

Feasts/Memorial

Monday	8	Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Tuesday	9	St John Diego Cuahtlatotzin
Thursday	11	St John Damasus I, Pope
Friday	12	Our Lady of Guadalupe
Saturday	13	St Lucy, Virgin & Martyr

Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea

Mayor's Charity Christmas Carols

On Monday 15 December at 7.00pm here in our Carmelite Church we will have the **Mayor's Charity Christmas Carols**, followed by wine and mince pies in the Mayor's Parlour at the Town Hall, Hornton Street. Ticket prices are £20, and all proceeds go to **The Multiple Sclerosis Trust**. All are welcome. Details of how to apply for tickets are available on special leaflets at the back of the Church. Please take one.

Our Repository

Please note our Repository at the back of the Church has now got large stocks of Christmas Cards, Mass Cards, religious items and a wide range of suitable gifts for your family and friends for Christmas, all at very reasonable prices. Please feel free to take a good look round after Mass. (We are still waiting delivery of the '*Westminster Year Book 2009*').

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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: 8am, 12.15pm, 6pm
 Saturday Masses: 8am, 12.15pm, 6pm (*Vigil Mass for Sunday*)
 Sunday Masses: 8.30am, 10am, 11am *Sung/Latin*
 12.15pm, 6pm *Young Adults Choir*
 Holy Days: 8am, 12.15pm, 6pm
 Bank Holidays: 9am, 12.15pm (no 6pm Mass)
 Weekday Confessions: 5.30-5.50pm (Priest on duty except between
 12 Noon-3pm)
 Saturday Confessions: 10.30-11.45am, 3.30-5.50pm
Carmelite Priory, 41 Kensington Church St., London W8 4BE
Tel: 020-7937-9866 Fax: 020-7938-1470
Registered Charity No: 253645.

OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL

Parish Newsletter

Sunday 7 December 2008 – Second Sunday of Advent

The Gospel According to Mark

Mark's Gospel opens with this remarkable line: '*The beginning of the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God*'. Is this meant to be a title or prologue or preface? Who knows, but we can take it to be all three. This line tells us all we need to know as we begin reading this fascinating account of the life and death of Jesus. Let us look a little closer at what we have here:

Beginning: This takes our minds back to the story of creation, the beginning of everything. This is the story of One who existed before creation and *through whom all things are made* [words of the Creed].

Our meeting with Jesus, the subject of this story, is the real *beginning*.

The Gospel is a new beginning for all who read it, and as we read it and accept its contents, we are beginning a whole new life. Mark is not setting out to tell us the whole story – only the beginning. There is no ending to Mark's Gospel just as there is no ending to our discipleship of Jesus Christ.

Good News: This could also be translated as **Gospel**. This is the announcement of the greatest news humanity will ever hear. At the time Mark was writing, this term had already been used by Paul in his letters to describe the content of all that he and the other apostles preached. Now with Mark it also becomes the name of four documents that tells us the life of Jesus, of which Mark's is the first to be written.

Jesus: As I have already said, Jesus is the subject of this story – it is all about Jesus. There are two questions that we must always keep in mind as we read Mark’s Gospel:

Who is Jesus? What does it mean to become a disciple of his?

Christ or Messiah: Jesus is the fulfilment of all that the scriptures long for. We will hear this term again in the Gospel: Peter will profess his faith with these words, “*You are the Christ*”, and when Jesus is dying on the cross the chief priest and scribes mock him saying, “*Let the Christ, the king of Israel, come down from the Cross now, for us to see it and believe*”.

Here the chief priests and scribes express one of the central difficulties for believers in Mark's Gospel: How do we believe in a Christ or Messiah who suffers and dies; if he is who he claims to be, then why does he not save himself??

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Son of God: We are told this three more times in Mark's Gospel, twice by God the Father [at Jesus' baptism and at the transfiguration] and by the Roman centurion after Jesus dies. However, this is the central fact we must remember whenever we read a passage of Mark's Gospel. This is the story of Jesus, Son of God. Sometimes Mark's Gospel has been described as the story of the death of Jesus with a long introduction – the life, teaching and miracles of Jesus are really an introduction to his death. This then is the story of the rejection, suffering and death of the Son of God. How do we accept or understand this?

I said at the beginning that the introductory line tells us all we need to know in order to begin reading this Gospel, it also introduces us to the questions this Gospel frustratingly leaves unanswered. Jesus is the Christ or Messiah and the Son of God; he is also the one who is rejected by friends and opponents alike, who suffers and who finally dies. Both his disciples and his opponents, indeed everyone who meets Jesus in Mark's Gospel, struggle to come to terms with this fact. Every disciple of Jesus in any situation or era of history must struggle with the same mysteries and unanswered questions.

Fr Matt Blake, Prior

Advent Tea Party for Senior Parishioners & Friends

On Sunday next 14 December, some of our Catechism children are hosting an **Advent Celebration** at 11.15am, and would very much like to welcome especially our **Senior Parishioners and friends** for a time of reading, reflection and music as we prepare for Christmas. This will take place in the Priory where refreshments will be served. The children are really looking forward to welcoming as many Senior Parishioners as possible to this event.

Filippino Christmas Mass

On Tuesday 16 December at 7.00pm there will be a **Filippino Christmas Mass (*Sinbang Gabi*)** in this Church, celebrated by the Filippino Chaplain. Everyone welcome.

A Celebration of Christmas by More House School

On Tuesday 16 December at 7.30pm at Our Lady of Victories Church, there will be a performance by More House School of Benjamin Britten's '**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.

Carmelite Carol Service, Sunday 7 December

This evening, after the 6.00pm Mass, there will be a **Carol Service** given by the singers and musicians from our Sunday evening choir, in aid of the **Catholic Children's Society**. Do please come along and support them. A collection will be taken up for the CCS. After the Carol Service there will be drinks and refreshments and an opportunity to meet and socialise.

Young Adults Monday Group

Our Monday Group will meet tomorrow evening at 7.30pm to continue their Advent journey when Fr Matt will be present to speak about the significance of **Mark's Gospel**. All young adults are very welcome to attend. Entrance to the Parish Centre via Pitt Street.

Advent Celebration in Soho 12-14 December

St Patrick's Church, Soho Square welcomes all to the Advent Celebrations in Soho, starting on Friday next 12 December with a **Gospel Concert** at 8.30pm at the French Church, Leicester Square. Then, on Saturday 13 December and Sunday 14, two days of prayers and activities at St Patrick's Church, ending with Mass accompanied by St Patrick's Gospel Choir at 5.00pm on Sunday 14. See poster on our notice-board with full details.

Flowers for the Altar for Christmas

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

Notices

- * Tomorrow, Monday 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 & 6.00pm
- * The Solemnity of **St John of the Cross**, 14 December, will this year be transferred to Monday 15 December. Masses will be at the usual week-day times.

I would like to sincerely thank and congratulate our Sunday evening Choir for their very successful **Carol singing** at Kensington High Street tube station on Saturday last. The amount raised was **£426.63**, and this has now been passed to the **Catholic Children's Society**. Well done everybody !

Fr Matt