



MASS TIMES & INTENTIONS



Saturday 06TH December 2023 – Feria of Christmas Time

9.20am	Mass and Rosary	Helen Donnelly & Denise Curtis RIP
10.00am – 11.00am	Confessions	
6.00pm	Vigil Mass	Lucy Parry Smith RIP

Sunday 07TH December 2023 – THE EPIPHANY OF THE - LORD HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION

9:00am	Mass	Alison Jackson Intentions
11:00am	Mass	Helen Donnelly RIP
5:00pm	Holy Hour	

Monday 08th January – The Baptism of the Lord

10.00am	Mass
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The Season of Christmas concludes.

Tuesday 09TH January 2024 – Feria

7.00pm	Novena to Anthony of Padua
7.30pm	Mass

Wednesday 10TH January 2024 – Feria

9.00am	Morning Prayer	
9.20am	Mass and Rosary	Shirley Claiden RIP
10am until 4pm	Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament	

Thursday 11TH January 2024 – Feria

9.00am	Morning Prayer	
9.20am	Mass and Rosary	Bob & Shirley Galloway RIP
10am until 4pm	Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament	
5.00pm	Memorial Mass – John Paul	

Friday 12TH January 2024 – Feria

9.00am	Morning Prayer	
9.20am	Mass and Rosary	Colline & Connie Hounslow RIP
10am until 5pm	Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament	

Saturday 13TH January 2024– Feria

9.00am	Morning Prayer	
9.20am	Mass and Rosary	Liz Baker Thanksgiving
10.00am – 11.00am	Confessions	
6.00pm	Vigil Mass	

Sunday 14TH January 2024 – SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (B) (Peace Day)

9.00am	Mass	Joseph Rodgers RIP
11.00am	Mass	Shirley Claiden RIP
5.00pm	Holy Hour	



OUR LADY OF GOOD COUNSEL



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THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD HOLYDAY OF OBLIGATION (B) 07TH JANUARY 2024

On this feast of the Epiphany, we celebrate the revelation of who Christ is. The visit of the three wise men reminds us that Jesus came as the Saviour of all nations, including ours. We worship God who wants all people to be saved.

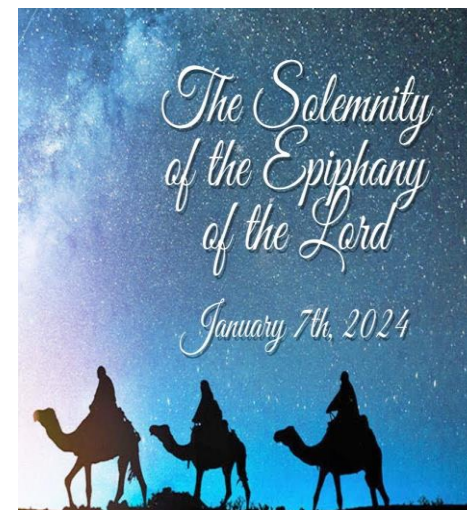
Introduction to the Scripture Readings

Isaiah 60:1-6 — Isaiah refers to foreign people coming to worship the God of Israel, just as the three wise men did.

Ephesians 3:2-3, 5-6 — Paul talks about the meaning of the feast: in Jesus, salvation is made available to Jews and pagans alike.

Matthew 2:1-12 — The events celebrated on the Epiphany are described in the Gospel.

Today's Solemnity continues the celebration the celebration of the astonishing mystery of God's manifestation to the very ends of the earth. The visitors from the East symbolize the extent of God's salvation as it unfolds for peoples of every land. As they offer gifts, as would be fitting for a king they announce to the world that an astonishing event has taken place; all people will know the glory of God.



THE FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD (Mon 08th Jan 2024)

The manifestations of Christ that we celebrate during Christmas Time culminate in the Baptism of the Lord. On the last day of the Christmas season, may we think of how we will be open to allow Christ to be manifested in our lives. Let us resolve to consciously choose to follow Christ more closely & take seriously our baptismal call to live as disciples.

We long for the day when justice, freedom, & peace become a reality for all. As people of faith, we believe Jesus brings these to the world in need. Together, we accompany each other as we proclaim & work to build up the kingdom of the One whose baptism at the river Jordan we celebrate today. Let us reflect on those times when our words & actions on behalf of those in need of justice, freedom, and peace have fallen short.



PARISH NEWS

The First Holy Communion Session

The next Session will be on the **06th of January 2024** followed by the obligatory Mass Attendance on the **07th**.

To all participants, please regularly bring the booklets that were issued to you for signing by the Parish Priest.

Confirmation Programme 2023/24

The next Confirmation class will be on **11th January 2024** in the back hall (7:30pm-9:00pm). If you are unable to attend, please email the parish office.

Teas & Coffee Morning

Will be held this **Sunday on the 07th** after the 9:00am mass.

Cuppa, Cake, and a Chat

We are thrilled to announce another cuppa, cake and a chat has been organised for the **15th January 2024** from 11am in the back hall. All are welcome. This time we also have a VIP visiting, May Carey who many of you will know, who is visiting from her new home in Surrey.

100 Club Grand Draw

Congratulations to the winners of December 2023's draw, you shall receive your winnings shortly via post.

Thank you for your continued support & participation.

Volunteers Needed

We need Volunteers for Adoration, if you would like to become one, kindly inform Talitha, our Parish Secretary so you may be added to the Rota.

Wickford Food bank

Stocks are going down - we need Baked Beans, soup, tinned fish, meat, fruit, rice and custard, jam, and cereals. Please can you help. We can only accept donations of food and toiletries. There is no room at the Foodbank to store anything else. Thank you for your generosity!

Memorial Mass – John Paul

A memorial mass will be held on **Thursday 11th January 2024 at 5:00pm** for Mr. John Paul, a teenager from the Travellers community who sadly passed away on **11th December 2023**. We express our heart felt condolences to the family.

Sick Friends and Relatives - Please pray for Jonathan Fabri, Jayne & Danny Balaam, Beniamina Bilewycz, Ruby Borien, Arthur Brittain, Mary Caruana, Theresa Eldred, Patricia Gammell, Johnny Gee, Celine Guckian, Sharon Guckian, Gabrielle & Ralphie Langridge, Margaret Livesey, John Maguire, Bridget Mahoney, Carmella Micella, Elizabeth Mooney, Cecile Narbeth, Olivia Nazareth, Diane Neale, Margaret O'Doherty, Joy Orrock, Carmelo Piazza, Maureen Price, Conchita Prime, Carol Rushbrook, John Sheridan, Gerry Smyth, Maria Weedon, Elizabeth Arnold, Jane Williams, Gomez, Patricia McEvoy, Danny Curtis, Maureen Sullivan, Susan Freeman, Jane Davenport, Nathalie Ah-key, Amparo Thorogood, George O'Boyle, Pat McEvoy, Ann Parkinson, Valerie Robinson, Nelly Prada, Michael Fitzgerald, May and Chris Carey, Doreen Green, Conrad Gomes, Peter Turner, Sr. Sior Cosgrave Una, Clairin Molloy, Celine Wells, Patricia Graves and Keith Bottjer, Robert Turner.

Anniversaries – We pray for Canon John Bloomfield, Louisa Jane Smart, William Bertte Parker, Ellen Newland, Eric Wood, Margaret Cross, Alec Charkwood, Alan Pearce, Joan Mc Clory, Peter Joseph Penman, Ruby O'Shaughnessy, John Daly, Edward Darsh, Savah Rhodes, Frank Corbish, Ethel Doyle, Harry Pont, A.V Cusack O'Rorke, Ellen Maker, Patricia Cloonan, Elsie Amey, Annie Bury, Cornelius Shanahan, Timothy Duggan, Fred Eveling, Canon Francis Dobson, Mary Ingram, William Allison.

DIOCESAN NEWS

1. Events:

A FIRE IN MY HEART - A CONVERSATION WITH BIBLICAL FRIENDS:

On Saturday 3rd February from 11 am until 2 pm (coffee at 10.30 am), at the church of Christ the Eternal High Priest in Gidea Park (RM2 6DH), Fr Adrian Graffy, parish priest and member of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, will be in conversation with professor Nuria Calduch-Benages, secretary of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, and Carlos Castillo Mattasoglio, archbishop of Lima, Peru. The event coordinator is Fr Javier Ruiz-Ortiz, vice-rector of Allen Hall. The speakers will be present in-person, but this free event is also live-streamed on www.whatgoodnews.org. If attending in person please book your place at gideapark@brcdt.org. The event is under the auspices of the Catholic Biblical Association of Great Britain.

SAHARA DESERT RETREAT IN MOROCCO - 26 February to 11 March 2024

Including a day visiting Marrakesh and 9 full days in the Desert. With Fr Arnaud and Deacon Vladimir from St Antony's in Forest Gate. Designed for young adults, open to all adults able to hike 4 - 6 hours a day for 9 full days in the desert. £952 (plus flight). www.desert-retreat.com or phone Catherine at 07807 348223.

Escorted Pilgrimage to Knock & Co Mayo, 7th April 2024.

£899.00 per person - Price includes flight, 10kg hold luggage, 5 nights in 4* Castle court Hotel, Westport with Dinner, Bed & Breakfast. Lunch on three days. All entertainment, excursions and transport included. Visit Knock, Galway City, Kylemore Abbey, Croagh Patrick & Ashford Castle. Single supplement on Enquiry. Contact Patricia or Natali on 01268 762 278 or 07740 175557 or email knockpilgrimages@gmail.com.

40yrs of Walsingham House Teams

2024 marks 40 years of retreat teams at Walsingham House. There will be a celebration Mass with Bishop Alan on Saturday 31st August 2024 at Walsingham House at Abbots wick. Please save the date as it would be

wonderful to see Walsingham House and BCYS alumni and friends gather to mark this milestone. More information to follow in the new year.

2. Programmes:

Bishop's Certificate in Catechesis and Youth Ministry is an online course is designed to be an entry level qualification to help in the ongoing formation of adults involved in sacramental preparation (First Holy Communion and/or Confirmation) or youth ministry in the Diocese of Brentwood. It includes both the development of practical skills & the deepening of theological knowledge. For more information or to register your interest please email clairebailey@brcdt.org or see the website <https://bcys.net/bishops-cert/>

BCCS FREE SELF-HARM WORKSHOP FOR FAMILIES

Brentwood Catholic Children's Society (BCCS) is aiming to deliver free Self-Harm support groups to both parents/carers and their teenagers should they wish to attend. The workshops will be held on a Wednesday evening for four consecutive weeks at their premises at 133 High Street, Billericay between 6.30 and 8pm. The parents' group will run alongside a separate group for the young people and will be an opportunity to think about how self-harm is affecting you, your child and your family. The young people will attend a separate group session with a BCCS Child and Adolescent Therapist. Parents will come together with their teenager at the end where they will be supported to communicate, reflect and connect. Parents are welcome to attend without their child or young person if that is a more comfortable option. To book your space, please contact Catherine Munns asap; places are likely to fill quickly: cmunns@bccs.org.uk (A Flyer of the event is displayed on the Church Notice board).

3. Appeals:

Caritas Diocese of Brentwood

In the Gospel narratives, we hear of the family displaced from their home, finding solace in a humble stable, cradling their newborn amidst the simplicity of their surroundings. This Holy Family, vulnerable yet resilient, resonates profoundly, urging us to reach out to those facing hardships during this Advent season. It prompts us to remember that amidst the

festivities, there are individuals and families across Essex and East London experiencing great difficulties, requiring our support, kindness, and care. Numerous charitable organisations persist in their efforts to aid the most vulnerable in our communities, and they rely on our collective support. Please visit the Caritas website to access links to the many charities in need of generosity and volunteers.

[Caritas Diocese of Brentwood \(caritasbrentwood.org\)](http://Caritas Diocese of Brentwood (caritasbrentwood.org))

Brentwood Catholic Children's Society

This November is pleased to re-launch their virtual **Tree of Angels** which will allow you to light up a symbolic angel on a virtual Christmas tree in memory of a loved one who has died while donating to the work of BCCS. Please visit www.bccs.org.uk and click on the Christmas tab where you will see 'Tree of Angels'. You can read more about this initiative and can click onto the Tree of Angels portal to make your dedication and secure donation. If you have any questions about lighting an angel, please contact Damian ddillon@bccs.org.uk.

CAFOD Israeli-Palestinian Crisis Appeal

Donate to CAFOD's Israeli-Palestinian Crisis Appeal at cafod.org.uk/ipc or call 0303 303 3030 to support those affected and get funds to local trusted experts in Gaza and southern Israel who have been working alongside communities helping those most in need. Your donation will help support aid workers providing urgent humanitarian aid including food, water, and emergency shelter to those in need. Thank you for your prayers.

4. Job adverts:

Assistant Headteacher Vacancy

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Stanford-le-Hope.

For more information see www.essexschoolsjobs.co.uk

Application Deadline - **14th January 12pm**. We look forward to hearing from you.

Volunteers Needed

The SVP are looking for volunteers willing to help children put their faith into action. Could this be you? The St Vincent de Paul Society have primary school groups called Mini Vinnies, and volunteers would support teachers or youth leaders wishing to start a group in their school

or parish. They will talk to children about how they can make a difference to those living in poverty and share resources to support the group. The role is flexible but does need people with some availability during school hours (at least 2 mornings or afternoons per month) who are willing to travel within the diocese (all costs are covered). If you are passionate about helping children discover how they can make a difference in their communities, please email Sarah for more information on youngvincentians@svp.org.uk. You do not have to have previous experience of working with children as all training will be given. Our next initial training day is on Tuesday 27th February 2024.

VOLUNTARY TREASURER NEEDED

Do you have financial experience and a couple of hours per week to spare?

If so, the National Justice and Peace Network would like to hear from you. Due to the sad passing of their Treasurer, they are now in urgent need of a new one. If you are looking for some voluntary work, and share their passion for social action, please email: - admin@justice-and-peace.org.uk

Supply Teachers - Our Lady of Ransom Catholic Primary School

We are also looking to build a team of Supply Teachers

Please Contact Mr Parascandolo via info@olorcps.net for further details.

This Week's Article:

The star first leads the wise men to Jerusalem—where Old and New Testament meet—not Bethlehem



An image of the Magi is featured on one of the Vatican's 2021 Christmas stamps. The images on the stamps were painted by Adam Piekarski, a homeless man from Poland currently living in Rome. (CNS illustration/courtesy Vatican Philatelic and Numismatic Office)

Preaching on the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord, David Neuhaus, S.J., explores a curiosity in the story of the Wise Men's journey from the East to the Bethlehem manger. "Why didn't the star take them straight to Bethlehem? Why did it take them to Jerusalem?," he asks. "I think it took them to Jerusalem, as we are always taken to Jerusalem, because we must encounter the scriptures of Israel," he continues. "It is from the Scriptures of Israel that they will receive the precise destination to which they are going—Bethlehem."

David, a Jesuit priest and Scripture scholar of the Near-East province of the Jesuits, was born into Judaism in South Africa but has lived most of his life in the Holy Land. Firmly declaring his roots, he states, "I was born a Jew and remain a Jew," he states, firmly declaring his roots. "I didn't have any faith until I became a Catholic." Over the course of his ministry as a Jesuit, he has dedicated himself to teaching Scripture in both Israel and Palestine. Notably, from 2008 to 2017, he served as the vicar for the Hebrew-speaking Catholic community in Israel. Presently, he splits his time between Johannesburg and Jerusalem.

On this week's "Preach," host Ricardo da Silva, S.J., delves into David's questioning of the route, the Magi took to see Jesus and its implications for the Sunday Mass readings. "There is always some intimate connection between the first reading from the Old Testament and the third reading from the Gospel," David notes. "I would also say that it is very helpful when

we realize that what we are called to do in a homily is to make Jesus alive, bring Jesus alive, and that Jesus is made alive by explicit texts about Jesus in the New Testament, and an implicit promise of Jesus in the Old Testament.

The star took the Magi to Jerusalem, as we are always taken to Jerusalem, because we must encounter the Scriptures of Israel.

Scripture Readings for the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord

First Reading: Is 60:1-6

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13

Second Reading: Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6

Gospel: Mt 2:1-12

You can find the full text of the readings [here](#).

Homily for the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord by David Neuhaus, S.J.

Jesus was born in difficult times—not easier than those in which we live today. Yet, despite the darkness surrounding him, there were those who found their way to the manger in order to adore him. God does not abandon us in times of darkness and continues to guide us to the light even if we struggle with the darkness that seeks to swallow us. In the Gospel today, there are a number of surprising elements. I would like to underline a few so that we can become more aware of the ways in which God works in our world.

This feast of the Epiphany (the manifestation of the Lord) is symbolized by the bright star in the Gospel we heard. It leads three magi, wise men from the East, on a journey. These men, not from the people of Israel, do not know the Scriptures that speak of God and God's promises; however, they are able to read the signs in nature, gazing at the stars. Following this special star, they set out to find the King of the Jews who is the Savior of all the nations.

Interestingly, the star does not lead them to the manger in Bethlehem, where the child lies. Rather, it takes them to Jerusalem, center of the Jewish world, to King Herod. Jesus will later say to the Samaritan woman: "salvation comes from the Jews" (John 4:22). The word of God in the

Scriptures, the word of salvation, comes to us from the Jews, a people chosen by God to bring light into the world, the light that results from living according to God's Word. The wise men must hear the words of the prophets, from the Jews in Jerusalem. It is there that they learn that the Messiah is to be born in Bethlehem, as spoken by the prophet Micah.

The star does not lead the Magi to the manger in Bethlehem, where the child lies. Rather, it takes them to Jerusalem, center of the Jewish world, to King Herod.

However, unconsciously, these wise men from the nations also challenge the Jews in Jerusalem. In a special way, they provoke the king. Standing before the king, or at least the one who thinks he is king, Herod, they ask: Where is the king? Can you imagine saying to a king where the king is? It is not just impolite, it is verging on insurrection.

From the Old Testament, we know that the king of Israel is supposed to be God. When the people was born, emerging from Egypt after crossing the sea, they sing with Moses: "God reigns forever" (Ex. 15:18). However, this people, seeking to be like all other people, repeatedly asks to have a king of flesh and blood rather than recognizing God as its king. The story of kingship in Israel, starting with Avimelekh in the Book of Judges and passing through the figures of Saul, David, Solomon and many other kings, most of them great sinners, is mostly a tragic story. Kings tend to be Pharaohs, ruthless, self-interested and corrupt.

And Herod, who will be revealed as a true Pharaoh, slaughtering the children of Bethlehem to try and wipe out the Messiah, understands immediately what the wise men are saying. These three strangers, without even knowing it, are telling him that his time is up. They are announcing that the true King has come. They are speaking truth to power.

These wise men from the East were from among the nations and yet God opens for them a way to reach the light.

These wise men from the East were from among the nations and yet God opens for them a way to reach the light. They read the book of a wonderful creation, which we tend to overlook in times of darkness. Like the Bible, creation too tells of the Creator and his plan for our lives. In this plan, life

is stronger than death, light will vanquish the darkness. And yet, the way is long and winding.

The wise men offer the baby their gifts—expected gifts—for a king, gold and for a high priest, incense (as mentioned in the Book of Isaiah 60, read on this feast). However, they also bring out of their pouches, myrrh—an unexpected gift that heralds the fate of the baby. Myrrh is used to prepare a corpse for burial. Indeed, darkness will try to extinguish the light... but will never succeed.

Already at his birth, Jesus is bringing together Jews and Gentiles, Israel and the nations. The Jewish shepherds we heard about on Christmas day are now joined by the Gentile wise men at the manger. They have all come to adore the Word of God. Saint Paul reminds us that in Jesus there is neither "Jew nor Greek, neither slave nor free, neither male nor female" (Gal. 3:28). For "he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us." He seeks to "create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it" (Eph. 2:14-17).

On this feast, let us again swear fidelity to the one and only king—the merciful and compassionate Father who seeks out all His children in order to give them life and blessing, light and joy in excess, through His Son. On this feast, He reveals His Son to the world. Come, let us go to the manger in order to give him all we have. We know he will give us more than we can ever imagine and also his peace.