

FOCUS

The Parish Magazine

of

St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Wembley



gl oria in excel sis deo!

Christmas 2020

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

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Parish Team: Fr Joseph Kaduthanam CMI, Fr Joseph Chacko CMI
and Fr Tebin Francis CMI

Times of Service during the Covid 19 restrictions

Monday	Mass: 9.30am (Live streaming only)
Tuesday	Mass: 6.30pm
Wednesday	Mass: 9.30am (Live streaming only)
Thursday	Mass: 6.30pm
Friday	Mass: 12.00noon (Live streaming only)
Saturday	Mass: 9.30am (Live streaming only) 6.30pm Vigil Mass of Sunday
Sunday	Mass: 9.30am, 11.00am (Live streaming only) and 12.30pm

All services are streamed live on ChurchServices

ChurchServices.tv/wembley1

Schools

ST JOSEPH'S INFANT SCHOOL, Waverley Avenue. Tel: 020 8903 6032

ST JOSEPH'S JUNIOR SCHOOL, Chatsworth Avenue. Tel: 020 8902 3438

Executive Head Teacher: Mrs Mandy Whelan

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2020 has been a very different year to any we have experienced. The Coronavirus pandemic has had – and continues to have – a major effect on all our lives. We saw our churches closed from March until July when the whole country was in ‘lockdown’. This happened again in November. When we were able to open our churches again it has not been a return to normal. There are still restrictions on what we can do and how we celebrate our faith. But we must carry on. This year our Christmas celebrations will be different, both in the church and at home. During this Advent Season the focus of our liturgy is on our preparation for the celebration of Christmas, the birthday of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. As we prepare for this great feast as best we can with the current COVID – 19 restrictions, with cards, presents, food, drinks, decorations, etc., let us not forget our own spiritual preparation. Please try to come to one of the Penitential Services or to individual confession and participate in the services which will be live streamed on Church Services TV for those unable to attend particularly in view of the limits on numbers imposed by social distancing. Christmas is very much a children’s feast, as it commemorates the birth of the greatest child ever born. It is in the stillness of this special season that we gather to celebrate the Lord’s presence in our midst. We look on Jesus as the new-born infant, totally dependent on his family for everything. And so, it is also very much a family feast as it commemorates the greatest family that ever existed.

At this time of the year, our thoughts and prayers are also with those families who have lost someone during this year. We remember especially all our parishioners who have died in this past year, whom we commend to the love and mercy of God our Father.

Being appointed as your new Parish Priest early in the year has been a wonderful privilege, but with that comes responsibility and I hope that by the grace of God and with the assistance of my fellow CMI, Frs. Tebin and Joseph C, I, will be able to provide the pastoral and spiritual support that all my parishioners expect and deserve.

I wish you and your families a happy and holy Christmas. In this Christmas season, our prayer is that our parish will continue to grow in strength as we move forward in 2021.

May God Bless you all.

Fr Joseph

ADVENT AND THE TRUE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS



Advent comes from the Latin word meaning "coming." Jesus is coming, and Advent is intended to be a season of preparation for His arrival. While we typically regard Advent as a joyous season, it is also intended to be a period of preparation, much like Lent. Prayer, penance and fasting are appropriate during this season.

Advent is not as strict as Lent, and there are no rules for fasting, but it is meant to be a period of self-preparation. The purple colour associated with Advent is also the colour of penance. The faithful should fast during the first two weeks in particular and receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

The colour of the Third Sunday of Advent is rose. This colour symbolizes joy and represents the happiness we will experience when Jesus comes again. The Third Sunday is a day of anticipatory celebration. It is formerly called "Gaudete" Sunday; gaudete means "rejoice" in Latin.

Finally, Sundays during Advent, just as during Lent, should not be given to fasting, but instead to celebration because we celebrate the resurrection of Our Lord every Sunday. It is important to remember, however, there are no particular rules for how the laity should observe Advent.

Recently, a full page colourful ad in The Wall Street Journal with a catchy caption sponsored by a group called Rethink Church caught one's attention. In bold print it read: "Unwrap The True Meaning Of Christmas." This is a worthwhile invitation at this time of year when we are surrounded by rampant commercialism, which robs Christmas of religious meaning.

Christmas commemorates that God entered this world in human form. It is the celebration of the Birth of the Saviour. God has taken on human flesh. Nothing like that had ever taken place previously. Oh, yes, God was very active in the creation of the world and in forming man and woman; further, in the making of a covenant with Israel, God promised to be with and to save them. Jesus is the fulfillment of God's promise. He is God's Word who saves all humanity from the tragic consequences of sin.

At His birth in Bethlehem the Infant Jesus was placed in a wooden manger by His loving Virgin Mother, Mary, and her husband, Saint Joseph. That wood would be replaced at the end of His life by the wood of the Cross on which He accomplished salvation. From the Cross, He rose to life. His Birth was a prelude to His Resurrection.

The true meaning of Christmas is that God so loved us that He gave His only begotten Son; that God shared our human condition even to death; that salvation was accomplished by God within the grittiness of life.

This is why the angel announced to the shepherds, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a Saviour has been born for you who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.” To climax this announcement a whole army of angels appeared and sang, “Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom His favor rests.”

Their angelic song awakens in us a deep longing to experience the closeness of God; a desire to live in a peaceful world; a hope to end suffering and a wish to eliminate grudges and hatred in our relationships with our families, co-workers, and communities.

This Christmas we need to unwrap the Saviour, Jesus Christ, whose presence as the Infant of Bethlehem is God’s Word to us. God’s promise has been kept. “Fear not,” the shepherds are reminded. “Fear not,” God is with you.

Let us hear this Good, this Very Good News. Let it encourage our faith in God. Let it resonate in our homes and families, among our friends and co-workers. May it be preached from our pulpits. The Saviour is born and He and ONLY HE can take away fears and free us from sin. No one else can; nothing else can do that for you.

For some, Christmas evokes memories, especially of loved ones who have died. Consider Mary in the years after Jesus’ death. She understands your pain. Each year after His death on the Cross she surely remembered the day of His birth, that first Christmas. Talk to Mary about whoever you miss this Christmas. She understands what is going on in your heart.

Let us unwrap the TRUE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS, Jesus Christ, the Saviour and Lord.



Pondering the birth of Christ



We have three questions on the birth of Jesus Christ. Why do we say he was born in a stable when the Bible doesn't make any mention of this? What are swaddling clothes? And what exactly was the sign announced by the angel of a child wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger?

THE birth of Christ has a number of extraordinary aspects and your questions touch on some of these.

The first is that the Son of God, the King of Kings, was born in such humble surroundings. Surely God in

the flesh should have been born in a palace, a castle, or at least a dignified inn. And he should have been laid in a bed or a cot, not in a manger, a feeding trough for animals.

But God's ways are not man's ways, and God clearly wanted it to be that way in order to teach us something.

From the humble circumstances of Christ's birth we learn, in the words of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, that "To become a child in relation to God is the condition for entering the kingdom. For this, we must humble ourselves and become little" (CCC 526).

And from the poverty of the stable we learn that the possession of material wealth, with all its attending comforts, is not as important as the possession of God. Mary and Joseph, while poor in the material sense, were truly rich in having the very Son of God, the King of Kings, in their family.

Returning to the questions, why does Christian tradition, and even the Catechism, say that "Jesus was born in a humble stable" (CCC 525) when nowhere in the Scriptures do we find any explicit mention of it? Indeed, St Matthew limits himself to saying that "Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea" and, significantly, when he tells of the arrival of the magi he says that "going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother" (Matthew 2:1, 10).

The reference to a house can be explained by the possibility that after the birth in a stable, Mary and Joseph were finally able to find a house in which

they lived at least until the presentation of Jesus in the Temple of Jerusalem 40 days after his birth.

St Luke doesn't mention a stable either but he does say that after Jesus' birth Mary wrapped him in swaddling clothes "and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn" (Luke 2:7).

Since a manger is a feeding trough for animals it has always been assumed that Jesus was born in some sort of stable.

Pope Benedict XVI, in his book *Jesus of Nazareth – The Infancy Narratives*, comments on the significance of the manger: "The manger is the place where animals find their food. But now, lying in the manger, is He who called himself the true bread come down from heaven, the true nourishment that we need in order to be fully ourselves. "This is the food that gives us true life, eternal life. Thus the manger becomes a reference to the table of God, to which we are invited so as to receive the bread of God" (p. 68).

We might add that the name Bethlehem means precisely "house of bread". But why do we associate the birth of Christ with the actual presence of animals, in particular an ox and an ass?

Pope Benedict, acknowledging that the Gospel makes no mention of animals, writes: "But prayerful reflection, reading Old and New testaments in the light of one another, filled this lacuna at a very early stage by pointing to Isaiah 1:3: 'The ox knows its owner, and the ass its master's crib; but Israel does not know, my people does not understand'" (ibid., p. 69).

And what are swaddling clothes?

In ancient times, as often seen in icons of the nativity scene, the newborn child was customarily wrapped round and round with a narrow band of cloth like a mummy. It was thought this would help the limbs to grow straight. Pope Benedict comments: "The child stiffly wrapped in bandages is seen as prefiguring the hour of his death: from the outset, he is the sacrificial victim ... The manger, then, was seen as a kind of altar" (ibid., p. 68).

The swaddling clothes can be seen too as a reference to Christ's kingship and his descent from King Solomon, the son of King David. Solomon, in the book of Wisdom, writes: "I was nursed with care in swaddling clothes. For no king has had a different beginning of existence; there is for all mankind one entrance into life, and a common departure" (Wisdom 7:4-6).

Finally, why did the angel say to the shepherds, "And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger" (Luke 2:12).

Certainly a baby lying in a manger would be a sign, since this was most uncommon. But probably, since the angel mentioned the swaddling clothes specifically, this too must have been part of the sign.

So there is much symbolism and much to be learned from these simple aspects of Christ's birth in Bethlehem.

How Do I Love God With All My Heart?



Dear Father, I want to love God with all my heart, but I don't know where to start. How do I do this?

LOVING GOD WITH all your heart means desiring him above all things and making your intimate, personal relationship with him into the highest priority of your life, the centre around which every other facet of your existence finds its proper and glorious place. But how do you do that? How do you make that happen?

The heart expresses itself through the other three modes that Jesus identifies in the greatest commandment: loving God with all our soul, mind, and strength. Attending to each of those arenas, therefore, produces an indirect effect on the heart as well,

educating and purifying it, and nourishing its Christian core. Nevertheless, you can also attend to the heart directly.

Thoughts of the Heart

We spend a lot of time thinking about the things we desire. When we treasure something, it occupies our mind. And, conversely, the more we think about something, the more we tend to desire it.

This is part of human nature; it flows from the connection between the two spiritual faculties that human nature possesses—intelligence and will, the power to know and the power to choose. For us human beings, these faculties utilize instruments to operate: our senses, our imagination, our memory, our emotions, and our passions. Unlike angels, whose access to truth and goodness is purely spiritual and immediate, human persons discover truth and goodness gradually, through the mediation of spatial-temporal experience. This is why we can figure out a solution to a complex problem by making diagrams and pictures, doodling, trying various alternatives in our imagination, and discussing it with others.

And so, what we choose to look at, think about, and daydream about will affect the desires that grow and mature in our heart. The intensity of our love for a certain object can increase or decrease according to how much attention we pay to that object and how much space it takes up in our external and internal senses (memory and imagination).

Tricks of the Devil

The devil understands this reality and uses it in the dynamics of temptation. St. James explains how temptation begins with something that stirs up a self-centered desire, and then, if we choose to pay attention to that desire, it

grows. If we feed it with more attention, we will eventually act on it, committing sin. If we continue to act on it, the sin can become a habit and even choke off the life of grace:

Each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire conceives and brings forth sin, and when sin reaches maturity it gives birth to death. (James 1:14–15)

The devil, agitating our fallen nature and the fallen world in which we live, will try to monopolize our attention with images, ideas, thoughts, and invitations that can lure us into self-absorption and eventually into destructive self-indulgence. The enemy of our souls wants to occupy our minds with a multiplicity of inputs that can divide our hearts, draining our desire for God and filling up our desires for any number of petty idols.

Spiritual Heart Supplements

Forming our heart in Christ follows the contrary path. To feed our desire for God and our desire to make our relationship with him the core and fountain of everything we do requires thinking frequently about him and his magnificent plan for our lives. Just as a little boy will feed his desire for a new bike by looking at a picture of that bike every day, so too we need to gaze at the Lord and savour his dream for us as often as we can. We need to feed the central desire of our Christian heart with thoughts that are in harmony with that desire. And we need to intentionally stir up those thoughts all the time. The Psalms frequently make choosing to think about God and his plans (his name, promise, judgments, testimonies) a central theme for prayer:

In my heart I treasure your promise, that I may not sin against you.... At all times my soul is stirred with longing for your judgments.... Direct my heart toward your testimonies and away from gain. Avert my eyes from what is worthless; by your way give me life. When I recite your judgments of old...I am comforted, LORD. Even at night I remember your name in observance of your law, LORD. (Psalm 119:11, 20, 36–37, 52, 55)

Most of the traditional pious practices associated with Christianity have this as their goal. Displaying images of Jesus, Mary, and the saints on our walls, desks, rearview mirrors, and screen savers; wearing a cross or a crucifix around our necks; wearing blessed medals; dropping by a church and making the Sign of the Cross with holy water; asking for a priest's blessing; praying before meals.... Practices like these set reminders for us to think about God. They can nourish the core desire of our hearts.

Eating Right

But the meat and potatoes of forming the Christian heart remain prayer and the sacraments... Without a real, growing life of prayer—in all of its forms, but most essentially in a daily, personal God-time—our core desire for God will always remain undernourished, and our spiritual growth will be stunted. Infrequent or superficial contact with the sacraments, especially the Eucharist and confession, robs our souls of essential spiritual nutrients. Jesus made this clear so many times:

On Prayer: "Then Jesus told them a parable about the necessity for them to pray always without becoming weary..." (Luke 18:1); "If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you." (John 15:7)

On the Eucharist: "Jesus said to them, 'Amen, amen, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you do not have life within you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him on the last day. For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I have life because of the Father, so also the one who feeds on me will have life because of me.'" (John 6:53–57)

On confession (Jesus to his apostles): "Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained." (John 20:23)

So, God himself gives us a new heart when we become Christians, but he leaves it up to us to make that heart grow.

Pope Francis
declares

YEAR OF SAINT JOSEPH

December 8, 2020 -
December 8, 2021



St Joseph our Patron, Pray for us.

Kids Corner

Riddles

Q. What is a cat's favourite colour?

A. *Purr-ple!*

Q. What did the egg say when it was late for breakfast?

A. *I have to scramble!*

Q. Why didn't the skeleton cross the road?

A. *Because he didn't have the guts!*

Q. Why doesn't the scientist trust atoms?

A. *Because they make up everything!*

Q. What school subject is the fruitiest?

A. *History. Because it is full of dates.*

Q. What is a vampire's favourite fruit?

A. *A neck-tarine!*

Bible Word Search: The Christmas Story

Camel	D	R	E	H	P	E	H	S	Mary
Cat	R	W	Y	P	M	W	M	T	Savior
Cave	O	I	T	E	A	O	A	A	Sheep
Christ	I	S	S	S	K	C	R	R	Shepherd
Cow	V	E	H	O	I	N	Y	N	Star
Donkey	A	M	E	J	G	R	O	E	Wise men
Joseph	S	E	E	V	A	C	H	D	
	R	N	P	L	E	M	A	C	

Bible Story **Jesus Is Born at Bethlehem**



The angel Gabriel was sent from God to a young woman named Mary in Nazareth, a town of Galilee. She was to be married to a man named Joseph of the family of David. When he came to her the angel said: "Hail, highly honoured one! God is with you!"

She was startled by his words and wondered what such a greeting might mean. But the angel said to her, "Fear not, Mary, for you have found favour with God. You will have a son and will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High."

Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, for I am not yet married." The angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will cover you; therefore your child will be called holy, the Son of God." Mary said: "I am God's servant. May it be with me as you say." Then the angel left her.

In those days the Emperor Augustus commanded that everyone should be registered. So all went to be registered, each to his own town. Joseph, because he was of the family of David, went to be registered with Mary, his wife, from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Bethlehem in Judea where David was born. While they were there Mary's first son was born. And she wrapped him in swaddling-clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

In that country there were shepherds living in the fields and keeping watch over their flocks by night. And an angel from God stood by them and a heavenly light shone around them, and they were frightened. But the angel said to them:

"Fear not, for behold I bring you good news
Of great joy which shall be for all the people.

For to you is born this day in the town of David
A Saviour who is God's Anointed.

This will be a sign to guide you:
You will find a baby in swaddling-clothes lying in a manger."



Then suddenly there was with the angel a great number of the heavenly ones singing praise to God and saying:

*"Glory to God on high,
And on earth peace, good-will
among men."*

When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go now to Bethlehem to see this which God has made known to us." So they went quickly and found Mary and Joseph; and the baby was lying in a manger.

When they had seen him, they made known what had been told them about this child. All who heard the words of the shepherds wondered, but Mary kept these things to herself and often thought about them. And the shepherds returned, thanking and praising God for what they had heard and seen, as it had been foretold.

Monthly Adoration:

The Adoration of the Holy Eucharist is held on third Friday of every month at 7pm.

All parishioners are welcome to join the adoration along with their family live at ChurchServices.tv/Wembley1



REFLECTIONS ON THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD



For much of contemporary secular society, following Christmas Day itself, Christmas is over for another year. For Catholics and Christians, however, there is “still more to come.” The Roman Catholic Church anticipates the Christmas feast of the “Epiphany of the Lord,” traditionally celebrated throughout the Western Christian world on January 6. Known by many other names in a number of different cultures – “Little Christmas,” “Three Kings’ Day,” the “Twelfth Day of Christmas,” “Twelfth Night,” etc. – this feast extends the Christmas season by commemorating the visit of the “magi” or “wise men” to the Christ Child. What is the Feast of the Epiphany all about in the Church?

Most of us are familiar with the legendary presence of the “three kings” from manger scenes in our churches and homes. We can sing the words of the popular hymn “We Three Kings” from memory. We know the gifts they brought as they followed the Christmas star to the place of the Nativity: gold, frankincense and myrrh.

The story of the “three wise men” or “magi” is derived from the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 2, where the sacred author describes their visit to King Herod in Jerusalem in search of the “newborn king of the Jews.” They told him they “saw his star at its rising” and – recalling the words of the prophet Micah that the “one to rule Israel” would come from Bethlehem (Micah 5:2) – they wanted to pay him homage.

“Troubled” by this news of competition, King Herod dispatched them to Bethlehem and directed them to return to him once they found him there. And so, following the star, they entered “the house and saw the child with Mary his mother” and presented their gifts. They had a dream, however, not to return to King Herod and, so, they journeyed home via another route.

That is the story. It is only found in the Gospel of Matthew and nowhere else in the scriptures. In the early centuries of the Church’s developing tradition, the visit of the three magi had a great impact on its imagination and became part of the whole liturgical re-presentation of Christ’s birth, his early life, his baptism by John in the Jordan and his first public miracle at the wedding Feast of Cana. Eventually, the Epiphany became a separate liturgical celebration as did the commemoration of the Baptism of the Lord.

Let us focus on the celebration of the Epiphany as we Catholics have come to know it.

First, the “magi.” They are also called “wise men,” “kings,” and “astrologers.” It is this last identification would explain their interest in and attraction to the “star.” The term itself comes from ancient Greek and Arabic expressions used in many ways but, basically, to describe men of great learning – hence “wise” men. Although not Jews themselves, they would be familiar with many ancient religious traditions and customs. This would explain their knowledge of the prophecies of Micah, which they quoted to King Herod. Matthew notes that they came “from the east.”

Scripture does not claim that they were “three” in number nor does it identify them as “Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar” as later tradition customarily names them. The presumption that there were “three” of them comes from the three gifts Matthew says they offered to the child and his Mother: gold, representing royalty – Micah predicts he will “rule Israel;” frankincense, used in ancient worship rites – the magi “prostrated themselves and did him homage;” and myrrh, a perfume used at the coronation of kings or to anoint the dead – perhaps a prediction of the eventual death of the king.

Next, the star. Whether or not the star was a miraculous or unusual apparition is not clear from the story itself. It is entirely possible that the star was clearer in the sky at the time of the journey of the magi “from the east.” It cannot be dismissed or discounted but it certainly was interpreted at the time to have a special prominence or significance. It does add to an amazing story.

In his book “Jesus of Nazareth: The Infancy Narratives,” Pope Benedict XVI observed that it was not the star that determined the child’s destiny but the child who directed the star.

Finally, the story itself. “Epiphany” comes from a Greek linguistic expression that is translated as “display” or “manifestation.” In Matthew’s account, the visit of the magi is intended to demonstrate or “manifest” that Jesus, the child of Mary born in Bethlehem, is the long-awaited Messiah of Israel, predicted by the prophets of old. They called upon King Herod during their journey as a courtesy because they presumed that he, too, shared their enthusiasm for the anticipated birth of “a ruler who is to shepherd my people Israel.”

The Catechism of the Catholic Church observes that “The Epiphany is the manifestation of Jesus as Messiah of Israel, Son of God and Saviour of the world” and that the magi’s coming to Jerusalem, in order to pay homage to the king of the Jews, shows that they seek in Israel, in the messianic light of the star of David, the one who will be the king of the nations (Catechism, 528).”

For Catholics and Christians, Christmas does not end with the celebrations of December 25 or January 1 or even January 6. No, Christmas begins on the great feast of Christ’s birth and continues with the visit of the magi to Bethlehem, with the baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River and with the Wedding Feast of Cana when his miraculous power is first publicly revealed.

The Lord Jesus Christ, born of Mary, adored by the magi, is the Messiah, the Son of God and Saviour of the World. Let the celebration continue! With the magi on the feast of the Epiphany, “come let us adore him, Christ the Lord!”

Epiphany Prayer



O God
Who by a
star
guided the wise men to the worship of your Son
we pray you to lead to yourself
the wise and great of every land
that unto you every knee may bow,
and every thought be
brought into captivity
Through
Jesus Christ our Lord.

Animals take over cities during self-isolation

In many countries people have been told to stay at home to try to stop the spread of coronavirus, which means far fewer people are out and about.

And when humans are away, the animals come out to play!

Lots of creatures, from deer and goats to monkeys and even a puma, have been making an appearance in places you wouldn't normally expect to see them.

Some have come to big towns and cities in search of food, while others look like they're making the most of their freedom with humans out of the picture.

Deer



A herd of fallow deer were seen grazing on the lawns in front of a housing estate in Harold Hill in east London. It's thought they came from the nearby

Dagnam Park, and spent the morning lazing on the grass.

It is very unusual to see deer in this area as they are normally very timid creatures, but with the streets deserted, this one had full reign!

Meanwhile in Japan, the local deer have also been out and about exploring. They normally live in Nara Park, a popular tourist attraction, where more than



a thousand deer roam freely throughout the year.

But now that tourists aren't around to feed them they've been wandering into the city (and shops!) in search of food.

Pumas



You'd get quite a shock if you saw something like this outside your front door, but that's exactly what happened to people in the city of Santiago in Chile, South America. Local experts think it must have come down from the nearby mountains in search for food.

Wild boar



In some countries it's not unusual to see boars roaming around in public. The Spanish city of Barcelona is another place where they've been spotted over the past few years, but now that there's even fewer people around, the boars are making the most of their freedom.

Coyotes



In the US city of San Francisco coyotes have been roaming the empty streets, with many people having a surprise coyote encounter when they're popping out to get groceries.

It even looks like the coyotes having been enjoying some of the city's famous tourist sites. including the Golden Gate Bridge.

Kangaroo



A kangaroo went for a hop around a city centre in Australia

Mountain Goats



Mountain Goats roam the streets of Llandudno, in North Wales. The goats normally live on the rocky Great Orme but were drawn to the streets due to the lack of people and tourists

People on lockdown have been posting on social media stories of seeing the wild animals boldly strolling through quiet, deserted streets.



CULINARY QUARTER



Easy Mince Pies

Ingredients

225g cold butter, diced
350g plain flour
100g golden caster sugar
280g mincemeat
1 small egg, beaten
icing sugar, to dust



Method

STEP 1

To make the pastry, rub the butter into the flour, then mix in the golden caster sugar and a pinch of salt.

STEP 2

Combine the pastry into a ball – don't add liquid – and knead it briefly. The dough will be fairly firm, like shortbread dough. You can use the dough immediately, or chill for later.

STEP 3

Heat the oven to 200C/180C fan/gas 6. Line 18 holes of two 12-hole patty tins, by pressing small walnut-sized balls of pastry into each hole.

STEP 4

Spoon the mincemeat into the pies. Take slightly smaller balls of pastry than before and pat them out between your hands to make round lids, big enough to cover the pies.

STEP 5

Top the pies with their lids, pressing the edges gently together to seal – you don't need to seal them with milk or egg as they will stick on their own. *Will keep frozen for up to one month.*

STEP 6

Brush the tops of the pies with the beaten egg. Bake for 20 minutes until golden. Leave to cool in the tin for 5 minutes, then remove to a wire rack. To serve, lightly dust with the icing sugar. *Will keep for three to four days in an airtight container.*

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