

GOSPEL REFLECTION FOR THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

Christmas Spirit



You've done it! The hysteria is over and you have arrived at Christmas Day without too much physical or psychological harm. It's all too easy at this point to collapse in a heap with the Radio Times and an overly large sherry feeling that Christmas is safely over for another year. But Christmas is more than just the culmination of Advent; it's the beginning of the Christmas Season, in which we are invited to contemplate on salvation "made flesh". As children we visited church on Christmas day to sing Christmas carols and peep in at the cosy crib scene. As adults we are invited to contemplate the deeper and long lasting meaning of Christmas.

How many times have we been guilty of thinking of God as a distant figure? How often have we wandered how to develop a relationship with a God who is supposed to love us, yet remains stubbornly silent and invisible. But on this day over twenty centuries ago, there was something of a miracle. God was no longer somebody we couldn't see or hear, God became "flesh" in the form a small child in a stable. God came into the world that he had created to save us. Jesus is the face and voice of God. Jesus became the blueprint of how we should live our lives. His life and work is there for us all to read and remember. He has left the Holy Spirit as his legacy to help and guide us. Our acceptance of Jesus is key to our relationship with God.

For children, the excitement of Christmas comes once a year. As adults we learn to live the true meaning of Christmas not on this one day but every day. As Ebenezer Scrooge promises in the in final pages of Dickens' 'Christmas Carol' as he leaps out of bed on Christmas morning, the time before him his own to make amends in, "I will live in the past, the present and the future. The spirits of all three shall strive within me."

Bite Size

"Christmas gift suggestions: to your enemy, forgiveness. To an opponent, tolerance. To a friend, your heart. To a customer, service. To all, charity. To every child, a good example. To yourself, respect." ~ *Oren Arnold*

PARISH PRAYER - Father, pour out your Spirit upon our parish. Grant us a new vision of your glory, a new faithfulness to your Word, and a new consecration to your service; that your love might grow among us and your Kingdom come.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen

Useful links: Diocesan Website: <http://www.rcdea.org.uk>
Notre Dame High School, Norwich: Website <http://www.ndhs.org.uk>

PARISH OF THE SACRED HEART AND ST MARGARET MARY

[Reg. Charity 278742]

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25TH DECEMBER 2016 – THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD



Christmas Masses – Pages 95, 98 & 103 of Parish Mass Book

Christmas Eve	5.30 pm	<i>Christmas Carols (see inside for hymn nos.)</i>
	6.00 pm	First Mass of Christmas – Int. Francis Lynch
	9.30 pm	<i>Christmas Carols (see inside for hymn nos.)</i>
	10.00 pm	Mass during the night ('Midnight Mass') – Int. People of the Parish
Christmas Day	10.00 am	Mass during the day – Private Int.

Music for Christmas Masses - Setting: Dom Gregory Murray Mass

Entry Hymn 128 – Once in royal David's city ...
Offertory Hymn 136 – Silent night, holy night ...
Communion *Instrumental Interlude/Sacred silence ...*
Recessional - 6pm & 10pm (Christmas Eve): Hymn 130 – Angels we have heard in heaven
10 am (Christmas Day): Hymn 159 – O come, all ye faithful

Weekday Mass Times (The Octave of Christmas) [Psalter Week 1]

Mon.	12.00 Noon	St Stephen, The First Martyr – Int. Mary Reeder
Tues.	No Mass today	St John, Apostle & Evangelist
Weds.	10.00 am	The Holy Innocents – Int. Phyllis Thurstance
Thurs.	10.00 am	St Thomas Becket – Int. Mary Gledhill
Fri.	No Mass today	The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph
Sat.	No Morning Mass	7 th day within the Octave of the Nativity
	6.00 pm	Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God – Int. Sr. Mary Stephen

The Parish Newsletter (incl. back copies) is available to view on the parish website from Friday onward each week.

Anniversaries this week: Joseph Murphy, Ivy O’Shea, Charlie Secker, Mary Reeder, Charles Wilfred Hunt, Dorothy Pinner, Harry Dempsey, Helen Phyllis Coyne and Alda Dias. *May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace.*

Hospital Visits – If you or family members are admitted to the Norfolk & Norwich Hospital (NNUH) or Queen Elizabeth II Hospital (QEII), King’s Lynn, and would like a visit from the Roman Catholic Chaplain, please call either St John’s Cathedral, Norwich (01603 624615) for visits to NNUH, or Fr Peter Rollings (01553 772220) for visits to QEII. If you would like to receive the Sacrament of Anointing of the sick before going to hospital, please contact Fr. Brendan on 01362 694066.

Sick List - Please pray for: Joan Blakiston, David Peek, Robert Nicol, Shirley Liebenhals, Sarah Chaudri, Anne & Derek Williams, Michelle Smith, Rita Smith, Eileen Brockleby, Pat Howe, Kathleen (Jenny) Rudd, Ellen Flood, Margaret Leggett, Peter Brown, James Maxwell and Pamela & Catherine Evans.

Money Matters – The collection for the parish last weekend amounted to £460.95. Thank you very much. The collection during the Christmas Masses is the traditional Christmas Offering to the Parish Priest.

Please note the following changes to this week’s Mass Times –

- ◇ Mon. – Mass is at 12 noon for the **Altar Servers Renewal of Commitment.**
- ◇ Fri. – Please note there is no Mass or evening Exposition & Vespers this week.
- ◇ Sat. – Please note there is no morning Mass while Saturday Club is on holiday.

Diary Dates for this week –

- Tues. – Please note there is no Queen of Peace Prayer Group this week.
- Sat. - Saturday Club is on holiday. Classes begin again on 7th January.

I would like to wish everyone in the parish a very happy, holy, joyful and peaceful Christmas and a happy New Year. Thank you to everyone who do so many things during the year to make this community a real and living sign of the presence of Christ. Your commitment to the Christian Faith is an inspiration and a true sign of the holiness of God's people. Thank you for all your encouragement to me throughout the year. Fr. Brendan.

Boxing Day, 26th December - The Feast of Stephen - There seems to be two theories on the origin of Boxing Day and why it is celebrated. The first is that centuries ago, on the



day after Christmas, members of the merchant class would give boxes containing food and fruit, clothing, or money to trades people and servants. The second thought is that Boxing Day comes from the tradition of opening the alms boxes placed in churches

over the Christmas season. The contents thereof which were distributed amongst the poor, by the clergy, the day after Christmas. What a great extension of the Christmas holiday spirit. You might consider making this holiday a tradition in your family. Put into practice the simple principle of giving to others less fortunate.

Holy Innocents Day, 28th December ('Childermas') - Holy Innocents Day, once also known as 'Childermas', falls on 28th December. It commemorates King Herod's massacre of all male infants in and around Bethlehem under the age of two in an attempt to kill the young Christ. In the days when Christmas was less child centred, Childermas was a time for indulging children with treats and parties. Today is a day we might consider supporting a children's charity such as Barnardos, NSPCC, UNICEF, and Save The Children. Alternatively you might consider supporting child refugees through our Catholic aid agencies and the Barnabas Fund.

Feast of the Holy Family, 30th December: Family Values - The birth of Christ took place



in circumstances of poverty, without many of the comforts we would consider basic, and yet we know that this was a family that shared every value that counts for anything. It doesn't matter whether we are single parents, aunts, uncles, foster parents or grandparents we look to the Holy Family and follow their example in making our own homes places of peace and happiness places where true

values flourish.

Christmas Eve - Carols before Evening Masses

- 1) 144 – In the bleak midwinter,
- 2) 127 – O little town of Bethlehem,
- 3) 133 – While shepherds watched their flocks by night
- 4) 129 – God rest you merry, gentlemen,
- 5) 150 – The first Nowell the angel did say
- 6) 155 – Hark! the herald angels sing,

