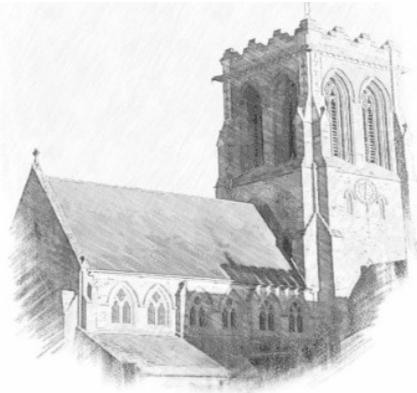


St Michael and All Angels Belmont Abbey



PARISH NEWSLETTER

17 December 2017

3 Advent

PARISH PRIEST

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Today is known as *Gaudete* Sunday. The term *Gaudete* refers to the first word of the Entrance Antiphon, "Rejoice". Rose vestments are often worn to emphasize our joy that Christmas is near, and we also light the rose candle on our Advent wreath. "Rejoice: the Lord is nigh." As Christmas draws near, the Church emphasizes the joy, which should be in our hearts showing everyone what the birth of our Saviour means to us. The great joy of Christians is to see the day drawing nigh when the Lord will come again in His glory to lead them into His kingdom.

The Christmas Draw, postponed from last week, will take place today. There is still time to buy tickets and win a wonderful Christmas goodie or a hamper type prize after all the Masses this morning. We will announce the winners over Mulled Wine & Mince Pies in the Parish Centre after the 11 am Mass.

Today's second collection will be for the Homeless at Christmas

Fr Nicholas

Last Sunday's	1 st Collection	£232.26
	Standing Orders	£501.23
<p>The 1st collection goes towards the maintenance of our Abbey church and parish, diocesan levies and other related costs.</p>		
	2 nd Collection	£81.97
<p>The 2nd collection is reserved for specific charitable causes or appeals and our own Outreach projects as detailed in the Newsletter. Last week was for: Diocesan Clergy Welfare. Thank You!</p>		



Parish Outreach - During December, the Second Collections, marked as Parish Outreach, will be buying for flowers for the Church at Christmas (Dec 3), for the Cardiff diocesan Clergy welfare fund (Dec 10), for the Homeless at Christmas (Dec17) and Parish Outreach to the Poor (Dec24).



A **new rota of ministries** is due from 31 December to and including 15 April 2018. Could I please have your non-available dates by **17 December** at the latest. Please contact me on frangrant235@btinternet.com or Hfd 266307. Many thanks for your help.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

2 January
Diamond Diners
12:45

The Three Horseshoes

16 January
Tea & Chat
2:30
Parish Hall



CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES

Vigil 'Midnight' Mass
at **10.30 pm**

Tridentine Latin Low Mass
7 am

Parish sung Family Mass at
9 am

Pontifical High Mass at
11 am

Please note there are only
two Parish Masses on
Christmas morning

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The Angel

Sadly we only have a couple of articles for the proposed Christmas edition of the Angel. I therefore suggest we postpone publication until the New Year in the hope that a few more articles emerge.

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First Holy Communion

classes start on Saturday 13th January 2018 from 10.30 am to 12pm in the Phillips Library at Belmont Abbey. Please contact Fr Nick or Rob and Jacqui Corrigan if you would like your child to receive this special sacrament next year.

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It is with sadness that we report the death of Philomena Nicholas who died on Wednesday.
May she rest in peace.

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150 Club

Thank you to everyone in the parish and beyond who supports the 150 Club, your contributions are very much appreciated. May I take this opportunity to remind those members who pay by cash or cheque that subscriptions for 2018 are now

due. Please place these in an envelope marked 150 Club and hand to Chris Moore or Fr Nick. Thank you.

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Christmas Envelopes

For those who use **Gift Aid Standing Orders**, please pick up a Christmas envelope from the porch and write your number on it. Please use these for the Christmas Offering. Thank you.

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Hereford Hospital Chaplaincy

If you have a relative or fellow parishioner in hospital and they would like to be visited by Fr. Matthew, please contact him with the details on 01432 265177 or fr.matthew@live.co.uk.

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Friends of Rotherwas Chapel

The Friends of Rotherwas Chapel invite you to join them at the chapel on Saturday 6 January 2018 from 2 – 3 pm for a Twelfth Night Celebration “Kings & Things.” Come and enjoy the music and readings. Refreshments available. Bring your own chair! Donations to the Chair Fund for the chapel.

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O ANTIPHONS

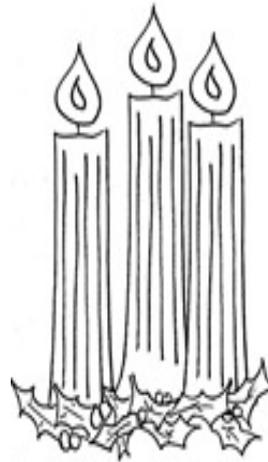
The week before Christmas is a special period of preparation and prayer. We are so close to the great feast and our anticipation grows as the season of Advent draws to its climax on Christmas Eve.

On the last seven days before Christmas, beginning with December 17, the Church recites or chants the *O Antiphons* preceding the *Magnificat* during Vespers. At Belmont we still sing the Great O's in Latin together with the *Magnificat* during the incensation of the Altar – the focal point of our evening prayer celebration.

The *O Antiphons* express the Church's longing and expectation for the Messiah, her startled wonderment at the fullness of grace, which the Christ Child is about to bestow on the world. Their theme is the majesty of the Saviour, His wisdom, His faithfulness and sanctity, His justice and mercy, His covenant with His chosen people, who in their ingratitude broke faith with Him. They are concerned with His power and love as King and Redeemer of the world, His relation to every soul as Emmanuel, God-with us. (*With Christ Through the Year* by Bernard Strasser)

According to Professor Robert Greenberg of the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, the Benedictine monks arranged these antiphons with a defi-

nite purpose. If one starts with the last title and takes the first letter of each one — Emmanuel, Rex, Oriens, Clavis, Radix, Adonai, Sapientia — the Latin words *ero cras* are formed, meaning, "Tomorrow, I will come." Therefore, the Lord Jesus, whose coming we have prepared for in Advent and whom we have addressed in these seven Messianic titles, now speaks to us, "Tomorrow, I will come." So the "O Antiphons" not only bring intensity to our Advent preparation, but also bring it to a joyful conclusion.



Homily

“He was not the light, only a witness to speak for the light.”

Illustration

There are both positive and negative aspects to the idea of mediation, or being an intermediary. Mediation can help two bitterly opposed sides begin to communicate, whether it be in a marriage, a damaged friendship, or in international relations. Mediators can operate in the school playground, to pass on the message that A wants to go out with B. Shuttle diplomacy can be used to prevent wars or arrange treaties. One of the titles of the Pope is “Pontiff”, from the Latin *pontifex*, or bridge builder. This refers both to the Pope’s spiritual intermediary role, and his ancient function of looking after the fabric of Rome. To be a bridge builder is usually seen as a positive function.

However, there can also be a downside. Intermediaries get blamed by both sides when things go wrong; if things go right they get none of the credit. The French novelist Flaubert wrote, “There are some men whose only mission among others is to act as intermediaries; one crosses them like bridges and keeps going.” He did not mean it as a compliment. In business, it is often seen as advantageous to

“cut out the middle man”. A rather cruder way of putting it in English is, “I want to speak to the organ grinder, not the monkey.” In Advent, however, we celebrate John the Baptist as a mediator. John is in some ways the most famous middle man in history.

Gospel Teaching

In sacred history the role of the intermediary is generally positive. Abraham and Moses are shown as interceding on behalf of the people. The prophets classically act as middle men, delivering God’s message to the people, and speaking on behalf of the people to God. In Exodus, God institutes the Aaronic priesthood to act as a permanent body of intermediaries, and the liturgy itself is a way of mediating God’s holiness. These two great roles, the prophetic and the priestly, are brought together in John the Baptist. He behaves as one of the classical prophets. That is why he is asked if he is Elijah, or “the Prophet”. But he is also one of the last generations of the Aaronic priesthood, his father being Zechariah, a priest, and the priesthood being hereditary. So John is a complex figure, with a complex message.

One of the reasons his message is complex is because he is announcing someone who is both yet another intermediary, and who is also the oth-

er party, so to speak, in the relationship. Christ is both fully human, so he can be our intermediary, and he is fully divine, the one who receives the intercession. John speaks about these two aspects of Jesus symbolically. Jesus' humanity is represented by the sandal-strap that John speaks of. Jesus fully takes on our humanity, right down to the soles of his feet. But he also stands among them as one "unknown to you". This stands for the complete otherness of his divinity.

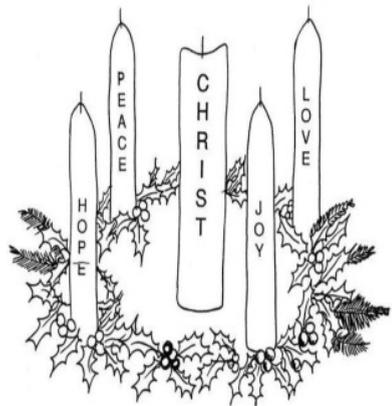
Application

It is by contemplating these two aspects of Christ's identity that we get to know who he is. As God, he is utterly beyond comprehension, the second person of the Blessed Trinity, who alone is immortal and dwells in inaccessible light. As fully human, Jesus is also one of us, through whom we have access to the Father. As St Thomas Aquinas puts it, it is through the sacred humanity of Jesus that we come to his divinity. So Christ is himself the ultimate intermediary, who joins in himself the two parties in the relationship. He is the unique high priest who offers us to God; and, as God, the one who also receives what he offers.

By sharing in our humanity, Jesus experienced himself all the joys and sorrows of human life. He fully participated in the love that humanity

is capable of, and suffered the evil that distorts it. As the letter to the Hebrews puts it, "For it is not as if we had a high priest who was incapable of feeling our weaknesses with us; but we have one who has been tempted in every way that we are, though he is without sin."

Through the sacraments, Jesus continues his intermediary role in physical, tangible ways. Through our own baptism, we share in the intercessory priesthood of Christ, so that we can mediate God's compassion and healing to the world. We ourselves become intermediaries, not through our own deserving, but by being raised up to share in the ultimate mediation of Jesus.



Ministers, etc. for next Sunday 24 December - 4th Sunday of Advent; Year B Cycle 2

	08:30	9:30	11:00
Celebrant	Fr Nicholas		Fr Nicholas
Welcomers	Cooper Family	Patrick Walesby	Monica Russell & Maureen Stacey
Sacristan			Rob Corrigan
1 st Reading	Adrian Eyre	Basil Nickerson	Monica Tomlin
2 nd Reading	Fran Grant		Sergio Pavia
Bidding Prayers	Fran Smallwood		Niamh Coyle
Offertory	Hayes Family	Gillick Family	
Extraordinary Ministers	Kath Parry & Jacqui Ramage-S		Jan Wyman & Gabrielle Stanley
Next Sunday - Parish Outreach - The Poor			

Low Mass in the Extraordinary Rite (Tridentine Mass) is celebrated here at Belmont Abbey on Wednesday evenings at 7 pm and Sunday afternoons at 4 pm.	CHILDREN'S LITURGY	
	17-Dec	A Morawiecki & Pauline Gill
	24-Dec	Jacqui King & Mary Wood

Please pray for all who have died: **May they rest in peace.** (W/C 17 Dec)

Deaths: *Philomena Nicholas, Sister Mary Clare and David Wood*

Anniversaries: *Sonia Chichester, Anne Davies, Bernard Hemson, Janet Skinner, Henry Day, Terence Egan, Edna Wilson, Douglas Davies, Sarah King, Mary Turner, Simon Williams, Kathleen Cobden, Oswald Crump, Theresa Gausden, RD Martin Wolfe OSB, Ian Luscombe, Bro Christopher Tilley OSB and Ilse Wooles.*

The Sick: Please pray for: *Robin Hayward, Julia Davey, Gil Savory, Eddie Wyman, Sam Evans, Denise Ellis, Michael Kennedy, Chris & Sue Rogers, Peter Draper, Dominique Wetz, Sally Hayward, Lillian Allsop, Kenny Hanna, Shirley Brymer, Edward Medicott, Elaine White, Joanne Savory, Dame Catherine, Vincent Hanna and Sadie Bowyer.*

Belmont Abbey Parish is part of Belmont Abbey Mission Trust (Registered Charity - 226277)

<p><i>Gaudete</i></p> <p><i>Sunday</i></p>	<p>Entrance: Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. Indeed, the Lord is near.</p> <p>Acclamation: Save us Saviour of the world...</p> <p>Communion: Say to the faint of heart: Be strong and do not fear. Behold, our God will come and he will save us.</p>
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Principal Celebrants, Extraordinary Ministers, Readers, etc.			
	08:30 am	9:30 am	11:00 am
Celebrant	Fr Nicholas		Fr Nicholas
Welcomer	Hayes Family	Desmond Keohane	Rita Chamberlain & Brenda Sherwood
Sacristan			Chris Moore
1 st Reading	Fran Smallwood	Clare Wichbold	Tony Archer
2 nd Reading	Jacqui Ramage-S		Lucy Reed
Bidding Prayer	Mary Hayes		Sally Johns
Offertory	Hayes Family	Anthea Morton-S & Maria Large	
Extra-Ordinary Minister(s)	Kath Parry & Seamus Hayes		Margaret Evans & Andre Pavia
Mass Intention	<i>P & R Malone</i>	<i>Ian Luscombe</i>	<i>Bernadette Higgins RIP</i>
Second Collection - Homeless at Christmas			
Food Bank Collection: John Goodall-Copestake			

<i>What's On for the week</i>	
Mon	Advent FERIA: Mass at 8:00 am
Tue	Advent FERIA: Mass at 8:00 am: Funeral Service for Mary Doughty 11 am
Wed	Advent FERIA: Mass at 8:00 am: Midday Mass in the Oratory
Thu	Advent FERIA: Mass at 8:00 am
Fri	Advent FERIA: Mass at 8:00 am: Exposition at 11 with Midday Mass in Oratory
Sat	Advent FERIA: Mass at 8:00 am: Sacrament of Reconciliation at 10:00