

LIVING IN THE PAST?

WE accuse people sometimes, don't we?, of living in the past. When change threatens to overwhelm us, there's a temptation to pretend that things are as they have always been, to hold onto a world that is long gone. That's what we mean by living in the past.

It might seem that Christians do, in a very strong sense, live in the past. Our secular critics want to say we hold onto a religion which has had its day, and of course I don't think they're right in that. "Just a few days ago, we were talking in the kitchen about the nativity scene at the Town Hall, which of course already has its Christ-child in it. Fabian said, '(and that) he meant the birth of Jesus, hasn't happened yet-)

Well, the pedant in me wanted to point out to him that the birth of Jesus happened a very long time ago, and if I'd done that, I'd have been right in a rather trivial way and wrong in a deeper way. We Christians live our year by entering the Christian story, so for us, at this point in the story, it makes perfect sense to say of the birth of Christ that it hasn't happened yet. "It doesn't that mean we Christians are living in the past?

It seems to me that the very opposite is the case. Christians are people who are trying to live their lives with Christ. We are trying to conform ourselves to Christ, so that we can say with Paul, 'It is not I that live, but Christ who lives in me.) (and we know that Christ was not just a man of history. He was that, of course. He is the one who gives meaning to all history, and makes sense of all our human stories and histories.

The Jews, even before Jesus' birth, were being prepared by God for the coming of His son. Their law, their nation, their religion, their priests and their prophets all made sense in terms of the coming of the Christ. Their lives pointed forwards to the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Does that mean that if their lives pointed forwards, ours point backwards, to the life of Christ already lived out on earth? Yes and no. For us, the life of Christ on earth is central to our faith. The great events of our faith are historical. They actually happened, a long time ago. Part of our celebration of Christmas is a calling to mind and entering into these great events of the past, the coming of God into His Creation as a human being.

But Christ is not only of the past. There is an odd phrase in the book of Revelations, where John records the angels praising God saying, 'Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God (Mighty, who was, and is, and is to come.) Christ is for us a man of history, but he is also the Eternal God, who was, and is, and is to come. In trying to live with the life of Christ, our lives point backwards to the events in the life of Christ. They also point forward to the coming of Christ at the end of time, when God's love will finally triumph.

(and they're also rooted in the here and now. We look back to God's love in sending His son, we look forward to the final victory of love at the end of time, and we live that life of love in the present, making Christ present to those around us, bringing God's kingdom near.

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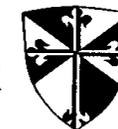
4th Sunday of Advent

Year A

19 December 2010

The Newsletter of HOLY CROSS PRIORY CHURCH, LEICESTER

Serving Leicester's Catholics since AD 1247



Entrance Antiphon:	Set the clouds rain down the just one, and the earth bring forth a saviour.
At 11am – page nos in Missale:	6The ordinary of the Mass, p 89 6. Sung setting: Mass ; II, p =8> Credo I, p =8? 6The Proper of the Mass, p >@A (Ima 4edemptoris, p=8B
1st Reading:	Isaiah C: 8D%8>
Psalm :	Let the Lord enter; he is the King of glory. */s =>,
2nd Reading:	4omans 8: 8%C
Alleluia:	"ehold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son and his name shall be called Emmanuel: God is with us.
Gospel:	7atthew 8: 8@%=?
Communion Antiphon:	The virgin is with child, and shall bear a son, and she will call him Emmanuel.
WEEKDAY MASS IN LATIN. In addition to the Masses listed in the schedule on p 9, Holy Mass will be offered in the older form from Monday to Saturday at 8am.	

CHRISTMAS SERVICES. Please take as many of the cards with service times as you need, and please do not ring the Priory to ask for this information. Thank you- Cards are by the doors.

TO HELP YOUR SPIRITUAL PREPARATION FOR THE COMING OF THE LORD we have:

Short Illustrated Advent Talks – The Nativity in Art. This is a series of talks given on Fridays after the 8am and 8.30pm Masses. **This Friday Fr Fabian will speak on "The Nativity in Different Cultures".**

Christmas Novena Masses. (As our immediate spiritual preparation prior to the solemnity of the birth of our Lord, we have specially themed Eucharistic Masses this week! *Except today, Eucharist as normal. The theme for the novena of Masses is: 'Come, Lord Jesus, dwell among us-' (We are invited to attend.

Thank you to everyone who has supported the work of the parish social committee this year, either by helping to run or by attending the events. Please look out for our programme for =D88 H you will soon be able to find us on the website.

PLEASE SUPPORT THE SVP IN THE SUDAN. In 8B@@ we opened a feeding centre which fed =9D babies every other day and the programme peaked at 8D,DDD babies a day for ? days a week. The centres are near camps for displaced people not far from Hartoum. (vast numbers of the population have been displaced because of unrest in the Sudan and Darfur. The SVP is running this programme and keeping babies alive and giving them hope for the future. It costs >D a year for each baby to provide nourishing food. Would you like to help? >D for a year's food, or >D for six months or >D for vocational training for = adults or >D for medical treatment for =D patients. If you would like to help please contact Bernard Sawcroft on b.hawcroft@Kntlworld.com or D88E =8D BDC or DCCC =?= ?>=C. We would love to hear from you-

MONEY MATTERS: Last Weekend's collections – Offertory Collection £1041.62; SVP £11.41; Friends of Holy Cross £14.87; Holy Souls £13.80; Grenada Church Restoration £13.55. The retiring collection for flowers to decorate the church over Christmas came to £283.44.

The Advent Mini-Food Fest raised £615.25. A very big thank-you to the organisers and all those parishioners who made it such a success. Usually we would have a retiring collection for those who were unable to attend, but we will refrain as we are now so near Christmas.

Very many thanks for your continuing generosity.

The Aquinas Institute at Blackfriars, Oxford. There will be a series of seminars on Thomas (Luinan and Contemporary Culture on Thursdays from =C +anuary to 9 7arch =D88. .ee noticeboards.

Child Protection. The M. /CC has a =>%hour helpline for use by anyone who is concerned about a child. .ee noticeboard, and there are small cards available by the doors with the number H D@d @DD ?DDD, or use helpKnsppcc.org.uk.

A Group of singers and musicians from the parishes of . t 7ary's, . outh Wigston and . t +ohn "osco, Eyres 7onsell, will be carol singing to **raise money for CAFOD** at (sda, &osse /ar!, **tomorrow**, 7onday =D 2ecember between Cpm and @.9Dpm. /lease go and support them-

Today's Gospel: "Joseph, do not fear to take Mary...she shall bear a son and you shall call him Jesus."

Red Cross Appeal for Refugees & Asylum Seekers. The full list of items needed to support these destitute and vulnerable people is:

Tinned goods: tomatoesN !idney beansN chic! peasN tunaN mac!ereIN corned beefN tinned fruitN tinned vegetablesN ba!ed beansN soupA

Dried foods: riceN mai0e mealN lentilsN cous cousN dried fruitN noodlesN sugarN porridgeN flourN pastaA

Long life goods: cool!ing oilN cereal barsN nutsN cerealN crispsN indian savoury miFN chocolateN biscuitsA

Drinks: fruit #uiceN teaN coffeeN drin!ing chocolateN dried mil!N long%life mil!N sLuashN water

Toiletries: toothpasteN toothbrushesN soapN toilet paperN shampooN sanitary towelsN face and body creamsN shaving eLuipmentA

Baby items: nappiesN baby wipesN oilN baby mil!N baby food #arsN baby bath liLuidA

Also: tin openersN cutleryN croc!eryN pansN towelsN sleeping bagsN t%shirtsN supermar!et and other shopping vouchersN mobile telephone top%up vouchersN writing paperN envelopesN stamps.

Please leave these items after any Mass. Thank you.

Are you keen to know what feasts are celebrated in this church for the coming year? The 2ominican rdo for the liturgical year =D8DN=D88 may be ordered from this website: <http://www.lulu.com/product/paperbac!Nop%ordo%=D88N89BBB?8D>. r you can download an electron t toEsc