

THE YEAR OF SAINT MATTHEW
On Earth as it is in Heaven
MAKING A HOME FOR THE SPIRIT
FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
Sunday 18 December 2022

Remember that the story of Jesus' birth was crafted after the resurrection. It follows the classic acorn-oak pattern. The bigger picture is hidden in the embryo. Nonetheless, the basic theme is stated with alarming clarity. The work of the Holy Spirit emerges in human life as a scandal. During His adult life, Jesus will challenge the prevailing understanding of the law, eat with the outcast and make claims that sound like blasphemy. But for St. Matthew it is clearer still that what looks like a scandal on the surface, is really the work of God at a deeper level. Even as an embryo Jesus caused scandal. What can we expect when he grows up!

Joseph is permitted to hold a public inquiry to determine how his betrothed got pregnant. He does not exercise this right - and neither should we - but decides to apply the law sensitively. However, his plan for a quiet divorce is scuppered by an angel. While Herod has to consult priest and sacred text to find out what God is doing, all Joseph has to do is fall asleep. In his dream he is told that what tradition labels scandal, he must call Spirit. Something big is afoot and Joseph has a part to play. But before he can decide to bless, shelter and protect his betrothed and her baby, he must labour to bring love into the world of law and extend forgiveness to what looked like sin. This is why it is Joseph who must name this child, for the name of his son clarifies his own deeper instincts and affirms the path he must take. The fact that Jesus is named twice in the narrative, means that for St. Matthew, Josephs' way must be ours. The Saviour is for all people and He is for all time. If Joseph, the wise one, can dream and imagine all of this, what might we do?

Here is a beautiful example of what I mean. It is a tale, imagining Joseph talking to his son as he teaches him the skill of the carpenter, or how to fit the pieces together. Joseph speaks.....

"Remember Jesus, whatever we are making, along with it we are also making a home for the spirit. The best way is to clear the space and the best way to clear a space is to stop the mind from judging. Whenever things seem simple and obvious and the mind is feasting on certainty, slow down. There is always more than you think. It just hasn't appeared yet. Judging stops the appearance of more. It cuts people to the little that you know and closes possibilities. Also, when you do not judge you avoid disgracing others. The Law is our measure. It is a tool of judgement but someone always wields it. Do not use it as a hammer to hit, or a saw to cut. Our tools are to fashion a table, not brutalise the wood. The law is a tool to fashion a people for love but in the wrong hands, it can break people and lose its sense of purpose. So, find a way to honour the law and to honour the person who, in our limited understanding, has broken the law. This is not easy. It requires making law work for love. This gives life a chance to breathe and people to change. And the biggest change will not be in other people but in you. It's like this beam of wood. Love takes the beam out of our own eyes. It does not focus on splinters in the eyes of others. Once, something happened and I was tempted to judge and reject. But I held back and waited. And another door opened - the door that is hard to find. I was led into a room of sunlight, a home for Spirit. Your mother and you were there - and a presence of light which dissolved all of my fear. It was as if all distance had been crossed, all separation reconnected. It was a dream but I wasn't asleep. The dream awakened me. The beam fell from my eye. I saw a home for the spirit as an endless adventure, like you growing up, my son. So, see everything at least twice Jesus. See it intensely with the eye of your heart. At first glance, you might see an unusable piece of wood. Looking deeper you may see something beautiful hidden in its shape. When you see this beauty, embrace it. Take it into your home. Don't hesitate. Don't ask questions. Argue about everything but listen always to the voice of love."

The boy listened.....

WE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO HAVE DIED



Freda Crookall RIP whose funeral will take place on Wednesday 21st December at 11am at Easthampstead Park Crematorium.

Peter Hale RIP whose funeral will take place on Tuesday 3rd January at 12pm at Easthampstead Park Crematorium.

ADVENT APPEAL 'GIVE A GIFT'



The Parish Pastoral Care team would like to say an enormous **THANK YOU** to everyone who donated a gift or gifts to the Parish Advent Appeal. Your generosity was truly overwhelming!

Our thanks also go to the amazing team of volunteers who came together and worked their magic, by sorting and wrapping all your donations. It was an amazing team effort and I know that we all had fun and made new friends too, so thank you for volunteering. This week we have started to deliver all these gifts, so our thanks in advance to all those who undertake this very important delivery. Together, you have made it possible for us as a Parish to touch the lives of so many in our community in a very positive way and truly deliver the message of Christmas.

WISHING YOU ALL A VERY BLESSED AND HAPPY CHRISTMAS

Thanking You for Your
Service to Our Parish



This Christmas, we celebrate and give thanks to Fr. Danny for his dedication, guidance and care of us all throughout the past year. If you would like to give a gift to Fr. Danny to support him in his vocation and in the ongoing mission of our parish, please follow this link : <https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/fundraising/bracknell-parish-of-st-joseph-and-st-margaret-clitherow-christmas-collection--2022>

LAST WEEK OF ADVENT REFLECTIONS ON OUR

PARISH FACEBOOK PAGE Follow us @sjsmcbracknell
Advent prayers and resources for all ages: cafod.org.uk/advent



“Mary sustains our journey toward Christmas, for she teaches us how to live this Advent Season in expectation of the Lord. For this time of Advent is a time of waiting for the Lord, who will visit us all on the feast, but also, each one, in our own hearts. The Lord is coming!”

Pope Francis



REMEMBER: For information about local Community Winter Hubs, help with energy costs, food costs, employment, housing and mental health, plus information about the government's help for households/cost of living payment, go to Bracknell Forest Cost of Living Support website: <https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/cost-living-support>

THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD & CHRISTMAS OCTAVE MASSES 2022

Saturday 24th December – Christmas Eve

Family Mass – 5pm

Vigil Mass – 8pm (Carols from 7:30pm)

Sunday 25th December – Christmas Day

Masses at 8:30am and 10:30am

Monday 26th December – St. Stephen 12pm

Tuesday 27th December – St. John 12pm

Wednesday 28th December – The Holy Innocents 12pm

Thursday 29th December – St. Thomas a Becket 12pm

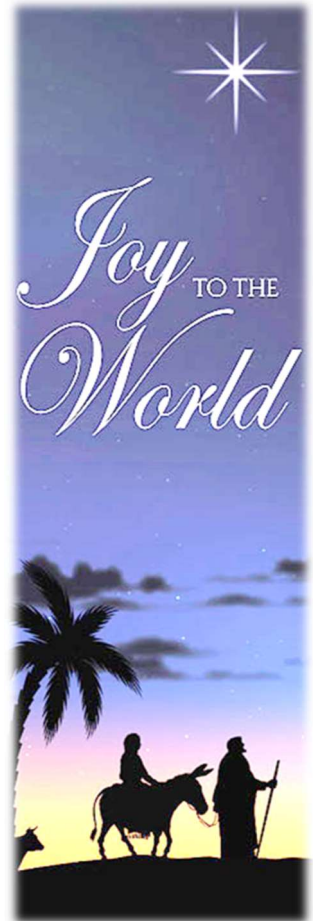
Friday 30th December – The Holy Family 12pm

Saturday 31st December 10am

Mary, The Holy Mother of God

Saturday 31st December Vigil Mass 6pm

Sunday 1st January 8:30am and 10:30am



WE PRAY FOR THOSE IN OUR PARISH COMMUNITY WHO ARE SICK, HOUSEBOUND OR IN HOSPITAL AND FOR THOSE WHO CARE FOR THEM

Ena Stanton, Inge Walker, Eddie Moore, Anne Hardy, Patricia Holmwood, Blanche Shap, Ethna Sweeney, Mary King, Mary Phelan, Tony Andrews, Shaun Howard, Sally Torode, Dorcas Innes-Grant, Veronika Jastrzebski, Jerry Tobin, Rico Morales, Reynalita Leysan, Mary Murray, Thelma Briggs, Margaret Pearce, Audrey Lam, Marie Swash, Terri Landmann, Jennie Tucker, Vilma Taborda, Zac Hoy, Brenda Lynch, Amanda Killestein, Doreen Pryor, Sharon Bryan, Chantal Addley, Terry and Peggy McCullough, John Moir, Beryl Pilgrim, Charles Hose, Douglas & Bernadette Hunt, Phyllis Whitehouse, Clarita Kokou-Tchri, Margaret Finnieston, Louis Burgisser, Prim & Ian Maynard, Vivienne Halfpenny, Ann O'Sullivan, Lucia Saligo, Leonie Macintosh, Maureen Baxter, Catherine White, Ann D'Ambrosio, Edmund Carroll, Claire Hose. Arthur Hardy, Bernard O'Neill

To add or remove a name to this list with consent, please contact the Parish Office.

If you or your relative is housebound, or because of illness cannot come to Mass and wish to receive Holy Communion at home, call the parish office 01344 425729 or email stjb@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

PARISH OF ST JOSEPH and ST MARGARET CLITHEROW, BRACKNELL

Parish Priest: Fr. Daniel McAvoy

Deacon: Rev. Aidan Lynch

Pastoral Assistant: Mary McNab

Safeguarding: Marion McGuire, Sarah Birch, Paula Read
07712 048695 safeguarding@bracknellcatholicchurch.org

Parish Office, St. Joseph's Church, 39 Braccan Walk, Bracknell, RG12 1HA

Usual Office Hours: Tuesday – Friday 9:30am-2:30pm

Telephone: 01344 425729

Email: stjb@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Website: <https://www.bracknellcatholicchurch.org>

MASS TIMES

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT			
Saturday 17 th	6pm	Mass	<i>Roma Bembridge RIP</i>
Sunday 18 th	8:30am	Mass	<i>Parish Intentions</i>
	10:30am	Mass	<i>Doreen Pryor [100TH BIRTHDAY]</i>
Monday 19 th	NO MASS – OFFICE CLOSED		
Tuesday 20 th	10am	Mass	<i>Aslin Family Living & Deceased</i>
Wednesday 21 st	10am	Mass	<i>Freda Crookall RIP</i>
Thursday 22 nd	10am	Mass	<i>The Macdonald Family</i>
Friday 23 rd	12pm	Mass	<i>John Baptist Robertson RIP</i>
THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD			
Saturday 24 th	5pm	Family Mass	
	7:30pm	Carol Service	
	8pm	Vigil Mass	
Sunday 25 th	8:30am	Mass	
	10:30am	Mass	

ALL MASSES ARE LIVESTREAMED <https://www.bracknellcatholicchurch.org/watch-live>

New to our parish or not yet registered? <https://www.bracknellcatholicchurch.org/parish-registration>



07394 440 938

pastoralcare@bracknellcatholicchurch.org

Are you lonely? Are you shielding? Are you ill and in need of prayer and/or support? Perhaps you haven't had contact with the Catholic Church for a while. Whatever the reason, please get in touch for a chat.



07947 182 761

stjb@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Are you in the land of loss & would appreciate a chat with someone in our group? If so, do not hesitate to get in touch.



Call **IN CONFIDENCE**
07731 862 349

If you need help, particularly, as a result of the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the local Society of St Vincent de Paul (SVP) may be able to provide some assistance.

DONATIONS TO PARISH FUNDS Online, Bank Transfer, Direct Debit, Standing Order <https://bracknellcatholicchurch.org/planned-giving>

BANK DETAILS: Account Name: PRCDTR Bracknell St Joseph

Sort Code: 30-93-04; Account Number: 00875520; Bank: Lloyds Bank Plc, Palmerstone Road, Southsea

PLEASE MAKE CHEQUES PAYABLE TO: PRCDTR BRACKNELL ST JOSEPH

South Berkshire Pastoral Area, Portsmouth Roman Catholic Diocese, Registered Charity No. 246871