

**THE YEAR OF SAINT LUKE**  
**THE YEAR OF THE RELENTLESS WIDOW**  
**FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT AND**  
**CHRISTMASTIDE BEFORE EPIPHANY – YEAR C**

**TAKING GOD'S WORD TO OUR HEARTS**

*23 December 2018 – Fourth Sunday of Advent Missal Page 90*

*24/25 December 2018 – Christmas Time Missal Pages 94-102*

*30 December 2018 – The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph – Missal Page 105*

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Elizabeth and Zechariah come from priestly families but their child, John, will be a Prophet. When John leaps in his mother's womb at the sound of Mary's voice and, when Elizabeth feels the kick inside and asks her question, it is clear that Mary has arrived carrying the fulfilment of Hebrew history. She has arrived with Jesus!

Elizabeth declares Mary as 'blessed' because she has learned how to ponder and how to trust God's Word so much that it leads to this fulfilment. Elizabeth is speaking about the mind-boggling conversation Mary has recently had with the Angel Gabriel. To her surprise and delight, Gabriel greets Mary as a reality bursting with Grace and destined for great things. This troubles her but she does not dismiss it. She ponders the meaning of phrases like 'Rejoice!', 'full of Grace' and 'the Lord is with you'. As Mary ponders, Gabriel presses on, telling her to be afraid of nothing, spelling out the mission which is being entrusted to her; bearing a Son who will be King of a Kingdom which will never end. Gabriel is awash with superlatives and extravagances. This is about God, human history and the future of the world.

Now Mary feels overwhelmed and out of her depth. She protests her lack of qualifications, but Gabriel counters this with a promise of help. The Holy Spirit will provide whatever is needed! He strengthens his case by dropping Elizabeth into the story. She is already on board, her barrenness gone forever. Gabriel ends the song with a chorus that nothing is impossible for God. Mary says 'Yes!' Gabriel departs and Mary isn't far behind as she makes her way to Elizabeth. She needs to talk to someone who can help her understand what is happening. But she isn't dashing off to the hills of Judea to check if Gabriel has told her the truth. She needs to walk with someone who can help her to explore the depths of the Word she has heard. She has come to the right place.

Notice what happens. There is no Holy huddle or tortured conversation. Mary's arrival unleashes the Holy Spirit in Elizabeth and her exclamation tells Mary all she needs to know. Elizabeth confirms Mary's Vocation and Mission. Saint Luke does not tell us what Mary's greeting was but it stirs something inside those who hear it. The one growing inside Elizabeth is a gift from God and is directed towards God. As Gabriel promised, the rules of the impossible have given way.

The astonishing conversation which unfolds between Gabriel and Mary does two things. First, in a moment of eternal tenderness she becomes the mother of the Beloved Son of God. Her Jesus. Next, it reveals her as an amazing disciple of Sacred Scripture. She knows her Bible by heart, she ponders its meaning in her heart. She enfolds what she hears into her daily life. She is well able to start this process in others. Anyone who has drawn close to her will tell you that her friendship can touch the interior where the promise of God is growing in us, and stir it into action.



In Sacred Scripture, the Womb is a powerful reality and image for the way and the places God moves. Sometimes it is the womb or the gut which is moved when God speaks. Sometimes the image is used to encourage patience as we grow and move from darkness to light. Jesus was very fond of Parables about seeds sown in darkness. Sometimes the womb is used to describe God's knowledge of us, His nearness to us and His commitment to our happiness. It feels like it is this last one which Saint Luke is drawing on in today's Gospel. I hazard a guess that Mary's greeting to Elizabeth was a word of Peace. Jesus taught his disciples, "Whenever you enter a 'house', let your first words be words of Peace. John, the Prophet, guides footsteps in the way of Peace. In Bethlehem the angels sing the birth of Jesus like this, 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth Peace to people of good will'.

Should **PEACE** not be the word that enfolds every child in the womb? In a world of violence, exclusion and alienation, Jesus lived in full communion with God and with people, with every breath he took. He was, as Sacred Scripture says, the firstborn. So, there will be others. But first, like Mary, we must become artists of the Sacred and the human.

Artists like this face only one challenge. On Tuesday, when we are celebrating the birth of Jesus, it will only be real if we are celebrating and working for the Peace of every child in every womb.

## DID YOU KNOW...?



**NEWSLETTER DEADLINE – Midday on Tuesdays**, please email any items you need to make known to the parish via the newsletter to [stjb@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:stjb@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)



**CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR** – The Parish Office will be closed from **Monday 24 December 2018** to **Wednesday 2 January 2019** inclusive.

There will be no newsletter weekend **29/30 December 2018**

*We wish all our parishioners and visitors many blessings for Christmas and 2019.*

**BEWARE: LIGHTING CANDLES** – Adults must accompany all children at the candle trays when lighting candles. Please ensure your children do not play around the candle trays, in the sand or with the lighted candles. Care must be taken reaching across lighted candles wearing loose clothing, etc. It is important to remember that they can be the cause of major fires and serious injury.



**LITURGICAL CALENDAR – DECEMBER:** 25<sup>th</sup> The Nativity of the Lord; 26<sup>th</sup> St Stephen; 27<sup>th</sup> St John; 28<sup>th</sup> The Holy Innocents; 29<sup>th</sup> St Thomas of Canterbury; 30<sup>th</sup> The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph.



**MASS WITH SACRAMENT OF ANOINTING** – Mass on **Friday 28 December** will **NOT** be an Anointing of the Sick Mass

**GOSPEL CHALLENGE** – 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays 7.45pm-9:30pm.  
Please contact the parish office for venue details.

**BABY & TODDLER GROUP** – Closed until **Tuesday 8 January 2019**

**KEEP FIT** – Closed until **January 2019**.

**OFS** - Next meeting **Saturday 16 February 2019** at 2pm-4pm in the hall.

**PRAYER GROUPS** – Hall Evening Group: 1<sup>st</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays 7.45pm – 9.30pm. Day Group: 1<sup>st</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays 10.30- 11.30am

**CHOIR PRACTICE** – Closed until **Thursday 10 January 2019**, 7.30pm to 8.30pm, in the Church. All Welcome.

**JOURNEY OF FAITH** – Closed until **Thursday 10 January 2019**, 7.30pm to 9.30pm in the hall.

**TEAS & COFFEES** – After all weekend Masses.



**MASS OFFERINGS: £1904.24. THANK YOU FOR YOUR KINDNESS AND GENEROSITY.**

Please make cheques payable to (full name) **“PRCDTR Bracknell St Joseph”**. Gift Aid envelopes and banker’s/standing order forms available in the porch, please complete and return forms to the parish office.



**MYDONATE BT** – The world of donating is rapidly changing and becoming easier and more secure, which is why we have signed up to **MyDonateBT**. With **MyDonate** our parish receives more of your donation – as well as the full 25 per cent Gift Aid – it is a no direct fees, zero commission, not-for profit service. We will receive up to 63p more for every £10 given through **MyDonate**. We have a **MyDonate** link on the parish website [www.bracknellcatholicchurch.org.uk](http://www.bracknellcatholicchurch.org.uk) orange button **“Parish Offerings”** where you can sign up to online donations. We also have donation buttons for **“Bamenda”** and **“CAFOD”**. Give it a go, it is really easy, you can do this on your phone or computer, a great way to donate to our beautiful church and parish.



### SOUTH BERKSHIRE PASTORAL AREA

**Co-ordinating Pastor: Fr Danny McAvoy**, St Joseph & St Margaret Clitherow Church, Bracknell, Tel: 01344 425729

**Fr Kevin Bidgood**, St Francis of Assisi, Ascot, SL5 9HG Tel: 01344 620591

**Fr Marcus Brisley** Immaculate Conception, Sandhurst, GU47 9BS and Holy Ghost, Crowthorne, RG45 6JG, Tel: 01252 876820

**Fr David O’Sullivan**, Corpus Christi, Wokingham, RG40 2HE Tel: 0118 9780348

**We pray for those in our parish community who are sick, housebound or in hospital and for those who care for them.**

Brenda Theobald, Olga Maguire, Betty Winn, Peter Dossett, Johanna Lenz, Ena Stanton, Inge Walker, Lilijan Rodenburg, Robert Mulcahy, Eddie Moore, Peggy Pendergast, Ann Newton, Joyce Newland, Bridie Maughan, Angelina Ediale, Josephine Timms, Una Gilligan, Freda Edgington, Anne Hardy, Patricia Holmwood, Evie & Ruby Shallom, Blanche Shap, Mike Garnham, Ethna Sweeney, Mary King, Mary Phelan, Mary Sol Faulkner, Tony Andrews, Derek Alexander, Margaret Clark, Shaun Howard, Sally Tarode, Babs White, Tess Johnson, Dorcas Innes-Grant, Veronika Jastrzebski, Doreen Gladwin, Manuela Maria Barros, Gerry Tobin, Rico Morales, Reynalita Leysan, Marie Fielding, Marie Hughes, Jenny Bashford, Phyllis D’Souza, Donal Hanley, Pat Meehan, Jacqui Rawstron, Tom Larkin, Jim and Francis McEvoy.

## LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENING.....



**PARISH CHRISTMAS CARD** – Please collect your Parish Christmas Card from the porch. As well as a beautiful reflection from Fr Danny, all the Mass times are listed for Advent, the Nativity and the Christmas Octave. There are three sizes of the same card to best suit everyone.



**JOURNEY IN FAITH** - Thursday evenings from 7.30 – 9 pm in the hall. This is a group for people who would like to deepen their understanding of our faith. Each week we will study and reflect upon the following Sunday's readings and explore aspects of the Catholic faith. Everyone is welcome, especially those who are considering joining the Church. There's no commitment - just come along to see if this is something that could support you on your faith journey. If you have any questions, please speak to Mary McNab or email [bracknellpa@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:bracknellpa@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)



**ADVENT GIVING - THANK YOU** to everyone who gave so generously and brought in items for the Berkshire Women's Aid Welcome Packs last week and to those who donated Christmas gifts for the 2 Bracknell Refuges, the Life House, Supported Living House and Care Homes. "We are so grateful to people in your parish for their kindness". BWA Bracknell.

**ABLAZE! (age +13) & IGNITE! (age 10-12)- GRAVITY FORCE - JOINT SOCIAL EVENT** - Join us for some bouncing fun on **Friday, 11 January 2019**. For further information, please contact:

Youth@[bracknellcatholicchurch.org](mailto:bracknellcatholicchurch.org)

**New to either of the youth groups? Want to make some new friends and have some fun? Get yourself registered on our Parish website and come along. We'll look forward to welcoming you!**



**FLAME 2019** - Preparations are underway and excitement is building for the biggest gathering of Catholic Youth in the country, taking place at Wembley Arena on **Saturday 2 March 2019**. For the latest info, check out the Flame Facebook page at CYMFed Flame Congress! If you are one of the thirty people already signed up to go from our Parish, we are now taking clothing orders for your (complimentary) hoodies. Please contact us with your required size at [youth@bracknellcatholicchurch.org](mailto:youth@bracknellcatholicchurch.org), **before Monday 7 January 2019**



### THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD and OCTAVE

Mass times are as follows:

**Saturday 22 December - 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent:**  
6.00pm Mass  
**Sunday 23 December – 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent:**  
8.30am Mass & 10.30am Mass  
**Monday 24 December: 5.00pm Children's Mass**  
**Monday 24 December: 10.30pm Carol Service**  
**Monday 24 December: 11.00pm Midnight Mass**  
**Tuesday 25 December: 10.00am Morning Mass**  
**Wednesday 26 December to Saturday 29 December:**  
10.00am Mass each day  
**Saturday 29 December: 6.00pm Mass**  
**Sunday 30 December: 8.30am and 10.30am**  
**No Mass on Monday 31 December**  
**Tuesday 1 January 2019: 10.00am Mass**

**Parish Office:** 39 Braccan Walk, Bracknell, Berkshire, RG12 1BE, Office Hours: Monday – Friday 9.30am-2.30pm

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

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

**Please make cheques payable to (full name):** "PRCDTR Bracknell St Joseph"

**Parish Priest:** Fr Daniel McAvoy

**Deacon:** Rev Aidan Lynch

**Parish Secretary (Director of Administration):** Elizabeth Fisher

**Pastoral Assistant (Director of Evangelisation):** Mary McNab

**Safeguarding Representatives:** Sarah Birch, Marion McGuire, Paula Read,

**Safeguarding email:** [safeguarding@bracknellcatholicchurch.org](mailto:safeguarding@bracknellcatholicchurch.org)

**PARISH OF ST. JOSEPH and ST. MARGARET CLITHEROW, BRACKNELL**

## TIMES OF MASSES AND MASS INTENTIONS

### FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT – YEAR C

|          |                  |         |      |                   |
|----------|------------------|---------|------|-------------------|
| Saturday | 22 <sup>nd</sup> | 6.00pm  | Mass | Breda Murray, RIP |
| Sunday   | 23 <sup>rd</sup> | 8.30am  | Mass | Parish Intentions |
|          |                  | 10.30am | Mass | Sarah Davis, RIP  |

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

|                                     |                        |                |                        |                                             |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|----------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <b>Monday</b>                       | <b>24<sup>th</sup></b> | <b>5.00pm</b>  | <b>Children's Mass</b> |                                             |
|                                     |                        | <b>10.30pm</b> | <b>Carol Service</b>   |                                             |
|                                     |                        | <b>11.00pm</b> | <b>Midnight Mass</b>   | <b>Rohan, Farita &amp; Richal Pais</b>      |
| <b>Tuesday</b>                      | <b>25<sup>th</sup></b> | <b>10.00am</b> | <b>Day Mass</b>        |                                             |
| <b>ST STEPHEN, First Martyr</b>     |                        |                |                        |                                             |
| Wednesday                           | 26 <sup>th</sup>       | 10.00am        | Mass                   | Fr Patrick Amba                             |
| <b>ST JOHN, Apostle, Evangelist</b> |                        |                |                        |                                             |
| Thursday                            | 27 <sup>th</sup>       | 10.00am        | Mass                   | Breda Worsford, RIP                         |
| <b>THE HOLY INNOCENTS</b>           |                        |                |                        |                                             |
| Friday                              | 28 <sup>th</sup>       | 10.00am        | Mass                   | Suffering of Children Across the World      |
| <b>ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY</b>      |                        |                |                        |                                             |
| Saturday                            | 29 <sup>th</sup>       | 10.00am        | Mass                   | Pastoral Carers and Ministers of our Parish |

### THE HOLY FAMILY of JESUS, MARY and JOSEPH – YEAR C

|                                     |                  |                |      |                                        |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|----------------|------|----------------------------------------|
| Saturday                            | 29 <sup>th</sup> | 6.00pm         | Mass | Peace in the World and our Homes       |
| Sunday                              | 30 <sup>th</sup> | 8.30am         | Mass | Parish Intentions                      |
|                                     |                  | 10.30am        | Mass | Peter Willcox, RIP                     |
| Monday                              | 31 <sup>st</sup> | <b>No Mass</b> |      |                                        |
| <b>MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD</b> |                  |                |      |                                        |
| Tuesday                             | 1 <sup>st</sup>  | 10.00am        | Mass | Benedictine Nuns at St Cecilia's Abbey |

### Ss BASIL THE GREAT & GREGORY NAZIANZEN, Bishops, Doctors of the Church

|           |                 |         |      |                        |
|-----------|-----------------|---------|------|------------------------|
| Wednesday | 2 <sup>nd</sup> | 10.00am | Mass | Anthony Denyer         |
| Thursday  | 3 <sup>rd</sup> | 10.00am | Mass | Victims of Abuse       |
| Friday    | 4 <sup>th</sup> | 10.00am | Mass | David Jon Hancock, RIP |
| Saturday  | 5 <sup>th</sup> | 10.00am | Mass | Pro-Life               |

### THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD – YEAR C

|          |                 |         |      |                               |
|----------|-----------------|---------|------|-------------------------------|
| Saturday | 5 <sup>th</sup> | 6.00pm  | Mass | Parish Intentions             |
| Sunday   | 6 <sup>th</sup> | 8.30am  | Mass | Patrick and Anne Grattan, RIP |
|          |                 | 10.30am | Mass | Anna Maria Johnson, RIP       |

**Wednesday and Thursday:** 9.10am Morning Prayer; **Thursday:** After Mass Novena to Mother of Perpetual Help, 10.15 am Mother's Prayers; **Saturday:** 9.30am Rosary, 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of the month 9.30am Pro-Life Rosary.

**Confessions:** every Saturday at 10.45am or prior appointment.

**PLEASE NOTE: THESE SESSIONS WILL NOT TAKE PLACE BETWEEN CHRISTMAS AND THE NEW YEAR.**