

St Michael and All Angels Belmont Abbey



PARISH NEWSLETTER

**4th December 2016
2 Advent**

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During these weeks of Advent, the Church looks forward to the coming of Christ. Our liturgies remind us of the hope of our salvation, the promise of God's love. This love is expressed in the coming of the Christ child at Christmas and our Christian hopes will indeed be realised when Christ returns in glory. I think that Advent is, above all, the season of the year that speaks to us about the virtue of hope in our lives.

During these weeks before Christmas, you and I are invited to think about the way in which the essential virtue of hope is present, or maybe not so present, in our lives. We are also called during this season to become signs of hope for others. Through what we say and do, by the way we relate to others, do we offer hope to those who may be discouraged, disillusioned or just overburdened by life? Do we make the effort to encourage others during their difficult times? During the weeks before the celebration of Christmas, it would be good if we asked the Lord to renew the gift of hope in our lives.

The Christmas Draw will take place next Sunday 11th December. Do buy a few tickets and have the opportunity of winning a wonderful Christmas Hamper. If you promised prizes please make sure they are delivered to the Parish today. Thank you.

Fr Nicholas is away today.

Fr Nicholas



Last Sunday's	1 st Collection	£576.90
	Standing Orders	£412.50
The 1 st collection goes towards the maintenance of our Abbey church and parish, diocesan levies and other related costs.		
	2 nd Collection	£149.71
The 2 nd collection is reserved for specific charitable causes or appeals and our own Outreach projects as detailed in the Newsletter. Last week was for Parish Outreach. Thank you!		



Second Collections

Last month our Parish Outreach collections went towards helping the homeless in Hereford and the Hereford Food Bank. In December, apart from next Sunday's collection for Christmas flowers, we will make two collections for the Syrian Crisis Appeal.

Fighting in Syria has caused a humanitarian crisis on a staggering scale, and it's getting worse every day. Over 250,000 people have been killed and more than 6.6 million children, women and men driven from their homes. Millions of people desperately need aid right now. Let's help to provide food, shelter and safety for people driven from their homes, as well as blankets, warm clothes and other essentials.

<p>Christmas Mass times</p> <p>Vigil 'Midnight' Mass at 10.30 pm</p> <p>Parish sung Family Mass at 9 am</p> <p>Pontifical High Mass at 11 am</p> <p>Please note there are only two Masses on Christmas morning</p>
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As she is unable to drive anymore, **Margaret Meikeljohn** is looking for a lift, even if only occasionally, from the Broomy Hill area to the Sunday 11 am Mass. Please speak to Fr Nicholas if you can possibly help.



<p>DATES FOR YOUR DIARY</p> <p>Sunday 11 December Christmas Draw Parish Hall After 11 am Mass</p> <p>Wednesday 14 December Retired Persons Christmas Lunch 12:30 pm</p>
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One of our parishioners has kindly invited up to four parishioners for **Christmas Day Lunch**. This festive invitation is extended to anyone who might be on their own or lonely this Christmas. Transport can be arranged.

Please contact Fr Nicholas if you would like to take up this invitation or know somebody who would be on their own.



Parish Retired Person's Christmas Lunch

12.30 pm Wednesday 14th December at Hedley Lodge. Tickets £10.00 – please return completed leaflet to Parish Office as soon as possible.



Thank You

As I am retiring as secretary of the APF this year I want to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to all those promoters, past and present, who have helped collect and count the Red Box money your efforts made my job so much easier.

I am always surprised at how generous the Red Box holders are; this year for example we have raised nearly £1000 for our missions abroad, well done and thank you all.

I am very grateful to Mandy Cooper who has volunteered to take over from me. Mandy will be your new secretary from January 2017.

Thank you all one again. *Liz Norman*



Easy Giving

With so many of us doing our Christmas shopping online these

days, there is an excellent way to turn your shopping into a fundraising opportunity for the Parish. Go on line to www.easyfundraising.org.uk to register and depending on which shop you are using, a percentage of the money you spend will be allocated to the Belmont Parish. It does NOT cost you anymore! There are hundreds of retailers (including M & S, John Lewis, Amazon, Argos, Tesco and Selfridges) who are quite happy to give money to charities and it really is only a matter of getting into the habit of going through the Easyfundraising website. Please give it a try and see how simple it is and how much more we can raise for the Parish. The 23 people who have signed up have raised about £850 for the parish without any extra cost to themselves!



Carol Service

At the Poor Clares Monastery on Sunday 11 December with Evening prayer at 3pm and Carol Service at 3:30. Refreshments will be served after the service.



<p>With sadness we report the death of Brian Holbery who died on Tuesday. His funeral will take place on Friday 16th December at 12 noon. May he rest in peace.</p>
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Emmaus Youth are holding their Christmas Celebrations at Our Lady's Parish Hall, 1-4 pm on Saturday 17th December! You are warmly invited to share in some Praise and Worship, Advent Liturgy and then a Christmas Party! Come and join us for some Christmas fun!!

*Rob & Jacqui Corrigan, Annie Ridgway
and Ben Aldridge*



The **parish First Holy Communion programme** will be beginning in the New Year. The children are prepared by parishioners who have a great love for the Eucharist and who wish to pass on their love and understanding to the next generation of Catholics. The family, the school and the priest also have an important role to play in preparing the children. The children will make their First Holy Communion in early summer 2017 and there will be a series of preparatory classes which take place usually on Saturday mornings. Parents who would like their children (Year 3 and above) to be considered for First Holy Communion next Summer should speak to Fr Nicholas or Jacqui & Rob Corrigan.



Sick and Housebound Parishioners

If you know of any sick or housebound parishioners please let the Parish Office know. We can then make arrangements for Fr Nicholas or an extraordinary minister to bring them Holy Communion or for a priest to come and hear confession if that is required. This also applies to parishioners who move into a care or nursing home. Please remember that hospitals no longer advise us of Catholics in hospital!



HOMILY

"If you are repentant, produce the appropriate fruits."

Illustration

Judgement is not as popular as it was. At least not in church. In a previous age sermons about the judgement of God were common and illustrated by vivid descriptions of what happened to you if you ended up in hell. And in earlier times, painters often adorned church walls with graphic murals depicting the last judgement and the awful punishments awaiting those found wanting. But hell-fire sermons and lurid wall-paintings are not so common nowadays, and not surprisingly we breathe a sigh of

relief. After all, they seemed to present God as a punishing Father and could induce all the wrong kinds of fear and guilt. There were indeed exaggerations, but can we actually get rid of judgement altogether?

The English novelist Evelyn Waugh, in his 1953 novel *Love among the Ruins*, tells of an old, hardened, criminal called Mr Sweat. After a life dedicated to crime he is sent to a reformatory where kind people try to understand him and cure him. But Mr Sweat objects to all this care lavished upon him. He sees it as patronising. He claims that people no longer understand crime and he cites the first time he was brought up before a judge when he was young. This judge certainly did not mince his words: "My lad," he said, "you are embarking upon a course of life that can lead only to disaster and degradation in this world and everlasting damnation in the next." Now Mr Sweat really appreciated that – "It was real talking," he said, "and showed a personal interest."

Gospel Teaching

On this second Sunday of Advent we encounter the strange figure of John the Baptist, dressed in camel skins and eating locusts like the prophet Elijah. Both these prophetic figures had no qualms about judgement. In a way they both represent what we see

throughout the Bible, namely, that the judgement of God leads to salvation. Can you imagine an Advent without John the Baptist? In this season Jesus and he are inseparable. He provides the contrast to Christ. He helps us to see where Christ is, to prepare the way so that Christ can come to us at Christmas. He stands outside society in the desert, a prophet who does not accept the way we see ourselves.

The Baptist preaches judgement so that people can be freed from their lack of true knowledge of themselves. They are complacent because, as John tells the Pharisees and Sadducees, they proudly call themselves children of Abraham. But their self-confidence is mistaken because, most importantly, they don't produce any fruit. John calls for repentance, a change in the way they think about themselves. "Even now," he says, "the axe is laid to the roots of the trees, so that any tree which fails to produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown on the fire." That is the fire of judgement. And he then points forward to Christ, who will baptise not just with water but with the Holy Spirit and fire. Christ too will sort out the chaff from the wheat. But it's important to see that both John and Jesus preach judgement in order that there may be salvation. It is not so much about God as about ourselves.

God treats us with respect, for we have the dignity of human beings created in God's image who can choose in freedom. John the Baptist, like Jesus, urges us to choose the way of God, for that is the way to salvation.

Application

John today is pointing us to Christ, just as he did for the people who came to hear him preach in his day. He tells us to repent that we may be saved. John convicts and Jesus absolves. And so the Church urges us in Advent to seek out the sacrament of confession, or reconciliation, for it provides the healing we need. It gives us the opportunity to examine our lives and so see what is keeping us from Christ this Advent. And so although Jesus teaches us that we are not to judge other people, we can use this opportunity to judge our own lives so that we may accept God's forgiveness and healing. We



acknowledge those things that weigh us down and keep us from God so that we may be liberated. Then when we are absolved we shall be ready to

welcome our saviour when he comes to us at Christmas.



O most blessed and sweet Virgin Mary,

Mother of God, filled with all tenderness,

Daughter of the most high King, Lady of the Angels,

Mother of all the faithful,

On this day and all the days of my life,

I entrust to your merciful heart my body and my soul,

all my acts, thoughts, choices, desires, words, deeds,

my entire life and death,

So that, with your assistance,

all may be ordered to the good

according to the will of your beloved

Son, our Lord Jesus Christ....

St Thomas Aquinas



Ministers, etc. For next Sunday 11th December - 3 Advent - Year A - Cycle 1

	08:30	09:30	11:00
Celebrant	Fr Nicholas		Fr Nicholas
Welcomers	Hayes Family	Anne Stapleton	Ross & Anne Williams
Sacristan			Jeremy Hogan
1 st Reading	Adrian Eyre	Lucy Zammit	Jennifer Hackman
2 nd Reading	Fran Smallwood		Jane Davies
Bidding Prayers	Jacqui Ramage-S		Sally Johns
Offertory	Ramage-Hill Family	Nickerson Family	
Extraordinary Ministers	Gabrielle Stanley & Seamus Hayes		Tony Archer

Next Sunday - Christmas Flowers

<p>Anniversaries</p> <p>These are noted below. Our week starts on Sunday- the anniversaries include all those which occurred on the Sunday date to the following Saturday.</p>	CHILDREN'S LITURGY	
	8.30 Children's Liturgy - temporarily cancelled	
	04-Dec	Pat Wood & Mary Wood
	11-Dec	Jacqui Corrigan & Rachel Cowdrey
	18-Dec	A Morawiecki & Monica Russell
	25-Dec	No Children's Liturgy
01-Jan	No Children's Liturgy	

Please pray for all who have died: **May they rest in peace.** (W/C 4 Dec)

Deaths: Brian Holbery, John McComish, John Pimblett and Michael Kenneth Rose

Anniversaries: Mark Evans, Mary Crump, Winifred Dodd, Mary Watkins, Jean Cocksedge, Jeanne Harding, Margaret Florence Cox, Eileen Diamond, Jackie Jones, Abbot Aidan Williams OSB, Albert Bray and Kathleen Desmond.

The Sick: Please pray for: Marnie Archer, Wendy Lyle Cameron, Sister Trish, Mother Regina, Ann Thomas, Fr Michael Cronin, Philip Herderschee, Sheila Langford, Dominique Wetz, Marie Williams, Sally Hayward, Stephen Fisher, Gordon Wilson, Denise Ellis, Lillian Allsopp, Kenny Hanna, Shirley Brymer, Edward Medicott, Sr Philpa, Elaine White, Sue Rogers, Joanne Savory, Sr Catherine, Vincent Hanna and Sadie Bowyer.

Liturgy for Sunday 4th December 2016 *Cycle A; Weekdays: Cycle 1*

<p>2nd Sunday Of Advent</p>	<p>Entrance: O People of Sion, behold, the Lord will come to save the nations, and the Lord will make the glory of his voice heard in the joy of your heart.</p> <p>Acclamation: When we eat this Bread...</p> <p>Communion: Jerusalem, arise and stand upon the heights and behold the joy which comes to you from God.</p>
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Principal Celebrants, Extraordinary Ministers, Readers, etc.			
	08:30 am	09:30 am	11:00 am
Celebrant	Fr Nicholas		Fr Nicholas
Welcomer	Liz Norman	Nickerson Family	Hackman Family
Sacristan			Tony Archer
1 st Reading	Bill Jackson	Brenda Warde	Monica Tomlin
2 nd Reading	Ann Jackson		Niamh Coyle
Bidding Prayer	Mary Hayes		Lucy Reed
Offertory	Parish Children	Frances Riddell & Menna McBain	
Extra-Ordinary Minister(s)	Seamus Hayes & Julia Davey		Monica Russell
Mass Intention	John McComish RIP	Pro Populo	Doris & Joe Corrigan RIP
Second Collection - Parish Outreach			
Food Bank Delivery: John Goodall-Copestake			

What's On for the week	
Mon	Feria: Mass at 8:00 am
Tue	St Nicholas: Mass at 8:00 am
Wed	St Ambrose: Mass at 8:00 am: NO Midday Mass: Tridentine Mass at 7:00 pm
Thu	Immaculate Conception of Our Lady: Mass at 8:00 am
Fri	Feria: Mass at 8:00 am: Exposition at 11 am & Midday Mass in Oratory
Sat	Feria: Mass at 8:00 am: Reconciliation at 10:00 am