



SS MICHAEL AND MARTIN

Roman Catholic Parish of Hounslow
Archdiocese of Westminster

This Parish is served by the Spiritans

NEWSLETTER

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NATIVITY OF THE LORD (CHRISTMAS DAY)

25th December 2022

AIM FOR A CULTURE OF PEACE – POPE FRANCIS

Once more, the Lord grants us the grace of celebrating the mystery of his birth. Each year, kneeling before the Child lying in the manger (cf. *Lk* 2:12), we can look at our lives in this special light. It is not the light of the glory of this world, but “the true light, which enlightens everyone” (*Jn* 1:9). The humility of the Son of God who partook of our human condition is, for us, a lesson in seeing things as they really are. Just as he chose poverty, which is not merely the absence of wealth, but utter simplicity, so too, each of us is called to return to what is essential in our own lives, to discard all that is superfluous and a potential hindrance on the path of holiness.

Much has happened in the course of this year, and before anything else, we want to thank the Lord for all his blessings. Yet we hope that among those blessings is that of our conversion. Conversion is a never-ending story. The worst thing that could happen to us is to think that we no longer need conversion, either as individuals or as a community. To be converted is to learn how to take the Gospel message seriously and put it into practice in our lives. It is not simply about avoiding evil but doing all the good we can. That is what it means to be converted. The culture of peace is not built solely between peoples and nations. It begins in the heart of every one of us.

Anguished as we are by the spread of wars and violence, we can and must make our own contribution to peace by striving to uproot from our hearts all hatred and resentment towards the brothers and sisters with whom we live. In the Letter to the Ephesians, we read these words: “Put away from you all bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander, together with all malice, and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you” (4:31-32). Let us ask ourselves: How much bitterness do we have in our hearts? What is feeding it? What is the source of the indignation that often distances us and fuels anger and resentment?

I would like to say one last word about the subject of *peace*. Among the titles that the prophet Isaiah gives the Messiah is that of “Prince of Peace” (9:5). Never as at this time have we felt so great a desire for peace. I think of war-torn Ukraine, but also of the many ongoing conflicts in different parts of our world. War and violence are always a catastrophe. Religion must not lend itself to fueling conflicts. The Gospel is always a Gospel of peace, and in the name of no God can one declare a war to be “holy”. If we genuinely want the din of war to cease and give way to peace, then each of us ought to begin with himself or herself. Saint Paul clearly tells us that *kindliness*, *mercy*, and *forgiveness* are our medicine for building peace. For every war to end, forgiveness is required. Otherwise, justice becomes vengeance, and love is seen only as weakness. God became a Child, and that Child, once grown, let himself be nailed on a cross. There is nothing weaker than one who is crucified, yet that weakness became the demonstration of God’s supreme power. In forgiveness, God’s power is always at work. May *gratitude*, *conversion* and *peace* thus be the gifts of this Christmas. I wish you all a happy Christmas! And once again, I ask you not to forget to pray for me. Thank you! - **Excerpt from Pope’s 2022 Christmas message**

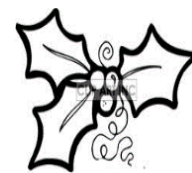
WE ARE GRATEFUL!

We thank our parishioners for the selfless and spontaneous availability for the needs of the parish and the people in our vicinity. The Parish workforce is large, and we can only mention some here; the Parish Office, the Parish Catechism team, the Parish Youth Worker, the Parish Centre Manager, Repository Managers, Sacristans, the Parish Pastoral Council, the Parish Finance Council, Live Streaming Team, Stewards, Altar Servers, Projector Slides Team, Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist, Lectors/Readers, Cleaners, Decorators, Counters, Choral Groups, Union of Catholic Mothers (UCM), Sport and Cultural Society (SCS), St Vincent de Paul Team (SVP), those who contributed to the Food Bank, Jacob’s Angel and the Christmas Hampers initiatives. Thank you for the Christmas gifts and for your love and encouragement! We hold in our prayers everyone dedicated to improving our parish and worship. We wish you all a joyful and peaceful Christmas celebration and a prosperous New Year! - **Pastoral Team**



PARISH OFFICE IS CLOSED

**From Friday 23rd December 2022 till Tuesday 4th January
2023**



CHURCH CAR PARK ACCESS

Please note the Church car park will **NOT** be in use from the 23rd December till the 2nd January. There will be a marquee in the Church car park to support the crowd expected for Christmas and New Year Masses. The school car park will be open for cars to park, and entry and exit will be via St Mark's school car park.

DAY OF PRAYER BEFORE THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

The morning Mass on Saturday 31st December at 9am will be followed by a Day of Prayer with an exposition of the Blessed Sacrament throughout the day and ending with Benediction at 5.30 pm. The list is available in the porch area of the Church to add your names for watching the Blessed Sacrament.

MASS DIARY 2023

The parish Mass diary for 2023 is now open! Please note that **only TWO INTENTIONS per person** will be taken, this is due to the large number of parishioners we have and to ensure we are fair to all our parishioners. Any additional requests for Mass intentions will be sent to other Spiritans Churches/Communities and celebrated as intended. Kindly note that the **stipend** per Mass intention is a **minimum of £10** (Diocesan Guidelines). **Cash or online transfer, NO CARD PAYMENT can make payment.** Bookings will resume after 3rd January 2023.

CRIB OFFERING 2022

This Christmas, our Crib Offering will be donated to the Catholic Children's Society to support their work with disadvantaged children and families. This will help provide mental health services, family support and emergency grants for vulnerable children in our Diocese.

NEW ROLE WITHIN THE FOOD TEAM AT CARITAS WESTMINSTER

Food Programme Support Officer (one-year fixed term contract). This role will be delivering the Caritas Emergency Supermarket Vouchers scheme (which continues into 2023, funded by the Cardinal's Lenten Appeal) and supporting communities to access more long-term programmes, as part of working together towards the sustainable end of poverty (the deadline for applications is 9th Jan). For any further questions, please contact Caritas Parish Rep. Vincent Fernandes.

Please visit the link provided for further details: <https://jobs.rcdow.org.uk/food-programme-support-officer-caritas-westminster/>

OFFERTORY COLLECTION 17TH/18TH DECEMBER

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| Envelopes | £1,337.75 |
| Loose | £2,898.37 |

TOTAL £4,236.12

A FAMILY BLESSING ON THE FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY

All families and especially those who have had a child baptised during this year are warmly welcomed. This will take place on Friday 30th December, at 3:00 pm in the Church followed by refreshments in the Parish Centre.

BAPTISM PREPARATION COURSE

Parents of infants and those seeking Baptism may register for the course using the online form available on the Baptism page of the Parish website. The next course will be run in January 2023. Read the Baptism webpage for requirements & other details.

*Merry
Christmas*
AND
HAPPY NEW YEAR