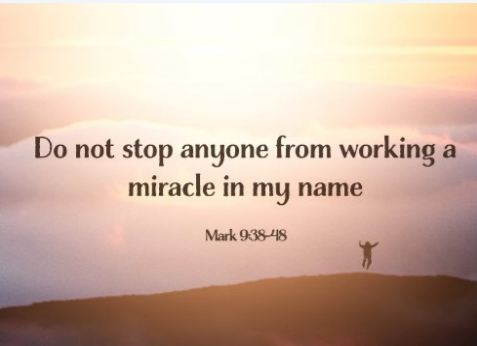




# St Brigid's Parish, Blanchardstown Newsletter

## The Baptism of the Lord Sunday 7th January 2024



### Extracts from the Pope Christmas Homily 2023

"A census of the whole earth" (cf. Lk 2:1). This was the context in which Jesus was born, and the Gospel makes a point of it. The census might have been mentioned in passing, but instead is carefully noted. And in this way a great contrast emerges. While the emperor numbers the world's inhabitants, God enters it almost surreptitiously. While those who exercise power seek to take their place with the great ones of history, the King of history chooses the way of littleness. None of the powerful take notice of him: only a few shepherds, relegated to the margins of social life. The census speaks of something else. In the Scriptures, the taking of a census has negative associations. King David, tempted by large numbers and an unhealthy sense of self-sufficiency, sinned gravely by ordering a census of the people. He wanted to know how powerful he was. The Lord was angered, and the people suffered.

On this night, however, Jesus, the "Son of David", after nine months in Mary's womb, is born in Bethlehem, the city of David. He does not impose punishment for the census, but humbly allows himself to be registered as one among many. Here we see, not a god of wrath and chastisement, but the God of mercy, who takes flesh and enters the world in weakness, heralded by the announcement: "on earth peace among those whom he favours" (Lk 2:14). Tonight, our hearts are in Bethlehem, where the Prince of Peace is once more rejected by the futile logic of war, by the clash of arms that even today prevents him from finding room in the world (cf. Lk 2:7).

The *census of the whole earth*, in a word, manifests the all-too-human thread that runs through history: the quest for worldly power and might, fame and glory, which measures everything in terms of success, results, numbers and figures, a world obsessed with *achievement*. Yet the census also manifests the way of Jesus, who comes to seek us through *enfleshment*. He is not the god of accomplishment, but the God of *Incarnation*. He does not eliminate injustice from above by a show of power, but from below, by a show of love. He does not burst on the scene with limitless power but descends to the narrow confines of our lives. He does not shun our frailties but makes them his own.

Brothers and sisters, tonight we might ask ourselves: Which God do we believe in? In the God of incarnation or the god of achievement? Because there is always a risk that we can celebrate Christmas while thinking of God in pagan terms, as a powerful potentate in the sky; a god linked to power, worldly success and the idolatry of consumerism. With the false image of a distant and petulant deity who treats the good well and the bad poorly; a deity made in our own image and likeness, handy for resolving our problems and removing our ills. God, on the other hand, waves no magic wand; he is no god of commerce who promises "everything all at once". He does not save us by pushing a button, but draws near us, in order to change our world from within. Yet how deeply ingrained is the worldly notion of a distant, domineering, unbending and powerful deity who helps his own to prevail against others! This image is so frequently ingrained in us. But that is not the case: our God was born for all, during a census of the whole earth.

Let us look, then, to the "living and true God" (1 Thess 1:9). The God who is beyond all human reckoning and yet allows himself to be numbered by our accounting. The God, who revolutions history by becoming a part of history. The God who so respects us as to allow us to reject him; who takes away sin by taking it upon himself; who does not eliminate pain but transforms it; who does not remove problems from our lives but grants us a hope that is greater than all our problems. God so greatly desires to embrace our lives that, infinite though he is, he becomes finite for our sake. In his greatness, he chooses to become small; in his righteousness, he submits to our injustice. Brothers and sisters, this is the wonder of Christmas: not a mixture of sappy emotions and worldly contentment, but the unprecedented tenderness of a God who saves the world by becoming incarnate. Let us contemplate the Child, let us contemplate the manger, his crib, which the angels call "a sign" for us (cf. Lk 2:12). For it truly is the sign that reveals God's face, a face of compassion and mercy, whose might is shown always and only in love. He makes himself close, tender and compassionate, for this is God's style: closeness, compassion, tenderness.

### FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

#### Christmas Dues Envelopes

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



#### What can we look forward to in January?

**Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> January** – Third Sunday in Ordinary Time  
Word of God Sunday  
**January 18<sup>th</sup> -25<sup>th</sup>** – Week of Prayer - Christian Unity



Fr Michael Carey PP

### Children's Corner: In the Gospel Today

John tells people that someone special is coming. Jesus is that special person. Jesus comes from Nazareth and is baptised by John in the River Jordan. When Jesus is baptised a voice from heaven says, "You are my Son and I love you."

#### Puzzle

Find these words. They may go in any direction, but always in a straight line.

**HOLY, JESUS, SPIRIT, RIVER, DOVE, JOHN, FIRE, BAPTISE, WATER, GENTLE, WIND, FREE**

A	S	C	D	H	R	E	G
J	O	H	N	O	E	G	E
E	D	S	B	L	V	J	T
S	V	B	A	Y	I	E	N
U	E	S	P	I	R	I	T
S	L	W	T	F	I	R	E
E	T	A	I	W	R	Q	N
H	N	T	S	N	L	E	M
O	E	E	E	G	D	V	E
H	G	R	V	E	R	E	E

#### A PRAYER TO SAY

Dear Jesus, thank you for loving me. Thank you for giving me special people who look after me and help me. Amen.

### A Pilgrim People in History

When Benedict XVI was Pope, he presided at a Baptism Ceremony on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. He delivered a lovely homily and as you read this newsletter, with extracts from his homily, I invite you to think of your children, your grandchildren or even yourself.

"Today I am administering the sacrament of Baptism to these new-born babies whose parents are presenting them to the Church. Welcome, dear mothers and fathers of these little ones, and you, the godfathers and godmothers, grandparents, friends and relatives who have gathered round them. Let us give thanks to God who today calls these girls and boys to become his children in Christ. Let us surround them with prayers and affection and welcome them joyfully into the Christian Community which from this day becomes their family too.



Baptism brings us into the People of God, makes us members of a People on a journey. We are a pilgrim People in history. Life is passed on from generation to generation and through rebirth at the baptismal font, grace is also passed on from generation to generation. With this grace the Christian People (and that is us) flow through time, like a river that waters the earth and spreads God's blessing throughout the world.

When Jesus was baptised, a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is my beloved Son'. We may say that the skies are opened for these children today. They will receive as a gift the grace of Baptism and the Holy Spirit will dwell within them as in a temple, transforming their hearts in depth. From this moment the voice of the Father will also call them to be his children in Christ, and, in his family which is the Church, he will give to each one the sublime gift of faith. This gift will be sown in their hearts as a seed full of life that is waiting to develop and bear fruit.

### CURRENT SCHEDULE

**Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday:**

Mass at 10am preceded by the Rosary at 9.30am, Church closes at 5pm

**Monday:** Area Mass at 7.30pm

**Wednesday:** Liturgy of the Word at 10am

**Saturday:** Church opens at 10am

**Vigil Mass at 6pm**

**Sunday Mass** at 10.30am

**1st Saturday of the month**– 10am Mass followed by confessions until 11am

**Last Tuesday of the month**–Prayer Group

Mass 8pm, all welcome

**Bank Holidays:** Mass 11am only

All services available on

[www.blanchardstownparish.ie/webcam](http://www.blanchardstownparish.ie/webcam)

Also on Phoenix Radio– 92.5FM

**Eucharistic Adoration**

Tue & Fri 10.30am-5pm

**Blanchardstown Area evening Mass**

**Mon:** Blanchardstown 7.30pm

**Tues & Thurs:** Castleknock

**Wednesday:** Mulhuddart

**Friday:** Corduff

### Sunday Mass Collections

Many thanks for your continued support of these collections which are vital for the support of the priests of the diocese. You can contribute to the Mass collections by: Putting your offerings in the 'white boxes' around the Church or by leaving your Envelope into Parish Office during the week. Using the 'Tap and Go' machines. Using the online 'Donate' facility on the Parish Website.

**Thank you so much for your generosity.**

**PARISH CONTACTS: V REV Fr. Michael Carey: 8213660 Rev Jim Adams(Deacon) 0862232411**

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**<https://www.facebook.com/St-Brigids-Parish-Blanchardstown-44438662375848/>**



### Parish Meetings – This week

**Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January** – The **Teen Hope Team** will meet in the Pastoral Centre at 11.00am



#### Thank You from GOAL

Many thanks to the families and individuals who came out to support

GOAL's annual Christmas Day Mile in the Phoenix Park.

Your generous donations on the day and online raised over €10,700 for GOAL's humanitarian work among the poor in developing countries.



THE MONTHLY OUTDOOR COLLECTION FOR ST VINCENT DE PAUL WILL TAKE PLACE NEXT WEEKEND AFTER BOTH MASSES—13TH/14TH JAN



THE CHRISTMAS COLLECTION TALLY FOR ST BRIGID'S PARISH IS IN...DRUM ROLL **THE AMOUNT IS €13,000!** THANK YOU FOR YOUR EXTRAORDINARY GENEROSITY!

### Mass intentions for the week

Saturday	Ronald McGarrell (1st Anniv) and Bernard McGarrell Rita Roche (1st Anniv) James & Agnes Griffin Patsy Boyle & Aimee Devaney Tracy Griffin Rosemary Fitzgerald (1st Anniv)
Sunday	Joan O'Keefe Daniel Corr Lily & Canice Brady Jose Gulmatico (1st Anniv) Bridie Farrell (MM)

We pray for our recently deceased,  
Patricia Howard  
Always loved, never forgotten

