

### FEASTS FOR THE FORTNIGHT

Monday: St Stephen  
Tuesday: St John  
Wednesday: The Holy Innocents  
Thursday: St Thomas of Canterbury  
Friday: The Holy Family  
Sunday: Mary Mother of God  
Monday: St Basil the Great

### PARISH DIARY

Tuesday 8.00pm: Parish Prayer Group

### 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 Elsey, Christopher Browne, Mary Wallace, Rosa Vitolo, Elsie Malone & Colette Patten.

### LATELY DEAD

Please pray for James Flynn who died recently. The funeral arrangements will be announced soon. May his soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. AMEN

### ANNIVERSARIES

Bernard McArdle, Barbara McArdle, Margaret Brennan, William Albert Robinson, John Cullinane, Maud Adams, Percy Smith, Alice Rigby, Richard Browne, Henry Talbot, Catherine Boulter, Ellen McDonnell, Annie Jardine, Joseph Rankin, Millicent Prince, Ellen Jarvis, Keith Perkins, Georgina Darnell, Mary Absalom, Arthur Norris, William Dorsett, Monica Brennan, Rose Mary Irgolith, Elizabeth McKenna, Astor Charles Henchy, Antonietta Ambruso, Lionel Jones, Bertram Woodhouse Currie, John McDonnell, Alfred North, Nora Cremin, Henry Desmond, Kathleen Anderson, Kevin Smith, John McCormack, Marguerite Hards, Moyra McCullagh, Lilian Teresa Cullen, Violet Palmeri, Francis Cardinal Bourne, Michael Cooney, Mary Angela Gilbert, John Williamson, Patricia Crump, John Pereira, Olga Paine, Peter Kelly, Jeremiah O'Dowd, Rose Wilson, Mary Westhead, Anna Hanson, John Stevenson, Stanley Bays, Jack Allen, Hannah Mennis, Edgar Duckett, Fredrick Thomas, Dorothy Eley, Vincent Raymond, Olive Bryden, Tony Green, Mary Josephine Edwards, Sarah Kelly, Helena Collins, Michael Frain, Ellen Merritt, Patrick Connolly, John Crehan, Michael Jordan, Teresa Buller, Clara Cunningham, Joan Culme, Daniel Quaid, Maurice Woolger, Azzopardi Twins



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 25th December 2016 – The Nativity of the Lord

Sunday 1st January 2017 – The Holy Mother of God

|              |   |                                      |
|--------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| Saturday     | 9.30am  | Special Intention                    |
|              | 6.30pm  | John Davis                           |
|              | <b>9.00pm</b>                                     | Natalino Evangelista "Midnight mass" |
| Sunday       | 9.00am  | Keith Perkins                        |
|              | 10.30am   | People of the Parish                 |
|              | No 6.30pm mass                                    |                                      |
| Monday       | <b>Noon</b>                                       | Private Intention                    |
| Tuesday      | 9.30am  | Peace in our World                   |
| Wednesday    | 9.30am  | Amanda & Defina Bernardin            |
| Thursday     | 9.30am  | Edward & John Lovekyn                |
| Friday       | 9.30am  | Anne Hall                            |
| Saturday     | 9.30am  | Louisa Giles                         |
|              | 6.30pm  | Special Intention                    |
| Sunday       | 9.00am  | John Pereira                         |
|              | 10.30am   | People of the Parish                 |
|              | 6.30pm  | Vincenzo Straccialano                |
| Monday       | 9.30am  | Harry Barratt                        |
| Tuesday      | 9.30am  | Mary Frances McDonald                |
| Wednesday    | 9.30am  | Thomas Byrne                         |
| Thursday     | 9.30am  | Fr Albert Jenner                     |
| Friday       | 9.30am  | Fanny Cook                           |
| Saturday     | 9.30am  | Holy Souls                           |
|              | 6.30pm  | Fr Caspar Lutz                       |
| Confessions: | Saturday 10.00–11.00am, 18.00–18.15pm and at call |                                      |
| Baptisms:    | By previous arrangement                           |                                      |

## SCRIPTURE REFLECTION

In Jesus, God drew near to us in person. He became one of us. He lived among us. Jesus is the gift of Christmas. This was no loving 'from a distance'. This was loving at close quarters. God meets us where we are. He took our humanity on himself. This means we don't have to deny or reject our humanity in order to know God. He showed us how to live out the fullness of our humanity. Religion and holiness have become very real. They are not merely concerned with the spirit and with heaven, but with the body and the earth. By becoming a child, completely dependent on human care, God took away the distance between the divine and the human. We are not afraid of a little child. Jesus has become a Brother to us. What would we do without him? Abstract talk about God can leave us empty. We need God made flesh, human like us, walking our streets, even in our shoes, teaching us the way of God. And that is precisely what we are celebrating this day. The Son of God comes to us not as a judge but as a saviour. He comes to reveal to us our divine dignity as God's children, and the glory of our eternal destiny in heaven. This is the good news. This is the great joy which the angels announced to the shepherds, and which is announced to us today. Let us open our hearts to receive it.

## PARISH NOTICES

### 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.

### 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**.

### CAFOD ambassadors – Share your love at Christmas

CAFOD are looking for volunteers to visit schools on its behalf to speak at assemblies and hold workshops on the problems facing peoples around the world and the wonderful work CAFOD does in helping them to improve their lives. The work is very rewarding. Training will be provided. For more information contact the local CAFOD volunteer centre on 020 8466 9901 or [southwark@cafod.org.uk](mailto:southwark@cafod.org.uk).

## REFLECTION

In our times Christmas has become very commercialised and very pagan. Many people are lured into overspending and excessive eating and drinking. However, these abuses must not blind us to the true meaning of Christmas. When thick smoke rises up, catches you in your throat, and brings tears to your eyes, it is because a fire has been lit. Even since the coming of Christ a bright fire has been burning over our earth, a fire that will never die. At this fire we experience the warmth of God's love, and the glow of human fellowship. Let us not be afraid to come in out of the cold and warm ourselves at this fire. So, Happy Christmas, everyone.

**Fr Flor McCarthy S.D.B.**

### **First Reading: Isaiah 9: 1–7**

Isaiah's prophesy regarding the coming of the Messiah is awash with kingly images and glorious proclamations. In many ways, it sounds as though the Messiah will rise to an earthly throne to forever rule in splendour. No wonder a child born to a peasant woman in an outhouse did not seem to fit the bill. The saviour we received was not the saviour we expected. Rather, he exceeded all our expectations.

### **Second Reading: Titus 2: 11–14**

Living a good life in the eyes of God can seem like an impossible task. We often forget that God gives us what we need to succeed. When words and signs had failed, he gave us his Son, his very flesh and spirit, to come into our world and live our experience. Our lives are not a test, of which God is the examiner. Our lives are a journey back to God, for which he is the guide.

### **Gospel Reading: Luke 2: 1–14**

The circumstances of Jesus' birth are politically and socially unusual. He was born in a town over seventy miles from his home, due to a decree from an occupying force. He was born to a young unmarried mother and was laid in a feeding trough. He spent the first two years of his life displaced by a terrorist regime of infanticide. To many, these quirks may simply serve the function of a good story. We often miss the message. God gave his Son, not only into the world, but into the disasters and tragedies and uncertainties of life. This is not watered-down, eyes-shielded version of humanity, adapted for the Son of God. His human experience was the real thing.

### Offerings

|                             |          |         |       |         |
|-----------------------------|----------|---------|-------|---------|
| First collection            | Gift Aid | £509.00 | Loose | £378.90 |
| Retiring collection (CAFOD) | Gift Aid | £7.50   | Loose | £54.82  |

This weekend's collection is for the Christmas Offerings. There will be no retiring collection.