

15th December 2019

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT, YEAR A

"In truth I tell you, of all the children born to women, there has never been anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of Heaven is greater than he." (Matthew 11:11)

Immaculate Conception Church

Within the Pastoral Area of Southampton East
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Parish Priest: Fr Antony Gatt

Hospital Chaplaincy: (023 8120 8517)

University Chaplain: Sr Valentina Stilo (07983 883377)

Safeguarding Officer: Pat Saunders (023 80442189)

Parish Secretary: Rachel Brady (023 8055 5470)

Confessions: Saturdays, 10.30 am after morning Mass

Rosary: Wednesdays, starting 25 mins before Mass

Hall Bookings: portswood@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Sun 15 Dec Third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete)

Mon 16 Dec Of the 3rd week of Advent

Tue 17 Dec Liturgy of the Day

Wed 18 Dec Liturgy of the Day

Thu 19 Dec Liturgy of the Day

Fri 20 Dec Liturgy of the Day

Sat 21 Dec Liturgy of the Day

Sun 22 Dec Fourth Sunday of Advent

8.30am †Kathy White

10.30am †Alfred Rosario

----- NO SERVICE

10 am †Catherine John

10 am Holy Souls

11 am †Eileen Fallon

10.30 am FUNERAL – Andrew Cole

10 am †Hope Soars

8.30 am †Kathy White

10.30 am Humphries family



Today's readings

1st Reading – Isaiah 35: 1-6, 10

Psalms – 145:6-10

2nd Reading – James 5:7-10

Gospel – Matthew 11:2-11

WELCOME to our Masses this weekend. Please join us in the hall after the 10:30 Mass for tea, coffee and refreshments.

ADVENT THEME/DISCUSSION SERIES

The final evening of Fr Antony's Advent 'Hope' discussion series takes place this Tuesday evening 17th December at 7.40 pm in the hall. All welcome.

DANCE CLUB CHRISTMAS SHOW this Wednesday 18th December at 6pm in the hall: The Nativity followed by Christmas songs and dance with refreshments. All welcome. If you would like to come but need transport please contact Steve 0754029973.

CHRISTMAS RAFFLE DRAW – THANK YOU!

A total of £1091 was raised towards the roof fund through our Christmas raffle. Thank you to all who bought tickets. A list of winners who still need to collect prizes is on the noticeboard in the hall. A particular thank you also to those who generously donated prizes - Jojo's gym and Inner city boxing gym, and the parish groups who donated hampers – Altar Servers, Book club, Cafod, First Holy Communion group, Dance club, International choir and the Youth group.

NEW KEYS FOR THE CHURCH The locks for the church are to be changed on Friday this week. A limited number of new keys are available for those who need them. If you require a key for regular access to the church for a role you undertake in the parish, please contact the parish office. Please also return your hall key at the same time. Thank you.

My dear Friends:

Third Sunday of Advent! Preparing some hand-outs for Tuesday evening's *Hope* session, I opened some of my notes on the great Jewish scholar, Abraham Heschel. For Heschel, *awe, wonder and radical amazement of God* are the vital keys to open the doors to an intimate, earth-moving and world-changing, experience of God: ***Awe is more than an emotion; it is a way of understanding, insight into a meaning greater than ourselves. The beginning of awe is wonder, and the beginning of wisdom is awe.***

It is this ***awe*** which motivates and transforms us. It heals, restores and fills us with love, compassion and hope. The word *Religion* has its origins in the Latin word '*religare*' which means '*to bind*' or connect. It is by our being '*bound*' or '*connected*' ***in awe and wonder*** to the immensity of God and his love, that we can experience transformation within ourselves and within our world. Heschel says '*awareness of the divine, begins with wonder*'... *Religion declined not because it was refuted, but because it became irrelevant, dull, oppressive, insipid. When faith is completely replaced by creed, worship by discipline, love by habit; when the crisis of today is ignored because of the splendor of the past; when faith becomes an heirloom rather than a living fountain; when religion speaks only in the name of authority rather than with the voice of compassion-its message becomes meaningless. Religion is an answer to humanity's ultimate questions. [We need] to rediscover the questions to which religion is an answer.*

Perhaps we can open ourselves in these days before we celebrate Christ's birth to the awe and wonder of His love for us. It is then we shall be truly connected and bound to him.

Love, Peace and Blessings, Fr. Antony

MONEY LAST WEEK:

Main Collection:

Gift Aid Envelopes inc tax reclaim - £130.00

Loose plate collection – £281.79

Standing orders - £1080.27

Second Collection:

Flowers - Inc tax reclaim: £568.83

Feast Day Celebration:

Book Sale, Silent Auction, Candles & Crafts: £226.80

Second Collections:

Today – Life

Next week – No collection

BLESSING OF THE BAMBINELLI At both Masses next weekend, Sunday 22nd December, each family is invited to bring a statue of Baby Jesus/manger crib from your home Nativity set. Fr Antony will bless the Baby Jesus statues for you to take home and place in the manger on Christmas Eve. This blessing will be similar to the one that takes place in Rome each Advent when the Pope invites all the local children to St. Peter's Basilica to bless them and their 'bambini' (Child Jesus statues). A beautiful way to keep Christ in Christmas!

SERVICIO NAVIDEÑO DE COMUNIÓN EN ESPAÑOL

Este sábado 21 a las 6pm, organizado para y por la comunidad de habla hispana. Nos vemos en la iglesia desde las 5:00pm para preparar los cantos y la liturgia. Refrigerios después del servicio en el salón parroquial. Son todos bienvenidos. Translation

Christmas communion service in Spanish

Saturday 21st at 6pm, organised by the Spanish speaking community. We will meet at 5:00pm in the church to prepare the songs and liturgy. Refreshments in the hall after the service. All welcome.

THE CHOIR WELCOMES 'CHRISTMAS SINGERS AND PLAYERS'

for the Christmas Eve Carol and Christmas morning services. Please join us for rehearsals on Thursday 19th December at 7.30 pm in the church. Come and enjoy singing for Christmas.

THE PARISH CHRISTMAS POST TRAYS are in the porch for the sending and receiving of Christmas cards to parishioners!

VOLUNTEERS: Please could Eucharistic Ministers, Readers and volunteer ushers and clickers sign up or email mary.gobbi@btinternet.com for the Christmas and New Year special services. Thank you.

THANK YOU FROM DENNIS WILSON Dennis thanks all the Parishioners for their sympathy and cards on the passing of Daphne McGill, his beloved sister for 97 years. He would also like to take this opportunity, on behalf of the whole parish, to congratulate Fr Antony on the admirable way he coped with the additional work, inconvenience and confusion resulting from the roof-replacement; and we thank him for keeping us so well informed while the work was in progress.

DIOCESAN DIRECTORY 2020 If anyone would like a copy of the Diocesan Directory for 2020, please let the office know before 18th December. Cost, £4 each.

CHILDREN'S PAINTING/POSTER COMPETITION

If any more children would like to enter the competition there is still time. For all children up to the age of 16. Please pick up your leaflet and competition details after Mass. Entries should be handed in by 11 am on 21st December in time for judging and the announcement of winners after Masses on 22nd December.

DONATIONS OF FOOD AND TOILETRIES FOR BASICS BANK AND POITIERS CARE

Please remember to bring in donations for this vital support for those who are in need in Southampton. We hope to be able to provide a bumper collection during the Christmas period. All donations to be left in the large wooden box in the porch.

STILETTO HEELS! Now that we have a lovely smooth, re-sanded floor in the church, we would like to keep it looking good for as long as possible. To help reduce the wear and tear, it would be much appreciated if ladies could please refrain from wearing stiletto heels in the church! Thank you!

TRY SOMETHING DIFFERENT THIS ADVENT

Why not find some stillness in Advent and join us for a quiet time of prayer, candle light and meditative songs - a time to come closer to God. All welcome. TODAY, Sunday 15th December, 6 till 6.45 pm. At Annunciation Church, Station Rd, Netley Abbey, SO31 5AF.

YEAR OF THE WORD 2020 - READERS' WORKSHOPS

The first of the Readers Workshops takes place on 11th and 25th January 2020, 10 am – 1 pm at St Peter and the Winchester Martyrs church, Jewry Street, Winchester, SO23 8RY. Please consider signing up if you are a reader in the parish. For further details and to register please visit www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/readers

PILGRIMAGE TO MEDJUGORJE A wonderful opportunity for fellowship and spiritual recharge. Travelling with Marian Pilgrimages and a guide for the duration of our stay. English mass every day. 30 Sept - 7 October, flying from Gatwick to Dubrovnik plus a 2.5 hour transfer to Medjugorje. Half board accommodation. Flights and transfers will be £595.00 (based on shared room). Single supplement applies. Early bird £30.00 discount for booking before 1 Feb. £100 deposit required on booking. For further details and to reserve a place contact Heather Hauschild hauschild287@btinternet.com. More details on Medjugorje pilgrimages at www.marian-uk.com

SEPARATED/DIVORCED Relationships that have broken down can lead to unresolved hurts and questions, to feelings of rejection or isolation. A series of evenings for those who are separated, or divorced starts on Tuesday 14th January 2020 in St Edmunds Parish and is open to all: 'Restored lives' is run over 7 weeks and offers the opportunity to explore different issues in a safe and non-judgemental setting with those who have been there too. If you are interested in joining or would like to know more please speak to Fr Vincent or one of the priests at St Edmunds Church.

PARISH OFFICE HOURS NEXT WEEK:

Tues, Thurs & Fri, 9.30 am – 3.00 pm