

Little Saint Mary's, Cambridge
NEWSLETTER

December 2012: No. 449
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Advent: Christ comes

at the end of time and as a babe in the manger

Highlights of December

Tuesday 4th, Tuesday 11th & Tuesday 18th December

'Waiting on God' Advent Group

7.30-8.30pm Learn about and experience silent prayer

Wednesday 5th December

First Wednesday Fellowship Group

10am Mass followed by coffee & visit to the Fitzwilliam Museum

Saturday 8th December

Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

10am Sung Mass

Wednesday 12th December

Healing Mass

9.45am Prayers; 10am Mass *with laying-on of hands & anointing*

Sunday 9th December

Advent II

10.30am Preacher at High Mass: Fr John Hughes, *Dean of Jesus College*

Sunday 16th December

Advent III

10.30am Preacher at High Mass: Fr Stephen Stavrou, *Assistant Priest, S. Michael & All Angels, London W4*

6pm **Advent Carol Service** *followed by mulled wine and mince pies*

Monday 24th December

Christmas Eve

5pm Christmas Carols & Readings by candlelight for families

11.30pm Midnight Mass

Tuesday 25th December

Christmas Day

8am Low Mass, 10.30am High Mass, 6pm Evensong & Benediction

Wednesday 26th, Thursday 27th & Friday 28th December

S. Stephen, Protomartyr, S. John the Evangelist, the Holy Innocents

10am Low Mass

From the Vicar

Dear Brothers & Sisters,

Elsewhere in this newsletter there is a page reflecting on General Synod's decision not to accept the present legislation on women bishops. More extraordinary than the decision itself, however, is the reaction to the decision. That people in favour (and even opposed, but wanting to see it settled) should be dismayed is entirely understandable. That the reaction in the press, parliament and social media should be so hysterical (I can think of no better word) is genuinely amazing, however.

I wonder why this is? Partly it must surely be because news organisations' only mode of operation is for everything to be a great row and everyone to be in crisis, and if they are not then it isn't news. Certainly, situations are exaggerated and disagreements amplified by the media. Secondly, the possibility with Twitter, Facebook &c., for instant comment and response means that initial reactions have no time to subside or become more proportionate with the benefit of time and reflection. The kind of thing one may say at first is not always what one would broadcast as one's final analysis. Part of the problem therefore is to do with the immediacy of modern living.

Another, perhaps more profound factor, however, is that contemporary society cannot comprehend any other way of thinking about equality than sameness. To be equal means we must all be able to do and be the same things. Obviously in many ways this is correct: women and men being paid the same for the same work, having the same rights in the eyes of the law, equal treatment in marriage, property, not being expected that one will give up their career or plans for another simply on the basis of their gender and so on.

All this is indisputably good. Yet the reasoning behind much 'equality' thinking is unclear. For a secular society equality is actually not that obvious: it is not obvious that the rich and poor, the powerful and weak, the beautiful and ugly are equal. Many 20th-century ideologies indeed were predicated on the reverse, such as eugenics or Nazism. Yet equality is – quite correctly – one of the foundations of modern life; while at the same time it isn't always clear to people why they are equal and what equality means. The only way equality seems to be understood is if everything is the same.

For Christians the notion of equality is rooted in our being made in God's image and being equally loved by Him: we are equal not because of what we do or merit or because an Act of Parliament declares it to be so, but because that is how God has ordered creation and that is what He tells us.

The question is whether this God-given equality means a similar sameness to secular equality. For gay persons to be equal to straight persons do they need to be able to marry, for example? Or is there a different description for a gay relationship which is not inferior to marriage, but is different because marriage generally involves children and the symbolism of male and female is

theologically significant? Equally, is it possible for men and women to be equal in the life of the Church – as they are by virtue of being made in God’s image and sharing equally in baptism – without their needing to do the same things (e.g. ordination)?

These are complicated questions to which there are no easy answers. The extremely strong reaction to Tuesday’s vote, however, suggests a society with only one understanding of equality and which is not very good at dealing with questions that are posed to it. It may well be that society’s notion of equality is the right one, but other ideas are not wicked or moronic and deserve to be taken just a little more seriously than the reaction to the events of Tuesday 20th suggests.

Perhaps even more concerning is what happens when the Church and society really collide. To date our disagreements have been small and even this present issue is one that sets the Church against herself as much as society. Yet debates on schooling or the beginning and end of life, say, are ones where Christians and contemporary culture do not see eye to eye and they are coming soon to a society near you. If the Church of England copes as badly with these disputes as she seems to have coped with the present one, there is much for us to be afraid of. Advent, a time of attentive waiting on the Lord and consciousness of coming judgement, perhaps cannot come soon enough.

With my love & prayers,

Fr Robert.

Reflections on the Mass - I

In what way is the Eucharist a Sacrifice?

The Mass is the Sacrifice of the New Covenant in which Christ, through the ministry of the priest, offers Himself to God in an unbloody manner under the forms of bread and wine. A sacrifice is something we offer over and give up to something or someone. Just as we might sacrifice some time to something or our lives for someone, so in the Mass we offer to God the one perfect thing worth offering Him – Himself, Jesus Christ. As far back as human history is recorded, men and women have offered sacrifices to God as a way of adoring and thanking their Creator. Before the coming of Christ, sacrifices were offered in many different ways. The Jews (at God's command) offered fruits, wine, or animals. Cain, for example, offered fruits; Abel offered some of his sheep; bread and wine were offered by Melchisedech. The destruction of these offerings removed them from human use and so showed both that God is supreme and our dependence on Him. All these different sacrifices of the Old Covenant were only types or figures of the sacrifice which Christ was to make of Himself. His offering of Himself on the cross was the greatest sacrifice ever offered to God.

So what's the difference between the sacrifice of the cross and the sacrifice of the Mass? On the cross Christ Himself physically shed His own blood and was physically slain, while in the Mass He offers Himself through the priest and there is no physical shedding of blood nor physical death, because Christ can die no more; on the cross Christ gained merit and satisfied for us, while in the Mass He applies to us the merits and satisfaction of His death on the cross. Our Reformers in the 16th century opposed erroneous and unbiblical understandings of the Mass in which each Mass is a separate sacrifice, sacrificing Jesus on the cross again; so Article 31 of the 39 Articles warns vividly that 'the sacrifices of Masses' are 'blasphemous...dangerous deceits'. Our liturgy is full of references to this, as each Sunday we 'with this bread and this cup...make the memorial of Christ Thy Son our Lord' asking God to 'accept through Him, our great high priest, this our sacrifice of thanks and praise' before offering our own 'souls and bodies to be a living sacrifice'. Not only do we receive Jesus' Body and Blood in Holy Communion but we are sharers in that great offering of love to the Father whereby heaven and earth are reunited and the kingdom of heaven is opened to all.

New Mass Times

Previously wanted to come to Mass but found the times inconvenient?

From 3rd December there are new Mass times to try...

Do you want to come early before work and offer the day to God?

Join us on **Tuesdays & Thursdays** at **7.45am**

Do you want to come mid-morning and have coffee afterwards?

Join us on **Wednesdays & Saturdays** at **10am**

Do you want to escape from work & re-focus your day on God during the lunch hour?

Join us on **Mondays & Fridays** at **12.30pm**

Do you want to offer the past day and your work to God & 'top up' in the middle of the week?

Join us on **Wednesdays** at **7pm**

Mass during the week is a brief (less than 30 minutes), quiet and reflective time to bring all our lives into God's loving presence and receive food for the journey, keeping us going on our Christian pilgrimage between Sundays. Services take place in the varied and beautiful spaces of the Lady Chapel, the Crypt or the High Altar.

Advent is a great time to re-commit to worshipping God between Sundays and deepen our spiritual lives.

This and the next few newsletters will contain reflections on the Mass to help us make more of our time at the Eucharist

Daily Intentions & Anniversaries of death for December

Bishop Justin Welby	<i>Douglas Bird, Brian Jordan</i>	1 st
The Parish	<i>Anthony Morcom, Pr.</i>	2 nd
Missionaries		3 rd
Deacons in the Church of England	<i>Romo Gorrada</i>	4 th
Increase in local charity	<i>Michael Fisher SSF, Bp</i>	5 th
Children		6 th
School chaplains	<i>Michael Barnard</i>	7 th
Increase in devotion to Our Lady		8 th
The Parish	<i>Cyril Hankey, Pr., Charles Goodhart</i>	9 th
The homeless		10 th
Diocese of Ely		11 th
Victims of famine		12 th
Local Government	<i>Glyn Daniel, Dennis Peck</i>	13 th
Increase in priestly vocations		14 th
Westcott House	<i>Gladys Stockbridge</i>	15 th
The Parish		16 th
The poor	<i>Jack Grist</i>	17 th
Those who mourn		18 th
A good keeping of Advent	<i>David Eric Lawson</i>	19 th
Local businesses	<i>Yvonne Mashedor</i>	20 th
Christian unity		21 st
Christians in China		22 nd
The Parish	<i>Ruth Wheatley</i>	23 rd
Peace in Jerusalem		24 th
The Parish and the World		
<i>Andrew Kennedy, Nelson Bleackley</i>		25 th
Christian Martyrs		26 th
Christian-Jewish relations	<i>Muriel Ellis, Leonard Beard</i>	27 th
Protection of the unborn		28 th
Those suffering under tyranny		
<i>Leonard Askham, Pr., Peter Walker, Bp</i>		29 th
The Parish		30 th
Christian revival	<i>Muriel Brittain</i>	31 st



The Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

*Almighty and everlasting God,
who didst stoop to raise fallen humanity
through the child-bearing of blessed Mary:
grant that we, who have seen Thy glory
revealed in our human nature
and Thy love made perfect in our weakness,
may daily be renewed in Thy image
and conformed to the pattern of Thy Son
Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen*

This festival in honour of Our Lady's conception is celebrated on this day in both the eastern and the western Church. This feast, which dates from the seventh century, acknowledges the preparation by God of His people to receive their Saviour and Lord, putting 'heaven in ordinary' and showing that mortal flesh can indeed bring Christ to the world.

For Roman Catholics it is the *Immaculate* Conception – the idea that Mary was without original sin from the moment of her conception. This feast and doctrine developed first in the Anglo-Saxon England of the early 11th century and was attacked by the Normans as not being a feast celebrated in Rome and therefore one that shouldn't be celebrated elsewhere. Ironically, today the reverse pertains: it is of universal obligation in the Roman Catholic Church but is not celebrated by the Church of England.

What does it mean? The doctrine claims that in order for Mary to conceive our Lord without sin, she had to be conceived without original sin; therefore she received the grace of baptism in advance of Christ's death and resurrection. In a joint statement in 2005 the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church agreed that 'in view of her vocation to be the Mother of the Holy One, Christ's redeeming work reached 'back' in Mary to the depths of her being and to her earliest beginnings'. What the Church of England continues to question, however, is whether such a complicated and precise definition is needed, whether it tends to remove our Lady from the realm of humanity and why such a definition should be declared to be an infallible dogma that all faithful Christians must believe, as Rome has made it.



Calendar and Intentions

for

December 2012

*The list of Thanksgivings and Intercessions offers a focus
for our daily prayer, both at the Offices and Mass,
and in our personal times of prayer.*

*The Vicar would be glad of suggestions
for additions to the list of daily intentions.*

Calendar for December

Sat. 1st S. Eligius, Bishop

SUN. 2nd ADVENT I

Mon. 3rd S. Francis Xavier, Priest

Tue. 4th *Nicholas Ferrar, Deacon*

Wed. 5th

Thu. 6th S. Nicholas, Bishop

Fri. 7th S. Ambrose, Bishop

Sat. 8th **Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary:** SM 10.00am

SUN. 9th ADVENT II

Mon. 10th

Tue. 11th

Wed. 12th S. Jane Frances de Chantal, Ember Day

Thu. 13th S. Lucy, Virgin & Martyr, Ember Day

Fri. 14th S. John of the Cross, Priest

Sat. 15th Ember day

SUN. 16th ADVENT III

Mon. 17th

Tue. 18th

Wed. 19th

Thu. 20th

Fri. 21st **S. Thomas, Apostle:** LM, 12.30pm; SM, 7.00pm

Sat. 22nd

SUN. 23rd ADVENT IV

Mon. 24th Christmas Eve: Candlelight Service 5pm; Midnight Mass 11.30pm

Tue. 25th CHRISTMAS DAY: LM, 8.00am; HM, 10.30am

Wed. 26th **S. Stephen, Deacon & Martyr:** LM, 10.00am

Thu. 27th **S. John, Apostle & Evangelist:** LM, 10.00am

Fri. 28th **The Holy Innocents:** LM, 10.00am

Sat. 29th S. Thomas Becket, Bishop & Martyr: LM, 10.00am

SUN. 30th FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS

Mon. 31st in the Octave of Christmas. *John Wyclif:* LM, 10.00am

Women Bishops - some reflections

This newsletter went to press in the wake of the decision of the General Synod of the Church of England not to proceed with the proposed legislation to ordain women as Bishops. It's probably worth making clear a few things which the secular media seem to have misunderstood:

1. The Church did not reject women bishops (this has been agreed for some years now) but rather the precise legislation to make it happen. It will certainly happen within the next five years - which in Christian history is not a long time.
2. In making such a major decision it is only right that a high level of consent (two thirds of each synodal house) is required. The Church is the Body of Christ, not the House of Commons, and seeks the highest level of consensus in her life, knowing the importance of unity given that Our Lord prayed for it on the night before He died. Approval of legislation in the Diocesan Synods is no requirement that General Synod pass it; the voting difference between the two is largely because opponents of the legislation focused their attention on standing in General rather than Diocesan Synod elections.
3. The legislation was defeated not just by conservative lay people but by liberal lay folk too, who voted against it on the grounds that it gave too much to traditionalists rather than too little.

Regardless of one's view on the ordination of women (and LSM's congregation contains a wide variety of views) it is important for Anglicans of whatever stripe to be clear that being a national church is not about reflecting the views and values of the nation (*contra* the views of some MPs) but about being a Christianising influence on the country and having a parish system so that all people can avail themselves of baptism, marriage and a funeral. The ordination of women is right if it makes sense in terms of Christian revelation, not because society tells us it is. Certainly the Church is taught by the Holy Spirit from outside her own bounds and much of the developments of the last hundred years are ones with which the Church has been lamentably slow to catch up, but not all of them are ones with which we ought to catch up - contemporary society has plenty about it that Christians should deplore.

Let us pray fervently then that the Church may make both proper provision for women to be admitted to the episcopate and also proper provision for those who cannot (for reasons that must be theological not misogynistic) accept this development. Thy will be done, Lord.

Little S. Mary's Mission Work

There are various places and projects that appear regularly in prayers in church, which we might be aware of without ever knowing who they are or why we support them. So each month I hope to give you just a little information about those places and groups we support so that our prayers can be just a wee bit more informed. This month:

The Prison Fellowship's 'Angel Tree' Project

Angel Tree supports prisoners in their family relationships by providing a way for them to give Christmas presents to their children. Local Prison Fellowship volunteers raise funds and work with churches and prison chaplains to buy and deliver the presents. As long as they are allowed access to their children, prisoners are given the opportunity to apply for a gift to be sent to them. Their volunteers then coordinate the fundraising, purchasing of gifts, wrapping and delivery. Each gift is sent as though it is from the parent in prison who is also able to write a personal message to their child. If the parent wishes, a Christian story book is also sent.

They have also launched an Angel Tree Mother's Day programme, where their volunteers enable Young Offenders to send their Mum a card and gift on Mother's Day. Last year they sent 643 gifts to mothers of young offenders. They also run Angel Tree through the year at prison 'Family Days'. This allows parents to give gifts to their children as part of a day spent with them, and is always really appreciated

Why do they do it?

There are around 200,000 children in England & Wales with a parent in prison. One in 15 children will experience their father's imprisonment before they leave school. Angel Tree is a very simple and incredibly rewarding way to help prisoners keep contact with their families, which is not only compassionate but has been shown to reduce reoffending. Family contact during imprisonment can drastically reduce reoffending rates. Those prisoners being visited by a family member have a 52% reoffending rate as compared to 70% for those who do not. 'I was in prison and you visited me,' says Jesus. LSM is committed to supporting this project through our Friday Charity lunches.

Next month: The Calcutta Cathedral Relief Service

LSM's Response to Poverty

Patricia Pires Boulhosa writes:

As our Michaelmas series of lectures on Christian Responses to Poverty comes to an end, I would like, on behalf of the Social Responsibility Group, to thank all those who have participated and attended.

The lectures were a great opportunity for us to reflect on the poverty we encounter on our own doorstep and how, as Christians, we respond to it.

It was also an opportunity to discover in more detail the work of two local charities, Jimmy's and Cambridge City Foodbank. We have been humbled and inspired by the work of their volunteers. Their challenges are enormous but not insurmountable and there is a lot we can do to help them -- watch out for the forthcoming notices on how to donate food and clothes and participate in some hands-on volunteering.

Families First

Families First is Britain's best-selling Christian magazine and suitable for all ages. It is a bi-monthly lifestyle magazine from the Mothers' Union for people who care about families and who want to support families in their community. Practical features tackle real life issues about making marriages loving and lasting, good parenting, and putting Christian faith into action locally and globally. The current issue contains varied articles from "n times of Trouble" by Caroline White, wife of the Vicar of Baghdad, and "Sing yourself happy" by Michelle Guinness, to "Making Gifts Special" by Ruth Valerio. Contributors include Adrian Plass, Clive Price and Andrew Wooding.

Families First is extremely good value at only £2.50. It has been available previously only through subscription but now in its fifth year it can be obtained in Cambridge at WH Smith in Market Street and at Antoncroft in Cherry Hinton Road. For more info see www.familiesfirstmagazine.com

Advent is here and Christmas is coming...

Jo Wibberley writes:

There will be a **Sale** of unwanted gifts, Christmas cards, produce and preserves on **Sunday 2nd December** in the Parish Centre after High Mass. Gifts for the stall will be welcome.

Christmas cards are now on sale at 60p each, £2.75 for 5 or £5 for 10. They will be available after High Mass on Sundays or to order by signing the form on the table at the back of the church.

Calendars for 2013 will be available from Advent Sunday (2nd December), priced at £5, with details of feasts and fasts over the coming year, some beautiful pictures of the church and space to enter your own information.

Plus some information from our friends at
S. Giles' Church
(on the corner of Chesterton Lane and Castle Street):

Christmas Tree Festival **Sat 1st - Sun 9th December**

Cambridge's only Christmas Tree Festival - 24 real trees imaginatively decorated by local schools, shops & businesses. Seasonal refreshments!

1st December, 2-5pm Scandinavian Wreath Binding Workshop
6pm Blessing of Trees, Concert & Tea
2nd December, 3pm Advent Carol Service followed by tea
Open daily 10am - 4pm from Monday 3rd-Saturday 8th December
Christmas mini-market on 8th December

Quiet Day at St. Giles'

Saturday 15th December, 10am - 4pm

"Towards the Nativity: an Advent Reflection with St Francis"
led by the Rev'd Pam Thorne, Assistant Priest at Waterbeach
£18 including lunch, tea and refreshments.
Contact 01223 315000 or office@churchatcastle.org to register

See www.churchatcastle.org for more info

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SERVICES AT LITTLE SAINT MARY'S

Sundays

7.30am *Morning Prayer* **8.00am** *Low Mass*
10.30am *High Mass* **6.00pm** *Solemn Evensong & Benediction*

Weekdays

	<i>Low Mass</i>	<i>Morning Prayer</i>	<i>Evening Prayer</i>
Monday	12.30pm	8.20am	6.00pm
Tuesday	7.45am	8.20am	6.00pm
Wednesday	10am & 7pm	8.20am	6.00pm
Thursday	7.45am	8.20am	6.00pm
Friday	12.30pm	8.20am	6.00pm
Saturday	10am	<i>Said privately</i>	6.00pm

Weekday Festivals

7pm Sung Mass (10am on Saturdays)

The Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession)

Saturdays at 10.30am & 6.30pm, after most masses or by appointment

***Coffee** is served in the Parish Centre after the High Mass on Sundays and after the 10am Mass on Wednesdays.*

*There is a **Charity Lunch** after the 12.30pm Mass on Fridays supporting home and overseas charities.*

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lsm-social-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

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Open daily for prayer and visiting, 7.30am to 6.30pm

www.lsm.org.uk