

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

WHISPER WORDS OF WISDOM, 'LET IT BE'

Sunday 24th December 2023

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New Year's Eve Mass – Holy Family of Jesus, Mary And Joseph – Page 105



It has been six months since God last sent Gabriel. Back then, Gabriel spoke to Zachary in the Holy of Holies, bringing news of a son to those who were well past their sell by date. Gods' Word brings new and strange possibilities. Now Gabriel is back, in a town so small that St. Luke has to name the region to give the reader some ideas of where they are. Gabriel has been sent by God to visit the spiritual centre of a young woman. To ask her to build a house for God - a house that cannot be built by human hands. Gabriel knows something about Mary that she does not know about herself. She is 'full of grace'. Her spiritual centre is an abundant, overflowing spirit. And even though she is troubled by what is unfolding, she does not dismiss it or turn away. She ponders the Word she is hearing and becomes fertile ground for the vocation she is being asked to fulfill. Gabriel pulls her through fear into the love she will need to keep saying yes to God.

Here we must pause to consider one of the most important facets of this story. As Mary feels her way towards an answer, she cannot get past the question of her virginity. Gabriel, proclaims that this child will come to be through the work of the Spirit and the power of the 'Most High'. Mary's identity and her mission cannot be imprisoned by physical and social laws. She will move into Gods shadow, where Spirit becomes flesh. The 'virgin point', the 'al-Hallaj', is the place where God alone has access. This is the place in every human heart where the human and divine meet. Mary is brought to see the sacredness hidden in the depths of every human soul which remains unformed until touched by God.

We might say that here, Mary's perplexity mirrors our own! We are not used to seeing ourselves in this way. But when the penny finally drops, and we see how we have our origins in God, everything changes. Now we can no longer think of ourselves in limited terms. Now, we are sons and daughters of God, who work tirelessly to uphold the sacred dignity of all life. As we move from darkness to light, our own small plans and self-centred ambitions have to give way to make room for the bigger vision. For many, this is the moment when they walk away, but for Mary, her illumined heart takes her to the edge of the ledge and she leaps into decision. 'Here I am - let what you have said be done'.

Back in 1989, Denise Levertov wrote a beautiful piece called 'Annunciation'. It ends like this:

*She did not cry, 'I cannot, I am unworthy.'
nor, 'I have not the strength'.
She did not submit with gritted teeth,
raging, coerced.
Bravest of all humans
consent illumined her.
Consent, courage unparalleled
opened her utterly.*



This is amazing because earlier, Levertov asked,

*"Aren't there annunciations of one sort or another
in most lives?"*

*Some unwillingly undertake great destinies, enact
them in sullen pride, uncomprehending.
More often, those moments,
when roads of light and storm open from darkness
in a man or woman,
are turned away from, in dread, in a wave of
weakness, in despair and with relief.
Ordinary lives continue.
God does not smite them.
But the gate closes, the pathway vanishes.
(A Door in the Hive. 1989)*

Yet, I am not sure I agree with her conclusion. I think God keeps sending Angels until we can see and take the next step.



MAY THE SOULS OF ALL THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED,
THROUGH THE MERCY OF GOD, REST IN PEACE. AMEN.

Children's Christmas Eve Vigil Mass Song Order:

1. Midnight
2. No Room at the Inn
3. Little Drummer Boy
4. S576 Schubert's German Mass
5. Echo Our Father
6. Agnus Dei
7. 127 O Little Town of Bethlehem
8. 136 Silent night
9. 159 O come all ye faithful



Share Great Hollands

Some of our parish members, together with members of other churches and volunteers in Bracknell, have been operating a pop-up food bank for several months now. After starting at St Margaret Clitherow School during the Summer, it now operates at the Great Hollands Community Centre. We are part of the original Share Wokingham organisation. The food is donated by various shops in and around Bracknell and is collected on Friday evenings. Then the pop-up food bank distributes the food on the following (Saturday) morning. Last Saturday 48 people received the food representing about 122 family members.

So a huge thank you is in order to our Share Great Hollands pop-up food bank volunteers; organisers, Friday evening collectors and those giving out the food on Saturday mornings.

Thank you.

Christmas Collections

Collections over Christmas Eve and Christmas Day will be for Fr. Danny and his annual living expenses (the cats).

Plea for a Bunk-Bed

A family are in dire need of a bunk-bed. If anyone should have a spare, please contact Thomas Donker at SVP.

Saturday Vigil Tea and Coffee Trial

There will be a trial of teas and coffees after the 6pm Mass starting on Saturday January 6th. The next one will be January 13th, beginning at 7pm. Please support this opportunity to meet and chat with other parishioners.

Baptism Preparation Evening	Cuppa & A Chat	Children's Liturgy	Soup & Roll
11/01 7:30pm-9:15pm	Cancelled Until the New Year	New Dates Pending	12/01, 09/02, 08/03, 12/04
Complete a Baptism Enquiry Form if you haven't already!			after 12 noon mass



Amanda Killestein	Ann D'Ambrosio	Ann Lynch	Ann O'Sullivan	Anne Hardy
Arthur Hardy	Audrey Lam	Bernard O'Neill	Beryl Pilgrim	Blanche Shap
Brenda Lynch	Bridget Riordan	Charles Hose	Claire Hose	Clarita Kokou-Tchri
Dorcas Innes-Grant	Doreen Pryor	Douglas & Bernadette Hunt	Eddie & Flo Moore	Edmund & Kate Carroll
Ethna Sweeney	Inge Walker	Janet Read	Jerry & Susan Tobin	John Moir
Leonie Macintosh	Louis Burgisser	Lucia Saligo	Margaret Finnieston	Margaret Pearce
Marie Swash	Mary King	Mary Murray	Mary Phelan	Maureen Baxter
Patricia Holmwood	Phyllis Lewis	Prim & Ian Maynard	Rico Morales	Sally Torode
Sharon Bryan	Terri Landmann	Terry and Peggy McCullough	Thelma Briggs	Tony Andrews
Ursula Docherty	Vilma Taborda	Vivienne Halfpenny	Zac Hoy	

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

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 office on 01344 425729 or email office@bracknellcatholicchurch.org

PARISH OF ST JOSEPH and ST MARGARET CLITHEROW, BRACKNELL

Parish Priest: Fr. Daniel McAvoy **Deacon:** Rev. Aidan Lynch

Parish Administrators: Francis Barton and Donna Mody

Safeguarding Team: Marion McGuire, Sarah Birch, Paula Read

07712 048695 safeguarding@bracknellcatholicchurch.org

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

Office Hours: Monday - Tuesday 9:00-3:00pm, Wednesday - Friday 9:00-5:00pm

Telephone: 01344 425729

Email: office@bracknellcatholicchurch.org **Website:** <https://www.bracknellcatholicchurch.org>

MASS TIMES

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD, *solemnity with octave*

Saturday	23rd	6pm	Mass	<i>Ann, Kim & Denis Crampsie RIP</i>
Sunday	24th	8:30am	Mass	
		10:30am	Mass	
		5pm	Mass	Children's Mass
		8pm	Mass	Vigil Mass

THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

Monday	25th	8:30am	Christmas Day Mass
		10:30am	Christmas Day Mass

ST STEPHEN, the First Martyr, feast

Tuesday	26th	12pm	Mass
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ST JOHN, Apostle, Evangelist, feast

Wednesday	27th	12pm	Mass	<i>John Page RIP</i>
THE HOLY INNOCENTS, feast				
Thursday	28th	12pm	Mass	<i>Denis Munnelly RIP</i>
ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY, feast				
Friday	29th	11am	Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament	
		12pm	Mass	<i>Justin Grattan RIP</i>
LITURGY OF THE DAY				
Saturday	30th	10am	Mass	
		11am	Confessions	
THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY & JOSEPH, feast				
Saturday	30th	6pm	Mass	<i>Mary Rose Quilliam RIP</i>
Sunday	31st	8:30am	Mass	
		10:30am	Mass	<i>Filip Bronislaw Faryniarz FHC</i>
MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD, solemnity				
Monday	1st	12pm	Mass	
ST. BASIL THE GREAT & GREGORY NAZIANZEN, Bishops, Doctors of the Church, memorial				
Tuesday	2nd	12pm	Mass	
LITURGY OF THE DAY				
Wednesday	3rd	12pm	Mass	<i>Colin Collier RIP</i>
LITURGY OF THE DAY				
Thursday	4th	12pm	Mass	
LITURGY OF THE DAY				
Friday	5th	12pm	Mass	<i>Catherine Grattan RIP</i>
LITURGY OF THE DAY				
Saturday	6th	10am	Mass	
		11am	Confessions	
THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD, solemnity				
Saturday	6th	6pm	Mass	Parish Intentions
Sunday	7th	8:30am	Mass	
		10:30am	Mass	
THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD, feast				
Monday	8th	No Mass		

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

New to our parish or not yet registered?

<https://www.bracknellcatholicchurch.org/parish-life/parish-registration>



01344 425729

office@bracknellcatholicchurch.org

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



07852 497 218 / 07851 200 987

office@bracknellcatholicchurch.org

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 are struggling financially and need practical assistance, the local Society of St Vincent de Paul (SVP) may be able to help. Do call us in confidence for a chat.

DONATIONS TO PARISH FUNDS Online, Bank Transfer, DD, <https://www.bracknellcatholicchurch.org/planned-giving>

BANK DETAILS: Account Name: CDP Bracknell St Joseph Sort Code: 30-93-04; Account Number: 00875520

PLEASE MAKE CHEQUES PAYABLE TO: **CDP BRACKNELL ST JOSEPH**

South Berkshire Pastoral Area, Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth Registration Number: 1199568