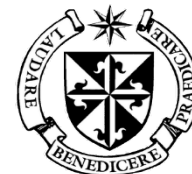


# HOLY CROSS PRIORY CHURCH



SUNDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2016

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT, YEAR A

· A ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISH · THE DOMINICAN PRESENCE IN LEICESTER SINCE 1247 ·

## FROM THE PRIOR'S DESK

*It has been nice this year to celebrate Advent in its fullness, something that only happens when Christmas Day falls on a Sunday. Advent is an important time for reflection, and our celebration of Christmas and the New Year is a chance for new beginnings. Before that, we should all use the opportunity at Christmas to reconnect with those who are important to us, and those who have touched our lives in a special way.*

*Our Advent Retreat and our Carol Service this weekend are lovely ways for us to do this as a Parish Community. We can do so much for one another in just small ways. Our daily interactions and our work in schools, the universities, the LRI and the prison really do make Christ's presence felt among us.*

*We are delighted to be welcoming +Patrick our Bishop to Holy Cross in January, to celebrate the conclusion of our 800 Jubilee Year. This is an occasion for us to look back with pride and thanksgiving, but also to look forward in hope, that the Spirit of the Risen Christ will be renewed in each of us, and we will faithfully and joyfully walk with St Dominic as pilgrims and preachers of grace, as we have so often prayed this year.*

*On behalf of all at Holy Cross, and Dominicans everywhere, may I wish you a happy and holy Christmas, and every blessing to your loved ones.*

Fr David

## 800<sup>TH</sup> JUBILEE – A CELEBRATION OF THANKSGIVING

**The actual 800<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Order falls on this Thursday**, and the final day of our Jubilee Year is 21 January, when the Holy Father will celebrate Mass at the Lateran Basilica in Rome. We are delighted that **+Patrick our Bishop** will join us for a **Mass of Thanksgiving for Dominican Life in our Diocese** on **Saturday 28 January 2017 at 12:30pm**. This will be an opportunity to give thanks for everything we have celebrated during this special year. Please save the date.

## CHRISTMAS ARRANGEMENTS FOR MASS

Please take the cards with our Christmas arrangements printed on them. Christmas Day is on Sunday, and the times of Mass are 6:30pm Vigil, 11pm Office of Readings, Midnight Mass, Mass 8am, 10:30am and 12 Noon (EF). No 7pm Mass. Mon-Fri there will only be Mass at 12:30pm. Please take note.



## NOTICE BOARD

### BAPTISM PREPARATION

If you wish to have your child baptised, please attend one of our baptism preparation sessions. The next is Sunday 5 February, after the 10:30am Mass in St Clement's Hall.

### FIRST HOLY COMMUNION CONFIRMATION

Forms for children and young people who wish to receive these sacraments in the new academic year (2016-17) are now in the Church. Please fill in and return.

### MARRIAGE PREPARATION

Couples who are preparing for the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony should make an appointment with the Parish Priest in the first instance.

### BECOMING CATHOLIC

Any adult who wishes to become a Catholic or receive Confirmation should join our RCIA programme, which begins in the Autumn Term.

### VISITING THE SICK

The Faithful who are sick and housebound can arrange a visit from a priest or special minister by calling 0116 252 1501.

### FAMILY VISITS

Families who would like a house blessing or a pastoral visit at home, can make arrangements by calling 0116 252 1501

## YOUNG PEOPLE'S PASTORAL COUNCIL – NATIVITY PLAY

*This is a new initiative, aimed at encouraging some of our young people to demonstrate their leadership skills within our community. They write: We have now cast most of the parts in our Nativity Play, and we are busy with rehearsals for the Nativity Play on Christmas Eve. There is still some time for other young people to get involved, so please come after the 10:30am Mass and find out how you can help. If you want to get in touch with us, please speak to Fr David. We would like to thank all the parents and other adults who are helping us to produce our play.*

## FR GREGORY MURPHY – A WORD OF THANKS

Fr Greg has received a special Christmas Hamper that we sent him, to welcome him to his new home. He has written to say that this has sorted his Christmas, and he hopes that all of us have a good Christmas also. He is now working from Our Lady of Sorrows Church, Finlarig Terrace, Dundee, DD4 9JF. Please continue to keep Fr Greg in your prayers.

## CATHOLICISM 101 – THANK YOU

***Our Thursday nights at Holy Cross won't be the same!*** Thanks to all who have helped make this evening series such a success. The sessions were lively and convivial, and they were a great way to welcome our new university students to our Parish and Chaplaincy Community. Many thanks to Fr Robert for this work.

## THINGS TO REMEMBER

- A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, followed by mulled wine and mince pies – This Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> December, 3.30pm. This will be a traditional carol service with all your favourites. A wonderful opportunity to bring your friends to Holy Cross.
- Our Sunday Holy Hour, 6-7pm – Rosary, Compline, Benediction.
- In the New Year – there will be a new Thursday evening course starting in late January for six weeks. More details in the New Year.
- Shared Service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity – 7pm at Leicester Cathedral, 25 January 2017. Organised by Churches Together.

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## THE DOMINICAN COMMUNITY

Fr David Rocks OP PP *Prior*; Fr Isidore Clarke OP; Fr Fabian Radcliffe OP;  
Fr Neil Ferguson OP; Fr Robert Gay OP CC *Subprior, Bursar*.

Office Administrator: *Mrs Rachael Powell* – [leicester.admin@english.op.org](mailto:leicester.admin@english.op.org)

Lay University Chaplain: *Mr George Ralph* – [george.ralph@english.op.org](mailto:george.ralph@english.op.org)

Director of Music: *Mr Thomas Keogh* – [thomas@thomaskeogh.co.uk](mailto:thomas@thomaskeogh.co.uk)

For the Office Administrator, please call 0116 252 1501

**Holy Cross Priory, 45 Wellington Street, LE1 6HW. Tel: 0116 252 1501**

For more details, visit: [www.holycrossleicester.org](http://www.holycrossleicester.org)

## MASS TIMES

### Sundays:

8am; 10:30am (sung);  
12:30pm (old rite);  
7pm

### Weekdays:

8am (old rite);  
12:30pm; 6:10pm

### Saturdays:

8am (old rite);  
10am; 12.30pm;  
*6:10pm Vigil Mass for  
Sunday*

## CONFESSION

### Saturdays:

10:30-11:30am  
5:00-6:00pm

## MONEY MATTERS

Last week's collections:

**£ 1,354.61**

(Gift aided: £ 430.50)

### Woodhouse Collection

**£ 131.84**

(Gift aided: £ 81.30)

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR  
CONTINUED SUPPORT!**



# THE SCRIPTURES THIS WEEK

## READINGS FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

### 1<sup>ST</sup> READING: ISAIAH 7:10-14

Biblical names often contain huge clues as to the character of the person who bears them. In this case, the maiden's son is to have the title, "Immanuel", "God-with-us". A very clear prophecy of the Incarnation. In the fullness of time, he is given the personal name "Jesus", which means "God saves".

### 2<sup>ND</sup> READING: ROMANS 1:1-7

Here St Paul preaches the full humanity and the divinity of Christ. From this flows his apostolic mission and that apostolic mission has been continued down through the centuries in the Church. Here we can also see that Rome is already coming to the fore as the earthly centre of Christianity.

### GOSPEL READING: MATTHEW 1:18-24

Here St Matthew links up the prophecy of Isaiah with the birth of Christ. The Annunciation to St Joseph emphasises his character as a just man who is to be set over the little household of God; Jesus, Mary and Joseph. We invoke his prayers for all men, fathers, and for the well-being of God's great household, which is the Church.

### EPISTLE: PHILIPPIANS 4:1-5

St Paul gives a concise definition of the role of the apostles, and by extension all those called to the priesthood, and to all Christians in general. "Stewards of the Mysteries of God." We are given the Sacraments and doctrine of the Church in stewardship, not to do with as we please. It is this stewardship which will be examined at the end of time.

### GOSPEL: LUKE 3:1-6

St Luke is very careful to the place the appearance of our Lord in public at a very specific time, just as he does for the nativity of the Lord. The Incarnation is the central event in human history until the Second Coming of Christ, when the creation will be consummated and the final resurrection comes to pass.

## NEXT SUNDAY –

### THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD (CHRISTMAS DAY) (YEAR A)

*Prayer is a surge of the heart, it is a simple look towards Heaven, it is a cry of recognition and of love, embracing both trial and joy.*

St Therese of Lisieux

Pope Francis:

***Amoris Laetitia:***

*Apostolic Exhortation on the Family*

"God's indulgent love always accompanies our human journey; through grace, it heals and transforms hardened hearts, leading them back to the beginning through the way of the cross."

# THE WORD AT WORK: OUR WEEKLY REFLECTION

## 4TH WEEK OF ADVENT – THE COMING OF OUR GOD

*During the Season of Advent, Fr Fabian reflects on the meaning of this special time, and the readings we hear at Mass.*

On Christmas Eve, half an hour before our Midnight Mass starts, we have a service of readings and carols in this Church, to lead us into the Christmas celebrations. This service begins with what is called the Christmas Praeconium, an ancient chant, sung by one cantor, telling of the moment in history when our Saviour was born. First, it gives the date of the birth of Christ, counting from the creation of the world according to the Biblical dating. Then it gives the date of Christmas counting from important Biblical events: from the Flood, from the birth of Abraham, from the Exodus, from the anointing of David as King, and from the prophecy of Daniel. Then it gives the date of his birth in relation to civil events: how long it has been since the first Greek Olympiad, how long since the founding of the city of Rome; and how long since the accession of the reigning Roman Emperor, Octavian Augustus. And finally, it reaches its climax: 'In the sixth age of the world, when the whole world was at peace, Jesus Christ, eternal God and Son of the eternal Father ... was born at Bethlehem in Judah, of the Virgin Mary'.

It is a dramatic moment, made more dramatic by the singer raising the pitch by a fifth for the final words, describing the actual birth of Jesus. It is a memorable start to our annual celebration of Christmas.

Because the words of this chant are very ancient, some of the dates are no longer accepted. For example, we now think that the world began much more than 5,199 years before the birth of Christ. But precise dating is not important. What is being said is that the birth of Jesus was a real happening. Christmas does not simply commemorate a virtue or value or gift – like the Hindu 'Diwali', the 'festival of light'. The birth of Jesus was a real human birth, which took place in the real material world, which it shares with other historical events such as those mentioned, the ancient Greek Olympic Games, and the founding of the city of Rome. Moreover, in contrast to much earlier history, it was a time of peace, not perhaps of total absence of conflict everywhere, but certainly a time when the Roman Emperor Augustus no longer had rivals; so, the Roman Empire was at peace within itself and in its relations with the rest of the world. It was appropriate that the Prince of Peace should be born into a peaceful world.

In contrast, our present-day society tends to reduce Christmas to fanciful stories, not recognising it as an historical event. For example, Santa Claus, Rudolf the Red-Nosed Reindeer, and the Twelve Days of Christmas, feature very obviously in current Christmas decorations, Christmas Cards and so on. But no one really thinks that these are, or were, real people, animals or events – even though Santa Claus is based on the very real Saint Nicholas, who is celebrated on 6 December. So, it is good to see that the Christmas Crib continues to be well displayed in Leicester's Town Hall Square. You could hardly have a more vivid statement that Christmas is about something that really happened.

But of course, though the birth of Christ was an historical event, it was quite unlike any other historical event. First, it was unique. God could only become man once. Second, could there be any other happening which brought together God and his creatures so closely as this? Could there be any other event which affirmed so clearly the value of the material creation and of human beings within it? Could there be any other way in which we can learn so much about God himself – his love, his compassion, his mercy, his power and his wisdom?

These may be some of the thoughts that fill our hearts and minds when we celebrate Christmas this year, when we kneel before the crib, when we pray that Jesus will make his home with us and bring peace, mercy and holiness into our lives and into his world, the world he came into, to bring it his peace.'

*Fr Fabian Radcliffe OP*

### ***The Jubilee Prayer***

God, Father of mercy, who called your servant St Dominic 800 years ago, to found the Order of Preachers in the service of your Gospel, renew within the Church as we celebrate this Jubilee the Spirit of the Risen Christ, that we might faithfully and joyfully walk with St. Dominic as pilgrims and preachers of grace. Through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.