

CRIB VISIT

Do take the opportunity to visit the crib during the Christmas season which lasts beyond today – the Feast of the Epiphany, the visit of the Kings. You can make a donation at the crib to the work of the Catholic Children Society which does a lot of service supporting families in difficulty. The donation box is in the crib front.

CHRISTMAS BREAK

Monsignor Turner will be away on Tuesday for a week. Fr. Chris Brennan SMA will be serving in the parish in his absence. For many years Fr. Chris was a missionary in Liberia. He now works in Cork. Do make him welcome.

CHRISTMAS THANKS

During the Christmas Feast we had a wonderful attendance at all of our Masses. I want to take the opportunity to thank everyone for their great kindness over this Special Season and for your contribution to the Christmas Offerings.

For all the kind wishes, cards and gifts, a most warm “thank you” - **Mgr. Turner, Bp. Crowley, Fr. Robert.** **And our good wishes to you and your family for the coming year.**

YOU'RE INVITED

We welcome everyone after 11.30am Mass today to have refreshments in Our Lady's Hall – the Undercroft. It is a good opportunity for a friendly chat. See you there!

THE YEAR OF MERCY



Pope Francis initiated the **YEAR OF MERCY** on 8th December last year. He said – “The jubilee is a favourable time for all of us, so that in contemplating divine mercy, which surpasses every human limitation and shines in the darkness of sin, we may become more convinced and effective witnesses,”

In the year of mercy, we are all called to look into our hearts and recognize our sinfulness and our need for God's mercy. But this is not a year of sad reflection on our sinfulness, rather it is a year of rejoicing that God's mercy is gratuitous and overwhelming. Mercy is not earned. It is given.

Whether it is in our families, our neighbourhoods, our nation, or the world, without forgiveness and reconciliation there will be no peace. This appears naïve to those who think every crime must be avenged, every problem has a military solution. But millennia of experience shows that such

philosophies simply result in unending fighting and strife.

The year of mercy reminds us that mercy is not only shown by God. It should also be shown by us. We who have experienced mercy must in turn grant it to others.

SAVE THE DATE

This year will be a special one when I give thanks for having served 50 years in the priesthood. There will be a Thanksgiving Mass to which everyone is warmly invited, **on SUNDAY 5th JUNE at 4.00pm** in church followed by a reception. **Mgr. Turner**

OFFICE RE-OPENS

Normal service resumes after the Christmas holidays on Tuesday 5th January. Please be patient on the first day of opening, though!

THE EPIPHANY

We celebrate Epiphany - the visit of the wise men to the baby Jesus. But who were these wise men? No one knows for sure. St. Matthew calls them ‘Magi’, and that was the name of an ancient caste of a priestly kind from Persia {Iran}. It wasn't until the third century that they were called kings - by a church father, Tertullian.

Another church father, Origen, assumed there were three - to correspond with the gifts given. Later Christian interpretation came to understand gold as a symbol of wisdom and wealth, incense as a symbol of worship and sacrifice, and myrrh as a symbol of

healing - and even embalming. Certainly Jesus challenged and set aright the way in which the world handled all three of these things. Since the eighth century, the magi have had the names Balthasar, Caspar and Melchior.

WHAT'S THEIR NAME?!

Do your New Year Resolutions include the forlorn hope that you will be better at remembering people's names in 2016?

Many of us – and not only those of the older generation – have difficulty remembering names. It's not just TV personalities and so on, but people we meet in the street. We know exactly who they are, we see them every week in church or the supermarket, we know what job they do and which school their children go to. But as for their name – it's a blank.

Help is at hand, however. Not to solve the problem, but at least to name it. ‘Nominal asphasia’ is the clinical name for the inability to remember a name, even when we can remember everything else about someone. It was a great relief to me to find it had a name. Up till then I thought it was the first symptom of dementia, or just plain stupidity.

There is also the strange truth that the cure for asphasia comes spontaneously, often in the middle of the night, when that elusive identity pops unbidden into our memory. We must be sure, of course, to put the light on and write it down, because it will be gone again with the morning light.