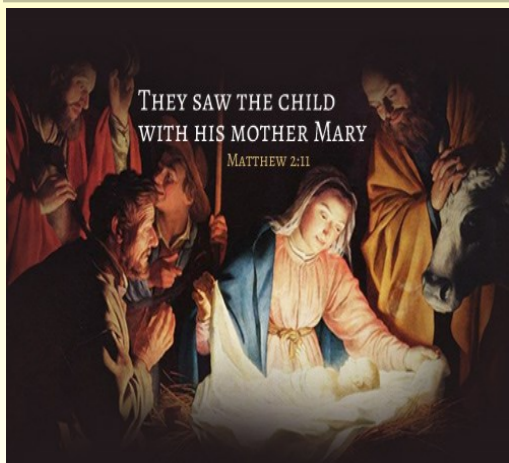


# St. Brigid's Parish, Blanchardstown Newsletter

## The Nativity of the Lord - Sunday 25th December 2022



### This Sunday's Readings

**1st:** Isaiah 9:1-7  
**Psalm:** 95 R/ Today a saviour has been born to us; he is Christ the Lord.  
**2nd:** St Paul to Titus 2:11-14  
**Gospel Acclamation!** Alleluia, alleluia! I bring you news of great joy; today a saviour has been born to us, Christ the Lord. Alleluia!  
**Gospel:** Luke 2:1-14

### CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE

**Saturday 24th 6pm Family Mass**  
**8.30pm Carol Service**  
**9pm Vigil Mass**

**Sunday 25th December**  
**9am & 10.30am mass**

**Mon 26th-Fri 30th Dec**  
**Mass at 11am**

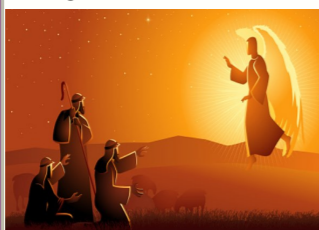
**Saturday 31st Dec 6pm Vigil Mass**  
**Sunday 1st January 10.30am**  
**Monday 2nd January 11am**  
**Tuesday 3rd 10am**  
**Thursday 5th 10am & 7.30pm Vigil**  
**Friday 6th 10am Epiphany**  
**Saturday 7th 10am & 6pm Vigil**  
**Sunday 8th 10.30am**

The Parish Office will be closed for Christmas holidays on Friday Dec 23<sup>rd</sup> and will re-open on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> January. For urgent business please contact the Sacristan on the day or Fr. Michael.

### A Celebration of Wonder & Awe

This reflection was written by J.B. Williams from 'The Christian Year' from Good News; Thoughts on God and Man. I consider it excellent and very appropriate.

The particular danger, which faces us as Christmas approaches, is unlikely to be contempt for the sacred season, but nevertheless our familiarity with it may easily produce in us a kind of indifference. The true wonder and mystery may leave us unmoved; familiarity may easily blind us to the shining fact that lies at the heart of Christmastide. What we are in fact celebrating is the awe-inspiring humility of God, and no amount of familiarity with the trappings of Christmas should ever blind us to its quiet but explosive significance. For Christians believe that so great is God's love and concern that he himself became a man. Amid the sparkle and colour and music of the day's celebrations we do well to remember that God's insertion of himself into human history was achieved with an almost frightening quietness and humility. This almost beggarly beginning has been romanticised by artists and poets throughout the centuries. Yet I believe that at least once a year we should look steadily at the historic fact, and not at any picture. At the time of this astonishing event only a handful of people knew what had happened. And as far as we know, no one spoke openly about it for thirty years. Even when the baby was grown to be a man, only a few recognised him for who he really was.



Two or three years of teaching and preaching and healing people, and his work was finished. He was betrayed and judicially murdered, deserted at the end by all his friends. By normal human standards this is a tragic little tale of failure, the rather squalid story of a promising young man from humble home, put to death by the envy and malice of the professional men of religion. All this happened in an obscure, occupied province of the vast Roman Empire. It is two thousand years ago that this apparently invincible Empire utterly collapsed, and all that is left of it is ruins. Yet the baby, born in such pitiful humility and cut down as a young man in his prime, commands the allegiance of millions of people all over the world.

Although they have never seen him, he has become friend and companion to innumerable people. This undeniable fact is, by any measurement, the most astonishing phenomenon in human history. It is a solid rock of evidence that no agnostic can ever explain away.

### THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

The celebration of the anniversary of the Lord's birth seems to have been observed since the fourth century. The popular keeping of the feast has always been marked by joy. Some writers have written of the three-fold birth of Christ: eternally in the bosom of the Father; at Bethlehem from the womb of the Virgin Mary and mystically in the soul of each Christian.

**Reflection** The stories about the infancy of Jesus found in the gospel accounts of Matthew and Luke contain echoes of the passion story giving the message that even from the beginning of his life the shadow of the cross is never far away. At his birth and at his death Jesus is presented as being received by gentiles but rejected by Jews, welcomed by strangers but turned away by his own. Lord Jesus, born this day at Bethlehem, be born once again in our hearts. Amen.

### THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

The scriptures and the liturgy give very little emphasis to the private life of Jesus, dominated as they both are with his public ministry. Today's feast is an exception. The details of their family life are lost - the significance enduring.

**Reflection** Matthew presents Jesus going into exile like his people did some six centuries earlier. He is a displaced person. The narrative about Herod serves to remind the hearers of Matthew's community that the shadow of the cross stretches right back to Jesus' first moments on earth. But that is good news because it implies that God's saving plan is close at hand.

### Advent Wreath

5th CANDLE - (white)  
 "CHRIST CANDLE" - The white candle reminds us that Jesus is the spotless lamb of God, sent to wash away our sins! His birth was for his death - his death was for our birth! "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, 'Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!'" (John 1:29)



### FROM THE PASTORS DESK

#### Happy Christmas



On behalf of myself, the Parish Team; the Parish Staff and the Parish Pastoral Council, I'd like to wish the parishioners of St. Brigid's and Royal Canal a joyful and Happy Christmas. May Christ Jesus dwell with you, keep you from all harm, and make you one in mind and heart, now and forever. Amen

#### CHRISTMAS TREE: A SIGN AND REMINDER OF DIVINE LIGHT

"God became man and came among us to dispel the shadows of sin, bringing His divine light to humanity. This highest of lights, symbolised and recalled by the Christmas tree, has not only shown no sign of dimming through the passing of the centuries and the millennia, but rather continues to shine upon us and to illuminate every person who comes into the world, especially in moments of uncertainty and difficulty. Jesus Himself declared, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life'. And, the attempts made through the ages to extinguish the light of God, to replace it with the glare of illusion and deceit, have heralded episodes of tragic violence against mankind. This is because the attempt to cancel the name of God from the pages of history results in distortion, in which even the most beautiful and noble words lose their true meaning".



#### Christmas Dues Envelopes

Thank you to all who have returned their Christmas dues envelopes. If you did not receive Christmas Dues envelope and would like to contribute to the Priests of the Parish, please take one from the tables in the Church.

#### Vocation Themed Intercessions for Christmas

**Christmas** - In Luke's Gospel, we hear that Mary treasured all the things that the shepherds told HER that had been revealed to them by the Angels and that she pondered them in her heart. We pray that parents find it in their hearts to support their son or daughter who is trying to discern a vocation.

#### Mass Booking Diary

The 2023 Diary is now available in the Sacristy if anyone wishes to 'book' Masses for next Year.

*Fr Michael Carey PP*

### Remembrance

We remember all our friends and loved ones who have died in the past year. All sharing in common that they died into the arms of our loving God. We pray especially for those who are grieving and are without consolation at this time. May the gentle light of Jesus shine on them and may they know the love and compassion of our Lord in their hearts.

## Children's Corner

### In The Gospel

Jesus was with God the Father at the beginning of time. Now Jesus has chosen to come to live as one of us. Jesus is the light of the world. Nothing will ever stop Jesus' light from shining. We know how much God the Father loves us because we can see God the Son, Jesus.



### Jesus' birthday!

Today we are celebrating Jesus' birthday. What present would you buy Jesus to celebrate? Draw or write about your idea in the gift.

### JESUS IS HERE!



Thank you for coming to live with us, Jesus, and showing me how much you love me. Help me to shine with your light and your love as I enjoy Christmas. Amen.

### Christmas sudoku

Fill the grid with the Christmas pictures. Each row, column and grid should have just one of each of the different pictures.

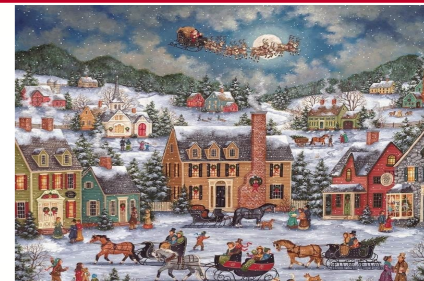


### Saints in the Church's Calendar

**St. Stephen, 1<sup>st</sup> Martyr, Monday December 26<sup>th</sup>**, died, c.35AD, the first Christian martyr, was one of those in charge of the poor and needy. He is outstanding for his forgiveness of his enemies. Patron of deacons, stonemasons and bricklayers.

**St. John, Apostle and Evangelist, Tuesday December 27<sup>th</sup>**, died, c.100AD, brother of James, son of Zebedee, the disciple whom Jesus loved, is traditionally said to have died in Ephesus. Alone among the Twelve, he stood at the foot of the cross and was entrusted to the Blessed Virgin. He is considered to be the author of the fourth Gospel, the Book of Revelation and three Letters. The Letters especially teach us the law of love; John is said in his old age to have preached only one message: love one another.

**The Holy Innocents, Martyrs, Wednesday December 28<sup>th</sup>**. 'The flight into Egypt and the massacre of the Holy innocents make manifest the opposition of darkness to the light: "He came to his own home, and his own people received him not." Christ's whole life was lived under the sign of persecution. His own share it with him. Jesus' departure from Egypt recalls the exodus and presents him as the definitive liberator of his people'.



**The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, Friday December 30<sup>th</sup>**. The Holy Family is seen as the model for the human family, the religious community and the Church itself. The celebration of the incarnation has brought us to see God's closeness. In the Holy Family we see the ordinariness of the life of Jesus, the simple acceptance by Mary and Joseph of the marvels of God. In the daily life of family and community we can come close to God. But we have to learn to live centered on God, with respect and love for each other.



We would like to thank you for your most generous contribution to the Annual Collection for Crosscare Homeless Prevention & Food Poverty Support Service. Our Parish contributed €1235 for 2022

**We remember our recently deceased:** Teresa Whelan  
 Margaret Kenny  
 John Moran



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