday, at 2pm for 'all older members of the congregation' (no minimum age specified!). More details from Katie Robertson on 241 4057 ex 211, or see noticeboard.

Refugee Action is an independent, national charity working to enable refugees to build new lives in the UK. They can now make referrals for food, clothing, household items and baby equipment to Open Hands Trust on Highfield Street. This organization offers tea, toast and friendship to anyone in need, as well as a free cafe and crafty time for women and some free evening meals. If you know of anyone who would benefit from these services, please contact Open Hands at 53 Upper Tichborne St (tel 255 8672). There are more details on the noticeboard in the Narthex at the back of the church.



Today's Gospel:
"No intimidation! No extortion! Be content with your pay!"

Please pray for our benefactors (mostly anonymous) who have donated or paid for the following items for the parish: bells, pulpit, statues of Ss Anne, George, Rita, Michael, & Anthony, sanctuary curtains, choir stalls, eight chasubles, mysteries of the rosary plaques, icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour, altar rails for Lady Chapel, repairs to altar crucifix, and Martyrs' shrine (yet to be built). Thanks to their generosity, all these items have not cost the parish a single penny, and the church looks far more beautiful and as it ought. Pray for their intentions and welfare please.

Year II	The week ahead...	Psalter Week 3
Monday:	St John of the Cross, priest, doctor	
Tuesday:	Feria	
Wednesday:	Feria	
Thursday:	Feria. <i>The weekdays of Advent from 17 to 24 December inclusive, called the 'Golden Nights', serve to prepare more directly for the Lord's birth, and they take precedence over the memorials of Saints.</i>	
Friday:	Feria	
Saturday:	Feria	
WEEKDAY MASS IN LATIN. This week, Mass in the older form will be celebrated on Monday to Friday at 8:30am, but the time on Wednesday is to be confirmed. All welcome, especially a server. If you would like to learn to serve this Mass, please contact Fr Thomas.		
Next Sunday – 4th Sunday of Advent. <i>Prayers are recommended for expectant mothers.</i> Readings:		
Micah 5: 1-4	Hebrews 10: 5-10	Luke 1: 39-44

A Set Dance Weekend will be held at St Patrick's Parish Centre, Beaumont Leys Lane, on Saturday 23 and Sunday 24 January. Details are on the noticeboard. There are weekly Irish Céilí and Set Dance sessions at St Patrick's on Sunday evenings and at Blessed Sacrament Parish Hall, Gooding Avenue, on Thursday evenings. Details are on the noticeboard.

National Pilgrimage to Fatima. This will take place from 9 to 16 July. See noticeboard.

Christmas Crib Figures. Many of you have asked about sponsoring one of the figures of our Christmas Crib, as they are being restored to their former glory. We list here a guide to what their restoration costs. **Almost £700 has already been collected to defray these costs, as well as a £500 grant from the Leicestershire Historic Churches Trust. The generosity of sponsors has given a further £1700.** The amount left to pay divided among the figures yields the following: ~~Christ Child – £200, Our Lady and St Joseph – £350 each, the three wise men Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar - £400 each, the three shepherds Asher, Zebulun, and Justus - £300 each, Aleph the ox, and Hamor the ass – £250 each.~~ If you wish to sponsor them, speak to any of the friars. Remember: Gift Aid it! Figures deleted have already been sponsored (thank you!).

Please join us in the Parish Hall after the 9:30am and 11:00am Sunday Masses for tea, coffee, fruit-juice etc. 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.

Noticeboards are situated in the New Walk and Wellington Street entrances and at the back of the church in the Narthex. If you don't see what you are looking for, please check the other boards.

REGULAR SERVICE TIMES
MONDAYS TO FRIDAYS 8.00 Lauds 10.00 Mass 12.30 Mass 17.45 Vespers Old Rite Masses as announced. Church is open from 8.00 - 18.00
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 (& MON TO FRI AROUND XMAS & NEW YEAR) 8.00 Lauds 12.30 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) 12.30 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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