

Our Repository

Please note our Repository at the back of the Church has got large stocks of items suitable for presents for your family and friends. So, if you are still searching for that last-minute gift for someone, or if you need some more Christmas cards etc., please feel free to take a good look round the Repository after Mass.

Westminster Year Book

The Westminster Year Book 2011 – the official Directory of the Diocese of Westminster, is now available from our Repository, price £4.50 (£5.00 ring bound). This Year Book contains listings of all parishes and schools in the Diocese, plus the Liturgical Calendar for the Year. It is an invaluable reference book and a must for every Catholic household.

Visiting the Sick

If you know of any sick, elderly or housebound parishioner who would like a visit from a priest, please tell **Fr. Iain** at the Priory. He will be very pleased to pay a visit.

Weekday Masses: 8.00am, 12.15pm, 6.00pm
Saturday Masses: 8.00am, 12.15pm, 6.00pm (*Vigil for Sunday*)
Sunday Masses: 8.30am, 10.00am (*with Choir*) 11.00am **Latin Choir**
12.15pm, 6.00pm **Young Adults Choir**

Holy Day Masses 8.00am, 12.15pm, 6.00pm
Bank Holiday Masses: 9.00am, 12.15pm (no 6.00pm Mass)
Weekday Confessions: 5.30-5.50pm - Priest on duty except 12 Noon-3pm
Saturday Confessions: 10.30-11.45am, 3.30-5.50pm

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament on Wednesdays from 6.30-8.00pm
Carmelite Priory, 41 Kensington Church St., London W8 4BB
Tel: 020-7937-9866 Fax: 020-7938-1470

Registered Charity No: 253645

Our Carmelite Newsletter on the Web: www.carmelitechurch.org

OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL

Parish Newsletter

Sunday 19 December 2010 - Fourth Sunday of Advent

Emmanuel – God Is With Us

Today we hear Matthew's version of "how Jesus Christ [*Messiah*] came to be born". The facts are astonishing and, in the context of the time, shocking. Joseph, "a man of honour" is engaged to Mary, whom he obviously loves, trusts and respects. Yet he discovers that she is pregnant and knows he is not the father. Now he cannot possibly marry her, neither can he bring himself to expose her publicly and see her stoned, so "he decided to divorce her informally" [how he could possibly have hoped to keep this secret the Gospel does not tell us!].

However, with the inspiration coming to him in a dream, Joseph takes the unprecedented decision to marry Mary. In any culture, or era of history, a man who chooses to marry a woman who is pregnant with child which is not his, faces enormous emotional psychological, cultural and social obstacles. In the society that Joseph and Mary lived in, these obstacles would have been insurmountable. [Is there anywhere in history, literature or folklore where there is a story quite like this?].

The Angel tells Joseph "*do not be afraid*". No words could exaggerate the fear and apprehension that must have been in the heart and mind of Joseph. The courage required will be enormous but it is not a courage that will win Joseph respect, admiration or hero status in the eyes of other human beings [try explaining to his mates that he was told by an angel in a dream that it was OK to marry Mary because the child is the Son of God!!].

This is Matthew's Gospel and Matthew is the most Jewish of the Gospels – presumably written for a Christian community made up primarily of Jewish converts. The Angel tells Joseph that "all this took place to fulfil the words spoken by the Lord through the prophet". This story would severely test the faith of any Jew, even one who has already converted to Christianity – how could the longed for Messiah or Christ be born in this way?

Joseph is told that the child will be "called **Emmanuel**, a name which means **God is with us**". This is why Joseph can do what he is asked to do – he is asked to do something that is humanly impossible but with Emmanuel everything is changed, everything that God asks is possible, because God is with us. Matthew's Gospel will end with Jesus telling his disciples: "I am with you always – yes, to the end of time"

Joseph had to believe this – his belief in these words will be severely tested in the days, weeks and years that follow. The most difficult word to believe in the above statement is the word “*always*”. We believe one moment, we quickly become unbelievers when circumstances change. Emmanuel – God with us, enables every Christian to be a “*Joseph*”. We are now all people who can take courageous decisions, people of honour, who can do the right thing un-swayed by public opinion, tradition or internal fears or prejudices.

Fr Matt Blake, Prior

Pastoral Letter by the Archbishop of Westminster

You will find in your Newsletter today a **Pastoral Letter** by the Archbishop of Westminster, Vincent Nichols, prepared for the **Feast of the Holy Family**, which takes place on Sunday next 26 December. This is a very important document, which concentrates especially on family life. You are all invited to take it home with you and study it carefully.

Carol Concert

My thanks to Daniela, the choir, musicians, readers and everyone who helped with the beautiful *Carol Concert* last Sunday evening. A total of **£872.93** was collected for the **Catholic Children's Society**. Thank you all for your generosity.
(Fr Matt)

Flowers for the Church for Christmas

Donations towards Flowers for the Church for Christmas will be gratefully accepted. Contributions may be handed in at Reception in an envelope marked “Flowers for the Church”. *Thank you.*

The Crib

Each year your offerings towards *The Crib* during Christmas are passed to a charity of our choice. This year they will be donated to the *Catholic Children's Society*.

Funeral Mass

The 12.15 Mass this Tuesday 21 December will be a **Funeral Mass** for **Doreen Hughes RIP**

‘Nativity’ Programmes on BBC Television

Archbishop Vincent Nichols has asked me to recommend to you BBC Television’s ‘**Nativity**’ programmes, telling the story of the **Birth of Christ**. The account is given in four 30-minute programmes on Monday 20, Tuesday 21, Wednesday 22 and Thursday 23 December at 7.00pm on BBC-1. Archbishop Vincent writes: “Please recommend this to your parishioners. The programmes are a dramatised re-telling of the accounts of Jesus’ birth, with some clear dramatic license yet retaining an overall fidelity not only to the Gospel accounts but also to traditional imagery. The programmes have been made with sensitivity and have moments of great beauty and emotional intensity. The final episode is particularly moving”.

Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity

A Date for your diaries: From 18-25 January we celebrate the **Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity**. This year our Church will be hosting a special event of prayer and celebration on Thursday 20 January from 7.00-8.00pm. I hope as many people as possible can come to support this event and to welcome the members of the other Christian Churches in Kensington who will be joining us.

Church Notices

- * We will have our **Parish Gathering** after the 10 o’clock Mass this morning, when you are all invited downstairs for tea/coffee with your friends - a good opportunity to celebrate Christmas together before people go away.
- * Our **Young Adults Monday Group** will meet tomorrow Monday in the Parish Centre at 7.30 for 8.00pm. They will then have their Christmas break, returning on Monday 10 January.

Our Newsletter

There will be a further *Newsletter* this coming week, available on Friday, Christmas Eve, following which it will go on Christmas break until Sunday 9 January. For those of you who are going away shortly, please remember to pick it up from our website: www.carmelitechurch.org