

"Every day, as long as this 'today' lasts,
keep encouraging one another" (Heb 3:13)

**24th December 2022
Christmas Eve**

Isaiah 7:10-14

The birth of the virgin's child will be a sign of God's merciful love for the people he has created.

Romans 1:1-7

Jesus belongs not only to the House of David or the House of Israel — he belongs to all nations.

St. Matthew 1:18-25

God reveals to Joseph that Mary's child will be of unique importance not only to his immediate family but to all his people.

Mary will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins."



We're almost there! The run-up to Christmas can sometimes feel like exactly that – a run, or even a marathon. No matter how much we try every year to pay attention to Advent and focus on the important things in our Christmas preparation, the last few days can pass in a bit of a blur. We want our Christmas dinner to be just right. We like to put a lot of thought and preparation into our gifts for loved ones. Many of us are on the move over these few days, perhaps visiting friends with cards and gifts and Christmas wishes, or preparing to return home to our families. There are parties, concerts and carol services. This fourth Sunday of Advent is the perfect time for a time out.

Today we find ourselves at the heart of the Christmas story. 'This how Jesus Christ came to be born,' the Gospel tells us. In the midst of the festive frenzy, it can be easy to lose sight of how our Advent preparation is going. Why not take the time for some quiet prayer today? Spend a few moments in silence reflecting on today's readings, get away from it all with a walk in the great outdoors, or take the younger members of the family to your local church to visit the crib. A pre-Christmas break can help focus your heart and mind. Perhaps it is a good time to remember the wise words of **Max Ehrmann's Desiderata: 'Go placidly amid the noise and haste, and remember what peace there may be in silence.'** Triona Doherty

**Today's Psalm
Psalm 23**

Here we are six days before Christmas and preparation for the celebration is hectic. Too easily do we get so involved in the preparation that we might forget the one in whose honour the party is held at this time every year.

Let the Lord enter...keep Christ in Christmas.

He is the king of glory. The child of Mary will be recognised as Emmanuel, God-with-us. Who could be worthy enough to receive such a divine gift?

In the psalm, pilgrims approaching the holy temple sense their unworthiness.

Who shall climb the mountain of the Lord?

Who shall stand in his holy place?

The great news of Christmas is that God has come down into our unworthiness. He is Jesus, the Saviour. We do not depend on our unworthy efforts to climb to heaven for heaven has come down to us in the Saviour.

So, on with the party. We have great news to celebrate.

Fr. Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap.

Mass Intentions for w/c Sunday December 24 2022

4.00pm Carols plus Mass

8.30.am. Christmas Morning Mass

10.30.am. Day Mass

Mon: St. Stephen the first Martyr

9.30.am: Michael Toman

Tuesday St John, Apostle and Evangelist

9.30.am: Thanks to St Anthony

Wedens: Holy Innocents

9.30.am: Billy Strickland

Thurs: St Thomas A Becket of Canterbury

9.30.am: JC

Friday: The Holy Family

0.07.pm: Desmond Gormond

Sunday. Mary Mother of God

8.30.am. Joseph Miller

10.30.am. Parisoners

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CHRISTMAS MASSES
Saturday Christmas Eve:
Carols 4.00.pm.
Followed by Mass
Sunday Christmas Morning:
Masses: 8.30.am. & 10.30.am.

We pray for the Sick, especially the sick of the parish Ryan Troop; JC;
Catherine Thompson; Maureen Beardsworth; Desmond Gorman; Thomas Halligan.

Once again, we congratulate our volunteers who have decorated our church for the Christmas season. They have put in a lot of time and skill to help us understand this season.

Boxing Day The Feast of Stephen There seems to be two theories on the origin of Boxing Day and why it is celebrated. The first is that centuries ago, on the day after Christmas, members of the merchant class would give boxes containing food and fruit, clothing, or money to trades people and servants. The second thought is that Boxing Day comes from the tradition of opening the alms boxes placed in churches over the Christmas season. The contents thereof which were distributed amongst the poor, by the clergy, the day after Christmas. Holy **Innocents** Day once also known as 'Children's', falls on 8th December. It commemorates King Herod's massacre of all male infants in and around Bethlehem under the age of two in an attempt to kill the young Christ. In the days when Christmas was less child centred, Children was a time for indulging children with treats and parties. Today is a day we might consider supporting a children's charity such as Barnardo's, NSPCC, UNICEF, and Save The Children. Alternatively you might consider supporting child refugees through our Catholic aid agencies and UNICEF.

The feast of St Thomas of Canterbury Becket. His Martyrdom is pictured in our church on the wall gospel side of the sanctuary.

Feast of the Holy Family 30th December Family Values The birth of Christ took place in circumstances of poverty, without many of the comforts we would consider basic, and yet we know that this was a family that shared every value that counts for anything. It doesn't matter whether we are single parents, aunts, uncles, foster parents or grandparents ... we look to the Holy Family and follow their example in making our own homes places of peace and happiness places where true values flourish

"Christmas gift suggestions: To your enemy, forgiveness. To an opponent, tolerance. To a friend, your heart. To a customer, service. To all, charity. To every child, a good example. To yourself, respect."