

# *The Little Flower Messenger*

Year A FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2019

*Welcome to our Parish Community of St. Theresa of Lisieux*

The Presbytery, High Lane, Stansted Mountfitchet CM24 8LQ

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## **Gospel: Matthew 1: 18-24**

*Jesus is born of Mary who was betrothed to Joseph, son of David.*

**Mass book (P. 90)**

**1st Reading:**

*Isaiah 7:10-14*

**Psalm 23:**

*Let the Lord enter! He is the king of glory.*

**2nd Reading:**

*Romans 1:1-7*

**Gospel Acclamation:**

*Alleluia, alleluia! The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and they will call him Emmanuel, a name which means 'God-is-with-us'.  
Alleluia!*

**Communion Antiphon:  
(P. 93)**

*Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son; and his name will be called Emmanuel.*

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## **This Week's Good News**

Dear Friends

Today's Gospel account tells us that whilst Joseph was betrothed to Mary it was discovered that she was pregnant. Joseph knows beyond any doubt that he is not the father. He also knows the outcome if this fact becomes public knowledge. The law was clear 'If there is a Virgin pledged in marriage to a man, and another man encounters her in the city and sleeps with her, you must take both of them out to the gate of that city and stone them to death.' (Deuteronomy 22: 23-24).

Joseph was a 'righteous man' and did not want to expose Mary to disgrace. He planned to divorce her quietly. In doing so, he shows us Christ-like compassion in the face of perceived sin. He also demonstrates a Godly balance between the Law of the Torah and the Law of Love.

And then in a dream he learned that the Child had been conceived by the Holy Spirit, and that he himself was to be the foster-father of the Christ.

In the end, Joseph obediently took Mary as his wife, in spite of his fears, and he claimed her Son as his own by naming him. In spite of his earlier decision to divorce this woman quietly, Joseph nurtured, protected, watched over and loved both Mary and her Child. Joseph, through trust and Faith in God, accepted his mission as the foster-father of the Son of God.

Joseph shows us the power of faith. Like Joseph we need to trust in God, listen to him and be faithful. As we approach the culmination of Advent and the birth of our Saviour, let us remain faithful and prayerful, as we welcome Jesus into our hearts and lives this Christmas.

Deacon Des

## Prayer & Liturgy

### **Intercessory Prayer Group.**

Third Friday of each month. A time to bring our needs and prayers to the Lord. If you would like prayers said but cannot make it, feel free to email Deacon Des with your prayer requests.

### **Christian Meditation.**

Every Wednesday evening in St. John's Church, 7:00 p.m. - 7:45 p.m.

## Sacramental Preparation

**Sacrament of Baptism:** The next Baptism Preparation Course will take place in Church on **Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2020 at 7:30 p.m.** Do please let Deacon Des or Fr. Lee know if you would like to attend this course.

**Sacrament of Marriage:** Catholics must approach the Parish Priest / Deacon, at least 6 months prior to their intended wedding, and before setting a wedding date.

## Social News and Events

This evening **Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> December: 6:00 p.m.** We will celebrate our Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols; this will be followed by Mulled Wine and Mince Pies. – This is a traditional service of Christmas scripture readings and carols. Everyone welcome. Why not bring family and friends?

**Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> December: 4:00 p.m.** Family Mass with Pop Up Nativity. Children (and adults too) are invited to come to Mass dressed as a character of the Nativity. Mary, Joseph, sheep, shepherd, donkey, ox or innkeeper. We will be looking for people to come forward and help recreate the nativity at this Mass.

### **Christmas Cards:**

A box has been placed in the Church porch for the distribution of Christmas Cards. Please place the cards in the A-Z index by surname only.

### **Change of Mass Times:**

The week commencing Sunday 5th January 2020, there will be a change to our weekday Mass Schedule. We will be introducing The Latin Mass on a Tuesday evening at 8:00 p.m. The introduction of this Mass comes from a request from a number of people in the parish. Everyone is welcome to attend the Latin Mass, again we will provide the booklets for this, and as the Mass and readings are in Latin, each week we will produce a separate sheet with the readings in Latin and English. Any questions about this Mass, do please speak with Fr. Lee.

The New Mass schedule will be: Monday: 9:00 a.m. Confessions, 9:30 a.m. Mass. Tuesday: 7:15 p.m. Confession, 8:00 p.m. Mass (Latin). Wednesday: 12:00 noon Confession, 12:30 p.m. Mass. Thursday 9:00 a.m. Confession, 9:30 a.m. Mass, 7:30 p.m. Holy Hour - Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament & Benediction. Friday 9:00 a.m. Confession, 9:30 a.m. Mass.

### **Brentwood Diocesan Directory:**

Is available to buy from the repository priced £4.00 for ringbound copies and £2.80 for normal binding. These directories have lots of useful information in them so do please buy them. The diocese has asked us to try and sell all the copies we have to keep the cost of production as cheap as possible, the cost will increase if copies go unsold.

**Of your Charity:**

Please pray for the repose of the Soul of Patrick Hooks, who has recently died. His funeral rites will be celebrated here at St Theresa's on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> December at 10:30 a.m. **Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace.**

## **The Nativity of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ**

Do please visit our Nativity Scene over the Christmas season. There is also a collection basket there for any offerings you would care to make. Bishop Alan has asked that our donations go again this year to BCCS for the excellent work they do in our diocese.

Tradition has it that St Francis of Assisi was responsible for producing the first nativity scene. He recreated the scene of Christ's birth in a special ritual and Mass he held inside a cave in Greccio, Italy, inviting both his fellow friars and the townspeople to join in the celebration.

St. Bonaventure (1221 - 1274), a follower and contemporary of St. Francis, has given us a complete account of the night of the first live nativity scene:

It happened in the third year before his death, that in order to excite the inhabitants of Greccio to commemorate the nativity of the Infant Jesus with great devotion, [St. Francis] determined to keep it with all possible solemnity; and lest he should be accused of lightness or novelty, he asked and obtained the permission of the sovereign Pontiff. Then he prepared a manger, and brought hay, and an ox and an ass to the place appointed.

The brethren were summoned, the people ran together, the forest resounded with their voices, and that venerable night was made glorious by many and brilliant lights and sonorous psalms of praise."

What a beautiful scene! Each time we meet at our churches for a nativity pageant or live nativity scene, or around a nativity decoration for a time of prayer, we are participating in a centuries-old Catholic tradition. St. Bonaventure goes on to talk about St. Francis of Assisi's personal devotion to the Baby Jesus that sparked this event:

The man of God [St. Francis] stood before the manger, full of devotion and piety, bathed in tears and radiant with joy; the Holy Gospel was chanted by Francis, the Levite of Christ. Then he preached to the people around the nativity of the poor King; and being unable to utter His name for the tenderness of His love, He called Him the Babe of Bethlehem."

Fr Lee, and Deacon Des would like to wish all parishioners, their families and their friends a blessed Christmas and a very Happy New Year.



## Mass Times and Intentions

Saturday 21 <sup>st</sup> December <i>O Oriens</i>	Confessions: 5:15 – 5:45 p.m. Mass: 6:00 p.m.	People of the Parish
<b>FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT Year A</b>		
Sunday 22 <sup>nd</sup> December <i>O Rex Gentium</i>	Confessions: 9:15 – 9:45 a.m. Mass: 10:00 a.m.  Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols: 6:00 p.m.	William Shevlane RIP (M Michelson)
Monday 23 <sup>rd</sup> December <i>O Emmanuel</i>	Confessions: 9:30 a.m. Requiem Mass: 10:30 a.m.	Patrick Gabriel Hooks RIP
Tuesday 24 <sup>th</sup> December	Confessions: 3:15 p.m. Vigil Mass: 4:00 p.m.  Confessions: 11:15 p.m. Midnight Mass: 12:00 a.m.	Intentions of Sheila Wood (S Wood)  People of the Parish
Wednesday 25 <sup>th</sup> December <i>NATIVITY OF THE LORD</i>	Mass: 8:00 a.m.   Confessions: 9:15 a.m. Mass: 10:00 a.m.	All those who serve in the Armed Forces; especially those far away from home and family this Christmas. (Fr Lee)  Fry & Bambridge Families (J Bambridge)
Thursday 26 <sup>th</sup> December <i>St Stephen</i>	Confessions: 9:00 a.m. Mass: 9:30 a.m.	Altar Servers (Fr Lee)
Friday 27 <sup>th</sup> December <i>St John</i>	Confessions: 9:00 a.m. Mass: 9:30 a.m.	Miss Margaret Aldridge (T & A Aldridge)
Saturday 28 <sup>th</sup> December <i>The Holy Innocents</i>	Confessions: 5:15 – 5:45 p.m. Mass: 6:00 p.m.	People of the Parish
<b>HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH Year A</b>		
Sunday 29 <sup>th</sup> December 1 <sup>st</sup> Reading: <i>Ecclesiasticus</i> 3:2-6,12-14 Psalm: 127 2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading: <i>Colossians</i> 3:15-21 Gospel: <i>Matthew</i> 2:13-15,19-23	Confessions: 9:15 – 9:45 a.m. Mass: 10:00 a.m.	