



HOLY CROSS PRIORY CHURCH

SUNDAY 10TH DECEMBER 2017

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT

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

A WORD FROM THE PRIOR ...

Are you a person of recollection? That might mean have you got a good memory. Can you recall many things from the past, and feel the same feelings again? Do stories from long ago still make you shudder, or make you smile?

Or could that question be understood in a different way? Are you someone who has "got your stuff together"? Do you have some sort of grasp on the different aspects in your life, and a certain degree of self knowledge? Are you someone who recognises that the biggest "room" is always "room for improvement"?

The Second Sunday of Advent is always our Advent Weekend of Recollection here at Holy Cross. Coming as it does just after the busy time of preparation for the Advent Market, it's a weekend when we can take stock. In being part of this community of recollection this weekend, each of us has an opportunity to recognise two distinct aspects of our lives – both how good God has been to us in times past, even during times of struggle; and how much we are dependent on his grace to grow ever closer to him in this holy season, and on our journey through life.

So a quiet weekend, and a quiet week ahead. Time and space to think things through. There's still time ahead for festive preparation, announced as it is by Gaudete Sunday next week. And we all need the rest from things – our achievement at the Advent Market was astounding, once again.

Be intent on prayer, and whatever may happen will turn to our good.

Fr David

ADVENT MARKET – THANK YOU – A HUGE SUCCESS

The last few weeks have been busy with all the build-up and preparations. We were so pleased to learn that the total for the Advent Market came to £5,876.30. That is a huge achievement, and we hope and pray that the Holy Spirit will guide us in putting those funds to good use. **Over the last four years, we have raised almost £40,000 through the Advent and Blackfriars Market.** This has had a huge impact on our ability to transform and repair our aging buildings. We still have a long way to go, but we're achieving it together. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass will be offered for the intentions of our friends and benefactors for the Advent Market.

HOLY CROSS CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE – 17 DECEMBER @ 4:30PM

We invite you to join us for this special Carol Service just before Christmas. It is an opportunity to bring your friends to church, and to welcome people who might not be frequent visitors to our beautiful church. Please wear Christmas jumpers, and afterwards there will be wine and mince pies.

CHRISTMAS ARRANGEMENTS AT HOLY CROSS

Details are now available for all our Christmas Masses, etc. On Christmas Eve, 6:15pm Mass includes a children's nativity play. If you would like your children to be involved, please contact the office here at Holy Cross.

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 November after the 10:30am Mass in St Clement's Hall.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION CONFIRMATION

Please get in touch with the Priory Office if members of your family wish to celebrate these sacraments.

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

PARISH SOCIAL EVENTS

Social Group;

Every Tuesday: 6.30-8.00pm in St. Clement's Hall - a chance to de-stress and chat, with a bite to eat and drink; fun-bingo. Spread the word...

Please keep Tuesday Dec 19 free from 6.30pm so that you can join us for the 'Advent to Christmas' Social in St. Clement's Hall. Entry is free; we will enjoy some refreshments (including some mulled wine and seasonal treats) and there will be plenty of music to listen to and join in with if you wish. More detail from hcross.social@gmail.com

CHURCH LIGHTING – PROJECT PLANS

We have commissioned Mealey Electrical Contractors Ltd to install a new lighting system in the church, at a cost of £65,000. We are grateful for the generosity of so many of you that enables us to do this. Appropriate light fittings have been sourced and ordered, which will mean that installation will commence on 8 January 2018, and in plenty of time for the Diamond Jubilee of our Dedication in May of next year. During the works, there will be minimal disruption to our regular pattern of Masses and services. Many thanks for your co-operation, and for your ongoing generosity, which has enabled the project to take place..

OUR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Leicester Catholic Students – bringing together Catholic students from Leicester and De Montfort Universities. It's been a wonderful first term at both our universities, and we are really pleased to have met so many students, who are involving themselves in the life of our community. We wish you every blessing of the Christmas season as you return to your families.

DOMINICAN COMMUNITY

Last Friday we wished a happy 40th birthday to Fr Robert. This week, we welcome Br Luke Doherty, leading our Advent reflections, and Br Joseph Bailham, with us for a couple of days. Fr David Goodill also makes a brief and welcome return.

DOMINICAN PROVINCE DAY – SATURDAY 16 DECEMBER

This Saturday, the Dominican Province Day will be held here in Leicester. The Dominicans will gather from across England and Scotland to discuss their mission and development. Do come and join us for Vespers at 3:30pm. It is a real privilege for us to host all the Dominicans from our Province in Leicester for a second year running.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Our Holy Hour, each Sunday at 6pm
- Carol Service, next Sunday at 4:30pm. Mince pies afterwards. Come along, wear Christmas jumpers, and bring your friends.

THE DOMINICAN COMMUNITY

Fr David Rocks OP PP *Prior*; Fr Isidore Clarke OP; Fr Fabian Radcliffe OP;
Fr Tony Rattigan OP *Bursar*; Fr Robert Gay OP CC *Subprior*; Fr Matthew Jarvis OP

Office Administrator: *Mrs Rachael Powell* – leicester.admin@english.op.org

Lay University Chaplain: *Mr George Ralph* – george.ralph@english.op.org

Director of Music: *Mr Thomas Keogh* – 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

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:

£ 1,273.18

(Gift aided: £416.00)

Woodhouse Collection

£179.00

(Gift aided: £75.00)

*THANK YOU FOR YOUR
CONTINUED SUPPORT!*

THE SCRIPTURES THIS WEEK

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT

1ST READING: ISAIAH 40:1-5,9-11

In order the first years of exile in Babylon were difficult but, as a result, the Israelites adapted to their new condition and many were able to reach even prestigious social positions. After forty years a prophet arose. He was an enlightened man, a sensitive poet, a brilliant theologian. He attentively followed the political events of his time. He realized that the kingdom of Babylon was crumbling, while the power of Cyrus, king of Persia, was dramatically growing. It was time to awaken in the exiles the hope of slavery's end and the imminent return to the fatherland. He began to circulate among the captives his insights, his predictions and hopes. So as not to arouse suspicions of the Babylonians authorities, who could accuse him of being a subversive, he made use of an encrypted language. He used images that only the children of his people were able to understand. He announced the upcoming release from the Babylonian slavery referring to the miracles that occurred during the exodus from Egypt and promising even greater prodigies.

2ND READING: 2 PETER 3:8-14

The early Christians were convinced that the Lord Jesus would soon change the world. However, after a few tens of years, they realized that their hopes were dashed. They began to wonder of the delay and the first doubts arose about God's faithfulness to his promises. The unbelievers mocked their expectations and asked mockingly, "What has become of his promised coming? Since our fathers in faith died, everything still goes on as it was from the beginning" (2 Pt 3:4). To these struggling Christians a pastor of souls, who lived in the second half of the first century A.D., addresses a word of encouragement. He explains the reasons for the delay of the coming of the Lord.

GOSPEL: MARK 1:1-8

We "This is the beginning of the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (v. 1). A verse that seems useless: what was the need to recognize the fact that we are in the first line of the gospel? Instead, it is an introductory sentence carefully composed by Mark. With the first word of his book he wanted to draw his readers' attention to the beginning of the book of Genesis: "In the beginning when God began to create the heavens and the earth." "The world, which came out good from the hand of God, was then corrupted. The Israelites, for centuries, were waiting for God to fulfill his promise: "I now create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things will not be remembered" (Is 65:17).

NEXT SUNDAY – THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT - (YEAR B)

"The splendour of the rose and the whiteness of the lily do not rob the little violet of its scent nor the daisy of its simple charm. If every tiny flower wanted to be a rose, spring would lose its loveliness."

-
St Therese of Lisieux

"There is no surer means of calling down God's blessing upon the family than the daily recitation of the Rosary."

Pope Pius XII

THE WORD AT WORK: OUR WEEKLY REFLECTION

MEETING IN THE WILDERNESS

Fr Benedict Jonak ponders the wilderness and loneliness of the human heart.

"Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way; the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight."

Why does the Lord sent his prophet to cry in the wilderness? Is there anyone to hear him there? Would there not be more listeners if he wandered round cities and villages?

I am not quite sure what kind of wilderness John the Baptist frequented, for it is he who announced the presence of Christ among the people, and whether there were people there or not, but to consider the wilderness in itself as a place when we meet God seems to me a helpful way into this Advent Gospel.

Our understanding of the wilderness tends to be either romantic: influenced perhaps by the stories of travelers across the middle eastern deserts such as Lawrence of Arabia; or magical – we see the desert as an other-worldly place where strange things might happen like in F. Herbert's *Dune*. Or, lastly, heroic, that is to say, we see the wilderness as a place where man is alone and faces the hostile world alone. The wilderness is a place that tests what we are really made of, an obstacle course that either makes you or breaks you.

You might object, saying that you certainly had not attempted to overcome the world. But if it is not so much the world in its totality that you try to shoulder as it is, perhaps, the weight of human nature – your very own – which might feel like a burden already too great. And so you feel like an anonymous hero – because to be a hero is to be on your own, quietly carrying your burden. Perhaps you tried to cry out, but no one listens, as people are not interested to hear. You are truly in the most cruel of wildernesses: surrounded by plenty of people but nevertheless very lonely.

Whichever wilderness you face, whether with people around you or without, the Lord is proclaiming today his glorious entry into that very world. In the liturgy of our Order (before the reforms of the mid-16th century), like in many other ancient catholic rites, Advent began with a reading of Christ's glorious entry into the holy city, Jerusalem – that very same reading that we have on Palm Sunday. "Prepare the way for the Lord!" and "Hosanna to the Son of David!": the two definitely go together, and they point out the most important two things about the wilderness, whether it is populated or not.

The first is that the Lord is there. The purple robes of the king who rides into Jerusalem are already recognizable in the royal purple of Advent. The Lord is present here already! The wilderness is a place of meeting with the Lord, not a place designed to crush you. The Day of the Lord, the Parousia - will reveal the fullness of his presence to us in his glorified and risen body, but he is present to us in the Holy Spirit already. He is alive and reigning!

The second is that you have to engage with the wilderness, such as was given to you. Do not just watch it, as if from the outside, as in a theatre. "What did you go out into the wilderness to behold? A reed shaken by the wind? Why then did you go out?" If you went out to contemplate your strengths or to wallow in your weaknesses, remember that this is not the main point of the wilderness. What is at the heart of it is that you are in fact not alone, whether weak or strong – the Lord is with you. You go out into the wilderness then so that he may enter in and meet with you. The Key of David, Root of Jesse, Emmanuel – our Rising Sun – has already illumined the darkness and the loneliness of all wildernesses, including that of the human heart.