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

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

[**https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/hertford**](https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/hertford) **Email:** **hertford@rcdow.org.uk** **Tel: 01992 582109**

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

**THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD – 6th / 7th January 2024**

**Prayers & Readings for this Sunday’s Mass can be found on p. 115 in the Parish Mass Book.**

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

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View from the Presbytery

And arriving at evening, not a moment too soon
Finding the place; it was (you may say) satisfactory.
Were we led all that way for Birth or Death?

There was a birth, certainly,
We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and death,
But had thought they were different; this Birth was
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
With an alien people clutching their gods.

(*from ‘The Journey of the Magi’ by T.S. Eliot*)

This poem is written from the perspective of one of the Magi. We learn how they were deeply affected and changed by their experience. The birth of Christ heralds the start of a new order and new truth, and yet the Magi have to return to their kingdoms and to ‘an alien people clutching their gods’.Christmastime draws to an end this weekend, and we head back into ‘Ordinary Time’ for a few weeks until Lent appears on the horizon. Very quickly we leave baby Jesus behind as he embarks on his public ministry. I remember a parishioner in my first parish after I was ordained who kept Christmas decorations up for the whole year because she loved Christmas so much! Baby Jesus does not make the same challenges on us that grown-up Jesus does – it is nice to have the memory of Christmas to help us face up to the days ahead. Please don’t forget that Fr Terry is going to be here in three weeks’ time – on Sunday 28th January - to celebrate his fortieth anniversary of ordination as a priest and to have his official farewell. Please sign up on the sheet provided at the back of the church so we can get an idea of how many to cater for! On a personal note, many thanks again for your kind cards, gifts and generous Christmas Offerings, very much appreciated.

*Fr Séamus*

**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 John Derek Everett. 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 6th January 2024**

**6.00pm:** Ray Salmons RIP

& Stacey Family (Ints)

**Sunday 7th January *Epiphany***

**8.30am:** People of the Parish

**10.30am:** Lena Queally RIP

**Monday 8th January 2024**

*Baptism of the Lord*

**10.00am:** George & Peggy English RIP

**Tuesday 9th January**

**12noon:** *Funeral:* Christine Smith RIP

**Wednesday 10th January**

**10.00am:** English Family Dec’d

**Thursday 11th January**

**CHURCH CLOSED**

**Friday 12th January**

**12.15pm: Rose Mary Agius (Anniv.)**

**Saturday 13th January**

**6.00pm:** People of the Parish

**Sunday 14th January**

***Second Sunday in Ordinary Time***

**8.30am:** George Robert Emmett RIP

**10.30am:** Tom & Annie Parsons RIP

**Confessions**

Saturday: 5.15-5.45pm