



ANGELICO, Fra Adoration of the Magi 1423-24
Tempera and gold on panel : Abegg-Stiftung, Bern

All Saints' Wickham Terrace eNews

January 2015

Thank you to everyone who helped in any way around the church over the Christmass period. The Christmass ceremonies were wonderful and the church looked beautiful. A DVD of the Midnight

Mass has been made and hopefully will be available shortly via YouTube linked to the All Saints' Web Page.

Calendar:

Thursday 1 January 2015 – Mary, the Mother of God :- Low Mass 9am

Sunday 4 January 2015 :- The Epiphany of the Lord (transferred from 6 January)
Low Mass 7:30am; Solemn High Mass and Procession 9:30am

Sunday 11 January :- Baptism of the Lord
Low Mass 7:30am; Solemn High Mass 9:30am

Sunday 18 January :- Second Sunday and Week of the Year
Low Mass 7:30am; Solemn High Mass 9:30am

Mr Darryn Jensen, having accepted a professional appointment overseas, will conclude his role as DIRECTOR OF MUSIC on 25 January, however his FAREWELL from All Saints' is scheduled to take place at Morning Tea on 18 January

25 January :- Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul
Low Mass 7:30am; Solemn High Mass 9:30am

His Grace, the Archbishop of Brisbane, the Most Revd Dr P Aspinall will preside and preach.

1 February Presentation of Christ to the Gentiles or Candlemass

Candle Ceremonies will be at the commencement of the High Mass at 9:30am – further information will be provided in the next 'eNews' Gazette

The Journey of the Magi



The poem is based on a sermon on the text "Behold there came wise men from the East" Lancelot Andrewes, Bishop of Winchester, in the early seventeenth century:

"This was riding many a hundred miles, and cost them many a day's journey ... This was nothing pleasant, for through deserts, all the way waste and desolate ... It was no summer progress. A cold coming they had of it at this time of the year, just the worst time of the year to take a journey and especially a long journey in. The ways deep, the weather sharp, the days short, the sun farthest off in solstitio brumali, 'the very dead of winter.'"

"A cold coming we had of it,
Just the worst time of the year
For a journey, and such a long journey:
The was deep and the weather sharp,
The very dead of winter."
And the camels galled, sore-footed, refractory,
Lying down in the melting snow.
There were times we regretted
The summer palaces on slopes, the terraces,
And the silken girls bringing sherbet.
Then the camel men cursing and grumbling
And running away, and wanting their liquor and women,
And the night-fires gong out, and the lack of shelters,
And the cities hostile and the towns unfriendly
And the villages dirty, and charging high prices.:
A hard time we had of it.
At the end we preferred to travel all night,
Sleeping in snatches,
With the voices singing in our ears, saying
That this was all folly.

Then at dawn we came down to a temperate valley,
Wet, below the snow line, smelling of vegetation;
With a running stream and a water-mill beating the darkness,
And three trees on the low sky,
And an old white horse galloped away in the meadow.
Then we came to a tavern with vine-leaves over the lintel,
Six hands at an open door dicing for pieces of silver,
And feet kicking the empty wine-skins.
But there was no information, and so we continued

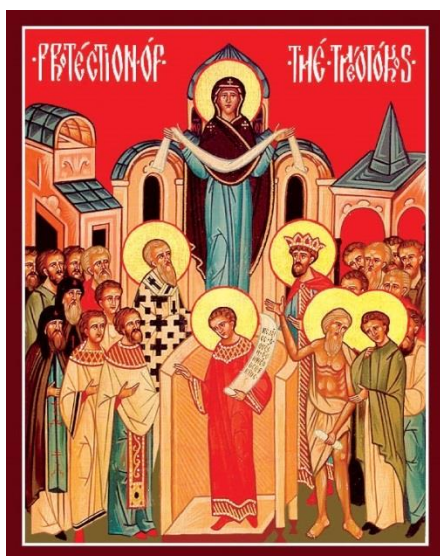
And arrived at evening, not a moment too soon
Finding the place; it was (you may say) satisfactory.

All this was a long time ago, I remember,
And I would do it again, but set down
This set down
This: were we lead all that way for
Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,
We had evidence and no doubt. I have seen birth and death,
But had thought they were different; this Birth was
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
With an alien people clutching their gods.
I should be glad of another death.

By T S Eliot (1888 – 1965)



Mary, the Theotokos



On 1 January, at the end of the Octave of Christmas, we celebrate the great and holy solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God. On this day we are reminded of the role that the Blessed Virgin played in the plan of our salvation. Christ's birth was made possible by Mary's fiat, her 'yes' to God's plan of salvation: 'let it be to me according to your word' (Luke 1:38). One of the earliest titles given by Christians to the Blessed Virgin was Theotokos, 'God-bearer': we celebrate her as the Mother of God because, in bearing Christ, she bore the fullness of the Godhead within her.

As we begin another year, we draw inspiration from the selfless love of the Theotokos, who never hesitated to do the will of God. And we trust in her prayers to God for us, that we might, as the years pass, become more like her. This is because God gave Mary to us as a model of discipleship and especially as a model of prayer. We are called to be like Mary in the way she treasured and pondered the great truths of our faith in her prayer – for where else can you treasure and ponder but in the inner sanctuary of quiet reflection and meditation.

For the events of our salvation unfolded before Mary's own eyes, and how she must have wondered that she was chosen to be an integral part of that plan! She must have wrestled, struggled, begged God for light and wisdom, interceded, not fully understood and thrown herself upon the mercy and providence of God. We must do the same because the truths of our faith are like an ocean, a deep unending mystery of God's revelation, which we are invited daily to plunge into plumb their depths.

(Bible Alive, Daily Reflections, 1 January 2015)



A Brief History of this Feast

In addition to being New Year's Day, 1 January is for us the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. Some Protestant brothers and sisters balk at this particular title of our Lady, until they discover that it was given to her by the early Church primarily as a way of safeguarding the truth about Jesus being both human and divine, God in human flesh.

There had been strange ideas floating around, in particular that Mary was the mother of a human baby who somehow became joined to God. This undermined the Biblical understanding of Jesus as ONE person with two natures. Some people even taught that the divine nature of Jesus didn't come upon him until his baptism!

In contrast to these theories, the Church has always understood from the Scriptures that the divine and human natures of Jesus were united in his one person from the moment of his conception, and that therefore the Baby to whom Mary gave birth was fully divine as well as fully human. This is why the ancient Church called Mary – Theotokos, which means Mother of God or God-bearer.

As early as 500 AD there is evidence of the Eastern Church celebrating a “Day of the Theotokos” just before or just after Christmas. This eventually became a feast of Our Lady on 26 December among the Byzantines, and 16 January among the Copts. By the seventh century the Western Church celebrated the Octave day of Christmas with a strong emphasis on Mary, but this eventually gave way to the Feast of the Circumcision of Jesus. It was in the eighteenth century that the Portuguese Church began to celebrate Mary's “divine maternity”, on the first Sunday in May. The custom spread to other countries, and the feast - which came to be observed on 11 October – was mandated throughout the West in 1931.

It was Pope Paul VI, following the Second Vatican Council, who restored the Christmas Octave day to its Marian emphasis, though the theme of the Lord's circumcision remains as well, so that we celebrate Jesus, truly God and truly man, as our only Saviour, who was born under the law that he might fulfil it, and who would shed his blood for our salvation.

(Off to Church again . . . Mary, Θεοτόκος, Mother of God 1 January 2013 www.fministry.com)



Incense



Psalm 140:1-2 "I have cried to Thee, O Lord, hear me: hearken to my voice, when I cry to Thee. Let my prayer be directed as incense in Thy sight; the lifting up of my hands, as evening sacrifice."

The "sweet savour" of incense was used in Old Testament liturgy as far back as the time of Moses as an offering to God:

Exodus 30:34-37

And the Lord said to Moses: Take unto thee spices, stacte, and onycha, galbanum of sweet savour, and the clearest frankincense, all shall be of equal weight. And thou shalt make incense compounded by the work of the perfumer, well tempered together, and pure, and most worthy of sanctification. And when thou hast beaten all into very small powder, thou shalt set of it before the tabernacle of the testimony, in the place where I will appear to thee. Most holy shall this incense be unto you. You shall not make such a composition for your own uses, because it is holy to the Lord.

... and its continued use was predicted, along with the Eucharistic offering, by Malachias:

Malachias 1:11

For from the rising of the sun even to the going down, my name is great among the Gentiles, and in every place there is sacrifice, and there is offered to my name a clean oblation: for my name is great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of hosts.

Frankincense as a sign of His Divinity, and myrrh to portend His Passion and Death, were two of the three gifts the Magi brought to Baby Jesus --

Matthew 2:11

And entering into the house, they found the child with Mary his mother, and falling down they adored him: and opening their treasures, they offered him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

-- and as portended, myrrh, with its analgesic properties, was offered to Him on the Cross and was used, mixed with aloes, to annoint Him after death:

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And they bring him into the place called Golgotha, which being interpreted is, The place of Calvary. And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh; but he took it not.

John 19:39-40

And Nicodemus also came, (he who at the first came to Jesus by night,) bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. They took therefore the body of Jesus, and bound it in linen cloths, with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.

Even the very angels in Heaven use incense, the smoke of which comes with the prayers of the Saints.

Apocalypse 8:3-4

And another angel came and stood before the altar, having a golden censer: and there was given to him much incense, that he should offer of the prayers of all saints, upon the golden altar which is before the throne of God. And the smoke of the incense of the prayers of the saints ascended up before God from the hand of the angel.



*Thurible
& Boat*

The Catholic Church still uses incense, of course, in accordance with prophecy of Malachias, the fragrant smoke symbolizing our prayers rising to Heaven and purifying what it touches. The incense is kept in a covered, often boat-shaped [liturgical vessel](#) called, unsurprisingly, a "boat," which symbolizes the barque of Peter. The boat, made of bronze or brass and often silver or gold-plated, comes with a spoon for scattering the incense in the bowl-shaped matching burner, called a "thurible" or "censer." The thurible holds burning charcoal (or wood) to ignite the incense and hangs on chains (see angel picture below) so that it may be swung by the clergy when censuring things (or people) and so it may be easily carried by the thurifer -- the "Altar server" who assists the priest by carrying the incense.

Royalty and the aristocracy had incense burned before them on all public occasions. If you wished to honor a friend, you burned incense when he visited you.

Incense was burned in temples and all places of public and private worship in honor of the God who was to visit the temple. It purified the place in anticipation of his visit. The Jews did this and the Christians took over the custom. "From the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my Name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered in my name, and a pure offering; for my name shall be great among the Gentiles, saith the Lord of Hosts." (Malachi 1:11).

It is instructive to notice the places in the Church service at which incense is offered. On the entrance into the sanctuary, at the beginning of the Mass, the priest "censes" the altar to prepare it for the coming of God on the altar. Then he himself is "censed" by the deacon or thurifer because the priest himself is to become an instrument through which God acts in the service. The bread and wine are "censed" at the offertory, because God is going to visit them and make them His habitation. Then the congregation is "censed" for they are going to receive, their communion--God is going to visit them. They further are due honor in their own right as the Mystical Body of Christ through which (with the priest) God acts to consecrate the Holy Sacrifice. At the moment of Consecration the bread and wine (becoming the Body and Blood of Christ) are again "censed" by the thurifer, because God becomes present there.

God is really acting through His priests. God is really present on our altars under the forms of bread and wine; God is really speaking to us through the reading of the Gospel, and finally God is really and actually present in the Christian who receives the Sacraments or hears His Word.

Incense is not used merely because it is pretty, or because it smells sweet, or because we like "high church" but rather because, as a living link with Christians and Jewish antiquity, it assures us that the early Christians believe as we believe, that when we gather together in His Name, God is in our midst, that we do not merely remember a dead Jew but have Communion with a living Christ, that we do not merely long for a heaven that is "up yonder", or "in the sweet by and by", but adore an Eternal Lord who is "right here and now."

It adds to our service an atmosphere of mystery--and well it might. For it signifies an invasion of the Eternal into time, of the Infinite All Holy into the midst of His people.

So when incense is offered, it should properly awe and impress us, with the terrifying fact of the imminent entrance of Him who flung the stars into space and who numbers the hairs of our heads, yet whose tender love is concerned with the sparrow's fall, who willed to be laid in a manger and nailed to a cross that you and I might know His love for all eternity. Understanding its ancient meaning, as purification before the entrance of an important visitor, incense as the Church uses it is eloquent testimony and a vivid dramatization of the Church's most cherished beliefs and vital experiences: God's coming to man, really and actually, in man's worship of God.

Incense is also used during the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament, during processions, funeral rites and to bless things like relics, bells or the Gospel.

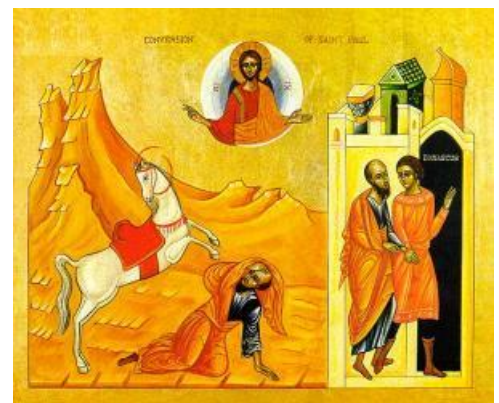
Other uses of incense are the 5 grains of incense, symbolizing [the 5 wounds of Christ](#), inserted into the Paschal [candle](#) on Easter, and the incense burned on the altar stone of a new Altar during its consecration. Incense is also placed inside the cavity (the "sepulchre") of the Altar along with a relic, to symbolize the prayers of the Saint to whom the relic belongs.



The Conversion of St. Paul

St. Paul, known as the Apostle to the Gentiles, was born in the city of Tarsus, a Roman city, thereby giving him Roman citizenship. At his circumcision, he was given the Hebrew name Saul. At a young age his parents sent him to Jerusalem to be instructed in the Mosaic Law under the greatest Rabbi of his time, Gamaliel.

Saul was an excellent student and as a Pharisee was respected for his great intellect and zeal for the Jewish faith and traditions. Because the Jews had a rule that their children should learn a trade along with their studies, Saul learned to make tents. This is a trade that provided him with the finances he needed later in his life to travel and evangelize. Because of Saul's great zeal for Jewish law and traditions, he was very upset about his Jewish brethren who were following the New Way, as Christianity was first called. So, thinking that he was serving God, Saul became the worst enemy of Christians. He hunted them down and dragged them out of their homes, imprisoning them and even having them killed. In fact, Saul was a witness to the stoning of the first Christian martyr, St. Stephen. Because Saul was a leader, he stood by and watched as those stoning Stephen laid their cloaks at his feet. It's very likely that Saul ordered Stephen to be stoned.



Saint Luke's recording of this story in his book of Acts is not merely an historical account. While drawing his last breath, Stephen called out to God to forgive those that were stoning him. St. Augustine later declared that had Stephen not prayed, the Church would have never had the great Apostle Paul. For it was Stephen's prayer that planted the seed which later helped Saul on his path to conversion.

Saul's conversion occurred when he was on his way to the city of Damascus. He had gone to the high priest and the Sanhedrin for a commission to allow him to go know there were many new Christians, to arrest them and take them back to Jerusalem for trial. The journey to Damascus took about two days by

horseback. When he and his men were very near the city, they were suddenly surrounded by a light so bright that it knocked Saul to the ground. The account of what happened then is related in the book of Acts, chapter 9. “They heard a voice from heaven that said: ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?’ And Saul said, ‘Who are you, Lord?’ And He said, ‘I am Jesus, Whom you are persecuting; but rise and enter the city, and you will be told what you are to do.’ The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. Saul arose from the ground and when his eyes were opened he could see nothing; so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus.

“For three days he was without sight and neither ate nor drank. There was a disciple there named Ananias. The Lord said to him in a vision, ‘Ananias.’ And he said, ‘Here I am, Lord.’ And the Lord said to him, ‘Rise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for a man of Tarsus named Saul; for behold, he is praying. And he has seen a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him so that he might regain his sight.’ But Ananias answered, ‘Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to thy saints at Jerusalem; and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call upon thy name.’ But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for he is a chosen instrument of Mine to carry My name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel; for I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of My name.’

“So Ananias departed and entered the house. And laying his hands on him he said, ‘Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me that you may regain you sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.’ And immediately, something like scales fell from his eyes and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized, and took food and was strengthened.” From that time forth, Saul went on to preach about Christ. Because he was so well-known as a Pharisee and was now evangelizing for Christ, Saul began being persecuted by his Jewish brethren in the same way he had been persecuting the Christians. At some point he decided to start using his Roman name, Paul.

After spending some time with the disciples of Christ in Damascus, God called Paul to Arabia where he spent at least two years or more in the desert. It is believed that this is where Paul had visions much like the vision St. John writes about in his book of Revelation. The Lord prepared Paul to teach the Gospel, and when Paul returned from the desert, after a short stay in Damascus, he went directly to Jerusalem where he met with Peter, our first pope, and some of the other Apostles, to receive Peter’s blessing before he started on his ministry. Paul spent the rest of his life traveling and spreading the Gospel of Jesus, establishing churches and teaching others to lead in his absence. Paul’s epistles to the churches that he established make up over one-fourth of the New Testament. He truly is the greatest missionary in Church history.

There is much we can learn from the conversion of St. Paul. One lesson is that we should never judge others. St. Paul, the worst enemy of the early Christians, would seem to be the most unlikely convert to the Church. But God had a plan for Saul, just as He does for each of us. We never know how some small thing that we may say or do will affect another person. When Paul watched Stephen die a holy death, praying for his persecutors, it had to have an impact on him. And Stephen’s prayer was heard by God. The seed, that Stephen planted by his Christian forgiveness of his enemies, helped in the conversion of St. Paul. We are all called to be evangelists, to plant seeds of faith wherever we can — in our families and our work places. We never know when something we do or say might transform another or

even bring a great saint and missionary to the Church like St. Paul.
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