

*I would like to give
a very big thank you to ...*

- * The army of **parishioners who give their time so generously throughout the year** on a voluntary basis in so many ways to make parish life run smoothly: the liturgy teams who serve, read, administer the Eucharist, take the collection and welcome the congregation; our catechists; our musicians and singers and those who organize and train them; the weekly flower arrangers and church cleaners; the weekly counters; the providers of teas and coffees after Mass ... and many more.
- * All who helped this year with our parish **Advent and Christmas celebrations**, including the Nativity play on Christmas Eve.
- * All the artists, organizers and caterers of the **Events and Arts Groups** who have provided entertainment and good food during 2008 and raised £6,473 towards the Building Project. Included in this is last Sunday's wonderful **Christmas Concert** which raised £352.
- * The many volunteers who help with the **Building Project** in both big and small ways.
- * And thank you to our **band of cheery builders from 8build** who are so working hard. We look forward to seeing the finished result of our refurbished premises!

*Your contribution is most appreciated
and valued. Fr Gerry*

Next week's Readings – The Holy Family:

Isaiah 61: 10 – 62: 3; Psalm 147; Galatians 3: 23-25, 4: 4-7; John 1: 1-18.

The Church of the English Martyrs

**A very Happy Christmas 2008
to our parishioners
and visitors**



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Fr Gerry and Fr David would like to wish all English Martyrs' parishioners a very joyful Christmas and a happy New Year.



ADVENT RECONCILIATION SERVICE

Our service this year will be tomorrow, Monday, 22nd December at 8.00pm. As in other years, visiting priests will be available to hear your confessions.

CHRISTMAS EVE

Our Children's Mass with the Choir and Nativity Play will take place, as usual, at the 5.30pm Mass on Christmas Eve, with Christmas carols.

Or join us for Midnight Mass (carols from 11.30pm).

CHRISTMAS MORNING

We have Mass at 9.30 and 11.30am on this day.

Please see our separate leaflet for full details of services throughout the Christmas and New Year season or visit our website: www.emchurch.org.uk

Recently deceased: We pray for **Carmel O'Keeffe** who died last Saturday after an illness. Her funeral Mass will be here this **Tuesday, 23rd December at 1.00pm**. Carmel was very involved in parish life. She was a catechist with our Journey in Faith team and, for several years, co-ordinated the group. At various times, she was a Reader and Minister of Holy Communion and, until very recently, an active member of a Sunday Liturgy team.

Our prayers and thoughts are with her family and friends, especially her husband, George and daughter, Eleanor.

We will welcome into the Church today **David Joseph Hook** and **Keon Gabriel Corrales** who will be baptised here this afternoon. We wish both boys every happiness for their future.

Reminder! Children's practice for Nativity Play after 9.30am Mass today, meeting at the piano.

Christmas Offerings: Twice a year, at Easter and Christmas, your collection offering is for the personal support of your priest. A special envelope is provided for this purpose. I thank you in advance for your support and generosity. Your Crib offerings are for the work of the Catholic Children's Society. Thank you, *Fr Gerry*

We are still collecting this weekend for two charities:

SPIRES – who have a need for socks, underwear, hats, gloves, wrapped presents, Christmas puds, mince pies, cereals, chocolates.

WOMEN AT THE WELL – who would welcome packeted groceries such as tea, sugar, tins of biscuits, chocolates or tins of meat or soup.

Please place donations in the box in the porch or bring to the parish office, 2 Mitcham Lane. Many thanks, *Fr Gerry*



CHRISTMAS THOUGHT

If you could choose to be anyone in the world, who would it be? A sports person? A famous leader or someone who made a famous medical discovery that cured a terrible disease? Or a film star?

When God chose to be anyone in the world, he chose to be you. That's the meaning of Christmas. When the tinsel is set aside for next year, one fact remains: the all-powerful, God chose to be born as a baby, just like you and me.

Jesus took on our human nature to show us that, by living like him in our daily lives, we can get the most out of life. He experienced the ups and downs that we have; he knows what we need. From womb to tomb, Jesus went through the same as us.

God was yearning to be among us, to show us that life can really be worth living. Each Christmas is God's fresh invitation for us to be fully alive by being fully human like the baby of Bethlehem.

