

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

Parish Priest: Canon Seamus Keenan. Assistant Priest: Fr Galeji Mulupuri, MC

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## THE HOLY FAMILY

31<sup>st</sup> December 2023



### THANKS

Thanks to all who helped to make our Christmas celebrations a joyful occasion in both parishes, especially our musicians and singers, our readers and ministers, the children's liturgy team, parish catechists, our flower arrangers and those who helped to erect the trees and crib in both churches and our altar servers and our church cleaners. Thanks to our SVP Conference who do so much good work. Also I and Fr Galeji are most grateful for your generous Christmas offering and the many greeting cards and gifts received.

### RENEWAL OF MARRIAGE VOWS

On this feast of The Holy Family there will be an opportunity for all married couples attending Mass today to renew their marriage vows and seek God's blessing.

### SURPLUS GIFT SALE

There will be Surplus Gift Sale on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> January in the Guild Room and the porch of Our Lady's church after the Masses. Donation of gifts can be left at the Presbytery and Our Lady's church.

### Mass Times – St Joseph's, Bedford

Sunday	8.15am	Ken & Bernie Blackburn
	9.30am	Mary, Frances, Brigid McFadden
	11.00am	People of the Parish
	6.30pm	Angela & Bill Letch
Monday		<b>Mary, Mother of God</b>
	10.45am	John & Helen Grogan
Tuesday		<b>SS Basil &amp; Gregory</b>
	10.45am	Kathleen Elliott, RIP
Wednesday		<b>The Most Holy Name of Jesus</b>
	10.45am	Charlie Sterling, RIP
Thursday		<b>Feria</b>
	10.45am	Jean Petts
Friday		<b>Feria</b>
	10.45am	Rosamma Baby, RIP
Saturday		<b>Feria</b>
	10.45am	Bridget & Michael Slattery, RIP

### Mass Times – Our Lady's, Kempston

Saturday	6.00pm	Edmond & Mary Connolly, RIP
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### Confessions – St Joseph's:

**Saturday 11.30am – 12.30pm (Exposition)**

### 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:** A Daniels, S Masih, R Okonkwo

**FLOWERS:** Mrs Redmond

**NEXT SUNDAY: The Epiphany of the Lord**

**Readers & Ministers:** Rota Week 4

**Children's Liturgy:** None until January

### CRIB OFFERING

Money placed in the Crib offering box is in aid of our parish project, Headway Bedford.

### FATIMA DEVOTIONS

Fatima Devotions this Saturday after the 10.45am Mass to pray for the gift of peace especially in the land of Our Lord's birth and in Ukraine.

### CHRISTMAS DRAW

The list of prize winners is available to view in the church porch. Winners can collect prizes from the presbytery. We made £1185.30 from the draw. Thanks to all who bought tickets and who donated prizes. A most generous response.

## **CONFIRMATION 2024**

Those wishing to receive the sacrament of Confirmation next year, i.e. Year 9 of school or older, are asked to collect an enrolment form from the sacristy. Preparation classes will start on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 2.30pm – 4.00pm in the Guild Room of St Joseph's church. Parents meeting on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> January at 7.15pm in the Guild Room. Access from Church Street.

## **QUIZ NIGHT**

A Quiz Night will be held in Christ the King Church Hall on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> January at 7.30pm. Tickets are £10 which includes Fish & Chips. There will be a limited cash-only bar or bring your own drink. For tickets, please contact Rachel Kirkham on 314093.

## **BEDFORD FOODBANK**

The Bedford Foodbank is looking for the following items: tinned rice pudding, long-life sponge pudding, long-life fruit juice, jars of jam, tinned fruit, tinned sweetcorn, teabags packets of 40/80, bottles of squash, cereal (child friendly), tinned meat. These can be placed in the Foodbank containers at the back of both our churches.

## **RED MISSION BOXES**

Thanks to all who handed in their red mission box which totalled £1183.67. New red boxes can be collected from the sacristy. Thank you.

## **REQUIESCAT IN PACE**

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Fernando Di Gennaro. May he rest in the peace of the Lord.

## **LUX.DIVE**

This is a residential weekend from Friday 9<sup>th</sup> February to Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> February at the King's Park Conference Centre, Northampton. Accommodation and meals £125. Open to Years 7-13. To book go to [www.nymo.org/lux-dive](http://www.nymo.org/lux-dive)

*Wishing you God's blessing,  
protection and peace in the New  
Year ahead.*

*Canon Seamus & Fr Galeji*

## **REFLECTION**

*"Every year at this time we are asked to escape from the tumult of our hearts, to put aside our weighty cares and leave our wearisome toil, to enter for a while into the chamber of our souls, to listen to God's Word. The Word calling us through the mist of ignorance and apathy to be silent, to listen to the sound of stillness, and to see in the Child born of Mary the Word who became flesh." (Cardinal Basil Hume).* Christmas is all about a child in whom is revealed a secret long-time hidden. And it was revealed in the silence of the night in the form of a defenceless, weak, vulnerable baby. Not an ordinary baby. No! This baby was God! Astounding!! It should take our breath away. Normally when we think of God we see him in our mind's eye as a great, powerful figure, sitting on a throne of glory, surrounded by millions of angels. We look up to such a figure, high above us. But here our eyes are drawn downwards to a tiny infant held in his mother's arms. Our eyes meet his and he looks back at us and in that encounter we behold God, not in power over us but in humility and littleness with us, one of us. *'Man was full of joy and gladness; God was weeping, weak and lone. Ne're before throughout the ages had so strange a thing been known.'* (St John of the Cross). The central and still unnervingly strange message of Christmas is that God became a baby! The all-powerful, infinite creator of the universe became an infant, too weak even to raise his head, a vulnerable baby lying helpless in a manger where animals feed. In this we see a stroke of divine genius. God's purpose is to attract people to himself and greater love among his people. Not to intimidate us or order us from on high but rather to become a baby, for who can resist a baby? At Christmas the human race no longer looked up to see God but rather down into the face of a little child. Once we understand this essential mystery of Christmas, the spiritual life opens in a new and fresh way and our relationship with God more intimate and loving, devoid of fear. We have a God who sympathises with us because he became one of us. God became small so as not to frighten us but rather to attract us to himself, to look into his eyes lying in the manger or his mother's arms and realise that we are loved. Gaze upon this crib scene and shiver with delight and joy at the wonder of this divine child, God's gift to us.

### **LAST WEEK'S COLLECTIONS**

**Offertory**

**St Joseph's £1256.70**

**Our Lady's £423.90**

**Thank you**