

St Joseph's, Bedford & Our Lady's, Kempston

Parish Priest: Canon Seamus Keenan. Assistant Priest: Fr Pius Duke MSP

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THE HOLY FAMILY

26th December 2021



THANKS

Our thanks to all who sent cards and gifts and for your generous Christmas offering as usual. Thanks to our parish musicians, altar servers, flower arrangers, church cleaners and those who helped to set up the Crib and trees. And thanks to all who have contributed to the life of the parish in so many ways during another difficult year. We pray for a better year ahead knowing that the Lord remains with us.

RENEWAL OF MARRIAGE VOWS

On this feast of The Holy Family, married couples are invited to renew their marriage vows at all Masses today. This will take place after the gospel.

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Our Christmas Concert raised £364. Again, thanks to all who attended and especially our gallant performers who displayed a wealth of talent which contributed to a most enjoyable festive evening. Thanks, also, to our behind the scenes organisers.

Mass Times – St Joseph's, Bedford

Sunday 8.15am People of the Parish
9.30am Dilys Willis, RIP
11.00am Clement Francis, RIP
6.30pm Doris Zonta

Monday *St John, Apostle*

10.45am Maria Smreková, RIP

Tuesday *The Holy Innocents*

10.45am Naughton Family

Wednesday *St Thomas Becket*

10.45am Giuseppe Zonta; Cecilia Castelvetri

Thursday *Octave Day*

10.45am Alfonso Bacangallo, RIP

Friday *Octave Day*

10.45am Jonathan Keohane

Saturday *Mary, Mother of God*

10.45am Rosalind Richardson, RIP

Mass Times – Our Lady's, Kempston

Sunday 9.30am John Smyth, RIP

**Confessions: Saturday 11.30am – 12.30pm (Exposition)
St Joseph's:**

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: O blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways!

ROSARY: Daily at 10.20am

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION: Thursday 11.30am-7.00pm

CLEANING: Daniels

FLOWERS: Mrs Redmond.

NEXT SUNDAY: Second Sunday after Christmas

Readers: Rota Week 3

Children's Liturgy: None until 16th January

CRIB OFFERING

Money placed in the Crib Offering box is in aid of our parish project, the MS Centre, Bedford and the International Refugee Trust.

CHRISTMAS DRAW

The list of prize winners is now on the noticeboard. Thanks to all who donated prizes and bought tickets which raised £1065.30 for the parish project. Our best ever! Prizes can be collected from the presbytery.

PLEASE NOTE

The Mass in Our Lady's will revert to a Vigil Mass this coming Saturday 1st January at 6.00pm.

PASTORAL LETTER

A Pastoral Letter from our Bishop will be read today at all Masses.

SONGS OF PRAISE

We are invited to an Ecumenical Songs of Praise Service at St Paul's Church, town centre, on Sunday 2nd January at 5.30pm. See poster on the noticeboard for details.

FR FINTAN CROTTY MEMORIAL MASS

Fr Fintan Crotty, who served at Holy Cross Church, Goldington Road for a total of 20 years, died on 6th January 2021. Frs Fergal and Chris will be celebrating Mass for Fr Fintan on Friday 7th January at 7.30pm at Holy Cross and all are welcome to attend.

CHARISMATIC PRAYER GROUP

Starting on Monday 17th January a Charismatic Prayer Group will commence in St Joseph's church, meeting in the Reconciliation Chapel from 7.30pm. All are warmly welcome to attend. For further information, please contact Ted Fawcett on 838134.

UNIVERSE CATHOLIC WEEKLY

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“Christmas, feast of the birth of Jesus, is for me the reply of God and of the Church to a need of the soul: to hear repeated to me every year, the commemoration of that fact so sweet, so sublime, so simple and so deep, that God loves me.”

Chiara Lubich

*May you know the love of God
wrapped in his Son, the perfect gift
for everyone.*

Happy Christmas and New Year.

Canon Seamus & Fr Pius

REFLECTION

We adults like to pretend that Christmas is for children, which is an engaging deception. Christmas surely is for those who need to recover hope, to glimpse again that fast receding star once called salvation. When God seems to have died on us and the world is wintry, we find hope alight in the eyes of the child, for the child still believes in salvation, still retains that sense of wonder which we jaded adults have lost. As we grow older many things happen that can cause that hope and wonder which burned in us as children to become somewhat diminished, and so it can feel that this world is a cold, forsaken place. Not so! Christmas proclaims otherwise. Christmas celebrates the birth of a child, the rebirth of hope. All human hopes converge on someone. Someone who will save us from past follies and present fears, especially at this difficult time. God promised a saviour and the world waited for a superman! But he sent his Son, a child of weakness and of the winter. At Bethlehem, on that cold winter night, we see God as he is; humble, not over us but with us and for us. We fall silent at mystery so bright. As we contemplate this wonder, something will begin to stir in us, something will begin to dawn. It is the dawn of hope and the realisation that we are not forsaken, not alone; God is with us. This doesn't make our problems and difficulties suddenly disappear but it does remove fear, knowing that there is someone who accompanies us, who understands because he has shared our humanity and our common lot. His abiding presence gives us peace and joy despite what may be happening on the surface of life. Draw close to him, then, who has drawn close to us, in prayer and trust. Hold him and press him to your heart as Mary did at his birth. In the tenderness of that embrace be assured of his love and his protection over you in all circumstances; he never abandons us. So, with the shepherds who heard and saw the good news of our Lord's birth, we look upon the astonishing humility of God coming into our world as a small child, the baby in the manger, and bow low in adoration and lift up our hearts in praise and wonder, in thanksgiving and renewed hope.

LAST WEEK'S COLLECTIONS

Offertory

St Joseph's £1180.50

Our Lady's £208.96

Thank you.