**CHURCH OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION & SAINT JOSEPH**

**23 ST JOHN’S STREET, HERTFORD SG14 1RX**

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**Parish Priest: Monsignor Séamus O’Boyle**

**THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY & JOSEPH 31st December 2023**

**Prayers & Readings for this Sunday’s Mass can be found on p. 105 in the Parish Mass Book.**

**Please note that there is a Loop system in the Church.**

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View from the Presbytery

After all the build-up to the Feast of Christmas, it always seems to come and go pretty quickly! But we do still have a week of Christmastide left before we go back to ‘Ordinary Time’. I want to say a special word of thanks to all who helped make our parish celebration of Christmas so prayerful and joyfully uplifting – the musicians and singers, the readers, altar servers, flower-arrangers, Crib putter-uppers, brass-polishers, cleaners. The Church looked lovely, and a number of people remarked on that. Thank you!

We are fortunate indeed to have been able to celebrate – so many of our brothers and sisters sadly could not do that! It is particularly sad that the Christian Communities in the Holy Land – where the Christ child was born – could not celebrate in the usual way.

In his Christmas Sermon, Cardinal Vincent spoke of this:

‘Bethlehem, is today a silent city. All public celebrations have been cancelled, out of mourning for the dead of the terrible war ravaging parts of the Holy Land. A song has emerged from there, sung in English and Arabic, entitled ‘Hear Angels Cry’. Yes, the angels must weep for the callous murders, the horrendous butchery of 7 October and for the consequent terrible destruction and loss of innocent life among millions of displaced people who now languish in hunger and disease, their homes, hospitals, schools and places of worship destroyed. Let us hear the angels as they cry out for peace.

Let us join our voices to those of the angels, in prayer for such peace, for a cessation of violence, for the relief of such suffering and the release of hostages. For this is the birthday of the Prince of Peace, who alone by his power as God can heal our hearts, broken by sin, and through his sharing in our human flesh, can instil in us the same mercy and compassion.’ Amen!

I wish you a very happy New Year of our Lord, 2024. Please God is will be a better one for all those caught up in places torn apart by violence and war.

*Fr Séamus*

**A NEW YEAR’S PARTY** will be held in the church hall on Monday 1st January 2024 after the 12noon Mass. If you would like to come please bring a plate of finger food if possible. Thank you!

**A MESSAGE FROM SUE WALKER:** Thank you to everyone who donated food and toys for Christmas. We were able to give out one hundred and twenty-two presents to under-privileged children in and around Hertford and food hampers to families in need.

**MISSIO RED BOXES:** Would all parishioners in possession of red Missio boxes please return them as soon as possible to the sacristy?  
Once all boxes have been handed in and contributions counted, the empty boxes will be placed with names attached on the table in the cloister to be picked up and used for the 2024 process. Thank you. Peter Mahoney

**IF YOU GO IN TO HOSPITAL**: If someone is sick in hospital, please let us know here at the Presbytery, and/or ask the staff on the ward, so that your loved one can be visited whilst in hospital, and receive Holy Communion and any other Sacraments from the Chaplain.

At the Lister & QE2 hospitals, the Chaplain is: John O’Neill 01438 314333

**ROSARY GROUP:**  Come and join us in thechurch hall on **Tuesday evenings** at 7pm for recital of the Rosary and the Chaplet of Divine Mercy.

**PRAYERS ASKED PLEASE –**

**FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK:** Elizabeth Barnes, Ursula Partner, Jan Kracinski, Stephen Carey, Norene Hristov, Paul Cox, Malcolm Gilbert, Enzo Andrean, Miriam Matthews, Ruth Featherstone, Stephen Judd, Mary Ward, John Sweeney, Pam Gates, Juliet Davis, Phyllis Read, Jo Black, Robbie Robinson, Fr Terry, Angela White, Manuel Lopez, Lyn Carroll, Linda Abeysundera.

**FOR THOSE WHO HAVE DIED RECENTLY:** Christine Smith and Maureen Harris. May they rest in peace and rise in glory

**POPE FRANCIS’ PRAYER INTENTION FOR JANUARY**

*FOR THE GIFT OF DIVERSITY IN THE CHURCH*

Let us pray that the Spirit help us recognize the gift of different charisms within the Christian community, and to discover the richness of different ritual traditions in the heart of the Catholic Church.

**MASS INTENTIONS:**

**Saturday 30th December**

**6pm:**  Ann & Frank Clayden RIP

**Sunday 31st December *Holy Family***

**8.30am:** People of the Parish

**10.30am:** Joyce Pearson RIP

**Monday 1st January 2024**

***Mary Mother of God***

**12noon:** People of the Parish

**Tuesday 2nd January**

**12.15pm:** Nell & Wilfred Blake RIP

**Wednesday 3rd January**

**10.00am:** Joan Chadirchi (Ints)

**Thursday 4th January**

**CHURCH CLOSED**

**Friday 5th January**

**12.15pm:** Vera & Bill Dent RIP

**Saturday 6th January**

**6.00pm:** Ray Salmons RIP

& Stacey Family (Ints)

**Sunday 7th January *Epiphany***

**8.30am:** People of the Parish

**10.30am:** Lena Queally RIP

**Confessions**

Saturday: 5.15-5.45pm