

PARISH OF OUR LADY QUEEN OF MARTYRS

Reg. Charity 242380

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Third Sunday of Advent, (Gaudete), Year A – 15 December 2013

Entrance: *Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. Indeed the Lord is near*

Responsorial psalm: *Come Lord, and save us*

Gospel: *Alleluia, alleluia! The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me. He has sent me to bring good news to the poor. Alleluia!*

Communion: *Say to the faint of heart: Be strong and do not fear. Behold, our God will come, and he will save us*



Today's Gospel passage starts by telling us that, 'John in his prison had heard what Christ was doing and he sent his disciples to ask him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or have we got to wait for someone else?' Jesus answered, 'Go back and tell John what you hear and see; the blind see again, and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised to life and the Good News is proclaimed to the poor; and happy is the man who does not lose faith in me.' Most of what Jesus says to the disciples of John will immediately strike a cord in their hearts, for he is quoting the very things that Isaiah chapter 35 speaks of as the Day of the Lord, when Israel is restored to righteousness, holiness and right worship of God; in a phrase, the life of the Covenant. But it is not simply a direct quote from Isaiah, for it goes beyond the limits of the prophecy, stating that 'lepers are cleansed' and 'the dead are raised' and 'the Good News is proclaimed to the poor.' What are these 'extra' bits about then? Nothing less than the restoration of harmony, divine order, to Creation, and in a way that even the ancient prophets could not have even imagined. The Good News of Jesus Christ is that we are reconciled to God, who is the Creator of all things, and the revelation of God as our Father. We take it for granted that God is our Father, but do we realise what sort of Father he is? He is Abba, which is a title of love, like 'daddy', rather than a title of formal relationship, as in Father of the Nation. The Creator of all things is revealed by Jesus to be in a deep, intimate, loving relationship with all his Creation, but through Jesus to have a unique relationship with humanity. It is not enough for him to restore Israel, humanity's representative before him, to holiness. No, he wishes to raise Israel and, through her, (remember Jesus said that salvation comes from the Jews), all humanity to divinity, to share in God's own life. So, when Jesus says that the 'lepers are cleansed' he speaks of the Israel which has been cast out of the Covenant by apostasy, by greed, by lip service, by immorality, being returned into covenant with God through forgiveness of her sins. Israel is restored in the coming of the Messianic age as described by Isaiah, personified by Jesus, the Righteous One. But then comes, 'the dead are raised' No longer is it enough in God's eyes that fallen humanity should be given mortal life; no, he comes into the world that it may have 'life, and in abundance,' the divine life of God himself. Jesus is truly man and truly God, and the incarnation that we celebrate on March 25th and the physical birth we celebrate on December 25th are the means by which God chose to make it possible for mankind to know and to share in that life. Pope Francis said last week that Jesus' "inner joy comes precisely from this relationship with the Father in the Holy Spirit. And this is the joy he gives to us, and this joy is true peace. It is not a static, quiet, tranquil peace: Christian peace is a joyful peace for Jesus is joyful, God is joyful". The life of the Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is open to us through grace, which we are now free to accept – 'peace I leave you, my peace I give you' – and it is a joyful peace to last for eternity. (Fr Cenydd Marrison)

Dates for Your Diary

Please come along and enjoy tea and coffee in the parish room after the Sunday morning Masses

The numbers drawn for week 33 were 18, 12, 15 & 42

No winner

Prize money for week 34 is £105.00 and four numbers to be drawn

Today's second collection: there isn't one

Advent Carol Service: today at the Poor Clare Monastery – Vespers at 3:00pm, Carol Service at 3:30pm. Refreshments will be served, and everyone is welcome

Tuesday Devotions: Divine Mercy Chaplet before Mass, and the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary after Mass

Bible Study: on Wednesday, 18th December at 7:00pm in the parish house

As an act of witness: HOPE FOR HEREFORDSHIRE and Churches Together in Hereford will be singing carols in Hightown on Wednesday 18th December at 6:30 pm, with a Christmas Lantern Parade

Funeral Arrangements: Mr Harry Grafen will be received into the church at 5:00pm on Wednesday, 18th December; his funeral Mass will be celebrated at 1:30pm the next day. *Requiescat in pace*

Preparing the church for Christmas: all willing helpers are very welcome to come along on the morning of Christmas Eve from 10am to help clean and decorate the parish church for the Christmas festivities; the more, the merrier! Refreshments will be provided

From another parishioner: would it be helpful to advertise the fact that Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* can be found at www.vatican.va by anyone connected to the Internet? Computer, tablet or smart phone

Penitential Services in Hereford: the following days and times have been arranged – Belmont Abbey on Wednesday, 18th December at 7:00pm; St Francis Xavier's on Thursday, 19th December at 7:00pm; and here at Our Lady's on Monday, 23rd December at 7:00pm

Timely reminder: if you were thinking of giving Father Roman a financial present this Christmas please put it in your Christmas card to him, or in an envelope marked with his name. This is because *everything on the collection plate on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day goes directly to Belmont Abbey*. Thank you

Christmas Mass times in Hereford

Our Lady, Queen of Martyrs:

Christmas Eve – 6:30pm, with nativity play; 9:00pm 'Midnight' Mass

Christmas Day – 10:00am

St Francis Xavier's:

Midnight Mass (preceded by Christmas Carols at 11.30pm)

Christmas Day – 10:00am

Belmont Abbey:

Midnight Mass at 12:00 am

Christmas Day: Parish sung Family Mass at 9:00 am; Pontifical High Mass at 11:00 am

NB: there is no evening Mass on Christmas Day anywhere in the Herefordshire deanery



Third Week of Advent

Psalter: Week III

Today:

9:30 am Andrew & Mary Sutton
11:30 am Harry Forder
6:30 pm

Monday 16 December 9:30 am Mass – David Thomas
Advent weekday

Tuesday 17 December 7:00 pm Mass – Buckley Family Int
Advent weekday

Wednesday 18 December 9:30 am Mass – David Thomas
Advent weekday

Thursday, 19 December 9:30 am Mass – Thanksgiving (BK)
Advent weekday

Friday, 20 December 7:00 pm Mass – Maureen Bellamy
Advent weekday Intention

Saturday, 21 December 9:30 am Confessions
Advent weekday 10:30 am Mass – Karoline Busko Int

Sunday, 22 December (Fourth Sunday of Advent)

9:30 am Mavilazhikathu Family Intention
11:30 am Special Intention (JB CC)
6:30 pm Celebrated by Fr Nicholas Wetz

Please pray for:

The sick, especially Ann Morris, Brian Morris, Alice Jones, Karen Royer, Sue Watkins, Julie Martin, Katie Balnaves, Shelaigh Fawcett, Dymphna and John O'Neil, Andrew Walker, Natalie Chadwick, Leo Hornby, Sylvia Jones, Sylvia Aiello, Chris Turville, Jason Houten, Eva Zakrzewska, Pat Franklyn, John O'Donahue, Sr Catherine Jackson OP, Joe Carroll, Dorothy Dzioba, Stan Morris, Glyn Matthews, Joan Sheeran, Janet McNamara, Sam Thomson, Ian O'Donahue, Dr Mike O'Kane, Simon Williams, Madeleine Went, Anna Foggo and all in our prayer book

The recently dead, especially Letty Taylor, Hilda Wood, Doris Corrigan and Harry Grafen

Those whose anniversary falls in the month of December, including: Winifred Hawes, Mary Bagnall, Ellen Jennings, Margaret Coughlan, Matthew Joynt, Jamie McGoran, David Halley, Matthew Robson, Stuart Powell, Anthony Jones, Herbert Eastwood, Erica Eastwood, Mary Clinton, Florence Marsh, Ann Wilding, James Fleming, Kathleen Hatcher, Richard Price, Thomas Morgan, Ann-Marie Sully, Mary Edwards, Robert Stanness, Betty Westmoreland, Kathleen Chesterman, Louis Avenin, the Rignall Twins and James Jamfrey

A man sent his friend a cryptic Christmas card. It said: A B C D E F G H I J K M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z. The recipient puzzled over it for weeks, finally gave up and wrote asking for an explanation. In July he received the explanation on a postcard: "No L."

As a little girl climbed onto Santa's lap, Santa asked the usual, "And what would you like for Christmas?" The child stared at him open mouthed and horrified for a minute, then gasped: "Didn't you get my E-mail?"

Rota Schedule for 20 to 26 December 2013

Flower Arrangers: As many as possible

Cleaners: Volunteers

Ushers: 9:30am J Sullivan & volunteer

11:30am J McGowan & J Kelly

6:30pm R & R Seamarks

Readers:

9:30am J Sullivan

11:30am C Thompson

6:30pm R Seamarks

Eucharistic Ministers:

9:30am C Sharland, H Fishlock

11:30pm F Davies, J McGowan C Balestra

6:30pm Rene Jones, Janet Winter

Altar Linen: A Hepworth

Polish Information:

Następna Msza Św w języku polskim odbędzie się w niedzielę, 22 grudnia godz 16:00

Finance:

The collection on Sunday, 8th December came to **£620.39**

The amount raised by the Christmas Fayre was **£1,023.34**



"Merry Christmas! Now get back to work."