

ST THOMAS MORE – PARISH NEWSLETTER

Maresfield Gardens London NW3 5SU Tel: 020 7435 1388

Email: swisscottage@rcdow.org.uk

Web page: parish.rcdow.org.uk/swisscottage

Web camera: www.churchservices.tv/swisscottage

Parish Priest: Mgr Nicholas Morrish nicholasmorrish@rcdow.org.uk

Also helping in the parish:

Fr Bernard Marsh

bernardmarsh@rcdow.org.uk

Fr Paul Hayward

paul.hayward@netherhall.org.uk

SUNDAY 31ST DECEMBER 2023

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH (Year B)



Christmas Season Timetable

Christmas Service Cards with the times of Masses until 8th January are available in the Narthex. Please note that there is only one Mass at 10am on New Year's Day after which the church will be closed.

Notice also that this year Solemnity of the Epiphany will be celebrated on Sunday 7th January.

Christmas Season

The crib will remain in place until 2nd February, the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord. During these days after Christmas it has been encouraging to see people come to the church during the day to pray before the crib. Hopefully the crib will help many people pray about the mystery of Christ's birth.

At times, for security, the doors leading from the Narthex to the church may need to be locked. On those occasions, if the front doors of the church are open, please do feel welcome to pray in the Narthex. When the crib lights are on it is possible to see the crib from the entrance.

Offertory Collections 3 December–25 December

Sunday offertory collection: £1,536.06
(Envelopes: £473.00; Loose: £1,063.06)
Contactless card machine: £614.54

Grand total: £2,150.60

Christmas Offerings: £2,080.80

Many thanks to everyone for your contributions to the upkeep of the Parish and the generous Christmas offerings for the clergy of the parish.

Dates for January

There will be tea and coffee after the 11am Mass on **Sunday 7th January**.

The next Seniors' coffee morning will be on **Wednesday 10th January** after the 10am Mass.

January Magnificat

Copies of the January Magnificat are available to buy at £5. There is also a Lenten companion at £3. Please ask Maggie or one of the Priests if you would like copies. You can pay using the card reader at the entrance or by putting cash in the newspaper/leaflet box.

Special Collection for the Holy Land

There will be a special retiring collection for the Holy Land **on Sunday 7 January** the Solemnity of the Epiphany. Cardinal Vincent wrote:

"I thank all those who have made contributions to charities seeking to support victims of the conflict between Israel and Hamas. I thank all who have made those contributions through Friends of the Holy Land who continue to do such remarkable work in these difficult times. An appeal has arrived, as well, from the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, Cardinal Pizzaballa, who is also deeply concerned about the impact on the Palestinian population in the West Bank, for many of whom sources of earning have effectively ended.

The crib offerings this year will be applied, as is our custom, to the Catholic Children's Society for the relief of poverty at home.

I ask that you hold a special collection immediately after Christmas, on the Feast of the Holy Family or on the Solemnity of the Epiphany, for relief for those suffering from the conflict in the Holy Land." He explains that the collection will be forwarded to the Latin Patriarch as a response to his appeal.

Crib Collection

To implement the Cardinal's decision about the Crib Collection we will use the candle stand at the Thomas More Chapel for donations to the Westminster Catholic Children's Society until the end of the Christmas Season.

First Holy Communion Classes

Classes begin again on Saturday 13th January.

Mass intentions

Please be aware that we have already allocated the Mass intentions several weeks ahead. However if your Mass intention is for someone who has recently died or is seriously ill, we shall try to allocate a Mass as soon as possible.

Please speak to Maggie Ainsworth in the Parish Office (Tuesday or Friday mornings) or email her at swisscottage@rcdow.org.uk about any Masses you wish to be offered on a specific day. Alternatively please use the brown Mass intention envelopes in the Narthex. These can be handed to a priest or put through the letterbox of the presbytery.

Parish Notes

Please note that I shall be away from the parish 2 – 8 January, attending a retreat. During that time Fr Bernard will celebrate the parish Masses.

The Masses at Christmas were well attended. Once again I would like to thank all those who helped prepare the church for Christmas, and all those involved in the Christmas liturgy. Many people play their

part in these celebrations whether it is cleaning the church, arranging the flowers, building the crib, taking the collections, reading at Mass, serving at the altar. Many thanks to you all.

The Nativity Scene a school of simplicity and joy

From Pope Francis' General Audience 20 December 2023 Catechesis. The Greccio Nativity, school of simplicity and joy

Eight hundred years ago, at Christmas in 1223, Saint Francis organized the living Nativity scene in Greccio. (...)

Francis does not want to create a beautiful work of art, but rather to arouse amazement through the Nativity scene, at the extreme humility of the Lord, at the hardships he suffered in the poor grotto of Bethlehem for love of us. In fact, the biographer of the Saint of Assisi notes, "In that moving scene, evangelical simplicity shines forth, poverty is praised, humility is related. And Greccio has become like a new Bethlehem"

I've emphasized one word, "amazement". And this is important. If we Christians look at the crib as a beautiful thing, as something historical, even religious, and pray, this is not enough. Before the mystery of the Incarnation of the Word, before the birth of Jesus, we need this religious attitude of amazement. If in the face of the mysteries, I do not come to this amazement, my faith is simply superficial, a "computational faith". Do not forget this. (...)

And the Nativity scene was created to bring us back to what matters: to God who comes to dwell among us. This is why it is important to look at the Nativity scene, because it helps us understand what matters and also the social relationships of Jesus at that time, the family, Joseph and Mary, and loved ones, the shepherds. People before things. And we often put things ahead of people. This doesn't work.

In addition to sobriety, the Nativity scene of Greccio also speaks of *joy* because joy is different from having fun. But having fun is not a bad thing if it is done on the right path. It is not a bad thing, it is a human thing. But joy is deeper still. More human. And sometimes there is a temptation to have fun without joy; to have fun by making noise, but there is no joy. It is a bit like the figure of the clown, who laughs and laughs and makes people laugh, but the heart is sad. Joy is the root of good Christmas fun. (...)

But where did this Christmas joy come from? Certainly not from having brought home presents or having experienced lavish celebrations. No, it was the joy that overflows from the heart when one tangibly touches the nearness of Jesus, the tenderness of God, who does not leave us alone, but consoles us [translator's note: stands with (*con*) those who are alone (*sol*)]. Closeness, tenderness, and compassion are the three attitudes of God. And looking at the Nativity scene, praying before the Nativity scene, we can experience these things of the Lord that help us in everyday life.

Dear brothers and sisters, the Nativity scene is like a small well from which to draw the nearness of God, the source of hope and joy. The Nativity scene is like a living Gospel, a domestic Gospel. Like the well in the Bible, it is the place of encounter where we bring to Jesus the expectations and worries of life, just as the shepherds of Bethlehem and the people of Greccio did. Bringing to Jesus the expectations and the worries of life.

If, before the Nativity scene, we entrust to Jesus all we hold dear, we too will experience "great joy" (Mt 2:10), a joy that comes precisely from contemplation, from the spirit of amazement with which I go to contemplate these mysteries

ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC CHURCH

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

31st December – 6th January 2024

Tel: 020 7435 1388

<https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/swisscottage/>

| | MASS | OTHER ACTIVITIES |
|--|---|--|
| SUN 31st December The Holy Family (Readings. Year B) | 9.30am People of the Parish 11am Mass John Howard (RIP) 6pm Mass Sheelah and Harry Wilson (RIP) | The Church opens at 9.15am 9.30am Confessions 10.30am Confessions 5.30pm Confessions |
| MON 1st January Mary, the Holy Mother of God | BANK HOLIDAY 10am Mass George Adegbola (intentions) | Church opens at 9.30am Monday to Saturday Church closes after Mass |
| TUE 2nd January Saints Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen, Bishops and Doctors | 10am Mass Margaret Milne (recently deceased) | |
| WED 3rd January The Holy Name of Jesus Optional Memorial | 10am Mass Holy Souls | |
| THU 4th January Christmas Feria | 10am Mass Mr and Mrs Caspar (RIP) | |
| FRI 5th January Christmas Feria Friday abstinence | 10am Mass Pat Gibson (intentions) | 10am to Noon Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament |
| SAT 6th January Christmas Feria | 10am Mass Margaret Wilson (intentions) | The Church opens at 9.30am No First Holy Communion Class |

Prayer Intentions:

Recently deceased: Alex Solomon-Tabet; Ken Brown; Fr Dominic McKenna; Jeanette Francise-Tabet; Robinson Emmanuel; Joan Ross; Maria Maguire; Mervyn Agnew; Fr Terry Murray OMI

Anniversary: Brigid Monaghan; Helen O'Neil; Cristina Pancha; Jamil Tayar-Tabet; Erik Karlsson; Maria Fernanda; José Miguel Vargas Alvoraz; Mark Sharman

Confessions:

Weekdays after Christmas Day: before and after 10am Mass
Saturday: before and after 10am Mass
Sunday: 10.30am and 5.30pm (before Mass)

Forthcoming liturgical celebrations:

7th January: **THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD**

8th January: **THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD**

2nd February: **THE PRESENTATION OF THE LORD**