



# Vox Clamantis

Bulletin of the Society of Saint Pius X in Scotland

December 2018

*"The will to do, the soul to dare"*

Dear Faithful,

With the First Sunday of Advent the new Church year begins. This period of preparation for Christmas will occupy us for most of the coming month. The commercialisation of Christmas has all but suppressed a Christian keeping of the season though, it is certain, a period of preparation, normally through some form of fasting or abstinence, has been observed from earliest times. The French custom of keeping a partial fast from the feast of St. Martin spread to the rest of the Church towards the end of the sixth century and though the amount of fasting or its duration changed during the Middle Ages the idea that Christmas was something which ought to be prepared for remained a constant.

Cardinal Wiseman remarks, "We are not dryly exhorted to profit by that blessed event, but we are daily made to sigh with the Fathers of old, 'Send down the dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the Just One: let the earth be opened, and bud forth the Redeemer.' The Collects on three of the four Sundays of the season begin with the words, 'Lord, raise up thy power and come' — as though we feared our iniquities would prevent His being born."

But it is not just an historical commemoration of the birth of Christ. The term Advent is derived from the Latin word for coming but if we look at the Greek term we see 'Parousia' which reminds us of the theme of the Last Sun-

day of the year as well as the First Sunday of Advent—the coming of Our Lord in glory at the end of time. This too needs to be prepared. And the Church does this through the readings. In the Epistles she exhorts us that, since the Redeemer is nearer, we should cast aside the works of darkness and put on the armour of light; should walk honestly, as in the day, and put on the Lord Jesus Christ; she shows that the (heathen) nations are called to praise the name of the Lord; she asks them to rejoice in the nearness of the Lord, so that the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, may keep their hearts and minds in Christ Jesus; she admonishes them not to pass judgment, for the Lord, when He comes, will manifest the secrets hidden in hearts. In the Gospels the Church speaks of the Lord coming in glory; of Him in and through Whom the prophecies are being fulfilled; of the Eternal walking in the midst of the Jews; of the original *vox clamantis* crying, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord".

Both these themes reinforce the Christian maxim which is valid throughout the year but which is particularly apt in Advent which is that of preparing the coming of our Lord in grace and particularly in Holy Communion. Periods of penance and reflection are just what we need during these precious weeks of preparation, not office parties and carol concerts. When Christmas does arrive, however, I wish you all the blessings of that holy time and have included a brief look at Christmas customs in this month's edition. Don't forget the Christmas party for the children on the 27<sup>th</sup> in St. Andrew's, Glasgow!

With every good wish and blessing,

Rev. Sebastian Wall (Prior)





## A SCOTTISH CHRISTMAS



Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century James Napier wrote a sketch of Christmas Eve and Christmas Day in Catholic Scotland.

The day preceding Yule was a day of general preparation. Houses were cleaned out and borrowed articles were returned to their owners. Work of all kind was stopped, and a general appearance of completion of work was established; yarn was reeled off, no lint was allowed to remain on the rock of the wheel, and all work implements were laid aside. In the evening cakes were baked, one for each person. These cakes were eaten at the Yule breakfast.

On Yule eve those possessing cattle went to the byre and stable and repeated an *Avemaria*, and a *Paternoster*, to protect their cattle.

On Yule morning, attention was paid to the first person who entered the house, as it was important to know whether such a person were lucky or otherwise. It was an unfriendly act to enter a house on Yule day without bringing a present of some kind. Nothing was permitted to be taken out of the house on that day; this prohibition, of course, did not extend to such things as were taken for presents. Servants or members of the family who had gone out in the morning, when they returned to the house brought in with them something, although it might only be some trivial article, say for instance, garden stuff. Masters or parents gave gifts to their servants and children, and owners of cattle gave their beasts, with their own hand their first food on Yule morning. After Mass in church, a table was spread in the house with meat and drink, and all who entered were invited to partake. On this day neighbours and relations visited each other, bearing with them meat and drink warmed with condiments, and as they drank they expressed mutual wishes for each other's welfare. In the evening, the great family

feast was held. In the more northern parts, where the Scandinavian national element was principally settled, a boar's head was the correct dish at this feast, and, by the better class, was always provided; but the common people were content with venison, beef, and poultry, beginning their feast with a dish of plum porridge. A large candle, prepared for the occasion, was lighted at the commencement, and it was intended to keep alight till midnight; and what of it was left unconsumed at twelve o'clock was carefully laid past, to be used at the dead wake of the heads of the family.



It is not difficult to see that many of these traditions have been kept (at Hogmanay) but not at Christmas. The reason for this was the Reformation, for Napier was describing a mediæval Christmas in Scotland.

John Knox, the leader of the Presbyterian movement, banned the celebration of Christmas in Scotland in 1580. Over the following years there was excommunication of those who celebrated Yule, even singing a Christmas carol was considered a serious crime (first offence, a fine; second offence "suffer the pain of deid as idolatoris"). After years of build-up, finally in 1640 an Act of Parliament of Scotland made the celebration of Yule illegal. Punishments for celebrating Yule were harsh, and even after the act was repealed there was no public holiday for the Scottish people on Christmas Day until 1958.

"... the kirke within this kingdome is now purged of all superstitious observatione of dayes... thairfor the saidis estatis have dischaired and simply dischaiges the foirsaid Yule vacance and all observation thairof in tymecomeing, and rescindis and annullis all acts, statutis and warrandis and ordinances whatsoever granted at any tyme heirtofoir for keiping of the said Yule vacance, with all custome of observatione thairof, and findis and



declaires the samene to be extinct, voyd and of no force nor effect in tyme comeing.”



Even the Protestants south of the border were scandalised. Dr. Jamieson reports the horror of an English clergyman on finding how the Scots kept (or rather didn't) the holy day: "The ministers of Scotland, in contempt of the holy-day observed by England, cause their wives and servants to spin in open sight of the people upon Yule day, and their affectionate auditors constrain their servants to yoke their plough on Yule day, in contempt of Christ's nativity. Which our Lord has not left unpunished, for their oxen ran wud, and brak their necks and lamed some ploughmen, which is notoriously known in some parts of Scotland."

It is interesting that Jamieson in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century as well as his anonymous clergyman along with the generality of Scots and, until recently, northern Englishmen, refer to Yule. This term for the Christmas holiday had been taken from the Norse *Jól*, a pagan festival originally but whose name was applied to the period leading up to the great celebration of Christ's birth which was for centuries Epiphany, not Christmas Day itself.

Of course, as part of the Christmas revival (in England) some of the old pagan traditions were re-introduced. Things like the Yule log or even the druidic mistletoe with its associations have become popular again and gradually crept



across the border. The Christmas tree has parallels in pagan customs though in the middle ages it was called the Adam and Eve tree and decorated with apples and not inside the house. Christmas cards are said to have been invented in Edinburgh in the mid-nineteenth century, incidentally.

The strangest and most innocent traditions of the season were forbidden. The Glasgow Kirk Session, on 26<sup>th</sup> December, 1583, had five persons before them who were ordered to make public repentance, because they kept the superstitious day called Yule. The *baxters* were required to give the names of those for whom they had baked Yule bread, so that they might be dealt with by the Church. Ten years after this, in 1593, an Act was again passed by the Glasgow Session against the keeping of Yule, and therein it was ordained that the keepers of this feast were to be debarred from the privileges of the Church, and also punished by the magistrates. In the same year the Scots' Church forbade bakers from preparing mince-meat pies, a chief tradition in pre-Reformation Christmas festivities. They were made in oblong casings to represent Jesus' crib, and it was important to add three spices



(cinnamon, cloves, and nutmeg) for the three gifts given to the Christ child by the Magi. The pies were not very large, and it was thought lucky to eat one mince pie on each of the twelve days of Christmas (ending with Epiphany). As the name suggests, mince pies were originally made of a variety of shredded meat along with spices and fruit. It was only as recently as the Victorian era that the recipe was amended to include only spices and fruit.

Carol singing made a return in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with groups of carollers passing through the town. That too was a mediaeval tradition since carolling (or singing and dancing in a circle) particularly in the vernacular had no place in churches. Alas, the manuscripts of many of the mediaeval Scottish carols perished at the hands of the iconoclasts and very few survive. Here is one that we still have:

Jerusalem rejois for joy!  
 Jesus, the sterne of maist bewté  
 In the is risin, as richtous roy,  
 Fra derknes to illumine the:  
 With glorius sound of angell gle  
 The Prince is born in Bethlehem  
 Quhilk sall the maik of thraldom fre,  
*Illuminare Jerusalem!*



# Mass Schedule



	CARLUKE	GLASGOW	EDINBURGH
Saturday 1 <sup>st</sup> December ( <i>First Saturday</i> )		11am	11am
Sunday 2 <sup>nd</sup> December — 1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent		10.30am	11am
Monday 3 <sup>rd</sup> December	11am		
Tuesday 4 <sup>th</sup> December			6.30pm
Wednesday 5 <sup>th</sup> December			7am
Thursday 6 <sup>th</sup> December	11am		
Friday 7 <sup>th</sup> December ( <i>First Friday</i> )		6.30pm	
Saturday 8 <sup>th</sup> December — Immaculate Conception		11am	11am
Sunday 9 <sup>th</sup> December — 2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent		10.30am	11am
Monday 10 <sup>th</sup> December	11am		
Tuesday 11 <sup>th</sup> December			6.30pm
Wednesday 12 <sup>th</sup> December	11am		
Thursday 13 <sup>th</sup> December	11am		
Friday 14 <sup>th</sup> December		6.30pm	
Saturday 15 <sup>th</sup> December		11am	11am
Sunday 16 <sup>th</sup> December — 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent		10.30am	11am
Monday 17 <sup>th</sup> December	11am		
Tuesday 18 <sup>th</sup> December			6.30pm
Wednesday 19 <sup>th</sup> December			7am
Thursday 20 <sup>th</sup> December	11am		
Friday 21 <sup>st</sup> December		6.30pm	
Saturday 22 <sup>nd</sup> December		11am	11am
Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup> December — 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent		10.30am	11am
Monday 24 <sup>th</sup> December	11am		
Tuesday 25 <sup>th</sup> December — Nativity of Our Lord		11am	Midnight
Wednesday 26 <sup>th</sup> December	11am		
Thursday 27 <sup>th</sup> December	11am		
Friday 28 <sup>th</sup> December	11am		
Saturday 29 <sup>th</sup> December		11am	11am
Sunday 30 <sup>th</sup> December — Within the Octave of Christmas		10.30am	11am
Monday 31 <sup>st</sup> December	11am		

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**If you require any further information concerning one of these places, or need to talk to a priest e.g. in case of emergency for the Sacraments, please ring the phone number mentioned in contact details.**