



Sacred Heart Church, Berkhamsted

✠ The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, Year B, 31st December 2023

“O God ... graciously grant that we may imitate the shining example of the Holy Family in practising the virtues of family life and in the bonds of charity...” (Collect: The Feast of Holy Family)

We owe a lot of our being, in fact all, to the divine institution of family. Our origin goes way beyond our biological family, (Ephesians 1:3-10) as each of our families derived from the overflow of love in the union of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit – the Holy Trinity. (Genesis. 1:26-28) Simply put, we are offspring of Divine Love.

Leading up to the Christmas celebrations, so many looked forward to sharing family times with loved ones during the joyful season. That so many braced the travel challenges during the festive season to travel far and near just so that they could be and reunite with families also emphasises the importance and priceless gift of family life. And even those who could not travel still found a way to connect with families over voice and video calls. Thanks to technology! Opportunities like this are so precious not so much because of the food and drinks, but for the support and psychological refreshment that being with loved ones brings, sharing and reliving cherished memories.

It was so that the human race may endure that God created our first parents – Adam and Eve. Today’s feast of Holy Family calls for the celebration of family life. As we give thanks for this divine gift, we also recognise the challenges, as well as the attempts to devalue this divine institution in our world today. There is no human society, and certainly no Church, if there is no safe, stable and loving family units, in keeping with God’s plan. Conscious of the challenges and weaknesses we all find in our individual families, the Church prays for and commends to us the virtues and shining example of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph to learn how we too can achieve God’s plan for ourselves and the human race.

We revere the Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph as holy for no other reason but for their obedience and faithfulness to God’s plan. They certainly faced trials – no room for them in the inn when the time came for Mary to have her child, the plan by Herod to kill the child Jesus made them to embark on an arduous journey through a dangerous road to safety in Egypt, the missing of the boy Jesus, and his Death on the cross. In all these, they persevered in their faith, helping each other, as it were, to fulfil their role in God’s plan of salvation.

Let us therefore pray for the protection of family life from all internal and external attacks; that all families be a place of love, safety and support for struggling family members. May God’s blessings be upon you and your families. Amen.

Fr Joseph

Mass Intentions:

Sun 31 Dec	✠ The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph	8:30am	People of the Parish
		10:00am*	Douglas Johnstone and All Holy Souls RIP
Mon 1 Jan	✠ Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God	10:00am*	Marshall Dudley and All Holy Souls RIP
Tue 2 Jan	Ss Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen, Bishops & Doctors	10:00am	Pat McCarthy RIP
Thu 4 Jan	Christmas Feria	12:00pm	Marrion Cummins RIP
Fri 5 Jan	Christmas Feria	10:00am	Deceased members of the Earls family and All Holy Souls RIP
Sat 6 Jan	Christmas Feria	10:00am	Fidelia Maduforo RIP
	Sunday Vigil	5:00pm	Benedict O.C. Raine RIP
Sun 7 Jan	✠ The Epiphany of the Lord	8:30am	Noreen Marum RIP
		10:00am*	Michael O’Regan RIP

* Livestream Mass

Saturday - 9:00am – Exposition and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament (and confession alongside) with Benediction at 9:45am

Confessions can also be arranged outside of these times, please contact Fr Joseph

We Pray for:

The Sick and the Housebound

We pray especially for: Sheila Hanratty, Lin Thomas, Edith Dicom, Caroline Butler, Ann McDonnell, Tom Jackson, Tess Hennessy, Anthony Doolan, William Campbell, Alice Danladi, Fr John Boland, Canon Jane Bannister, Ron Harper, Tom Kemplen, Joe Quinn, Rosemary Goacher, Jane Blayney, Dympna O’Connor, Lucy Chapman, Hilary Sweetman, Gerry Earls.

We commend them to God’s healing.

The Recently Deceased & Anniversaries

We pray for those who have died recently or those whose anniversaries occur at this time including: Rachael Church, Margaret Kay, Mary Wright, Michael Earls, Fr Terence Murray, Peter Doran, Baby Lily Angel Brinklow, Arthur Murray, Peter Ariokiasamy, Peter Hammond, Fr Timothy O’Connor, Tom O’Reilly, Bernard Gray.

Eternal rest granted onto them oh Lord and let the perpetual light shine upon

The Blessed Sacrament Lamp

is sponsored this week for expectant mothers and unborn children.

Sacred Heart Church
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Tel: 01442 863 845
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Website: <https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/berkhamsted/>
(Office Hours: 10:00am-2.00pm, Mon, Tue and Thurs.)

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

Thank You – I thank you all for your supports, prayers, Christmas cards and gifts in the lead up to, on and after the Christmas Day. It was so encouraging to read the kind words and prayers you wrote in the Christmas cards you gave me. They mean so much to me and have all been received with a grateful heart. Thank you and God bless.
Fr Joseph

Celebrate the Holy Eucharist at all Times – It was a great joy to welcome visiting families, visitors, friends and those local at the Christmas Masses. The church was so full at the various Masses, that we needed more seats in church. We hope everyone found the celebrations joyful, uplifting and prayerful. We hope and pray too that as many as came last weekend would join us to continue to celebrate God's most precious gift to us – the Holy Eucharist - the greatest prayer and the source and summit of our life as Catholics. Come one, come all and 'drink of the ever fresh mercy of Jesus Christ', the Word of God made flesh.

New Altar Servers – It is indeed a great privilege and blessing to serve God in his Sanctuary at Mass. We therefore encourage our young and teen parishioners to avail themselves of the opportunity of this sacred duty at the altar. Do not worry about what you need to do. Training sessions will be given. Parents, please help us to encourage our young ones to offer themselves to serve God in this very important ministry. Please speak with Fr Joseph if you would like to offer yourself for this service.

Confirmation Programme Parents/Candidates Meeting – Will be held on Friday 12th January 2024 at 7pm in the meeting room at the parish centre. Attendance is **mandatory**

Friday Holy Rosary Devotion - The Rosary is a powerful spiritual weapon and efficacious prayer. Please join us to pray the Rosary on Fridays after the 10am Mass in church for peace in the world and your private needs.

Prayer to the Holy Family - Jesus, Mary and Joseph, in you we contemplate the splendour of true love; to you we turn with trust. Holy Family of Nazareth, grant that our families too may be places of communion and prayer, authentic schools of the Gospel and small domestic churches. Holy Family of Nazareth, may families never again experience violence, rejection and division; may all who have been hurt or scandalised find ready comfort and healing. Holy Family of Nazareth, make us once more mindful of the sacredness and inviolability of the family, and its beauty in God's plan.

Defend, O St Joseph, most watchful guardian of the Holy Family, the chosen children of Jesus Christ. Keep from us, O most loving father, all blight of error and corruption. Aid us from on high, most valiant defender, in this conflict with the powers of darkness. And just as you once saved the Child Jesus from mortal danger, so now defend God's Holy Church from the snares of the enemy and from all adversity. Shield us by your constant protection, so that, supported by your example and strengthened by your help, we may be able to live a virtuous life, die a happy death, and obtain everlasting bliss in heaven. Amen.

Offertory Collections – 24/12/23

Weekly Loose Plate - £221.81

Weekly Contactless - £307.71

Thank you to every one for your support to our Parish.

Contactless Donation Machine – We are grateful for your continuing support to the parish. Donations for Mass stipends, votive candles, building maintenance fund, flowers for the Church and offertory can also be made using the contactless machine. You can also gift-aid your donation if you are a UK taxpayer. THANK YOU

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 –

12th Jan Confirmation Parents/Candidates Meeting 7pm

14th Jan Sunday Lunch 12pm

14th Jan First Holy Programme Session –Gathering 9am

Blessed Sacrament Lamp - If you would like to sponsor the Blessed Sacrament Lamp, for a week, the diary is open. To sponsor costs just £5 for a whole week. Just let the office know your preferred week and your intention.

Tea and coffee - after Sunday 10am Mass. All are invited to join us in the parish hall for teas, coffees and chats.

Hall door entry code – If you regularly use the Parish hall please contact the office for the latest door entry code.

Second Collection – There will be a second collection at this weekend's Masses - 30th & 31st December - in support of those suffering from the conflict in the Holy Land. Thank you for your generosity.

Child Minding Assistant Paid Job – For more details contact Caroline Reid on 07904477813 or email caroline.m.reid@live.co.uk

The Secrets of Paul: A Ten Week Course on Zoom - An opportunity to reflect on the life of St. Paul, as a model missionary disciple run by Mission Northampton from Wednesday 10th January 2024 to Wednesday 20th March 2024 (7.30-9pm) For more information, go to: <https://northamptondiocese.org/courses/secrets-of-paul-online/>

Requiem Mass – for the late Michael Earls will be held be celebrated on Tuesday 9th January at 1:45pm, here at Sacred Heart. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family. May he rest in peace and rise in glory. Amen.