

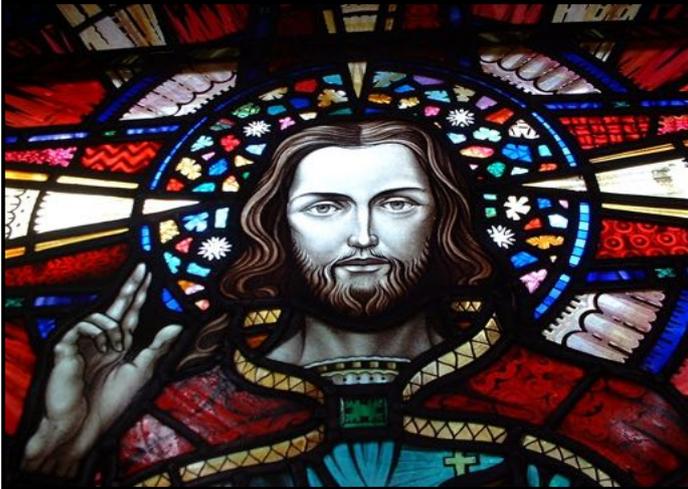


newsletter



24 and 25 December 2016

Christmas Day



Catholic Parish of The Sacred Heart

Our Mission

Through the power of the Holy Spirit we will be a parish renewed in our knowledge and understanding of the love of Jesus Christ, to enable each of us to fulfil our Christian mission



Pope Close, Flitwick, MK45 1JP

www.sacredheartflitwick.co.uk

Telephone: 01525 715 109 (checked every day), 07711 953 926

Canon Bennie Noonan, Parish Priest

frbennie@btinternet.com, 01462 813 436

Deacon Philip, Pastoral Administrator

deaconphilip@sacredheartflitwick.co.uk, 07711 953 926

Suzanne Yates, Parish Secretary

secretary@sacredheartflitwick.co.uk

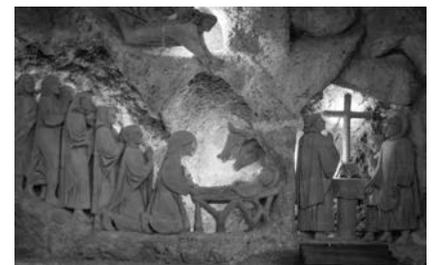


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The Shrine of Greccio

Known as the Franciscan Bethlehem, the shrine is an imposing architectural compound which clings to the bare rock. The pilgrims who visited Assisi visited Greccio and celebrated Mass in the chapel.

The original core of the shrine is the Cappella del Presepio (Nativity Chapel), built in 1228, the year of Saint Francis' canonisation. The chapel stands over the grotto where, on Christmas Eve 1223, Saint Francis, with the authorisation of the Pope and the help of Messer Giovanni Velita, a lord in Greccio, re-enacted the birth of Jesus for the first time in the history of Christianity, thereby establishing the first nativity play. The chapel is a grotto excavated in the stone, with a semi-circular vault.



The bare stone where St Francis laid down the simulacrum of Jesus can be seen below the modern-style altar, while a fine fresco by the school of Giotto can be found on the wall at the back.

The Nativity scene in Greccio is similar to the fresco that Giotto painted on the same subject in the Upper Basilica of Assisi; Francis, wearing the deacon's white dalmatic, adores Jesus on his knees, while at the top right the priest officiates the mass.

Behind Francis, the other participants in the event can be seen: in the foreground a man in a long red tunic, who according to local tradition is Giovanni Velita, a lord in Greccio and descendant of the Berardi di Celano counts, and became a very good friend of Francis; on his left, his wife Alticama Castelli di Strocone; and the people of Greccio.

The ancient walls of the shrine safeguard numerous treasures.

Adapted from <http://www.visitgreccio.com>

WISHES FOR CHRISTMAS

These are my wishes for Christmas.
That fighting may cease everywhere.
That the rich may invite someone
needy
To 'come in and pull up a chair'.
That all children receive, in their stocking,
The shelter and peace of a home.
Where everyone's gentle and kindly
And nobody's left on their own.
When friendship abounds in the pleasure
Of finding a gift that's just right
And everyone celebrates Christmas,
The day and the most Holy Night.
When parishioners gather together,
In a church full of love and of peace.
These are my wishes for Christmas
With the hope that these joys never cease.



P. Williams

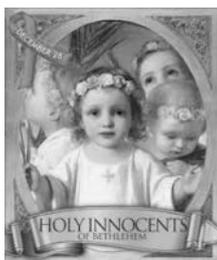
(This poem was in the book we just read at our church book club, *Shadows* by Fr. Jimmy Collins.)

28 DECEMBER – FEAST OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS

This is also called Childermas, or Innocents' Day, a feast day commemorating the massacre of the children by King Herod in his attempt to kill the infant Jesus (Matthew 2:16–18). These children were regarded by the early church as the first martyrs, but it is uncertain when the day was first kept as a saint's day. At first it may have been celebrated with Epiphany, but by the fifth century it was kept as a separate festival. In Rome it was a day of fasting and mourning.

In medieval England the children were reminded of the mournfulness of the day by being whipped in bed in the morning, a custom surviving to the seventeenth century.

The day is still observed as a feast day, and in Roman Catholic countries as a day of merrymaking for children.



Adapted from <http://www.britannica.com>

CHRISTMAS MASSES 2016 AT SACRED HEART

24 December Christmas Eve	7.00 pm 9.00 pm	Children's and Family Mass Midnight Mass
25 December Christmas Day	11.00 am	Mass during the Day

*We wish you a Holy
and a Happy
Christmas and
a Fruitful New
Year*

CHRISTMAS COLLECTIONS

Canon Bennie and Deacon Philip thank you for your generous Christmas offerings.

26 DECEMBER – THE FEAST OF ST STEPHEN, THE FIRST MARTYR

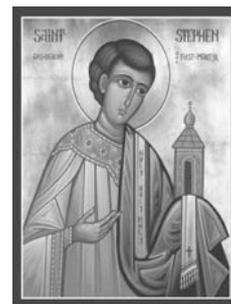
Stephen is the first martyr. He was one of the

deacons appointed by the Apostles to organise the distribution of food to the poor.

He performed many miracles and confounded the Jews in disputation, then they fabricated false charges against him. At his trial he preached the risen Christ to them, so they stoned him to death, he prayed for his persecutors as he was dying.

One of them, Saul of Tarsus, who was looking after the cloaks of the stone throwers, was later converted and became the great missionary St Paul.

Adapted from Catholic Calendar app by Universalis Publishing



We thank you for your weekly contribution to the parish. For 17 and 18 December the total was £467.40; this is £82.60 less than what is needed to meet the parish running costs. With thanks, Finance Committee.

Christmas celebrates weakness that becomes strength. A helpless new baby is God and saviour. A young woman becomes the Mother of God. A carpenter finds the strength and courage to make a safe home for God, not in a palace, but in an ordinary village house and through his own hard work. Shepherds become the first recorded witnesses to the incarnation.



In the Gospel accounts of the birth, Mary and Joseph did not speak: Mary, because she needed time to think and make sense of events; Joseph, showing us that long eloquent speeches and external show do not necessarily make us effective as we take Jesus into our hearts and our world. Perhaps Joseph would have agreed with St Francis of Assisi, who said that we must preach the Gospel at all times and, when necessary, use words. Joseph's silence does not mean he is ineffective. God chose him to care for Mary and Jesus, the greatest responsibility ever laid on a human being. Joseph was a village carpenter, but he was also one of the greatest saints the world has ever known.

Christmas tells us that littleness is greatness in the eyes of God. Christmas tells us that everyone is called to proclaim the good news that Jesus is born. Today, as we celebrate the feast of Mary, Mother of God, we celebrate someone whose littleness enabled Jesus to be born, who found the courage and strength to say 'yes' because she put God first.

Adapted from *The Living Word*

CHARISMATIC PRAYER GROUP

The next meeting is on **4 January** 7.30 pm till 9.30 pm.



Please contact Nicky Paterson on 01525 750 654 for information.

The next meeting of the Sewing Group will be on **9**



January from 2.00 pm till 4.00 pm. For more information contact Clare Bevan 01525 403 589.

MOTHERS' PRAYERS

will resume in the New Year. Please contact Sue Barley on 01525 634 186 for information.



Please note there will be no teas after Mass on Christmas Day and New Year's Day.



Date to Remember

Mass times this week

26 December – Feast of St Stephen, 9.30 am

28 December – The Holy Innocents, 7.30 pm

30 December – The Holy Family, 9.30 am

Other Dates

14 January – Men's Breakfast

26 January – Burns' Supper

18 January – Annual Quiet Day.

Lighting of the Advent Wreath – The Christ Candle

Celebrant: God our Father, today we greet the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ with joy. Help us to live in his light and to share the good news of your love to the whole world.

Deacon: Make us a people of this light. Make us faithful to your Word that we may bring your life to the waiting world



The Fifth Candle on the Wreath is lit.

ALL: TODAY A SAVIOUR HAS BEEN BORN FOR US. HE IS CHRIST THE LORD!

Circle of Prayer for December – Refugees and Migrants

Lord God, no one is a stranger to you and no one is ever far from your loving care. In your kindness, watch over refugees, migrants and victims of war. Bring them safely to the place where they long to be and help us always to show your kindness to strangers and to all in need.



INFORMATION

CONFESSION

Confession will be on Saturday evening at 5.30 pm and THIS Wednesday at 7.00 pm.

PRAYER LINE

Please ring for intercessory prayer on 01525 634 186. We have some wonderful answers to prayers. Be assured of full confidentiality.

CARDS, GIFTS, etc.

Are available for sale in Sacred Heart church after Mass. All are priced. Please put money in the repository box at the back of the church.

SAFEGUARDING

For information contact Paula Bates on 07834 715 978 or safeguarding@sacredheartflitwick.co.uk

CHURCH NEWSLETTER ONLINE

at <http://www.sacredheartflitwick.co.uk>

IN HOSPITAL, SICK OR HOUSE-BOUND?

Please let us know of anyone who needs a visit or requires Holy Communion at home.

THE ST VINCENT DE PAUL GROUP

meets every Monday at 7.30 pm. If you would to join us or would like more details or if you know of anyone who needs a visit, help with transport or any other need, contact John Flanagan on 01525 406 810.

LITTLE 'UNS

Meet every Friday 10.15 am to 11.45 am in term time, in the church hall. This is a group for babies and pre-schoolers. For further information please contact Deacon Philip on deaconphilip@sacredheartflitwick.co.uk.

MASS INTENTIONS

For Mass intentions contact Deacon Philip who will arrange for Canon Bennie or another local priest to say a Mass.

Mass Times at Sacred Heart

Saturday	24 December	7.00 pm	The Children of Iran, Syria and Yemen
		9.00 pm	The People of the Parish
Sunday	25 December	11.00 am	Margaritta Thomas, Seriously ill
Monday	26 December	9.30 am	Intentions of Noreen Hanley
Tuesday	27 December		No Service
Wednesday	28 December	7.30 pm	Intentions of the O'Donnell and Rowntree families
Thursday	29 December		No Service
Friday	30 December	9.30 am	George Ormai, Anniversary, RIP

Newsletter copy deadline – Tuesday midday. Newsletter contact: Suzanne Yates; 01525 840 661; suz_yates@btinternet.com

Readers, Eucharistic Ministers and Drivers for next week, 24 and 25 December			
Mass	7.00 pm	9.00 pm	11.00 am
1 st Reader	Alison Braniff	Kate Mansford	Rose Horne
2 nd Reader	Noelette Hanley	Ann Leatherland	Brendan Spillane
Eucharistic Minister		Deacon Philip Pugh	Deacon Philip Pugh
Eucharistic Minister		John Flanagan	Nicky Paterson
Driver		Noreen Weighell	
Readers, Eucharistic Ministers and Drivers for this week, 31 and 1 January			
Mass	6.00 pm	11.00 am	
1 st Reading	Siobhan Campbell	Victoria Basterfield	
2 nd Reading	Noreen Weighell	Bernadette Basterfield	
Eucharistic Minister	Deacon Philip Pugh	Deacon Philip Pugh	
Eucharistic Minister	Chris Till	Hilary Brennan	
Driver		Kate Mansford	