



*Pver natvs in Bethlehem, Allelvia. Vnde gavdet Jervsalem. Allelvia.*

*A Child is born in Bethlehem; Exult for joy, Jerusalem! Alleluia.*



# OSLJ COMMANDERY OF GREAT BRITAIN



Newsletter December 2009

## INVESTITURE 2009



The Commandery's annual Investiture was once again in London on November 23/24. It was a weekend filled with grace and enjoyment. The polyphonic melodies ringing out from the choir loft, the dignified ceremonies, and not to forget the fraternal repasts, created a feeling that we had firmly set the path for our journey in the Order of St Lazarus.

Honoured by the presence of both Grand Secretary, HE Aaron Keily and the Grand Magistral Delegate, HE Bishop Richard Garrard, there was an air of expectation that our swelling ranks, with five new postulants being invested and one demoiselle, could only be enriched with fresh enthusiasm.



The services, held at Our Lady of the Assumption and St Gregory Warwick Street, provided the opportunity for the Commandery to come together as a family once again. The Vigil Service, led by Bishop Garrard, was dignified and joy filled. We were reminded that our *raison d'être*, as members of the Order, was founded on the principles of the beatitudes. We were once again reminded that the Green cross is our banner in the Christian fight for justice - an idea so much promoted by the Grand Master, HRH Prince Charles Philippe. For all of us it is important to call to mind those eight precepts of Christ:

- ☞ Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
- ☞ Blessed are the meek: for they shall possess the land.
- ☞ Blessed are they who mourn: for they shall be comforted.
- ☞ Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill.
- ☞ Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.
- ☞ Blessed are the clean of heart: for they shall see God.
- ☞ Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.
- ☞ Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

After the service we were welcomed guests at the RAF Club where we were treated to a pleasant dinner, during which the Hospitaller gave a presentation on a new Project for us to consider (details will be forthcoming to the members). In the spirit of the temporal responsibility of the Commandery, there was an appeal for financial support. It was also announced that Dame Joan Hanley was to be recognised as the Grand Magistral Delegate for Ireland, an honour she accepted graciously. We all offered our congratulations.





The Investiture was another joy filled occasion. It followed the form of Lessons and Benediction, throughout there was a sense of spiritual calm. The music, provided by the schola, was sublime and added to the sacredness of the event. It was during the service that the new members were invested and the members joined together in praying the promise made to God on the day we were welcomed into the Order.

*O God, you have chosen us to be your Knights and Dames under the protection of the Most Blessed Virgin and Saint Lazarus, grant us grace to above all fulfil our filial duty to you, to be generous in charity to our neighbour, and to remain invincible until death against the enemies of the Cross. Amen.*

Remember these words, and pray that the Commandery continues to be fruitful in its work. pray especially for:

Mr Ronald Bakere [admitted at the rank of BLJ]  
Mr José Emanuel de la Cruz Rodriguez [admitted at the rank of BLJ]  
Mr James Rogers [admitted at the rank of BLJ]  
Mr James Parry [admitted at the rank of BLJ]  
Miss Corinne Wilson [admitted as a Demoiselle]  
Lt Col Julian Tyson-Woodcock [promoted to the rank of SBLJ]

## NATIVITATIS DOMINI

I am presently in the process of reading a fascinating novel - Michael O'Brien's "Father Elijah - An Apocalypse" (published by Ignatius Press). The title speaks for itself about its subject matter and although it was not deliberately chosen as Advent reading it has proved to be providentially relevant. In Her wisdom Holy Mother Church calls to mind what is in fact obvious - that we cannot recall the Lord's first coming "conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary" without pondering when and how He will "come again in glory to judge the living and the dead".

It is so very easy to sentimentalise the Incarnation "Word made flesh" when it is reduced to the domestic scene of the crib without the revelation of the Truth that is really integral to it. When St Francis popularised the crib it was revelatory because it brought home to people that Very God had become at one with them which is awe-inspiring. My suspicion is that people now look at the crib in the shopping centre - and perhaps even in our churches - and see the man but not the God. To take the Truth and to rob it of its strength, to hollow out it's heart, is one of the Devil's oldest tricks. The power of that domestic crib scene is precisely that it is a cosmic event - a cosmic even breaking into the ordinary. The world that would tame the power of the message is happy to accept the domestic scene but would rob it of its power to save by excluding the cosmic significance.

The imaginary apocalypse I'm reading calls to mind the spiritual battle that began with the coming of the Christ-child and ushered in the era in which we live - the era of decision for or against His Kingdom. As we pray in the first Preface for Advent of the Novus Ordo: Now we watch for the day, hoping that the salvation promised us will be ours when Christ our Lord will come again in His glory. But do we watch for the Day of Christ or do we sleepwalk through life, mesmerised by the superficial and all too willingly ignoring the great spiritual battle? I am reminded of the Venerable John Henry Newman's Advent Sermons where he prays: May GOD enable us all thus to walk by faith, not by sight, and live in the past and future, not in the present. Our lives as Christians are lived in the context of the beginning and the end, the alpha and omega, a context unseen by the world, to be seen only with the eyes of faith, yet none the less real for all that.

Let us look back this Christmas and every Christmas with joy and rejoicing, our hearts filled with wonder and praise but may it also find us watching in prayer and looking forward, aware of the spiritual realm and the cosmic significance of the Incarnation, but confident that we live in that age when the loving kindness of the heart of our God had visited us like the dawn from on high.

Fr Simon Henry SChLJ

### FUND RAISING 2009

**D**onations, totalling £1,495, have been received throughout 2009. All donations are greatly received and go a long way in supporting the Charitable aims of the Commandery throughout the world. From Parish collections to Car Boot sales, the efforts of the members are at the heart of our community. Consider taking the time if you can spare it to raise support for the Order's work.

### OBLATIONS 2009

**A** simple reminder that the annual oblations were due on the feast of Saint Andrew, 30 November. You should have received an email/letter from the Treasurer specifying the moneys due. Please ensure that any outstanding payment are made as soon as possible to the Treasurer.

*The Chancellor & the Commandery Council of Great Britain wishes you a blessed and jubilant Christmastide.*



**ATAVIS ET ARMIS**