

## THE YEAR OF MATTHEW

### ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN

#### **MAKING A HOME FOR THE SPIRIT**

18 December 2016 - Psalter Week 4 – Missal Page 90



Remember that the story of Jesus' birth was crafted after the resurrection. It follows the classic acorn-oak pattern. The bigger picture is hidden in the embryo. Nonetheless, the basic theme is stated with alarming clarity. The work of the Holy Spirit emerges in human life as a scandal. During His adult life, Jesus will challenge the prevailing understanding of the law, eat with the outcast and make claims that sound like blasphemy. But for St. Matthew it is clearer still that what looks like a scandal on the surface, is really the work of God at a deeper level. Even as an embryo Jesus caused scandal. What can we expect when he grows up!

Joseph is permitted to hold a public inquiry to determine how his betrothed got pregnant. He does not exercise this right - and neither should we - but decides to apply the law sensitively. However, his plan for a quiet divorce is scuppered by an angel. While Herod has to consult priest and sacred text to find out what God is doing, all Joseph has to do is fall asleep. In his dream he is told that what tradition labels scandal, he must call Spirit. Something big is afoot and Joseph has a part to play. But before he can decide to bless, shelter and protect his betrothed and her baby, he must labour to bring love into the world of law and extend forgiveness to what looked like sin. This is why it is Joseph who must name this child, for the name of his son clarifies his own deeper instincts and affirms the path he must take.

The fact that Jesus is named twice in the narrative, means that for St. Matthew, Josephs' way must be ours. The Saviour is for all people and He is for all time. If Joseph, the wise one, can dream and imagine all of this, what might we do?



Here is a beautiful example of what I mean. It is a tale, imagining Joseph talking to his son as he teaches him the skill of the carpenter, or how to fit the pieces together. Joseph speaks.....

Remember Jesus, whatever we are making, along with it we are also making a home for the spirit. The best way is to clear the space and the best way to clear a space is to stop the mind from judging. Whenever things seem simple and obvious and the mind is feasting on certainty, slow down. There is always more than you think. It just hasn't appeared yet. Judging stops the appearance of more. It cuts people to the little that you know and closes possibilities.

Also, when you do not judge you avoid disgracing others. The Law is our measure. It is a tool of judgement but someone always wields it. Do not use it as a hammer to hit, or a saw to cut. Our tools are to fashion a table, not brutalise the wood. The law is a tool to fashion a people for love but in the wrong hands, it can break people and lose its sense of purpose. So, find a way to honour the law and to honour the person who, in our limited understanding, has broken the law. This is not easy.

It requires making law work for love. This gives life a chance to breathe and people to change. And the biggest change will not be in other people but in you. It's like this beam of wood. Love takes the beam out of our own eyes. It does not focus on splinters in the eyes of others.

Once, something happened and I was tempted to judge and reject. But I held back and waited. And another door opened - the door that is hard to find. I was led into a room of sunlight, a home for Spirit. Your mother and you were there - and a presence of light which dissolved all of my fear. It was as if all distance had been crossed, all separation reconnected. It was a dream but I wasn't asleep. The dream awakened me. The beam fell from my eye. I saw a home for the spirit as an endless adventure, like you growing up, my son.

So, see everything at least twice Jesus. See it intensely with the eye of your heart. At first glance, you might see an unusable piece of wood. Looking deeper you may see something beautiful hidden in its shape. When you see this beauty, embrace it. Take it into your home. Don't hesitate. Don't ask questions. Argue about everything but listen always to the voice of love.

The boy listened.....

## TIMES OF MASSES AND MASS INTENTIONS

### FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Sunday	18 <sup>th</sup>	8.30am	Mass	Marjorie Wilson, RIP
		10.30am	Mass	Maire Mair, RIP
Monday	19 <sup>th</sup>	<b>NO MASS</b>		
Tuesday	20 <sup>th</sup>	9.30am	Mass	Annamarie Briess, RIP
Wednesday	21 <sup>st</sup>	9.30am	Mass	Tim & Dominica Roberts, Thanksgiving
Thursday	22 <sup>nd</sup>	9.30am	Mass	Stephen Richardson, RIP
Friday	23 <sup>rd</sup>	11.00am	Exposition (until 12.00noon)	
		12.10pm	Mass	John Baptist Robertson, RIP (Foundation)



### THE SOLEMNITY OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT

Saturday	24 <sup>th</sup>	5.00pm	Family Mass	Robert Buchanan, RIP
		11.30pm	Carol Service	
		12.00	Midnight Mass	Patrick Hickey, RIP and Family
Sunday	25 <sup>th</sup>	8.30am	Dawn Mass	Marie-Claire Ducasse, RIP
		10.30am	Day Mass	Federico Morales & Family Thanksgiving



**Tuesday to Thursday:** 9.10am Morning Prayer; **Thursday:** 10.15 am Mother's Prayers;  
**Saturday:** 9.30am Rosary and Confessions every Saturday at 10.45am or on request

**PLEASE NOTE:** These sessions will not take place between Christmas and New Year.

**Parish Office:** Stanley Walk, Bracknell, Berkshire, RG12 1HA  
Monday – Friday 9.30am-2.30pm

**Telephone:** 01344 425729 **Email:** [stjb@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:stjb@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)

**Website:** [www.bracknellcatholicchurch.org.uk](http://www.bracknellcatholicchurch.org.uk)

**Parish Priest:** Fr Daniel McAvoy

**Safeguarding Representative:** Marion McGuire 07712048695

**ST. JOSEPH and ST. MARGARET CLITHEROW**

# DID YOU KNOW...?



**PARISH OFFICE CLOSED** – From **Friday 23 December 2016** to **Monday 2 January 2017** inclusive, the office re-opens on **Tuesday 3 January 2017**. We wish you a very happy Christmas and many blessings for 2017. There will be no parish newsletter between Christmas and New Year.

**PARISH CHRISTMAS CARD** – Parish Christmas card available with all the Mass and Service times for Christmas and New Year.



**COMFY CHAIRS** – There are 4 comfy chairs at the front pews for those who need an easier seat than the wooden benches.

**MORNING PRAYER AND EXPOSITION: CHRISTMAS TO NEW YEAR** – There will be no morning prayer before Masses **Tuesday 27 to Thursday 29 December**, no Exposition on **Friday 30 December** and no rosary before Mass on **Saturday 31 December**. Pro-Life Rosary 9.30am and Mass 10.00am on **Saturday 7 January 2017**

**BEWARE: LIGHTING CANDLES** – Adults must accompany all children at the candle trays when lighting candles. Please ensure your children are not playing around the candle trays, in the sand or with the lighted candles. Care must be taken when reaching across lighted candles wearing loose clothing, etc.



**CHILDREN'S LITURGY:** We are in need of volunteers to help with Children's Liturgy to satisfy Safeguarding adult/children ratios in the hall during Sunday Masses. If we cannot get enough helpers we will be unable to run Children's Liturgy in the future. If you feel able to help with this important ministry, please contact the parish office 01344 425729 or [stjb@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:stjb@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)

**A CATHOLIC REPRESENTATIVE NEEDED FOR BRACKNELL FOREST STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SACRE) GROUP.** If you: Are you interested in young people and their education? Are you open to sharing your faith with other people? Are you interested in what others believe? Could you act as a bridge between the Church and the schools in your area? For further information or to express an interest please speak to Fr Danny or contact the parish office.



**WOMAN'S AID REFUGE** - A huge, huge thank you to St Joseph and St Margaret Clitherow Parish from the Berkshire Women's Aid Refuges in Bracknell for the fantastic donations of toiletries, bedding and clothing for our Welcome Packs and for the Christmas gifts for the children and mothers at the Refuges. Your kindness is amazing.



**LAST WEEK'S OFFERING** – Total amount £1635.53. Please make cheques payable to "PRCDTR Bracknell St Joseph".

*To the children, parents, teachers, parishioners and guests for the very beautiful and joyous Carol Concert in the town centre on 14 December.*

**We pray for the Sick and Housebound of Our Community and for those who care for them.**

**Sick and Housebound:** Brenda Theobald, Olga Maguire, Betty Winn, Peter Dossett, Adrian Sweeney, Thelma Briggs, Johanna Lenz, Bridget Tanner, Ena Stanton, Peggy O'Sullivan, Peggy Malone, Winnie Justice, Inge Walker, and Yvonne Gantzer, Jadwiga Butcher, June Cooper, Lilijan Rodenburg, Marjorie Brown Josephine & Maurice Timms.

**Those who are unwell or in hospital:** Bill Guilfoyle, Geoff Hallett, Una Gilligan, Una Mair, Freda Edgington, Esther Brophy, Anne Hardy, Nora Cronin, Patricia Holmwood, Fr Vincent Convery, Teresa Bullock, Maria Bishop, Peggy Pendergast, Evie & Ruby Shallom, Serafina Delmundo, Veronica Jastrzebski, David McCann, Brian Mecklenburg, Ann Newton, Bridie Maughan, Shaun Howard, Francis Robinson, Tom Corridan

# LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENING.....



**WELCOME TO OUR COMMUNITY – Baby Emilia Gardner who is being baptised on Sunday 4 December 2016 at 12 noon. Please pray for Emilia and her parents, James and Ruth**

**MARRIAGE PREPARATION FACILITATORS AND A HEAD OF CENTRE VACANCY** - Marriage Care is the largest faith-based relationship support organisation in England and Wales. We are looking for **Marriage Preparation Facilitators** and a **Head of Centre** to volunteer with us at our Reading centre and help us in our mission to support couples in the best and worst of times. Please visit: [www.marriagecare.org.uk](http://www.marriagecare.org.uk) or email: [volunteer@marriagecare.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@marriagecare.org.uk) for more information.



**BAPTISM PREPARATION FOR PARENTS** - We are looking for volunteers to join our Baptism Preparation team. If you have a heart for this most beautiful and rewarding ministry and would like to find out more about what is involved, please contact the parish office 01344 425729 or email [stjb@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:stjb@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)



## **YOUTH GROUP CLOSED FOR CHRISTMAS**

St Joseph's Parish Youth Group is now closed for Christmas

and will resume in the New Year in Parish Hall every Friday 7:00pm to 9:00 pm, date to be announced

## **THE YOUTH GROUP VOLUNTEER AND SPONSORS APPEAL**

- A youth community needs ongoing activities to support youth initiatives and thrives on adult presence for safeguarding purposes, expertise and know-how. We appeal to adults who can contribute to contact the parish office or [bkmaimo23@gmail.com](mailto:bkmaimo23@gmail.com). We aim for a model where volunteers do a little bit some of the time in an area of interest as opposed to an isolated few doing everything all the time.



**SENIOR CITIZENS EPIPHANY PARTY - Sunday 15th January 12.30pm** Invites to follow. If anyone can help with lifts, please let the office know.



**PASTORAL CARE** – A meeting for those interested in forming a Pastoral Care group on **Wednesday 18 January 2017** from 7pm – 8pm in the hall, beginning with time of reflection in the Church. Are you interested in putting your faith into action? Would you be willing to visit or help those who are unwell or in difficulty in a practical way? Do you live with a disability or do you care for someone who

does? Would you feel able to share your expertise with others? If you are unable to attend the meeting but interested in being involved please contact the parish office.

**GOSPEL CHALLENGE** – Closed for Christmas and New Year, will resume Monday 9 January 2017 at 75 Qualitas

**KEEP FIT OVER 50's CLUB** – Closed for Christmas and New Year, will resume 10 January 2017

**TODDLER GROUP** – Closed for Christmas and New Year, will resume 10 January 2017

**PRAYER GROUPS** - Closed for Christmas and New Year, will resume in January 2017

**RCIA** – Closed for Christmas and New Year, will resume in 12 January 2017

**SOUP & ROLL** – Closed for Christmas and New Year, will resume 6 January 2017