

20th December 2020

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT & THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD, YEAR B

'I am the handmaid of the Lord' said Mary, 'let what you have said be done to me'
(Luke 1:38)

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 (08044 2189)
Parish Secretary: Rachel Brady (023 8055 5470)
Enquiries re the Sacraments:
please make an appointment by email.
Hall Bookings are not being taken at present .

BOOKING ADVISED IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND MASS

E MAIL: icmassbookings@gmail.com

TEL: 08002471372

Date	Solemnities & Feast days	Mass Times	Mass details & intentions	
Sat 19 Dec	(for 4 th Sunday of Advent	10.00 am Recorded	†Eileen Fallon RIP	 <p>SUNDAY'S READINGS 1st Reading: Sam 7:1-5,8-12,14,16 Psalm: 88:2-5,27,29 2nd Reading: Romans 16:25-27 Gospel: Luke 1:26-38</p>
Sun 20 Dec	FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT Sunday Mass available from 10 am on: Youtube, Face-book & the Parish Website *Saturday Mass is recorded for Sunday	10.00 am	†Alfred Rosario RIP	
		5.30 pm	†Audrey Campbell RIP	 <p>https://www.dropbox.com/s/f7u6pwwjftkm50/Children%27s%20Liturgy%20Video%2020.12.20.mp4?dl=0</p> <p>SPIRITUAL COMMUNION <i>My Jesus, I believe that You are present in this Holy Sacrament of the altar. I love You above all things and I passionately desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, come spiritually into my soul so that I may unite myself wholly to You now and forever. Amen</i></p>
Mon 21 Dec	Liturgy of the Day	-	No Mass	
Tues 22 Dec	Liturgy of the Day	10.00 am	†Thomas Merton RIP	
Wed 23 Dec	Liturgy of the Day	-	No Mass	
Thurs 24 Dec	CHRISTMAS EVE Parish Carol Service	Available 12 noon onwards	Online only (Youtube Chanel)	
	VIGIL MASSES FOR THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Family Mass Midnight Mass 	5.00 pm 8.30 pm	- -	
Fri 25 Dec	CHRISTMAS DAY THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD	9.00 am	-	
Sat 26 Dec	St Stephen	10.00 am	†Alec Palmer RIP	
Sun 27 Dec	FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY & JOSEPH	10.00 am	Deceased members of the Gobbi/O'Brien families	
		5.30 pm	-	

The Parish Bank Account details are:

Name: PRCDTR Immaculate Conception Church
Sort Code: 30-93-04
Account No: 00887995,

For donations please give a reference followed by your gift aid number if you donate in this way. e.g:
GEN = General Fund (offertory collection),
ERF = Emergency Relief Fund

Parish office opening hours this week

Tuesday & Wednesday: 9.30 am – 4.00 pm

My dear Friends:

Would you believe that Christmas Day is just days away! Rejoice! Today, we celebrate the 4th Sunday of Advent. We light the last Advent candle, the *Angel* Candle, the symbol of PEACE.

In today's Gospel, the *Angel* Gabriel appears to Mary and announces that she is going to be the *God-Bearer* (*Theotokos/Θεοτόκος*), to humankind. Mary's 'yes' unfolds our journey of salvation in the birth of our Saviour, the Wonder Counsellor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace! On Christmas Day, we shall light the centre Candle, the symbol of Christ, the Light of the World! Wow... what amazing symbols! Wow...What amazing challenges for us to make these symbols realities.

In the Old Testament (often referred to as the *Hebrew/Shared Scriptures*) there are two amazing words, pulsating with a God-filled energy, challenging us to transform ourselves and transform our world: *Tikkun Olam* (תיקון עולם) '*Repair the World*'! *Tikkun Olam* also directs us to *Repair Ourselves*! Before we can repair, heal and transform the world, we have to begin with the repair, healing and transformation of SELF! This is the inner, the interior, spiritual journey upon which each one of us has to embark. No one can make this journey for us. They can walk with us, but not *for* us. It is the journey in which we become the creations God created us to be.

In the midst of COVID19, a symbol of HOPE has indeed become a reality! Think about it! By drawing on the global reservoir of scientific expertise, for the first time in *Human History*, a vaccine against a deadly pandemic has been developed in months instead of years. This is a new facet to *Tikkun Olam/Repair the World*!

Now...just think what could be achieved if ALL Lovers of God were to do the same thing! If ALL *Lovers of God* were to draw on the *global* reservoir of God's Love! If we were to make REAL those religious symbols of Love, Hope, Peace, and Justice (*Hessed/gentle-Mercy*) we would have a global reservoir of 'vaccines' against the diseases of injustice, oppression, poverty and war!

But...like that hymn, *Let There be Peace on Earth...and Let it Begin with Me*! Our own 'hearts' are like reservoirs, and our words and actions are like streams which flow from them. What do these streams say about that health of our interior reservoirs? Think of the last conversations we had...perhaps over a cup of coffee or a social drink...were my words the balm of gentle healing? Were they the *hessed* of Gentle Mercy? Did they pierce the darkness of someone imprisoned in smouldering anger and pain? Did they shine for them like beacons of HOPE in the dawn of a new spiritual awareness?

These are the '*spiritual vaccines*' contained in our words and actions (*Hessed*). They flow from the heart of the Professional Lover of God. They embrace 'the other' who asks them, and tells them, as Rumi did: *Do you know what you are? You are a manuscript of a divine letter. You are a mirror reflecting a noble face. This universe is not outside of you. Look inside yourself; everything that you want, you are already that.*

Martin Luther King, Jr., once said that we have guided missiles and misguided men. If we want to *repair* this world for God; if we want to develop those '*spiritual vaccines*' against the diseases of war, poverty and oppression; if we want to change this world for God; then, we have to start with our own interior journey of healing, growth and change.

In this last week of Advent, let us ask the Lord to illumine, and open, our awareness to the great things we can do in His name. When, like Mary, we respond to God's Messenger: "Let it be done to me..." and become the God-Bearers to the Prince of Peace, and become Sacred Repairers of his creation.

Remember me as loving you,

Fr. Antony



24 HOUR LIVE CHURCH

You can now watch all our Masses and Services

Live at Church Services TV using the link below. All services will also be recorded and remain online for at least 7 days. Additionally you can visit the church online at any time as the cameras are on 24 hours/day.

<https://www.churchservices.tv/portswoodchur>

SECOND COLLECTIONS

THIS SUNDAY, 20th December – No collection

NEXT SUNDAY, 27th December – Clergy Assistance (Diocesan sick and retired priests)

CHRISTMAS MASS COLLECTIONS

Traditionally the Christmas Collection always goes to the Parish Priest. If you would like to give a gift to support Fr Antony in his vocation and mission, your donation can be put in a basket as you leave after Mass, or you can make your donation on line at:

<https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/fundraising/southampton-Immaculate-conception-clergy-christmas-collection>

THIS SUNDAY Sunday 20th December 2 pm – 4.30 pm

on Zoom! If you would like to Zoom in on St Nicholas, you need to book your time by e mailing icmassbookings@gmail.com, referring to St Nicholas in the title and letting us know your name. We will e mail you back with a time and a zoom link address to visit on the day.



CATHOLIC NEWSPAPERS – THE UNIVERSE & CATHOLIC TIMES

If you would like to receive either of these Catholic newspapers, you can sign up on line to order them to be posted direct to your home each week. Currently on special offer - £22 for a 3 month subscription or £80 for 12 months. To order visit www.thecatholicuniverse.com or call 0161 8205722.

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CAROL SERVICE will be on our Youtube channel this year. It is a compilation of recordings of music and readings from various parishioners put together in one programme. Available to watch from 12 noon on Christmas eve. Link to be emailed out next week.

QUIZ CORNER (Answers at bottom of page)

1. Where am I? I am the country where Gaspar/Caspar/Jaspar came from
2. Who am I? The cousin of Jesus who was beheaded
3. What am I? I am a healing agent that was very expensive in the time of Jesus. Also known as olibanum I am the resin of the Boswellia tree. Also when burnt a symbol or prayers going to heaven.
4. Who said? Prepare Ye the way of the Lord

TO MAKE A BOOKING TO COME TO MASS:

- Send an email request to icmassbookings@gmail.com . stating:
 - Your name and address.
 - The total number in your household /bubble coming to Mass (let us know if there are under 10s).
 - The preference for the day of the week, and mass time you wish to attend. (If you can give a second choice that will help if there are too many requests for one Mass time).
 - Whether there is a special circumstance (e.g. wheelchair access, working hours)
- Or telephone 0800 2461372 and leave a message. We provide this option for those who have no access to the internet. If you have internet access, please email us.

Your booking should be made before 12 noon of the Friday before the Mass you wish to attend. With the exception of Saturday it is possible to turn up without booking. You will need to arrive at least 10 minutes before Mass starts and speak to one of the stewards in the church porch who will do their best to accommodate you but please do be prepared that there may not be a space.

DIOCESAN PLANNING



The Bishop is seeking views and opinions of people in the diocese to inform his long term planning. You are encouraged to complete the online survey.

ST ANNES SCHOOL ADMISSIONS ARRANGEMENTS CONSULTATION

St Anne's School is holding a consultation on its admissions arrangements for September 2022.

Please see www.st-annes.uk.com and then go to admissions. The consultation will run until 31st January 2021.

DO PLEASE SHARE A COPY OF THIS NEWSLETTER with other parishioners who may not have access to the internet. If anyone without internet access would like a copy sent to them each week while we do not have regular access to the church, please let the parish office know.

QUIZ ANSWERS: (1) India (2) John the Baptist. (3) Frankincense (4) Isaiah and then John the Baptist (also a song from the musical Godspell)