

Feasts/Memorials

Dec:

Monday 13 - St Lucy, Virgin & Martyr
Tuesday 14 - St John of the Cross, Priest & Doctor, Carmelite
Thursday 16 - Bl Mary of the Angels, Virgin, Carmelite

Preparation for Marriage Course

The Parish of St Charles Borromeo, Ogle St., London W1, will begin a **Preparation for Marriage Course** on Thursday 13 January 2011, which will run for eight consecutive Thursday evenings. The meetings will take place in the crypt room at 8.00pm, and will be led by two married couples and the Parish Priest. Engaged and recently married couples will also be very welcome. There is no registration and no fee. Couples are invited to all the sessions or as many as they choose. The course concludes with a day together on Saturday 5 March, ending with the Sunday Vigil Mass. For further details, contact Fr Alan Fudge, Parish Priest, 020-7636-2883 or email: oglestreet@rcdow.org.uk

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 12 December 2010 - Third Sunday of Advent
(Gaudete Sunday)

Doubts

John the Baptist is in prison. He is starting to have doubts about his belief in Jesus – is Jesus really the Messiah they have been looking forward to? So he sends his disciples to question Jesus and they come back with the answer. That is a summary of the first part of today's Gospel.

We know a lot about John the Baptist; we know enough to know that spending some time in prison is not going to cause John to doubt Jesus. However, "prison" is a good image for the deeper sources of John's doubt. It is not the physical prison that causes John's doubts but the "spiritual prison" he finds himself in. John's vision or understanding of Jesus is just too restricted to cope with what he is hearing about Jesus. John thought he knew Jesus and understood what He was all about – how humbling and confusing it is to discover otherwise.

Jesus' response to John's disciples could be summed up something like this: "Yes, I am the one you were expecting but I do not do things as you expected me to. Your way of thinking and understanding must change, there is a new and deeper journey of faith that you must come on".

John must have struggled to cope with this answer. John was the great teacher, the one everyone went to listen to, now he must start listening and learning from the poor, deaf, blind, lame, etc., that is, all those who have been touched and healed by Jesus. The answer to John's questions, doubts and fears are in the hearts, minds and experience of the very people John was teaching a little earlier. This helps us understand the very mysterious words of Jesus: "*I tell you solemnly, of all the children born of women, a greater than John the Baptist has never been seen; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he is*".

John is being invited to recognise the true "prison" he is in. This is also his spiritual cross-roads. Now he must make a choice; he either stays where he is, retreat into his own small restricted world that gives him a certain security or he can have the courage to embrace the deeper mystery Jesus is calling him into. John's prison is his opportunity to grow in faith.

What this Gospel does not tell us is John's reaction to his disciples when they return to him. They will now have had a deeper experience of Jesus

than he ever had - will he be open to listening to them and learning from them, or will he revert to being teacher and try to pull them back into his “prison”, that is, into their old way of thinking? This is a common mistake made by people who teach religious and spiritual matters.

“*Happy the man who does not lose faith in me*”. That is the conclusion of Jesus’ answer to John. The road to that “happiness” is a long and, at times tortuous one. There are many ups and downs and it is encouraging to see that even someone with John’s strength of faith has to go through this kind of growth experience.

Fr Matt Blake, Prior

Sr. Cathy Jones

We pray especially this week for **Sr. Cathy** as she prepares to make her **Final Profession** at the Assumption Convent, Kensington Square, on Saturday next 18 December. Maria Assumpta Convent and Church play a very important part in our parish community and we congratulate them and assure them of our prayers and support on this very special occasion.

(Fr Matt)

Carol Concert in our Church

You are all invited to a **Carol Concert** in our Church this evening at 7.00pm (immediately after the 6.00pm Mass), 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.

Christmas Masses and Services

Cards showing the times of Masses in our Church throughout the Christmas season are available from the back of the Church. Please take one as you leave after Mass.

Children’s Nativity Play on Sunday 5 December

Thanks to all the children who participated in the excellent **Nativity Play** held in the Parish Centre on Sunday last. A special thanks to the children’s parents for all their creativity and hard work, and for all who helped in any way. A superb performance by the children ! (Fr Iain)

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.

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.

Children’s Winter Cinema

In our *Winter Cinema for Children* we will be showing a film at 3.00pm today. 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)

Notices

- * We will have our **Parish Gathering** in the Parish Centre after the 10 o’clock Mass on Sunday next 19 December. A good opportunity to celebrate Christmas together before people go away.
- * On Tuesday next 14 December, we celebrate the **Solemnity of St John of the Cross**. Masses will be at the usual times: 8.00am, 12.15 and 6.00pm.
- * Will Readers please collect their **Christmas Rota** as they leave after Mass today.

Holy Hour for Vocations

On Friday next 17 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)