

Sacred Heart Church, Berkhamsted

The Nativity of the Lord, Year A, 25th December 2022



What do you hope to see...?

In each of the last four Sundays, our attention was drawn to the lights of the Advent Wreath. In the readings at the Masses, we listened to the call to repent and make our hearts ready to receive God's promise of salvation to his people.

Today, and until the feast of the Baptism of the Lord, (and in the Old Rite, the feast of the Presentation of the Lord) our focus will be on the Word made flesh. The liturgy during this time, with the image of Christmas crib, will help focus our minds and hearts on the Word made flesh. The Christmas crib tradition was borne out of St Francis' desire to relive on Christmas Eve, the memory of the infant born at Bethlehem, in the woods of Greccio near Assisi.

In these days of Christmas, many will visit the Christmas crib in churches or at their homes. What do you hope to see in the crib? A donkey and an ox seemingly looking indifferent to what is happening their manger? An image of a baby asleep on the hay or an image of a man and a woman overtaken by the wonder of what lays before their eyes?

For some, the visit to the Christmas crib will evoke the wonder of what God can do out of love for us. For others, it will elicit a joyful admiration of the baby Jesus wrapped in swaddling cloth ... and the list goes on. However, the Christmas crib represents more than this. In the Christmas crib, we see, not the fantasy of lifeless images, but the hope for our salvation become a living experience. We see a God on whose promise we can rely, even when all else fails us in life. We see an opportunity to return to the One who fulfils the deepest desires of our hearts. We see the love of God for us made flesh.

The promise that the Christmas crib represents also invites us to make our hearts and our world a crib wherein baby Jesus can grow, so that our lives can bear the fruits of humility, love, joy, forgiveness and peace. May we take him into the home of our hearts where he earnestly desires to live in, and not leave to the chill of cold indifference, the One who made himself poor that we may become rich in his grace.

Thank you all for your prayers and support, the Christmas cards that you sent me and the gifts that you gave. God bless you. Happy Christmas and blessings in the New Year.

Fr Joseph

Sacred Heart Church
Park Street, Berkhamsted, HP4 1HX
Tel: 01442 863 845
Email: berkhamsted@rcdow.org.uk
Website: <https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/berkhamsted/>
(Office Hours: 10:00am-2.00pm **Mon-Fri)
**Actual office closed on Wednesdays, telephone/email only

Parish Priest - Fr Joseph Okoro:
josephokoro@rcdow.org.uk
Administrator – Laura Etson:
berkhamsted@rcdow.org.uk
Parish Safeguarding Representatives (PSRs)
Carmella Perkins – Sacred Heart PSR:
berkhamstedsg@safeguardrcdow.org.uk

CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR AT SACRED HEART, 2022

Saturday 24th Dec – Christmas Eve

Morning Mass of Advent - 10am

Paul Strickland and all Holy Souls RIP

Family Vigil Mass of Christmas – 5pm

People of the Parish

Carols and Readings begin at 4:35pm

Christmas Mass of the Night - 10pm

Dominic Dieseru Special Int

Sunday 25th Dec - CHRISTMAS DAY

Mass of the Nativity of the Lord - 8.30am

People of the Parish

10am

The deceased members of the Finucane family

Masses during the Octave of CHRISTMAS

Monday 26th – St Stephen, The First Martyr – 12noon

Cecilia Okeke RIP

Tuesday 27th – St John, Apostle & Evangelist – 10am

Deceased members of the Doran family and all Holy Souls RIP

Thursday 29th – St Thomas Becket, Bishop & Martyr –

12noon

Mary and Tom Joe O'Connor and all Holy Souls RIP

Friday 30th - ✠ The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph -

10am

Harry Fitzgerald and all Holy Souls RIP

Saturday 31st – 10am (*Apologies - No Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament*)

Geoffrey Tomlin and all Holy Souls RIP

5pm – Vigil Mass

Derek Faulconer and all Holy Souls RIP

Sunday 1st Jan. ✠ Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God – 8:30am

William and Louisa Nuttgens and all Holy Souls RIP

10am

Patrick and Marie Nuttgens and all Holy Souls RIP

NO MASS – MON – THURS (2ND - 5TH JAN)

Friday 6th - ✠ The Epiphany of the Lord – 10am

John Desmond and all Holy Souls RIP

Thank You – What makes a parish a real place of encounter and worship isn't only what the priest brings, but also the generosity of parishioners with their gifts and talents which they also put to the service of their brothers and sisters in Christ. May I take this opportunity to recognise and thank everyone for their generous service since my arrival in the parish and for the preparations that went into organising the senior citizens' Christmas lunch, the carol service and the Christmas Masses. Thank you to Laura, our parish administrator, Josie, who ensures that everywhere is neat and tidy, our parish finance committee, those who help out in the sacristy, the choir, readers, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, the catechists, altar servers, those who look after and prepare our young parishioners for the liturgy, the counters, volunteers in the parish office, the Sunday teas and coffees band, and the social team. Whatever you do to make our parish community a jolly community, you do to the glory of God and for the growth of his Kingdom, here in Sacred Heart Parish.

May God bless and keep you.

Fr Joseph.

Offertory Collections – 18/12

Weekly loose plate - £261.83

Weekly Contactless - £41.00

Thank you to every one of you for your generosity to our Parish.

Online Giving – Should you wish to become a regular online donor please use the Parish bank details below.

WRCDT Berkhamsted

Sort Code 40-05-20

Ac. Number 31264354

Please do include your name as your reference and if you would like to gift-aid please ask Fr Joseph or Laura for a form. Thank you for your continued generosity and support to our parish. It is greatly appreciated.

Mass Intentions – Please call or visit the parish office to book Masses for your intentions, email Laura or use the blue envelopes at the back of the church.

The Diocesan suggested donation is £10.00. Thank you.

If making a donation online, please use 'MASS STIPEND' and the date of the mass as your reference.

Parishes Celebrations / Dates for your Diaries –

9th Jan Walking Football

22nd Jan Start of the Holy Communion programme

29th Jan Start of Confirmation programme

23rd Jan Walking Football

5th Feb Sunday Lunch Club

Contactless Donation Machine – We are grateful for your continuing support to the parish, which means that we are able to pay for the running costs of the parish, pay staff salaries and maintain parish property. Donations for Christmas Gift can also be made by using your contactless debit or credit card at the contactless giving machine at the church entrance. To use the machine, please tap the dona tablet and select the amount you would like to give. Then, tap your contactless card on the small card reader by the side of the tablet to give your selected amount. You can also gift-aid your donation if you are a UK taxpayer. THANK YOU

Sunday Lunch Club - was due to take place on Sunday 8th Jan, but given that it falls very early on in the new year, we have decided to reschedule. The next event will therefore take place on Sunday 5th February. The sign-up sheet can be found at the back of the church.

Car Park – The car park monitoring system will be switched on on the 20th January. Could all Parishioners please ensure they have registered their cars by the 3rd of January.

Walking Football - 9pm on Monday 9th and 23rd of January, start the new year with a kickaround at Ashlyns indoor 5 a side courts, contact Ed Murray (07743 844257) if interested.

Give Us This Day, Our Daily Bread - Thank you if you are able to bring some non-perishable food for our Food Bank Box. Your kind donations, which can be placed in the food collection box at the church entrance, are going directly to help local people via the Open Door and DENS Food Bank. Thank you.