

OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL

Parish Newsletter

Sunday 13 December 2009 – Third Sunday of Advent
(Gaudete Sunday)

John the Baptist

One of the great difficulties we face each Advent is to understand the preaching of John the Baptist and why he is so important in the overall context of the Christian message. Reading the Gospels, we are left in no doubt about the importance of John and his preaching. Yet at the same time his preaching can seem unattractive and incomprehensible and, perhaps more importantly, quite different in both style and content from the preaching of Jesus which immediately follows.

John the Baptist describes Jesus to the people in these words: “*He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire*”. What might these words mean? Perhaps we think we know who the Holy Spirit is – at least we know his presence is welcome, good and life-giving. *Fire*, we are not so sure about – the next line would appear to indicate that fire is a threat. However, in the “*Acts of the Apostles*” the Holy Spirit will come down upon the disciples in tongues of fire.

We have an expression in the English language: *a baptism of fire*.

An example of its use would be if one begins a new job and all the problems are landed on one’s desk immediately with no gentle easing in or “honeymoon” period. Perhaps this gives us an idea of the spirit of John the Baptist’s preaching – the coming of Jesus is a “*baptism of fire*” in the new way of living which will come to be known as Christian living. There can be no hesitation, compromise or delay in the way we welcome and embrace this new way of living. Change must happen and must happen immediately. A little earlier in today’s Gospel, John has shown us that there is no escaping this change, everyone must change. We all have our wrong ways of seeing things, doing things, and decision making. We are all lacking in charity and imprisoned by self-interest. All that varies is our way of living and expressing our distorted ways of thinking and being.

Change is necessary and urgent, it must always begin in my heart, my life, my relationships, my priorities etc. We are all experts at evading this reality and this imperative. John has to use shock tactics, strong language and the force and power of his personality to get his message across. John differs from Jesus in style and personality but the content of his message is

Charity Concert on Sunday 27 December at 7.00pm

A group of 20 exceptionally talented teenage musicians called ‘**Melodie Music**’ from Soweto, South Africa, are giving a concert here in our Church on Sunday 27 December at 7.00pm. The concert will be a combination of Classical, Christmas and African music. Entrance is free but we will take up a collection for the charity that supports the work of ***giving the opportunity to disadvantaged children to learn music***. Please tell anyone you know who is in London for Christmas to come along – it promises to be something very special.

- * We will have our *Parish Advisory Group Meeting* on Sunday next 20 December at 7.00pm. If there are any matters you would like raised, do please hand them in at Reception, attention Fr Matt.
- * Our *Babies and Toddlers Friday Play Group* has now closed for the Christmas break, returning on Friday 8 January. New children always welcome. Contact: Segolene on 020-7243-8335.
- * 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.

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Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament on Wednesdays from 6.30-8.00pm

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

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 **Sung**, 11.00am **Sung/Latin**
12.15pm, 6.00pm **Young Adults Choir**
Holy Days: 8.00am, 12.15pm, 6.00pm
Bank Holidays: 9am, 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

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Registered Charity No: 253645

very similar to Jesus. John not only understands the message of Jesus but he also knows and understands the impact and implications of the message of Jesus. John not only reminds us in very strong and vivid language about the message of Jesus, he also sets before us the implications and urgency of this message.

I guess if we really heard the message of Jesus and saw its implications with the clarity of John, then we also would be acting and speaking as John does. A person who has been “*baptised with the Holy Spirit and fire*” cannot remain lukewarm or indifferent. The baptism of Jesus calls for a whole new way of living, thinking and relating and this new way of life must begin now.

Fr Matt Blake, Prior

Mind the Gap: Faith in Film

The final session in the Advent Reflection Evenings ‘**Mind the Gap**’ will take place on Tuesday next 15 December at the Church of Our Lady of Assumption & St Gregory, Warwick St. from 7.00-9.15pm. The subject for the evening will be **St Thérèse of Lisieux**, and will be introduced by Fr Iain Matthew of our Community. All young adults from the Parish are invited.

More House School – Music for Christmas

On Tuesday next, 15 December, at Our Lady of Victories Church at 7.30pm, there will be a performance by More House School of Benjamin Britten’s ‘**A Ceremony of Carols**’, with Francesca Kaminski on Harp, plus a full programme of other Christmas music. Please see poster on our Church notice-board. Admission is free and all are invited.

Carol Singing by our Sunday Evening Choir

Sincere thanks and congratulations to Daniela and the choir for the wonderful **Carol Singing** at Kensington High St. tube station on Saturday last, in aid of the **Catholic Children’s Society**. The amount raised was **£489.03**. And again on Sunday evening here in our Church when they gave another fine performances of Carols and Christmas music, to support the **CCS**. **£447.91** was donated at this event. We thank you all for coming and for your kind donations. (Fr Matt)

The next **Carmelite Prayer Hour** will be on Monday 21 December from 6.30-7.30pm, guided by **St Teresa of Avila**, with Adoration and praying for the gift of vocations to religious life. All are invited.

Nativity Play and Advent Celebration

The Catechism Children and their families invite you all to their **Nativity Play and Advent Celebration** downstairs in the Parish Centre after the 10am Mass this morning, to see the children perform the greatest love story in human history – **The Story of the First Christmas**. There will be carol singing by all present, led by our Choir. The Catechism children look forward to sharing with you all the enthusiasm with which they have prepared this Celebration.

Children’s Christmas Party

We are having our **Children’s Christmas Party** today from 3.00-5.00pm. Lots of activities focused on the meaning of Christmas for the young children of the Parish. *Children*, please bring your favourite **Nativity** character costume!! Why not also bring something nice to have with tea and to share with everyone else. There will be some Christmas Carols – hope to see you there!!

Christmas Carols in aid of the Multiple Sclerosis Trust

On Thursday next 17 December at 7.00pm there will be Christmas Carols here in our Church in aid of the **Multiple Sclerosis Trust**, in the presence of the Mayor and Mayoress of Kensington & Chelsea. Tickets cost £15.00 and all proceeds go to the MS Trust. See details on notice-board.

Notices

- * Please note that, because of Carol Services in our Church tomorrow Monday evening at 7.00pm (in aid of the Children’s Charities in Latin America) and also Thursday evening (in aid of the MS Trust). the **6.00pm Mass** will take place in the Refectory on both days.
- * You are all invited to our **Parish Gathering** after the 10.00am Mass on Sunday next 20 December. A good opportunity to celebrate Christmas together before people go away.
- * Tomorrow Monday we celebrate the **Solemnity of St John of the Cross**. Masses will be at the usual times 8.00am, 12.15pm and 6.00pm.

Will the **Senior Members** of our Parish please note we will have a special **Tea Party** in their honour early in the New Year. Regrettably it wasn’t possible to fit it in before Christmas.