



# Parish of St Peter and St Paul

ARCHDIOCESE OF WESTMINSTER

THE PRESBYTERY  
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## Fourth Sunday of Advent & **CHRISTMAS** 24<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> December 2023

Today, 24th December, is at the same time the 4th Sunday of Advent and Christmas Eve! This year we had the shortest possible time of Advent... Maybe it is too much, all at once, but in Christianity the 'liturgical time' gives us the rhythm of life and all the graces we need.



**Sunday 24 Dec**  
**CHRISTMAS Eve**  
**9:30pm Mass in the**  
**Night**  
(followed by a time of celebration  
in the Parish Hall)



**Monday 25 Dec**  
**CHRISTMAS Day**  
**9:45am Mass at Dawn**  
**12noon Mass of the Day**

Tuesday 26 Dec, St Stephen  
Wednesday 27 Dec, St John  
Thursday 28 Dec, The Holy Innocents  
Friday 29 Dec, St Thomas Becket  
Saturday 30 Dec  
**Sunday 31 Dec, The Holy Family**  
**Monday 1 Jan, Mary Mother of God**

8:00am  
8:00am  
*No Mass*  
12:30pm  
*No Mass*  
**9:45am & 12noon**  
**12:30pm**

If you wish to help (setting up or with food & drinks) for the celebration in the Parish Hall following Christmas Eve Mass let Fr. Ivano know, thank you!

**SCAN to GIVE**  
You can scan this QR code for your weekly Sunday donation.  
Thank you.





# CHRISTMAS DAY DINNER

## Appetisers

Twice-Baked Lord of Hundred Cheese Soufflé (V)  
Cèpe mushroom sauce

Scottish Salmon Pastrami  
Oscietra caviar, shimeiji, radish, soda bread

Poached Native Lobster  
Cauliflower, macadamia nuts, shellfish sauce

Croquette of Gressingham Duck  
Butternut squash, five-spice, poached cranberries, candied pecans

Carpaccio of Winter Vegetables (Vg)  
Heritage carrots, beets, pumpkin, pickled kohlrabi, black truffle aioli

## Main Courses

800-years Traditional Saint Francis recipe  
Fresh straw from Greccio

## Desserts

'Winter Garden' Christmas Pudding  
Cognac sauce

Valrhona Chocolate Soufflé  
Mango and passion sorbet

Orange, Ginger and Oat milk Baked Alaska (Vg)  
Mandarin compote

Rum Baba  
Caramelised pineapple, lime gel, vanilla Chantilly

Selection of British Cheeses  
Pear chutney, quince paste and crisp bread

Three years before his death, in 1223, 800 years ago, as Francis was spending Christmas at Greccio, he said: "This Christmas I would like to bring home to the people of Greccio what the birth of Christ at Bethlehem was like. They ought to see with their eyes how poor he was, lying there on straw, with the ox and the ass beside him."

All the brethren in the district were invited and local people prepared candles and torches for Christmas night. The crib was put up and the ox and ass were there. The woods and whole hillside echoed the songs of the people. At the solemn Mass Francis was the deacon robed in the rich vestments of the liturgy, he sang the Christmas Gospel with great joy. He then spoke to the people of the birth of Christ and how this was the happiest event that had ever occurred and the source of divine grace to mankind. It was said that as he pronounced the word "Bethlehem" his voice sounded like the bleating of a lamb and that every time he uttered the Name of Jesus, he appeared overwhelmed with love and seemed to savour the sweet sound upon his lips.

One man said that when he first saw the crib the image of the Child looked like a dead child but that as soon as Francis had come in the Child seemed to come back to life. It was as if the Child Jesus lay neglected and forgotten in the hearts of many, only to come to life anew within them by grace.

Other miracles occurred through the straw placed on the manger. Many animals suffering from various diseases were cured after eating that straw, and women who were suffering a long and painful birth gave birth happily by placing some of the straw on themselves. Men and women who attended the event who had been suffering from various ailments were also cured that night.

Make sure you have your main course this Christmas, "Fresh straw from Greccio"! When we 'eat' Christmas' straw, its grace and its deep meaning, we are healed. Our animal, sensual and carnal appetites leave us. Our disordered life and spiritual infirmities disappear, what looked like dead is raised to new life. Enjoy your Christmas dinner. Help yourself, seconds are allowed!

*In manus.*

Father Ivano