

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

DRINKING FROM THE SKY

12th January 2025

Missal Page 100

Family and friends are gathering at the local church for the Celebration of the Baptism of the latest - and most precious - arrival. Amy! Invisibly, they stand in two circles, the inner circle being made up of the parents and godparents and then the wider circle of their community. It's snowing, and Granddad is trying to teach the children how to catch the snowflakes that are falling from the sky with their tongues. They think they have to chase them and create a very funny scene. One day they will learn that it is best to be still. But even so, it is never easy to drink from the sky.

For the brief time that John the Baptist and Jesus were together they were a team. John prepares human hearts to welcome the One who is to come by bringing them to forgiveness. His Baptism distances them from their sin and any mistaken notion they might have had that this is who they are. But this is only a first step. Turning away from sin creates the freedom to turn towards God. As John's disciples turn, the only person they can see is Jesus. And Jesus has just come up from the dark river, filled with the Spirit and certain that he is 'The Beloved Son of God'. Now, the heavens are open never to be closed and the Dove, symbol of Love, moves towards Jesus.

In the Gospels the Father only speaks twice. In Mark and Luke it is a direct address "You are my Son, the Beloved, with you I am well pleased". In Matthew the address begins with "This is my Beloved Son...". Where Mark and Luke seek to establish intimacy, Matthew is more concerned with identity. Both are needed.

Back to the family we met at the beginning. The priest arrives with the key which will unlock many gifts for this little one. The rituals will illuminate exactly what these are. What name have you given your child? Her name is spoken with reverence. The reverence that accepts that we know her but that she is also wrapped in mystery. The parents are then asked if they will open what otherwise would have remained closed by being faithful witnesses. They say yes but they hardly know what they mean. Still, they are willing to begin the journey. Support will be needed. That's what Godparents are there for. They will need support, that's what family and friends are for. Now that the inner circle is complete, everyone is invited to make the sign of the cross on Amy's forehead. This is the call to the third eye, the eye of the heart and the soul which looks in two directions. It gazes on the world and on eternity at the same time. With the water of Baptism the eye is awoken from sleep. The priest is reading the Gospel about Jesus challenging his bodyguard not to push the little ones away. He does this by embracing, blessing and laying hands of love upon them. This is how we open the third eye. This is how to babysit a child of God.

So, family, friends and community must renew themselves for this work. This is done by a renunciation of Satan - the accuser and the divider - by refusing the strategies of accusation and division to increase our own power. Instead we commit ourselves to the strategies of the Beloved Son - forgiveness and reconciliation. By freeing ourselves and opening ourselves we have created the right conditions for the water to be poured.

In our beautiful catholic tradition, nothing is ever what it seems. This is the font of the sacramental life of the church. The water, which is not water is poured. Oil, which is not oil, will follow the water and Amy will join the line of priests, prophets and queens who belong to Jesus. A candle, which is not a candle, will be lit. A white garment, which is not a white garment, will enfold her. The Risen One is here, they sing. The Spirit is here, they sing. And they are right.

Back at the house there is a party. Everyone toasts the new baby and asks that she will find true friends and live in a world of justice and peace. They move towards the buffet, and for a moment I am left alone with her. She begins to cry. I offer a finger to her outstretched hand and she grasps and holds it tightly. I wait until her distress, like all distress, passes away. It is a moment to ponder. That our Catholic Faith does not celebrate the individual seeker, the lonely exile. It begins and unfolds in a relationship where the old give the young the gift of the truth. As I ponder what we have just done I remember that the touch of love is a revelation of the spirit. I will continue to bless the little ones because their day is dawning. I will continue to enjoy every Baptism because it helps me understand myself and my own Baptism more.



There is an explosion of laughter from the sitting room and grandad is, as usual, at the centre of it. I hope she will have time to get close to him. I think he will teach her how to drink from the sky.



GIVE Campaign Update #054



FLAME Fundraising Volunteers We are seeking the support of a few parents who can assist with our fundraising efforts for the upcoming FLAME day out in Wembley next year. Your help would make a significant difference and directly benefit the whole group. Please reach out to Bernard or the office if you're able to help, thank you!

Winter ClothesBank Giveaway The winter ClothesBank Giveaway will be held on Tuesday 28th January from 10:15am to 1pm at St. Mark's Church, Popeswood Road, Binfield, RG42 4AH. We are once again providing vouchers for the ClothesBank to those in need, so please contact the office should you need a voucher. If you also need transport to the ClothesBank, a free minibus shuttle courtesy of Newbold College will be operating between Bracknell train station and St. Mark's Church, and will leave from the train station at 10am, 10:30am, 11am, 11:30am, and 12 noon. Please let us know in advance if you intend to travel using the minibus so a seat can be reserved.

Weekday Missals

Please can anyone interested in purchasing a weekday missal inform the office over the next week, so we can get an idea of quantity and if they're feasible to purchase, thank you.

Couple Counselling

If you are experiencing any difficulties in your relationship with your spouse/partner, we have collaborated with a local relationship counsellor based in the Bracknell area who will be able to assist you. For more information please visit <http://www.marriagecare.org.uk> or call 0800 389 3801. Your call is confidential.



A Church Renewed: An Update from Dr. Austen Ivereigh

Join us for a webinar with Dr. Austen Ivereigh on February 5th at 7:30 PM. Following his insightful talk at Corpus Christi in 2023, Dr. Ivereigh will discuss the latest developments since the conclusion of the Synod on Synodality. Learn why this shift towards a more participatory Church is crucial for the future. Register now for this important event which is free of charge: <https://bit.ly/CCA1w>.



World Day of Peace

On the 1st January each year, the Catholic Church observes the World Day of Peace, first instituted in 1967 by Pope St. Paul VI. In England and Wales, the Bishops have designated the second Sunday in Ordinary Time as 'Peace Sunday', a day when you are encouraged to reflect on the Pope's message for the year. This year the message is **'Forgive us our trespasses: Grant us your peace'**. You can read the full message here: <https://paxchristi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/20241208-messaggio-58giornatamondiale-pace2025.pdf>

Bickerton House Care Home Events (RG12 2JB):

Canine Café	Friendship Café	Community Cinema
The first Wednesday of each month, 2pm – 4pm	The second Thursday of each month, 10:30am – 12noon	The third Thursday of each month, 2:30pm – 4:30pm
		

Parish Events	When?	Where?
Gospel Outreach with Music (Carols)	13/01, 1:45pm-3pm	Bickerton House, RG12 2JB
Gospel Outreach with Music	22/01, 1:45pm-3pm	Bracknell Care Home, RG12 7DN
Gospel Outreach with Music	31/01, 1:45pm-3pm	Bickerton House, RG12 2JB
Gospel Outreach with Music	26/02, 1:45pm-3pm	Bickerton House, RG12 2JB
Cuppa & Chat (60+) ☕	14/01	Church Hall
Children's Liturgy (please pre-book) 👧👦	19/01, 02/02, 16/02	Church Hall
Soup & Roll 🍲	17/02 (second Friday of the month)	Church Hall
Parish Prayer Group 🙏	21/01	Church Hall
RCIA 📖	Every Wednesday, 7:30pm-9pm	Church Hall

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

FOR THOSE WHO CARE FOR THEM

Amanda Killestein	Angela Dossett	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	Douglas & Bernadette Hunt	Dymphna Slade	Eamon McNeill
Eddie & Flo Moore	Edmund & Kate Carroll	Inge Walker	Janet Read	Susan Tobin
Joe Rice	Leonie Macintosh	Louis Burgisser	Lucia Saligo	Margaret Finnieston
Marie Swash	Mary King	Mary Murray	Mary Phelan	Mary Stocking
Maureen Baxter		Patricia Holmwood	Paula Sandford	Phyllis Lewis
Rico Morales	Sally Torode	Terri & Andy Landmann	Terry & Peggy McCullough	Tony Andrews
Ursula Docherty	Vilma Taborda	Vivienne Halfpenny		

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

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD, *feast*

Saturday	11th	6pm	Mass	
Sunday	12th	8:30am	Mass	<i>Marie Hibbard (100th birthday)</i>
		10:30am	Mass	Parish Intentions

BEGINNING OF ORDINARY TIME

Monday	13th	NO MASS
Tuesday	14th	NO MASS
Wednesday	15th	NO MASS
Thursday	16th	NO MASS

St Anthony of Egypt, Abbott, *memorial*

Friday	17th	NO EXPOSITION
		NO MASS
Saturday	18th	NO MASS
		NO CONFESSIONS

SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Saturday	18th	6pm	Mass	<i>Stuart Birley RIP</i>
Sunday	19th	8:30am	Mass	Parish Intentions
		10:30am	Mass	<i>Norah Broomfield RIP</i>

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>

Pastoral Care 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.

Bereavement Support

07852 497 218 / 07851 200 987

bereavement@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.

SVP 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://bracknellcatholicchurch.org/give/>

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**

JOBS AVAILABLE IN THE DIOCESE: <https://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/about-us/other/jobs>

South Berkshire Pastoral Area, Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth Registration Number: 119956