

Catholic Church of Mary Immaculate and St Gregory the Great

# The Nativity of the Lord / The Holy Family

Christmas Day of Jesus, Mary & Joseph

**Fri 24 Christmas Eve***(no adoration today)**(no Christian mediation today)***\*4.30pm (vigil I)**

Bill &amp; Rosemarie Tinsley +

**\*6.30pm (vigil II)**

Maura &amp; Alan Howells +

**10pm: (Night) Maurice Hunt +****Sat 25 The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas Day)****8.30am:** Nellie Haughey ann +**10.30am:** Jan Agilada +**Sun 26 The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph****8.30am:** Rita McKenna (int)**10.30am:** Patrick Parsons +**6pm:** Peter Delyfer (int)**Mon 27 St John, Apostle & Evangelist****10am:** Sister Mary +*(please note no 6pm mass)***Tue 28****10am:** Liam Kinsella +**Wed 29 No Mass****Thu 30****10am:** Margaret Simons +**Fri 31****10am:** Mary Fitzsimons +

Dear Parishioner

May I take this opportunity to wish you a blessed and healthy Christmas and New Year.

As a parish, we have been through turbulent times and I thought it would be good to give thanks to the Lord for His continued blessings in our lives and in our parish. It is wonderful for us to come together to celebrate Christmas, the birth of our Saviour, and I believe the Lord is teaching us how to rely and depend on Him more and more each day.

Throughout these recent months, the good news of Jesus is being proclaimed and we have been blessed with reaching out to children, families and the elderly within our parish. We currently have a number of children attending Saturday RE Classes; together with a lively Baptism Class; thirty five children preparing for the Sacrament of Holy Communion; twenty five year 9 and twenty year 10 students preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation and amazingly ten adults attending the RCIA flowing from recent 'Alpha' courses. (This is a wonderful response considering the pandemic).

Slowly parish life is recovering and groups are gathering once again. Our finance team continued serving our parish throughout the pandemic. We now have an active Pastoral Forum; please see the noticeboard or parish website for information. It is great to see the 'Life Ascending' group meeting regularly, which continues to be a wonderful support to the senior members of the parish. We also have a number of parish Prayer Cell groups and men's prayer groups. We have a number of independent groups back in our hall, such as CancerLink and Guiding, and we look forward to the other groups restarting, such as the parents and toddlers and youth clubs, in the new year.

If you would like to know more about the above groups, please feel free to contact me or email me at the presbytery.

*continued overleaf...***Parish Priest:** Fr John McKenna**Telephone:** 020 8449 3338

82 Union Street, Barnet, EN5 4HZ

Email: [barnet@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:barnet@rcdow.org.uk)Website: [parish.rcdow.org.uk/barnet](http://parish.rcdow.org.uk/barnet)

A huge thank you to our army of volunteers who reached out to the many isolated parishioners during the pandemic and continue to do so. Thank you also to our stewards, flower arrangers and cleaning teams who have kept us safe and sane over the past months and who continue to serve our parish.

St John Paul II once said 'we could not exist without music' - on behalf of the parish, much gratitude to those who provide liturgical music at Mass, which helps us to worship the Lord. Equally, the ministry of Reader is an essential part of our liturgical celebrations and I am very grateful for those who proclaim the Word of God. This is also true of our many Eucharistic Ministers who visit the sick and housebound and minister communion at Mass. It is also important to acknowledge the work of Sacristans and Servers.

Lastly, our parish is eternally grateful to the continued Grace of the Holy Spirit.



Mary Immaculate, pray for us.

Saint Gregory the Great, pray for us.



*Fr John McKenna*

## NOTICES

**ALL CHRISTMAS EVE & DAY MASSES WILL BE LIVE STREAMED:** but can only be accessed via our facebook page five minutes before Mass, please visit: 'Mary Immaculate & St Gregory the Great' High Barnet.

**SEATING FOR CHRISTMAS MASSES:** will be on a 'first come, first serve' basis. Please do not reserve the seating and can we ask you to arrive together. To keep everyone safe, stewards are instructed, on my behalf, to steward these Masses. When we have reached full capacity, regrettably, the doors will be closed. Fr John.

- **Face coverings must be worn whilst in church (unless exempt).**
- Please ensure you wrap up well when attending Mass, as we are advised to have plenty of ventilation in church.
- **Please continue sanitising your hands as you enter and exit the church.**
- If you are showing any flu/cold symptoms, please remain at home and do a lateral flow test. If this is positive, obtain a PCR test and isolate according to the government guidelines.
- **If you are isolating, living on your own and need assistance, please contact the presbytery.**

**DATE FOR THE DIARY:** Friday 7th January 2022: Mass of Transformation, with praise & worship, adoration and reconciliation. Please join us!

**CRIB:** this Christmas our offering will be donated to the Catholic Children's Society to support their work with disadvantaged children and families. This will help provide mental health services, family support and emergency grants for vulnerable children in our Diocese.

**EPIPHANY OF THE LORD: Thursday 6th January 2022:** Mass is at 10am.

**SATURDAY RE CLASS:** will start again on 15th January, 9.30am in the JP Room.

**POOR CLARE'S COLLECTION:** Thank you for your wonderful support. £500.00 was collected for the Poor Clare Sisters, along with your generous donation of gifts.

**CAFOD** crisis appeal for Afghanistan. To donate, please visit [cafod.co.uk](http://cafod.co.uk) and support this worthy cause. Thank you, Rosie.

**THANK YOU** for your Christmas cards and generous gifts. May we wish you and your families a Blessed Christmas and peaceful New Year 2022.

*Fr John and the Parish Team*

**PARISH OFFICE:** is closed this week. Anything urgent, please telephone the presbytery. Non-urgent enquiries can be emailed to [barnet@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:barnet@rcdow.org.uk)

### FOR YOUR PRAYERS

**\*\*Please remember in your prayers the sick, their families and all who care for them, including:**

Emanuele & Carlotta Brunelli, Linda & Stuart Atkinson, Pat Cosgrove, Bernadette Hunt, Roberto Lusignani, Elaine Brennan, Mark O'Brien, Rita Rawlings, Margaret Trehy, Joe Connolly, Mary Harris, Eric Power, Michael Keyes, Julie Lown, Eileen Robbins, John Chuter, Marlene Hollocks, Margaret Greaney, Veronica Soosay, Leonor Driscoll, John Thompson, Lucretia Olivier-Hall, David John Hall, Suzanne Greig, Paul Stephens, George Buhagia, Phyllis O'Grady.

**Recently Died:** Hanoria Barry

### Parish Staff Contact Information

**Anita Hammond** - Catechetical Co-ordinator: [anitahammond@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:anitahammond@rcdow.org.uk)

**Jonathan Stephens** - Evangelisation Co-ordinator: [jonathanstephens@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:jonathanstephens@rcdow.org.uk)

**Janet Nestor** - Secretary: **Parish Office** - [barnet@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:barnet@rcdow.org.uk) (office is closed every Wednesday)

**ARCHBISHOP'S HOUSE,  
WESTMINSTER, LONDON, SW1P 1QJ**



**Pastoral Letter for the Feast of the Holy Family  
26 December 2021**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ,

The stage today is somewhat crowded. Not only is it Boxing Day and the Feast of St Stephen, but it is also the Feast of the Holy Family. The Holy Family takes precedence, and rightly so. But the other two will get a mention.

The Holy Family is the first flowering of the Feast of Christmas. Our concentration on the birth of Jesus embraces Joseph and Mary too. There, in the simple circumstances of an animal's stall, the Holy Family takes shape.

This is no romantic image of family life, far from a respectable home where everything is 'just so'. We easily forget that, at the birth of Jesus, the animals were not at all cuddly and probably very smelly; and that the manger was filled not with soft hay, but scratchy straw. Yet these were the circumstances into which the Eternal Word, through whom all things are made, chose to enter our world. So let's put aside any idea that there is no connection between this Holy Family and the reality of our own home life.

Not so! We can hold this Holy Family to be a model, an inspiration, for our family life precisely because it is thoroughly human, thoroughly immersed in the same realities as ours, and thoroughly dependent on the goodness of its members, strengthened by the all-present grace of God.

In this past year, we have been giving additional thought and attention to Joseph. He emerges as a parent full of tender love. By this I mean that the love he had for the child in his care was both strong and gentle. Every parent needs this. This love does not overlook weakness and failings in a child. But it does mean never humiliating, or belittling a youngster because of his or her struggles. Such tenderness is an expression of strength. Such tenderness comes from a love that has eyes only for what is best for the young person making their way to maturity. The quiet, steadfast love of Joseph is part of what makes his family holy and is a model for holiness in our own homes too.

This parental love shown by Joseph was never possessive. Parental love is not only full of wonder at the uniqueness of the new life in their child, but also knows that the child is given as a gift to be cared for, and not a possession to be managed. In this sense, human parenthood is about letting go.

This helps us to understand the words of Jesus when he says: 'You must call no one on earth your father, since you have only one Father, and he is in heaven'(Mt 23:9). Our Heavenly Father entrusted us to our parents. In turn he entrusts your children to you, yet always remaining Father of us all, and forever.

Now, Boxing Day. In my family life Boxing Day was always a special day. Its title that comes from opening boxes containing presents. Family presents were exchanged on Christmas Day. But on Boxing Day the circle widened. Aunts and Uncles, friends and lonely neighbours came round on this day. And so the joy of giving and receiving was extended. We sing about Good King Wenceslaus doing just this on the Feast of Stephen!

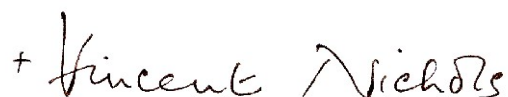
Yes, Boxing Day is also and always the Feast of St Stephen, the first martyr. His gift, in response to the presence of Jesus amongst us in our flesh, was to give up his life in witnessing to Jesus. In the account of his martyrdom we read that, as he gave his testimony, he cried out: 'I can see heaven thrown open and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God' (Acts 7:56). For this truth, heard by his audience as gross blasphemy, he was stoned to death.

Stephen's martyrdom is also a flowering of the Feast of Christmas, for in the eyes of faith there is a close link between our birth into this world and our entry, or second birth, into the next. Christmas marks the entry of Jesus into our flesh, and Easter brings the new life of the Resurrection. As we celebrate the Nativity, St Stephen teaches us to look forward to our 'second birth', because when this life ends we have the sure hope of eternal life. For us, too, the heavens will be thrown open and we shall indeed see the Son of Man and the all-consuming glory of God, the greatest gift of all. As we celebrate the birth of Christ and the entry into heaven of St Stephen, we see again the contours of our lives and the destiny that lies before us.

The Holy Family marks out our route. Boxing Day teaches us the greater joy of giving than of receiving. St Stephen proclaims the new and heavenly birth that our Saviour comes to give us.

A happy and joyful Christmas to you all and a happy New Year.

Yours devotedly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vincent Nichols". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

✠ Cardinal Vincent Nichols  
Archbishop of Westminster