

# Parish of St. Theresa of Lisieux Stansted

## *The Little Flower Messenger*

Year A - FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT - 18<sup>th</sup> December 2022

The Presbytery, High Lane, Stansted Mountfitchet, CM24 8LQ

Tel. 01279 814 349 • [stansted@dioceseofbrentwood.org](mailto:stansted@dioceseofbrentwood.org) • [www.sttheresastansted.org](http://www.sttheresastansted.org)

• Twitter: @StStansted • Instagram: sttheresastansted

**Parish Priest:** Fr. Liam Hayes [frliamhayes@dioceseofbrentwood.org](mailto:frliamhayes@dioceseofbrentwood.org) ☎ 01279 814 349

**Parish Deacon:** Rev. Des Connors [desconnors@dioceseofbrentwood.org](mailto:desconnors@dioceseofbrentwood.org) ☎ 07748 464 101

**Parish Administrator:** Clair Rava [stansted@dioceseofbrentwood.org](mailto:stansted@dioceseofbrentwood.org) ☎ 01279 816 889/07734 273 969

### 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*

**Psalms 23:1-2, 3-4, 5-6:**

*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 Emanuel.*

### A thought from Fr Liam...Waiting in joyful hope

Dear Friends

The waiting and expectation finally came to an end last Saturday evening, with our 'hopes' once again dashed, and our dreams of glory put on hold once more for another four years - football is still not 'coming home'. So whilst Argentina and France continue to dream ahead of Sunday's World Cup final, England's football team and fans prepare for four more years of preparation and waiting.

Thankfully our waiting in Advent Hope is not as fragile or precarious as footballing dreams and expectations, for our sure and certain hope as followers of Jesus - as Christian women and men - is already realised in our loving God who is with us, walking alongside us on each step of our journey, in each chapter of our lives, quite often in ways that we do not expect, nor often do not immediately recognise. Our God walking with us in the midst of the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of our complex lives.

As Advent draws to a close and our celebration of the birth of Jesus draws near we are called anew to recognise more deeply the Christ already in our midst through our looking and listening, rekindling the Christian attitude of vigilance - a vigilance that Pope Francis reminds us is to find expression in our 'deep attentiveness to our most vulnerable brothers and sisters



Please familiarise yourselves with the location of the fire exits, extinguishers, and assembly points at this church.

who knock on the door of our hearts. Let us remain watchful in humility and availability' as we wait in joyful hope for Jesus the Christ who, unlike our football, does not and will not disappoint.

I wish you and yours a blessed final week of Advent filled with joyful hope and leave you with this beautiful prayer from CAFOD

Liam

*With expectant waiting we anticipate your coming.*

*Come close to us, Lord, come very close.*

*Come, Alpha and Omega, who is from before the ages.*

*Come, Son of Joseph and Son of Mary, who went down to Nazareth to be obedient to them.*

*Come, Morning Star, who named the stars.*

*Come, carpenter from Nazareth, who knows the smell of planed wood.*

*Come, Beloved Son of God, who knows the heart of God.*

*Come, Son of Man, who knows the hearts of God's people.*

*Come, Lord of Life and Prince of Peace.*

*Come, Dayspring and Rising Sun. Come, Wonderful Counsellor.*

*Come Emmanuel, God with us; God very close to us. Amen. (Ged Johnson/CAFOD)*

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

Dear Friends,

Today we hear the account of Joseph and his unquestioning obedience to God.

When Joseph is told that his fiancée Mary is pregnant his life is thrown into turmoil. He is betrothed to Mary and knows that the child she is expecting is not his. It would be completely understandable for him to believe that Mary has been unfaithful. Joseph is a 'man of honour' and under the laws of his people, he had the right to name and shame Mary publicly, and put her on trial and if found guilty, stoned to death. (Dt. 22:23-30).

However, Joseph does not want to risk her life and her reputation or of the child she carries, so he decides to put her away discreetly, avoid publicity, and to allow her as much dignity and safety as possible.

Joseph, a 'man of honour' a devout Jew is caught between the law and equity, upholding principles, and displaying compassion, adhering to the standards of the day yet not wishing to humiliate others, between judgement and openness. Above all, Joseph believed in the dignity of every human person, no matter what they have done, or the rumours say they have done.

Joseph's story goes to the heart of Advent. Unawares he makes space for the miracle of Christmas because he seeks to protect life, restore honour, and demonstrate compassion in a world where life is cheap, discredit easy, and mercy rare. And he keeps doing so in the years ahead: as he searches high and low for a place for his wife to give birth securely, as he eludes Herod's grip and takes both Madonna and Child to safety in Egypt, and as he leads the search for the adolescent Boy when He goes missing. Joseph foreshadows the Christmas God who offers safety to every human soul, redemption where there has been dishonour, and mercy to the whole human race!

What a wonderful example Joseph is to all of us. Rather than condemn he applies mercy. In a world where we like to think we are all merciful, the sad truth is we are far too quick sometimes



Please familiarise yourselves with the location of the fire exits, extinguishers, and assembly points at this church.

to judge and condemn. Our modern society encourages this. A society that likes to build up and then pull-down people who are considered a threat or not like us. Joseph shows us the right way to be.

Over the past four weeks, we have been preparing a way for the Lord in our minds and hearts and lives. We've observed a reverse chronology: in the first week of Advent, we focused on the future, the end of time, in recognition of who Jesus will be when He comes again - as Judge (Mt 24:37-44). In the second and third weeks we addressed the present, with an acknowledgement of who Jesus is - the Christ (Mt 3:1-12; 11:2-11). Now on the fourth Sunday we look back two thousand years to His conception in appreciation of who He was for our sakes - the Messiah who took on human form. All time - past, present, and future - are contained within the four walls of Advent.

Deacon Des

### **Advent Reconciliation Service**

Our Parish **Advent Reconciliation Service** will be held this Tuesday (20<sup>th</sup> December) at 7.30 pm in our parish Church. This is a beautiful and gentle way to celebrate this sacrament of healing and forgiveness as we prepare to celebrate Christmas, that also offers us the opportunity to support each other in our community as we journey together.

*All are welcome.*

### **Christmas 2022**

*Our parish masses over the weekends of Christmas and New Year are as follows:*

#### **Solemnity of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ**

Saturday 24 <sup>th</sup> December 2022	<i>Mass during the Night</i>	<b>6.00 pm</b>
Sunday 25 <sup>th</sup> December 2022	<i>Mass During the Day</i>	<b>10.00 am</b>

#### **Solemnity of Mary Mother of God**

Saturday 31 <sup>st</sup> December 2022	<i>Vigil Mass of Sunday</i>	<b>6.00 pm</b>
Sunday 1 <sup>st</sup> January 2023	<i>Mass During the Day</i>	<b>10.00 am</b>

*Everyone is welcome*

### **Parish News**

**Christmas Flowers:** We shall be holding a collection this weekend for our Christmas flowers. Should you wish to donate please put your donation into an envelope marked 'Christmas Flowers' and place into the baskets when leaving the church or through the Presbytery door. If you wish the church to claim Gift Aid on your donation, please write your name and address on the envelope and 'yes to Gift Aid'. You do not need to have completed a Gift Aid declaration; you only need to be paying tax on your income. Thank you.



Please familiarise yourselves with the location of the fire exits, extinguishers, and assembly points at this church.

## Catholic Social Action - Thought for the day.

"Do everything possible so that liberty is victorious over oppression, justice over injustice, love over hate" - Ignacio Ellacuría

Ignacio Ellacuría was a Spanish-Salvadoran Jesuit priest, philosopher, and theologian who did important work as a professor and rector at the Universidad Centroamericana "José Simeón Cañas" (UCA), a Jesuit university in El Salvador founded in 1965. He and several other Jesuits and two others were assassinated by Salvadoran soldiers in the closing years of the Salvadoran Civil War

Deacon Des

### Mass Times and Intentions

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT - YEAR A		
Saturday 17 <sup>th</sup> December	Mass: 6:00 p.m. <i>Livestreamed</i>	Mick & Jim Cassidy R.I.P (E. Cassidy-Jones)
Sunday 18 <sup>th</sup> December <i>Expectant Mothers</i>	Mass: 10:00 a.m. <i>Livestreamed</i>	People of the Parish
Tuesday 20 <sup>th</sup> December	Advent Reconciliation Service: 7:30 p.m. <i>Livestreamed</i>	
SOLEMNITY OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST - YEAR A		
Saturday 24 <sup>th</sup> December <i>Mass during the Night</i>	Mass: 6:00 p.m. <i>Livestreamed</i>	For the Intentions of S.Wood
Sunday 25 <sup>th</sup> December <i>Mass during the Day</i>	Mass: 10:00 a.m. <i>Livestreamed</i>	People of the Parish
SOLEMNITY OF THE MARY MOTHER OF GOD - YEAR A		
Saturday 31 <sup>st</sup> December <i>Vigil Mass</i>	Mass: 6:00 p.m. <i>Livestreamed</i>	People of the Parish
Sunday 1 <sup>st</sup> January <i>Mass during the Day</i>	Mass: 10:00 a.m. <i>Livestreamed</i>	Margaret Aldridge Jnr R.I.P. (T. Aldridge)
SOLEMNITY OF THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD - YEAR A		
Friday 6 <sup>th</sup> January <i>Epiphany of the Lord</i>	Mass: 7:30 p.m. <i>Livestreamed</i>	People of the Parish



PLEASE TAKE THIS NEWSLETTER HOME WITH YOU AND DISPOSE OF IT RESPONSIBLY. THANK YOU.



Please familiarise yourselves with the location of the fire exits, extinguishers, and assembly points at this church.