

FEASTS FOR THE WEEK

Tuesday: St Lucy
Wednesday: St John of the Cross

PARISH DIARY

Tuesday 8.00pm: Parish Prayer Group

OFFERINGS

First collection Gift Aid £612.98 Loose £417.14
Retiring collection (CAFOD) Gift Aid £6.30 Loose £60.79
This weekend's retiring collection is for CAFOD.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK AND HOUSEBOUND

Grace Gibbs, Simon Leo, Paul & June McMahon, Michael Boyle, Maureen Allen, Eileen Hurley, Elizabeth O'Daley, Ellen Basci, Joan Gallagher, Kay Kennedy, Stephane Patten, John Sewter, Ryan Morison, Keith Fraser, Ronnie Xavier, Marie Eley, Christopher Browne, Mary Wallace, Rosa Vitolo, Elsie Malone & Colette Patten.

ANNIVERSARIES

John Boyden, Arthur McLeod, James Wilson, Arthur O'Connor, Elisabeth Hall, Natalie Marie Williams, Margaret Dignum, Norah Owens, Hannah Walsh, Katherine Trigg, Teresa Short, Bernadette Morrissey, Elisabeth Mahoney, Mary Anne Clarke, Edith Kate Letchworth, Dominic Fuouco, John Henry Isaac, Adelaide Clement, Julia Walsh, Elizabeth Milnes, Elizabeth Trefler, Bishop Brown, George William Smith, Thomas Easter, Charles Arday, Ada Laing, Margaret Reagan, Manuelina Fernandes.

+++ May they rest in peace +++

The Nativity – Wintershall

The annual Nativity play for all the family will be staged at the Wintershall Estate, Bramley, Surrey GU5 0LR on **14th – 18th December**. For further details see the church notice board or contact www.wintershal-estate.com or 01793 418299 for tickets.

Christmas Hamper & Cards

Tickets for the raffle for the **Christmas hamper** will be on sale after all masses this weekend. Cards and gifts are still available in the Cloister.

Christmas tree sale

Thank you to all parishioners who bought a Christmas Tree last weekend. £560 was raised for the St Agatha's School PSA. Special thanks to all the helpers for their hard work!



Christ Yesterday, Today & Forever

Parish Priest: Rev. Gerard O'Brien

Deacon: Rev. Robert Beresford

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Please visit our website regularly to keep abreast of important current issues.

MASS TIMES AND INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK

Sunday 11th December 2016

Third Sunday of Advent (A)

Saturday	9.30am	Holy Souls
	6.30pm	In Thanksgiving
Sunday	9.00am	Arthur & Robin O'Connor
	10.30am	People of the Parish
	6.30pm	Darren Hickey
Monday	9.30am	Special Intention
Tuesday	9.30am	Maureen Bentley
Wednesday	9.30am	Rosa Beresford
Thursday	9.30am	Special Intention
Friday	9.30am	Brenda Marsella
Saturday	9.30am	Holy Souls
	6.30pm	Crehan family
Confessions:	Saturday 10.00-11.00am, 18.00-18.15pm and at call	
Baptisms:	By previous arrangement	
Marriages:	Six months' notice required – Diocesan rule	

Christmas lunch

Our more mature parishioners are invited to a Christmas lunch in the Cloister on **Tuesday 13th December at 12.30pm**. Please sign up on the notice at the back of the church.

Christmas services

This is a quick reminder that masses at Christmas will be at **6.30pm** and **9.00pm** on **Christmas Eve** and at **9.00am** and **10.30am** on **Christmas Day**. There will be **no evening mass on Christmas Day** (Sunday 25th December). More details next week.

SCRIPTURE REFLECTION

Isaiah uses the image of the desert, made fertile by rain, to portray the confident hope that God would restore his people, crushed by misfortune. Their most crippling disabilities – blindness, deafness and lameness – will be relieved when God sends salvation to his people.

John the Baptist's image of the Messiah was that of a stern judge who would execute a fiery judgement. But Jesus did not fit this image. Hence John's doubts about him. Jesus dispelled John's doubts by showing that he was doing precisely the kinds of things that had been predicted for the messianic times (by prophets such as Isaiah). Once again, Matthew sees Jesus as the one who fulfils the messianic prophecies.

James is talking about the second coming of Jesus. He urges the kind of patience and hope farmers show in waiting for the harvest, and which the prophets of old showed as they waited for the promises to be fulfilled.

PARISH NOTICES

My Day by Day

This booklet contains a meditation for every day during Advent. Copies of this excellent publication are still available at the back of the church. There is one copy for each family. **There is no charge.**

Parish Prayer Group

The Parish Prayer Group meets every **Tuesday** at **8.00pm** in the church for rosary, praise and intercession. All parishioners are most welcome to join us. Please enter via the Presbytery.

Christingle Service

We are now actively preparing for the Christmas services in which the children can participate. The main one is the Christingle service on **Christmas Eve** at **4.00pm**. It would be lovely if your children could take part. Please sign up at the back of the church between **3rd and 11th December**. Parts will be assigned and emailed before **18th December**.

Actors should be from Years 3 to 6. Readers should be from year 6 and above. We ask that actors are available on the following key dates.

- **Sunday 18th December** after the 10.30 mass , from **11.30 am to 1.00pm** to try on costumes and have a first run through.
- **Friday 23rd December** 10 – 12.30, full dress rehearsal while Christingle making takes place in the cloister.
- **Saturday 24th December** from **3pm** for costumes and make up before the service at **4pm**.

REFLECTION

A reed in the wind

John the Baptist was no reed swaying in the wind.

A reed swaying in the wind is a symbol of those who are easily influenced, who go along with whatever is popular, and who have no convictions of their own.

But the humble reed can teach us something.

The fact that it is light means that it is at the mercy of every wind that blows.

But it has great strength too. The greatest storm cannot uproot it.

Even when giant oaks come crashing down, the slender reed still stands secure.

Lord, teach us that there is strength in weakness and suppleness,

and give us the wisdom to know when to bend and when to stand firm.

Fr Flor McCarthy S.D.B.

First Reading: Isaiah 35: 1–6, 10

Courage all faint hearts. God's beloved people are assured by the Prophet Isaiah that the Lord is coming to save and to heal. The wilderness will blossom. All weary hearts will revive. Imagine the arid desert dramatically transformed by desert flowers: pinks, reds, yellows, gold.

Second Reading: James 5: 7–10

Farmers waiting for the earth to bear fruit: the cycle of the seasons calling us to slow down, to foster patience, to muster as much goodwill as we can towards family members and fellow struggling believers, avoiding any semblance of judgement or complaint.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 11: 2–11

The Lord anoints John the Baptist as his spokesperson with unstinting praise: no one greater than John the Baptist has ever been seen. John is the last and the greatest of all the prophets. The time for waiting is almost past. The time for unstinting praise and thanksgiving is now.

Sacramental Preparation Programme 2016/17

The next **First Holy Communion** preparation class will be on **Monday 9th January** 2017 at **3.30pm**.

Application forms for **Confirmation** in 2017 are now available from Fr Gerry.

These should be completed and returned by **1st January 2017**.

There will be a meeting for candidates and their parents on **Monday 9th January** at **7.15pm**. The retreat day will be **Saturday 28th January** and the Confirmation mass with the Bishop will be on **Sunday 19th March**.