

MASS TIMES & INTENTIONS FOR WEEK COMMENCING 11th JANUARY 2009

Sunday, 11 January, 2009 – Feast of The Baptism of the Lord – White

5.30 pm (Saturday) DEREK & JEANNE OPIE'S FAMILIES

10 am inc. Children's Liturgy SIOBHAN DOYLE, R.I.P. Avril Mobin

Monday, 12 January, 2009 – Feria – Green



NO MASS TODAY

Tuesday, 13 January, 2009 – St. Hilary – White

Hilary (ca. 300 – 368), bishop of Poitiers and a doctor of the Church. He was sometimes referred to as the "hammer against Arianism" (Arianism is the theological teaching of Arius (c. AD 250-336), a heretic whose teachings dealt with the relationship between God the Father and the person of Jesus, saying that Jesus was not of one substance with the Father). Hilary's name comes from the Greek word for happy or cheerful, the root also of the English word "hilarious".

4.30 pm EXPOSITION

NOTE NEW MASS TIME

5 pm FR. JOSEPH LEVINS, R.I.P.

Wednesday, 14 January, 2009 – Feria – Green

10 am LESLIE HOLNESS, R.I.P.

Thursday, 15 January, 2009 – Feria – Green

9.30 am EXPOSITION

10 am BILL & DORIS TAPSTER, R.I.P. Fred & Marion

Friday, 16 January, 2009 – Feria – Green

NO MASS TODAY



Fr. John is officiating at a Requiem and Funeral in Birchington

Saturday, 17 January, 2009 – St. Anthony – White

Anthony (c 251–356) also called St. Anthony of Egypt and St. Anthony Abbot, was born and raised in a Christian family at Como in Upper Egypt. Orphaned in his late teens he was influenced by Christ's words - "If thou wouldst be perfect, go and sell that thou hast and give it to the poor; and come follow me and thou shalt have treasure in heaven" (Matthew 19:21) - Anthony gave his inheritance to the poor and went to live as a hermit near his native village. As a hermit he was marked by many temptations by the devil and demons. In 305 the first religious community of hermits was founded by Anthony at Pispir. He died in 356, when more than 100 years old.

10 am THOMAS MURRAY, R.I.P. Teresa Jones

10.45 am & 4.45 pm Confession

Sunday, 18 January, 2009 – Second Sunday of the Year – Green

5.30 pm (Saturday) RAY LIND – Thanksgiving for 91st Birthday

10 am Children's Liturgy JIM ALTOFT, R.I.P., and FAMILY Wynn Altoft

THE START OF CHURCH UNITY OCTAVE

Eight days' of prayer for Christian unity. Beginning today in Westgate at Christ Church URC at 3 pm. There will be two services here at St. Peter's during this special week: Thursday, 22nd, at 12 noon with a Prayer Service, and on Saturday, 24th, outside the Church a Service of Witness (followed by hot soup, bread roll and refreshments in the Hall).

IF YOU WANT TO CONTACT THE NEWSLETTER CALL 835630 or EMAIL: office@stpeterswestgate.co.uk

PETRINEWS

St. Peter's Church, Westgate-on-Sea

Priest in Charge: **FATHER JOHN SLATER**

Registered Charity No.:235468

117 CANTERBURY ROAD, WESTGATE-ON-SEA, KENT CT8 8NW

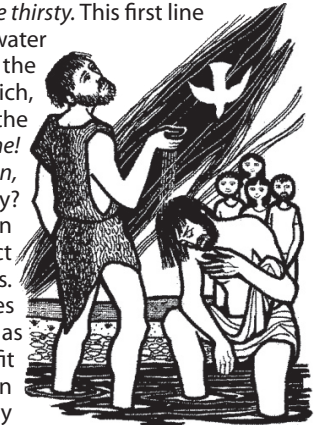
Tel: 01843 831593

www.stpeterswestgate.co.uk

Feast of the Baptism of the Lord (B) – 11th January, 2009

This week we pass on to the final part of the Christmas season. In next week's Gospel we move beyond the time in scripture of the Messiah's final prophet, John the Baptist, who, in this week's Gospel, points us directly to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is John the Baptist, who is the bridge between the promises of the prophets to the reality of the living Christ. This week we have the conclusion of the 'birth' of Jesus in preparation for his divine role as the teacher and gatherer of his followers, the promised Messiah. It is a very 'watery' set of scripture – yet at first glance the title of today's feast raises the question: why? Why would the Son of God need to be baptised? What purpose did this serve? Surely he was without sin and therefore the baptismal act would have little relevance! But we should remember that this man – for that is what he was – a Jewish man, and as such had to live within the Law and traditions as prescribed in the 'Book' from ancient times. We could look at the first reading today from Isaiah: *come to the water all you who are thirsty*. This first line

commands Jesus, as it does us, to seek out the living waters, the water of renewal, if we are to be prepared, to be in a fit state to receive the fullness of God our Father; to banquet our souls on the graces which, through the Holy Spirit, the Lord God so wants us to have. And the scripture says it is at no cost to us: *though you have no money, come!* He goes on: *Listen, listen to me . . . Pay attention, come to me; listen, and your soul will live*. But back to the question left hanging. Why? In Jewish law, in its tradition there isn't the concept of original sin – the inherited faults of Adam and Eve. They do however, have strict codes of ritual cleansing which relates to many aspects of their lives. These can be seen where followers of Judaism, in their everyday lives come into contact with blood and other bodily functions, human as well as animal, which are believed to make a person unclean, unfit for worship. So it is normal for an ordinary Jew to be cleansed in water, a routine and expected event which is repeated many, many times. However, it is not permitted to use just any old water. The water must be 'living water', that is water which is moving, from a stream or spring or even the sea. In synagogues they have special bathing areas called Mikvahs – these too must have water from a living source; rain water doesn't qualify. It is logical therefore for a Jewish priest to perform the act of ritual washing before he can undertake any actions as a minister. These ablutions go back to the God's instructions to Moses as recounted in the Book of Exodus. Chapter 29 verse 1 says: *This is the ritual you must use for them when you consecrate them to serve me in the priesthood*. Then in verse 4 it continues: *bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting and they are to be bathed*. Combined with the Genesis reference to the Eden's flowing river to water the garden, these constitute the origins which, as a good Jew, a respectful follower of the words spoken to Moses, necessitated Jesus to enter the water, and accept baptism by John in the River Jordan. So the whole of these first two scripture readings focus our minds onto the powerful symbolism of baptism. There is a theme of change which emerges, whilst at the same time a continuity, a remaining



CONTINUED INSIDE

Fr. John Writes:-

We come to the end of the Christmas Cycle today, and celebrate this link feast of the Baptism of the Lord, before beginning Ordinary Time of the Year. The Father anointed his beloved Son, Jesus, with the Holy Spirit and with power to bring healing and peace to all the nations.

Last Sunday morning we received the news of the death of Father Denis Finbar Barry, who died during the night at St. George's Retreat, Burgess Hill in West Sussex. I came across Fr. Barry in 1977 when I was an Anglican in Whitstable. In early 1997 he became Parish Priest of Our Lady & St. Benedict, Birchington. He remained there until his early retirement to County Cork at the end of 1989. After about ten years in Ireland he returned to Birchington, and became a very much loved priest in the Deanery. It was only during last summer that he was forced to go into nursing care for the last six months of his life. May he rest in the peace of the Lord, he loved and served as a priest for nearly 58 years.

■ WHITE FLOWER APPEAL

Today is White Flower Sunday, and there is a retiring collection for this very worthy cause, protecting the unborn child. The SPCU (Society for the Protection of Unborn Children) does invaluable work, particularly helping doctors and nurses who face the dilemma which the pernicious Abortion Laws bring them. If nothing else give generously today. In addition you could take one of the postcards which we have here and lend the SPUC your more concrete support.

■ FUNERAL IN BIRCHINGTON

On Friday, 16 January, there will be no Mass at St. Peter's. Fr. John will be officiating at Our Lady and St. Benedict's Church, Birchington, for the Requiem Mass and Funeral of one of their parishioners, Marie O'Donoghue.

**YEAR OF ST. PAUL
2008 - 2009**

From the letter of St. Paul to the Romans (ch 6: v 3)

You have been taught that when we were baptised in Christ Jesus we were baptised in his death.

■ 100 CLUB RENEWAL

The last draw for the current 100 Club takes place tonight, Saturday. So it's time to rejoin for the next twelve months, or join for the first time. Still ONLY £12 per year, there are monthly cash prizes (usually 1st prize of £25 and 2 x £5). Please take a membership form TODAY, join and help the parish.

■ PARISH CENSUS

If you didn't receive a Parish Census Form last week they are available in the Porch. Kindly complete them during the next week or so and place the form in the box provided in the porch.

■ CHRISTIAN UNITY WEEK

Next Sunday we begin Christian Unity Week. St. Peter's is hosting TWO of the days for Christian Unity Week. On Thursday 22 January, at 12 noon for a Prayer Service. And Saturday 24 January at 11.30 am for an open-air Witness in front of the Church.

Appropriately this year's Christian Unity Week ends on Sunday 25 January, which is also the day we celebrate THE CONVERSION OF SAINT PAUL, THE APOSTLE. The Holy See has allowed this feast to take precedence over the 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, as we continue to observe the Year of Saint Paul.

■ INTERFAITH

We at St. Peter's, representing the Christian Community in Thanet, also host the next Interfaith meeting which will be on Thursday, 22 January, at 7.30 pm. The main speaker will be Fr. Benedict, OSB, from Ramsgate Abbey who will talk on

REMEMBER TO VISIT OUR CHRISTMAS CRIB IN FRONT OF THE ALTAR ~ LEAVE YOUR DONATIONS, ROSARIES OR CASH, IN THE BASKET FOR ED-AID'S APPEAL FOR GAMBIAN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

the subject: 'Right & Wrong'. Refreshments will be served. If you are able to supply any appropriate snacks please see Phil today.

■ MASS ATTENDANCES

Feast of the Epiphany

Saturday (3 January)	5.30 pm	51
Sunday (4 January)	10 am	84

■ PARISH INCOME

Weekend of 3 & 4 January

Offertory	£198.40
Retiring and Missalette	£17.56

**TEA & COFFEE IN THE HALL
AFTER 10 am MASS ~ 20p**

Anniversaries this week:

Ivy Rabbats (1992), William Horrod (1992), Leonard Walsham (1996), Jack Lindsey (1998), Ethel Copeland (1999), Lawrence Moss (2000), Taylor Clifft (2002), Dennis Skelton (2002), Ivy Buckley (2003), Richard Jones (2008).

FROM THE FRONT

true to the tenant that we should all seek out a renewed life in the truth of God's love for us, of opening ourselves to his covenant. Here we are at the cross-over point. Jesus at the very beginning of his ministry, the symbolism of his baptism is more than eclipsed by what happened as he left those living waters of the Jordan. The events as forecast by The Baptist as he preached about the imminent arrival of the Messiah; the relationship of the Spirit of God with the Chosen One: *he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit*, John tells his followers. And so it was that as Jesus leaves the river the Spirit is seen with the Christ and the voice of God is heard to say: *You are my Son, the Beloved*. Again, scripture already described this scene, for in Isaiah 63 there is the plea to God: *Oh, that you would tear the heavens open and come down*, which is precisely what Mark says in his Gospel today: *the heavens torn apart and the Spirit, like a dove, descending on him*. We have in this momentary episode, this emergence of the cleansed body of Christ, the manifestation of the Trinity – God the Father speaking, as the Holy Spirit of God comes down to Jesus the Son of God. The evangelist John in his Epistle points to another trinity; the three elements which, as he says, bear witness to the truth which we discover in Christ our Saviour: Water, Blood and the Spirit. And there is a kind of symmetry here, as we look back at the Laws of Moses, and see that the 'blood' is a symbol of evil and how through the ritual washing, as laid down in the Torah, the person is made ready to receive the Lord's word, his Spirit. We could also look at ourselves and see that we too are tainted with the 'sins' of our fathers – the fall of mankind in the Garden of Eden – our bloody emergence into the world, with the struggle and pain of birth, which was one of the penalties earned by the disgraced first couple, followed by the cleansing of our souls in the Sacrament of Baptism, when we also receive the Spirit of God, also captures this idea of three elements: blood, water and Spirit. Jesus, having received both the water and the Spirit, also has the curse of blood in his life, but for him it is in the future. It awaits him as he is flogged by the Roman soldiers, as the crown of thorns cut into his sacred head, with the grazes as he stumbles on his journey with the cross, as the nails puncture his hands and feet and the lance pierces his side and heart. Rather than the blood of sin Christ's blood is the blood of salvation, it is the blood which changes everything, which enables victory over the world, a victory of our faith. A poignant question is both posed and answered in John's letter: *Who can overcome the world? Only the man who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.*

Your Prayers are asked for:

Fr. Barry and Esther Li died last week, Pauline Southgate died last Thursday. May they rest in Peace. Those who are sick: Teresa Rowan, Archbishop Kevin, Sister Anna, Eva Brewer, Pat Whaley, Len Lane, Peg Bunnage, Sister Stephen, Myra Taylor and Canon William Clements. Hope Sloly who is returning to the war-torn Congo region and Sean McNiff in Afghanistan.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Confessions on Saturdays from approx. 10.30am until 11am and 4.45pm until 5.15pm. Other times by appointment.

HOLY COMMUNION

We warmly welcome all non-Catholic to our services. It is not permitted, however, to receive Holy Communion until a person is received into full membership of the Catholic Church. If you would like to know more about this, please contact Fr. John.