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Link for vacancies throughout the Diocese <https://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/about-us/other/jobs>

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Sunday 22nd December 2024

Happy, holy and peaceful Christmas to everyone from Fr Thomas

Our Offertory donation over Christmas is our personal gift to Fr Thomas

Page 90	Micah 5: 1-4	Hebrews 10: 5-10	Gospel Luke 1: 39-45
<p>The Fourth and last Sunday of Advent invites us to prepare our hearts for Jesus. We reflect on the Annunciation, where Mary welcomed the mystery of God's plan, becoming the new Covenant. We are called to deepen our faith, accepting that some things are beyond our understanding. This Sunday's themes also emphasise hospitality and family, reminding us to welcome others warmly, just as Mary welcomed Jesus. It's a time to consider how events in our lives fit into God's plan. As we enter this final week of Advent, we should make room for Jesus in our hearts and homes.</p> <p>In the first reading the prophet Micah in about 710 BC announces a message of hope and promise to the people of Israel. From the humble Bethlehem, a small and seemingly insignificant town, God will raise up a ruler who will shepherd His people. This ruler's origins are from of old, pointing to the divine and eternal nature of the Messiah. Despite the trials and struggles Israel faces, God promises restoration and peace through this shepherd king, an eternal promise, offering hope for a world in need.</p> <p>The second reading from the Book of Hebrews is a New Testament letter to Jewish Christians who were struggling with their faith. This section compares Jesus to Old Testament priests. The writer highlights the obedience of Christ in fulfilling His Father's will. Jesus is the perfect high priest who offered Himself as the final sacrifice for our sins. Unlike the old priests who offered animal sacrifices, Jesus' sacrifice is complete and brings a new covenant. The Book of Hebrews shows that Jesus is greater than angels, higher than Moses, and fulfils the Jewish faith in a perfect way. His sacrifice made us holy once and for all.</p> <p>In the Gospel Luke recounts Mary's visit to Elizabeth, a considerable journey when she was pregnant so was most probably accompanied by Joseph. This encounter is filled with joy, humility and the recognition of God's presence when the infant John leaps in the womb of Elizabeth at the sound of Mary's voice. Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit proclaims Mary as blessed among women and acknowledges Jesus as "<i>my Lord</i>" even as an unborn child. We also are called to recognise and respond to God's presence in our lives with faith, humility and joy and allow the Holy Spirit to open our hearts to the joy of Christmas.</p>			

Mass times	Feast Days
6 pm Confessions 6.30pm Vigil Mass	Saturday 21st St Peter Canisius Born 1521 in Nijmegen now in the Netherlands to a wealthy family. Graduated as a doctor of civil law at Cologne University. There met Peter Faber, one of the founders of the Jesuits. Peter was the first Dutchman to join the Society of Jesus. Became one of the most influential Catholics of his time. Leader of the Catholic counter Reformation in Germany against people such as the German priest Martin Luther. Attended Council of Trent in 1547. Engaged in preaching, teaching, writing and instructing in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Bohemia and Poland. Wrote short catechism in Latin and Germany - had 200 editions. Translated into 12 European languages. Died 21 st December 1597 aged 76, Fribourg, Switzerland
3 pm Christmas Carols & Readings 9.30 am Mass	After the Carols and Readings from 3 pm mince pies will be available Sunday 22nd December Fourth Sunday of Advent Diana Stimson RIP
6.30 pm Mass	Monday 23rd St Servulus Born about 550 in Rome. A beggar who was paralysed from the neck down. Each day carried by his mother and brother to beg for alms outside St Clement's Church in Rome. Shared what he received with other beggars. Asked people to read Holy Scripture to him which he memorised. He sang hymns of praise and thanksgiving to God despite his continual pain. As he was dying he asked family, pilgrims and his fellow beggars to sing hymns and psalms. As he sang along his final words were, "Do you hear the great and wonderful music in heaven. He was buried in the graveyard of St Clement's Church in Rome and his feast day is still celebrated there annually. Pope Gregory the Great gave a sermon in praise of him.
8 pm Vigil Mass for Christmas	Tuesday 24th St Paula Elizabeth Cerioli Born in 1816 to a noble family in Soncino, near Cremona in northern Italy. Paola was a frail child, the youngest of sixteen with a heart condition from birth. She was educated by the Visitation Sisters and wished to join the convent as a consecrated religious. However, her parents wanted her to marry and she did so. She had 3 children, but they and her husband had all died in 1854 when she was 38. She started to lodge and care for orphan girls at her house in Como. She educated them as farm workers. Other women joined her so she founded <i>Sisters of the Holy Family</i> of which she was made superior. She founded a similar orphanage for boys in 1863. She died of heart disease 2 years later in 1865
9.30 am Mass for Christmas	Wednesday 25th Nativity of the Lord The actual date of the birth of Jesus is unknown and it might not have even been in the year 0. This is not surprising as poor or normal people at the time were completely unaware of the year and the day. Of the four gospels only Luke and Matthew tell stories of the birth and childhood of Jesus. In Luke's gospel Emperor Augustus called for a census so Joseph has to travel 150 km from Nazareth to Bethlehem with a pregnant Mary. This almost certainly would have been in the summer for ease of movement and the fact that the sheep were outside with the shepherds supports this theory. Jesus was born at the time of Herod the Great but he died in 4BC by our calendar. This makes the birth of Jesus between 7BC and 4BC.

10 am Mass Thanksgiving for Jean-Luc birthday	Thursday 26th St Stephen The first deacon in the Church chosen by the Apostles of the 7 deacons in Rome. A man of faith and of the Holy Spirit and was an amazing orator who preached with great wisdom and energy. He was converting many to Christianity and was thought a danger to the Jewish authorities. They arranged a crowd to oppose his teaching when he was addressing a hostile audience with “ <i>a face like an angel</i> ” as recorded in the Acts of the Apostles despite a stirring speech the crowd attacked him and stoned him to death. The person that held the coats of his assailants was Saul, later to be St Paul. Stephen was the first martyr of the Church.					
NO MASS	Friday 27th St John the Evangelist . Born in Galilee the son of Zebedee and brother of St James the Great. He was a fisherman on Lake Galilee until he was called by Jesus to be an apostle. He is the author of the fourth gospel and also wrote three canonical letters. In his gospel he is usually identified with “ <i>the disciple whom Jesus loved</i> ”. By tradition he was based at Ephesus after the Resurrection and died there of natural causes. One legend in the Middle Ages was that he survived being boiled in oil in Rome before his exile to Patmos in Greece.					
6 pm Confessions 6.30pm Vigil Mass Jane Barber RIP 1st anniversary	Saturday 28th Holy Innocents Herod the Great was King of Judea at the time of the birth of Jesus. He heard that the 3 Wise Men, kings from the east, had followed a star as it indicated the birth of an important person. Herod was troubled and called the chief priests and learnt that they had finished in the area of Bethlehem. To protect his position and those of his ancestors he ordered that all children under two years old in the vicinity of Bethlehem be killed. Jesus, Mary and Joseph escaped the slaughter with their “Flight into Egypt”					
9.30 am Mass	Sunday 29th December The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph					
PLEASE PRINT IN BLOCK CAPITALS WHEN RECORDING NAMES FOR MASS INTENTION						
Your prayers are needed for the following people						
Sue Chandler	Hazel Sale	Joe Heatley	Fr Shaun Budden	Trevor Delves	Valerie Baker	Ruth Gleeson

NOTICES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Offertory collections on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day is our personal gift to Fr Thomas

We only have two occasions in the year, Christmas and Easter, when we are able to make a personal gift to our parish priest Fr Thomas for all his spiritual leadership, new ideas, kindness, support and cheerful friendship

This Sunday 22nd December at 3 pm we have a service of Carols and Readings

Start the Christmas celebrations with this service of singing carols, listening to a series of readings, all followed by light refreshments of mince pies.

Many thanks to all the parishioners who contributed to Special Collections in the last two Sundays

We had a marvellous response to the appeal for contributions towards the refreshments following the funeral of Fr Michael Cronin. The total came to £372.40 with gift aid of £15 as shown in the newsletter last week
The appeal for Christmas flowers came to £163.13 with gift aid of £6.25. Very many thanks to all who donated.

Many thanks also from Liz Challand and Sheilagh Moon for all the contributions towards the homeless

The Southampton Lunch Project in Woolston and Portswood are very grateful for all your donations which are so essential at this time of the year for those who are so vulnerable in our society.

Christmas Programme at St Vincent de Paul

Sunday 22nd December: Christmas carols, readings and mince pies at 3 pm

Tuesday 24th December: Christmas Vigil Mass at 8 pm

Wednesday 25th December: Christmas morning Mass at 9.30 am

Thursday 26th December: 10 am Mass

Tuesday 31st December: New Year Eve Adoration at 10pm followed by Mass at midnight.

Wednesday 1st January 2025: New Year Mass at 6.30 pm.

Ruth Gleeson is 99 years old and very ill and needs our prayers

Ruth, wife of deceased Deacon Paddy Gleeson, mother of Dee Heatley and mother in law of Joe Heatley, is currently in a Nursing Home and will celebrate her 100th birthday on 17th January 2025



Are you able to host the Posada, figures of Mary, Joseph and the donkey, for the night?

Parishioners wishing to host the Posada should fill in the “*Posada Journey Rota*” in the church porch with your name and contact details. The person hosting the Posada on the day before you will deliver the Posada to you at an agreed time. You must then make arrangements for the Posada to be delivered to the next host on the following day. For the evening that you host the Posada, you can invite family and friends to join in your celebration, or you might prefer a quiet evening of prayer and reflection.

Parish collection for last weekend 14th and 15th December

Parish Gift Aid Envelopes	Gift Aid	Parish Loose Collection	Direct debits, standing orders	Gift Aid	Total of Offertory Collection	Other money	Christmas Flowers		TOTAL of all money
							Gift Aid	Loose	
£77	£19.25	£148.90	£242.54	£51.98	£539.67	----	£25	£138.13	£702.80