

Dec:

Monday	6	-	St Nicholas, Bishop
Tuesday	7	-	St Ambrose, Bishop & Doctor
Wednesday	8	-	Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Thursday	9	-	St John Diego Cuachtlatoatzin
Saturday	11	-	Blessed Maria Maravillas of Jesus, Virgin, Carmelite/ St Damasus I, Pope

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.

Flowers for the Church

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.

On Wednesday next 8 December, we celebrate the **Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary**. Masses will be at the usual times: 8.00am, 12.15 and 6.00pm.

Weekday Masses:	8.00am, 12.15pm, 6.00pm
Saturday Masses:	8.00am, 12.15pm, 6.00pm (<i>Vigil for Sunday</i>)
Sunday Masses:	8.30am, 10.00am (<i>with Choir</i>) 11.00am <i>Latin Choir</i> 12.15pm, 6.00pm <i>Young Adults Choir</i>
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	
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Registered Charity No: 253645	
Our Carmelite Newsletter on the Web: www.carmelitechurch.org	

Our Lady OF MOUNT CARMEL

Parish Newsletter

Sunday 5 December 2010 - Second Sunday of Advent

John the Baptist and Forgiveness

We are told in today's Gospel that “*Jerusalem and all Judaea and the whole Jordan district*” [that is a lot of people!] are making their way to **John the Baptist**, confessing their sins, receiving forgiveness and being baptised. This is all going very well until some Pharisees and Sadducees come along, who appear to be guilty of much more serious crimes, though we are given no details of what these crimes are [note it is not implying all Sadducees and Pharisees, just this particular group].

This episode raises some very serious questions for us about the meaning of forgiveness, particularly when serious crimes are involved that give rise to grave damage and hurt to other people. John the Baptist has much to teach us through his reaction to these people.

1. Forgiveness is not an escape from truth or responsibility; “*who warned you to fly from the retribution that is coming*”. If we wish to be forgiven, we must face up to the full truth of the crime and all its implications and consequences.

2. Forgiveness must involve a complete change of life and this change must be visible and be sustained over a long period of time; “*produce the appropriate fruits*”.

3. Christian faith does not give one an automatic right to forgiveness or make forgiveness easier to obtain; “*do not presume to...*”. People of faith can fall into a very subtle trap of having a superficial understanding of forgiveness or of seeing it as easier than what it really is.

4. On the other hand, Christian faith sometimes puts unrealistic and damaging pressure on people who are victims – you must forgive! Your Christianity requires you to forgive! How can you be a Christian and not forgive! etc. How often we hear this kind of talk but rarely do we acknowledge how damaging or misleading it can be.

Victims have a legitimate right to know the truth, to acknowledge and express their anger, to seek retribution [when possible and appropriate], to seek and receive all possible help with their physical, emotional, psychological, economic, social and spiritual healing.

5. Forgiveness is difficult and at times humanly impossible. Only God can set us free from our past, only God can untie the knots we bind ourselves in. Only the grace of God can enable me to forgive myself – forgiveness of self implies a deep reconciliation with my history, failures, sins and profound change of direction and attitude. That is why it is ultimately a gift of God: *“He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire”*.

6. It is God who lifts the burden of being expected to forgive others. When we are victims, when we are seriously hurt, responsibility for forgiveness must be handed over to God. This is too big for me, only God can deal with it. This gives an inner freedom that can allow the complex and slow process of healing to begin to happen; *“the One who follows me is more powerful than I am”*. Like John the Baptist and all the people coming to him, we need the One who is more powerful than we are.

7. Finally the Pharisees and Sadducees are religious leaders. The kind of damage they do to their victims is particularly harmful and the healing is especially difficult. John the Baptist is obviously very aware of this, angry about it and determined to take action; *“brood of vipers....”*

In this Gospel passage **John the Baptist** is pointing us towards Jesus. The most difficult, complex and painful circumstances of human life can only be healed by Him and He is doing it already in ways beyond our knowledge or understanding: *“His winnowing-fan is in His hand; He will clear the threshing-floor... gather the wheat...burn the chaff”*.

Fr Matt Blake, Prior

Children’s Christmas Celebration

Our annual **Children’s Christmas Celebration** will take place this morning from 11.00am – 12.15, in the Parish Centre. There will be a **Nativity Play** with some **Carol Singing**. All children who come to our Church are warmly invited to attend. To conclude this event, there will be some refreshments and nice things to eat for all the children and parents. (Fr Iain)

Gathering for Young Married Couples

Our next *Gathering for Young Married Couples* will take place this Tuesday 7th December from 7.30-9.00pm. The gathering is a time when young couples come to the Carmelite Priory and enjoy friendly conversation over a glass of wine. We follow this with some input relevant to marriage or

Carol Concert in our Church

On **Sunday next 12 December**, at 7.00pm (immediately after the 6.00pm Mass), you are all invited to a **Carol Concert** performed by singers from our Sunday Evening Choir, conducted by **Daniela Mirai**, plus some music on cello by **Sebastian Millett**, accompanied by **Marie-Claire Kaminski** on keyboard. There will also be some Christmas scripture readings by some young people from the Parish. The performance will run for approximately one hour, following which you are all cordially invited to the Refectory for some refreshments and mince pies. This promises to be a very special evening and we hope as many of you as possible will come. Entrance is free but donations to the *Catholic Children’s Society* will be gratefully accepted. The CCS does invaluable work with needy children and their families.

Children’s Winter Cinema

Our next film showing in our *Winter Cinema for Children* series will be on Sunday next 12 December at 3.00pm. All children who come to our Church are invited. No need to book, just come along accompanied by an adult. Enquiries: ludéfazio@yahoo.co.uk (Luciana)

Carol Singing at Kensington High St Tube Station

My thanks and congratulations to Daniela and all who sang Carols at Kensington High St. Tube Station on Saturday last. A total of **£583.82** was raised for the *Catholic Children’s Society*. Apart from the money raised, singing at the Tube Station is an important witness to Christianity and to the real meaning of Christmas. Thanks to all involved and all who supported them. *Fr Matt*

Carmelite Christmas Craft Challenge

We are in the final leg of our **Christmas Craft Challenge**. Our team will be collecting all the images you have made after the 10.00 Mass today. To remind you:- They are tiny felt images of the Baby Jesus which the children will distribute to the congregation on Sunday next 12 December. Alternatively, you can drop yours in any time before the 12th and add them to the display alongside Reception. Many thanks to all who have already submitted their work. (Candida and Carol makingjesus@gmail.com)

Holy Hour for Vocations: On Friday next 10 December, from 6.30-7.30pm, we will have a **Holy Hour of Prayer for Vocations to Religious Life.** You are all invited. (Fr Iain)