



Christmas 2010 Newsletter



The apse mosaic of Santa Maria in Domnica (9th century). Photo courtesy of the parish.

***You make this holy night radiant
with the splendor of Jesus Christ our light.***

from the Collect to the Mass at Midnight, Christmas

Dear Friends, This year's Christmas image comes from our local parish, Santa Maria in Domnica. Located just around the corner from the Lay Centre, this splendid basilica, that dates from

ancient times, hosts an active parish with lots of young people in attendance. What you see when you enter the church is a ninth century mosaic which is so beautiful that it nearly takes your breath away. As you move towards the altar, the eyes of the Virgin Mary lock with yours as she almost hands you the Christ child, inviting you to adore Him. Angels on either side gracefully process towards the centre. Pope Pascal I (817-824), who commissioned the mosaic, also reminds us to turn to Christ, as he kneels before the Christ Child. His square nimbus is a sign that he was still alive when the mosaic was completed. As you look more closely at this mosaic, you will notice that Christ's hand reaches out in blessing. Our prayer is that this Christmas, Christ's blessing will bring peace and consolation especially to those who need it most as they gaze on Him. All of us at the Lay Centre wish you and your loved ones a Blessed Christmas and a New Year filled with the blessing that the Christ child bestows today and every day.

Donna Orsuto

Russell Berrie Fellows in Interreligious Dialogue Experience a Chanukkah Shabbat Meal



Rabbi Jack Bemporad during the lighting of the menorah on Friday, 3 December.

On Friday, 3 December, the Lay Centre welcomed the Russell Berrie Fellows in Interreligious Dialogue and hosted a Shabbat Meal presided over by Rabbi Jack Bemporad. An expert in interreligious dialogue and professor at the Pontifical University of St Thomas Aquinas, the rabbi used the occasion to inform the Muslim and Christian participants about the spirituality of the table rituals that accompany the meal on the opening of the weekly Shabbat. He also lit a menorah and explained the biblical and talmudic origins of the modern celebration of Chanukkah. The fellows gathered again on the following day for a full day of conferences with Rabbi Bemporad and Prof. Adam Afterman, of Tel Aviv University, on issues in Judaism today concerning the Holy Land.

Advent Day of Recollection Features the Writings of Blessed John Henry Newman



Rev. Msgr. Roderick Strange presents during the Advent Morning of Recollection on Blessed John Henry Newman on Thursday, 2 December.

The Vincent Pallotti Institute organized an Advent Morning of Recollection on the Writings of Blessed John Henry Newman on Thursday, 2 December. Rev. Msgr. Roderick Strange, Rector of the Pontifical Beda College in Rome, is an expert on Newman having authored *Newman: A Mind Alive* (Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd. 2008). He spoke about Advent themes in the writings of the recently beatified scholar and ecclesiastic. The crowd, gathered at the Lay Centre for the occasion, then participated in the Celebration of the Eucharist and a buffet luncheon.

PLAN ON JOINING US FOR VPI PROGRAMS IN 2011

Called Forth from the Waters: a Baptismal Spirituality in and for the World

Thursdays - 27 January; 3, 10,
17, 24 February; 3 March
from 9:30 am to 12 noon

Ring in the new year with a six week study program with Rev. Brendan Hurley, SJ, and Rev. Mike Woods, SJ, designed to help us "return to the font," that is the baptismal font. It explores how baptism - our own and that of others - potentially shapes a Christ-centered view of the world. Baptism calls us to ongoing conversion, to a discrete sensitivity to the presence of God, to Christ-centered choices and to a community that recognizes him in the breaking of the bread and in the marginalized.

Annual VPI Lenten Weekend Retreat: Forgiveness

Friday evening 11 March- Sunday
afternoon 13 March

Rev. Stephen Rehrauer, CSsR, will guide a weekend of prayer, discussion and fellowship at the Casa di Esercizi Spirituali dei Ss Giovanni e Paolo.

Lay Women & Men:

Called to Transform the World from Within

Thursdays
from 9:30 am to 12 noon

This six week spring program will look at significant lay figures in the Church's history in order to show the perennial value of the lay vocation in the Church and the world.

10 March - "A Gospel of Freedom: The Living Voice of St Catherine of Siena" with Rev. Paul Murray, OP.

17 March - "Dante Alighieri: a Poet's Heart, a Scientist's Mind and a Mystic's Faith" with Rev. Stephen Rehrauer, CSsR.

24 March - "Harmony and Dissonance in the Life of Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina" with Dr. Maeve Heaney.

31 March - "Flannery O'Connor: Comic Disturber of the Peace" with Rev. Michael Paul Gallagher, SJ.

7 April - "Giambattista Tiepolo: Family Man and Religious Artist" with Dr. Joan Barclay Lloyd.

14 April - "Gian Lorenzo Bernini: Architect of the Glory of the Baroque" with Dr. Elizabeth Lev.

CELEBRATING 25 IN 2011

When in 1986 the Foyer Unitas closed its doors in Rome, two lay women developed the idea of a college for lay students. In 2011, the Lay Centre will mark its twenty-fifth anniversary with a number of public events. For more information, check out the new version of the website to be launched on 1 January for our silver jubilee:

www.laycentre.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark your calendar to join us on Thursday, 20 January at 4:30 pm for the Annual Ecumenical Lecture and Celebration of the Word on the occasion of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity at the Centro Pro Unione (Via Santa Maria dell'Anima, 30, Piazza Navona). Rev. Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit will give a lecture entitled "Renewed Mission of the World Council of Churches in the Search for Christian Unity in the Reformed-Catholic International Dialogue." Free entrance. Call 06.687.9552 to make reservations.

Wednesday, 9 February at 6:30 pm Annual Benefit Evening for the Lay Centre at Georgetown Visitation in Washington DC. The Friends of the Lay Centre at Foyer Unitas invite you to a musical evening and reflection entitled "Chant: Jewish, Christian and Muslim Perspectives" with musicians Thomas Stehle, Pastoral Musician at St Matthew's Cathedral, Carl Yaffe, Instructor in Music Theory and Music History at the Levine School of Music, and Imam Yahya Hendi, Campus Minister at Georgetown University. Please call Nancy Lindsay at (202) 364-4256 to make reservations.

Thursday, 3 March at 6:00 pm 25th Anniversary Oasis in the City "Why I Am a Man of Hope" with Cardinal Walter Kasper. This will feature a presentation by the President Emeritus of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, Sung Evening Prayer and a light reception. Please email info@laycentre.org for more information.

Congratulations to our Alumni Living in Rome

Congratulations to Dimitrios Keramidas who successfully defended his doctorate entitled *Sfide della collaborazione intercristiana nell'Europa. Approcci teologici ed ecclesiastici. Il cammino della Chiesa Ortodossa Greca in Europa, dagli anni '60 fino ad oggi* in the Faculty of Missiology at the Pontifical Gregorian University on Thursday, 9 December. Dimitrios was part of the Lay Centre residential community during the 2009-2010 academic year.



(Left photo) Dimitrios Keramidas (second from left) following his doctoral defense on Thursday, 9 December; (right photo) Stephan Kampowski (left) delivers his inaugural lecture on Friday, 10 December.



Congratulations also to Stephan Kampowski who delivered his inaugural lecture *Contingenza creaturale e gratitudine* at the John Paul II Institute for the Study of Marriage and Family. This public exercise marks the beginning of his position as an Extraordinary Tenured Professor and Chair of Philosophical Anthropology at the Institute. Professor Kampowski lived at the Lay Centre from 2000-2005.