

T H E B U L L E T I N .

The Annunciation Marble Arch

DECEMBER 2014

EDITORIAL BY FR GERALD BEAUCHAMP

By the time that you are reading this it may still be the end of December but Christmas could be a distant memory. So often in our culture 25th December feels like the end of a long haul: one that started when Selfridges opened its Christmas department in August; or perhaps, once Remembrance Sunday had passed.

In some measure at the Annunciation we have gone with the flow. The Christmas tree and decorations went up on 30 November (Advent Sunday) and after that it was full steam ahead with all sorts of carol services. In December I feel that I walk a spiritual tightrope. Advent, like Lent is a season of preparation. Preparation takes time and stepping back. Fasting precedes feasting.

In the church's calendar there are four weeks of Advent and Twelve Days of Christmas. The latter mark a variety of saints and events such as St Stephen, the first Christian martyr and the slaying of the Holy Innocents, the children murdered by King Herod as he sought to rid himself of a rival king. The Twelve Days of Christmas end with the Feast of the Epiphany when we celebrate the coming of the magi who adored the infant Christ and presented their gifts.

But such is the cultural pressure much of the way the church understands Advent and Christmas has been lost. I'm not a party-pooper and most clergy would admit that it is impossible to be a purist outside of a monastery but I hope that amidst the hype that easily hijacks Christmas you have had the opportunity to sense the mystery of God-with-us. After all, it's a gift not a purchase.

Yours in Christ



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*Many thanks to Home House for their generous
donation of the Christmas tree*

IN CONVERSATION WITH...FATHER SIMON

Greetings from St Cyprian's, Clarence Gate, Fr Gerald's other parish near Baker Street Station. When Fr Gerald is with you I look after the Sunday Mass there as his curate.

I am a self-supporting priest which means I work in the week as a partner with a London and regional law firm in the City specialising in commercial law, where I am known for my specialist work in computer and intellectual property law. I trained part time as a priest and Fr Gerald, as well as being our parish priest in Chelsea some years ago, laid hands on me at my priestly ordination in 2009. So it is a great pleasure to work with him in Marylebone.

In my ministry I try to bring the world of work into the church and the church into the world of work. With three children, the youngest, Grace, at Hampden Gurney, I find myself with three intersecting vocations - priest, father and lawyer. Each brings its own joys and challenges. Each enriches the others too. It is a great privilege to lead the people of God in worship and as I tell my law firm colleagues, life in a London parish is never dull.

I am looking forward to being with you at the Annunciation from time to time. My first impressions are of a majestic building, fine music and with what must be the youngest average age of any London parish congregation. May God continue to richly bless you, Fr Gerald and Fr Stephen and see you soon.

Fr Simon

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MARYLEBONE INTERFAITH SERVICE

THURSDAY 13TH NOVEMBER 2014

It was a great privilege for the Annunciation to host the Marylebone Association Interfaith Service in November. In particular it was a pleasure to welcome back the Lord Mayor of Westminster, Cllr Audrey Lewis. When the Mayor came to the centenary celebrations in June she was so struck by the church and the music that she asked that this long-running event should happen this year at the Annunciation.

On the night members of the Jewish, Muslim, Hindu and Buddhist communities took part as well as Christians both Catholic and Protestant. Each shared something of their tradition: the Muslim Call to Prayer, Jewish Commentary on the Torah, verses from the Bhagavad Gita and contemporary Buddhist music. We sang Christian hymns and the sermon was preached by Fr Jim Walters, Chaplain to the LSE. The Annunciation choir under the direction of Christopher Saward was on top form and the trumpeters gave the service some extra pizzazz.

Inevitably such an event attracts criticism. There are people

who feel that the proclamations of other faiths should not be heard in a Christian church. Their hesitations are understood. Christianity can appear to be exclusive. But this comes partly from the church's relationship with earthly powers. It can be argued that the pope is as much the successor of Caesar as he is of St Peter. At their best however people of different faiths can live alongside each other amicably.

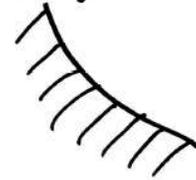
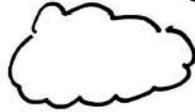
Tragically today many people are dying because of their faith. More to the point some are killing others and justifying this on the basis of faith. That nearly 200 people came together in prayer and respect and then ate and drank enjoying each other's company in the Annunciation is an important sign that violence is an aberration and not the norm.

Underlining that this was a community event it was sponsored by the Portman and De Walden Estates who paid for all of the expenses. To these important local institutions we offer our sincere thanks.

WHAT CHRISTMAS MEANS TO OUR SUNDAY SCHOOL OVER 6'S

Ruby

christmas means that ~~you mean to think when you to~~
jewe.
that you have joy.



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*We celebrate the birth of Jesus and get lots of present from Santa.
We all spend time together.*

Alexia

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*My whole family is together. We eat in the living room and the
kitchen, and we put candles up. We sometimes put little ribbons on
the table to decorate them. I like it when we open all of the presents.*

Chiara

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It's all about Jesus' birthday, and we hope that snow comes.

Fatima

JANUARY EVENTS

04 JAN.

Sunday 4 January, Epiphany Sunday
10.30am Parish Mass

11 JAN.

Sunday 11 January, The Baptism of Christ
10.30am Parish Mass

13 JAN.

Tuesday 13 January
3.45pm Children's Choir Rehearsals begin + 20th & 27th
7.00pm Parochial Church Council Meeting

14 JAN.

Wednesday 14 January + 21ST & 28TH
7-9pm Parenting Course Begins at 4 Wyndham Place

18 JAN.

Sunday 18 January The Second Sunday of Epiphany
10.30am Parish Mass

25 JAN.

Sunday 25 January The Conversion of Paul
10.30am Parish Mass

THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone who made such a spectacular contribution to the Christmas events especially Christopher and the musicians, Vladka and her team who both decorated the church and provided hospitality, the servers and the sidesmen. But thank you most of all to the children whose sheer enjoyment of Christmas saves even the most hard-hearted adult from cynicism.



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www.annunciationmarblearch.org.uk