

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

Parish Priest: Canon Seamus Keenan. Assistant Priest: Fr Liam Castle.

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FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

22nd December 2024



CHRISTMAS

Christmas is a feast of hope and joy and wonder. God the almighty came among us as a weak and vulnerable child to be close to us, to be one of us. What a gracious God! With Mary his mother we ponder this wondrous mystery of God's love.

CHRISTMAS MASSES

Please refer to this newsletter for the Christmas Mass times.

CONFESSIONS: KEMPSTON

There will be an opportunity for Confessions after the 6.00pm Mass today, Saturday 21st Dec in Our Lady's, Kempston.

CHRISTMAS DRAW

The draw will take place after the 6.30pm Mass today in St Joseph's. Thanks to all who bought tickets and donated prizes. The list of prize winners will be available next weekend.

Mass Times – St Joseph's, Bedford

Sunday 8.15am Karen Hourigan, RIP

9.30am Liz & Joe Duggan

11.00am Maura Boschmann

6.30pm Ryan & Lisa

Monday **O Emmanuel**

10.45am Dennis Gilbert, RIP

Tuesday **Christmas Eve**

10.45am Mary & Alan Wright, RIP

6.30pm **Children's Mass:** Des Orr, RIP

12.00am **Midnight Mass** People of the Parish

Wednesday **Christmas Day**

8.15am Kathleen Canavan, RIP

9.30am Hillary Brimble, RIP

11.00am Fr Roy

Thursday **St Stephen**

10.45am Bridget Hopkins

Friday **St John**

10.45am Maria & Teodor Bazylewicz, RIP

Saturday **The Holy Innocents**

10.45am Bob & Joe Zak; Katy Szczurko, RIP

Mass Times – Our Lady's, Kempston

Saturday 6.00pm Mr & Mrs DiGennaro, RIP

Christmas Eve 6.30pm Children's Mass: Bernard Atkins, RIP

Christmas Day 9.30am Catherine Lloyd, RIP

Confessions – St Joseph's:

Saturday 11.30am – 12.30pm (Exposition)

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Bring us back, O God; let your face shine forth, and we shall be saved.

ROSARY: Daily at 10.20am

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION: None this Thursday

CLEANING: S Masih, A Daniels, R Okonkwo.

FLOWERS: All flower arrangers.

NEXT SUNDAY: The Holy Family

Readers & Ministers: Rota Week 3

Children's Liturgy: None until January

CRIB OFFERING

Money placed in the Crib offering box is in aid of our parish project, Mary's Meals.

DIOCESAN DIRECTORY 2025

The new Diocesan Directory for 2025 is now on sale at the back of the church at £4 per copy. Please place money in the wallbox marked 'Books'.

PLEASE NOTE

There will be no Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament this Thursday in the Reconciliation Chapel.

CHRISTMAS POSTERS

The Knights of St Columba have produced Christmas posters which you can display in your window, free from the back of the church.

CATHOLIC HERALD

The December edition of the Catholic Herald is on sale in the porch of St Joseph's at £5 per copy. Please place money in the wall-box marked 'Papers'.

ROSARY FOR LIFE

The Rosary for the sanctity of human life will be recited after the 10.45am Mass this Saturday. All invited to pray for this intention.

ART RETREAT

Sue McQueen, a professional artist, will be running a day's Art Retreat in Turvey Abbey on Saturday 1st February 2025 from 9.45am to 4.30pm. The cost of the day is £50 which includes materials, refreshments and a vegetarian lunch. For booking, please contact Fr John on 01234 881211 or turveymonks@yahoo.co.uk or Sue McQueen on 07540 807695 suemcqueenartretreats@gmail.com

REQUIESCANT IN PACE

Please pray for the souls of Fr Tom Kenny, Mary O'Connor, Daisy McCann and Vincent Arthur. May they rest forever in the peace of the Lord.

REFLECTION

The setting up of the Christmas crib each year reminds us of the beauty and simplicity of our faith. As we gaze prayerfully upon the silent, still figures in the crib we are filled with the wonder of the Incarnation, God becoming a little child! There is a certain stillness and mystery in this familiar scene that is quite other, *'a still point in a turning world.'* (T.S. Eliot). Here, in this tiny babe, is the centre of all that exists, the reason for all that exists, the purpose of all that exists. The silent, still figures of the babe, of Mary and Joseph, of the shepherds and animals, invite us to ponder in our hearts this wonderful truth and its simple beauty. I have always found it comforting to enter a church at this

time of year and just gaze upon this mystery so bright. I feel drawn into that mystery which revealed itself so long ago but which is forever new and now made present once again in the simplicity of the crib scene. It was in 1223 that St Francis of Assisi created history's first nativity scene, bringing to the present moment that which changed the world forever and allowing us to contemplate the beauty of Christ's coming as one of us. We are drawn to dwell for a time upon this truth because, in a spiritual sense, the *'human soul needs beauty more than bread.'* (D.H. Lawrence). It is the enchantment of Christmas at its deepest meaning that revives the soul and renews hope and joy in our hearts. We rediscover the wonder of childhood which acts as a balm for our somewhat jaded lives, giving meaning to our existence, our high calling as sons and daughters of God, destined to share the eternal beauty of life with him. The simplicity of the crib also calls us from that tendency to make life complicated. When we centre our lives on this world this is what happens and faith becomes obscured or even lost. Other voices begin to claim our attention and we listen to them, often causing confusion and doubt where there was none before and robbing us, too, of the simple joy and wonder of what has been revealed to us in the Christmas story. The central figure in the crib is Jesus Christ, the babe of Bethlehem. He must become our centre in whom there is peace and freedom, joy and love. There is nothing confusing about this! We must, therefore, move from living our lives on the periphery, where there is so much that is shallow and noisy and worldly, and move to the centre where Christ is and look on him who is our peace. We come then to the crib with all that may weigh upon us and discover there the simple beauty of our faith; that God is with us. Where he is, there is to be found peace and freedom from anxiety. We become children again with the Christ-child.

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

*Wishing you God's blessing for a
holy and peaceful Christmas.*

Canon Seamus & Fr Liam.

LAST WEEK'S COLLECTIONS

Offertory

St Joseph's £1578.07

Our Lady's £789.90

Thank you