

## PARISH OF THE ENGLISH MARTYRS, Goring Way

24.12.2017

Father Liam O'Connor, 37 Compton Avenue, Goring-by-Sea, West Sussex. BN12 4UE

Presbytery 01903 242624 / Church repository 01903 506890

Email: emgoring@english-martyrs.co.uk Website: [www.english-martyrs.co.uk](http://www.english-martyrs.co.uk)

Deacon Gary Bevans 01903 503514

Arundel & Brighton Diocesan Trust is a Registered Charity No: 252878

### Fourth Sunday of Advent

Saturday	23 <sup>rd</sup>	6.00 pm	Patrick Johnson RIP
Sunday	24 <sup>th</sup>	9.00 am	The Parish
<b>Christmas</b>		<b>6.00 pm</b>	Charlie Gillespie RIP
<b>Eve</b>		<b>9.00 pm</b>	The Parish
<b>Christmas</b>	25 <sup>th</sup>	<b>8.15 am</b>	Roger Davis RIP
<b>Day</b>		<b>10.30 am</b>	Billy Kelly RIP
Tuesday	26 <sup>th</sup>		No Mass
Wednesday	27 <sup>th</sup>	<b>7.30 pm</b>	Reg Marshall
Thursday	28 <sup>th</sup>	<b>9.30 am</b>	Myra Margetson RIP
Friday	29 <sup>th</sup>	9.30 am	Ann & Catherine Bandy RIP
Saturday	30 <sup>th</sup>	6.00 pm	Private Intention (LY)
Sunday	31 <sup>st</sup>	8.15 am	The Parish
		10.30 am	Mary & Jack Haugh RIP



**SATURDAY:** Exposition with Benediction: 10.00 - 11.00am. Reconciliation: 10.15 – 10.45 am & 5.15 - 5.45 pm

**TODAY'S READINGS:** 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8-12, 14, 16, St Paul to Romans 16:25-27, Luke 1:26-38

**NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:** Genesis 15:1-6; 21:1-3; Hebrews 11:8, 11-12, 14-19; Luke 2:22-40

**Church: £571      Thank you for your generosity.**

**Contributions to the Christmas Crib will be sent to Christian Schools in the Holy Land**  
**NEXT SUNDAY there will be a second collection for the Worthing Churches Homeless Projects**

**PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS:** David Hall, Ann & Gordon Milne, Helen Gillespie, Anne Whitehead, Bernard Bandy, Jeany, Peter, Deacon Pat Moloney, Marie Davidson, Yvonne Carter, Finlay, Alfred Deacon, Ester Park, Marie Garselis, Roni Horstead, Krissie White, Ronnie Tyler, Jenny Begley, Bill Hogg, Andrew Kennedy, Breda Schlimgen, Michaela Finn, Ann Wesley, Winifred Lyons, Yvette Allen, Leslie Lee, Kerry McStravick, Gerry Potter, Lydia Van Melsen, Edna Catley

**2. THOSE WHO HAVE DIED RECENTLY** and those whose anniversaries occur about now: Patrick Taylor, Helena Sparrow, Margaret Goldsworthy, Jim Flynn, Joan Foley, Doris Cronan, Mary Walton, Patsy Mannion, Ernest Hare, Cyril Woodgar, George Welch, Mark Zenkteler, Gordon Daniel, Elsie Butlin, Margaret Simpson, Harold Birch, Peter Giles, Veronica Parker, Effie Downs, Catherine Brooks, Ted Bellenger, Giulia Grainger

**3. APF RED BOX HOLDERS** please collect your emptied red boxes from the front porch. . .

**4. CHRISTMAS PRESENTS FOR CHILDREN:** For the last eleven years we have helped 'Home-Start, Worthing and Adur' by donating toys for the children of the families that they support and the gifts have brought a great deal of pleasure to the children. If you are able to assist this year please wrap up a present (indicating if it is meant for a boy or a girl and of what age) and place it under the Christmas tree in church over the Christmas Season

**5. YOUR OFFERINGS AT THE CHRISTMAS MASSES** are your personal gift to Father Liam (Gift Aid applies). If you are not Gift Aiding, special envelopes are available in the Porch. If you will be away for Christmas you might like to use these envelopes to make your gift either beforehand or afterwards.

**6. CRIB DONATIONS:** This year this parish will be sending crib donations to Friends of the Holy Land. Every penny will help the poorest Christian families, especially in and around Bethlehem, the West Bank, Gaza and Israel, with education, employment, health or housing costs and initiatives. FHL is non-political and ecumenical. For further information, please take away the leaflet by the crib and keep our brothers and sisters in the Holy Land in your prayers at this time.'

**7. THE 'CAFOD AUCTION' AND SUPPER EXTRAVAGANZA** will be held in The Barn on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2018 at 7.00 pm following the 6.00 pm Mass. Please remember to save any 'surplus' gifts or unused items for the Auction. If you would like them to be collected please contact Charles 01903 505546. Tickets will be on sale after all Masses **next** weekend price £7.50. Raffle prizes will also be gratefully received

**8. A BIG THANKYOU** to all the cooks and washer-uppers who so generously gave their time to cater so wonderfully for everyone at the recent Alpha course. We couldn't have done it without you!

**9. THE DIOCESAN DIRECTORY 2018** is now available in the Repository price £5.00

**10. MARY'S MEALS:** We are now in particular need of Toothpaste, Pencil Cases, Sandals, Flip-Flops & Blue or Black Biro's. Many thanks to all who so generously contribute to these backpacks

**11. WORTHING CHURCHES HOMELESS PROJECTS** thanks all those who donated goods for Christmas. It will be much appreciated by the recipients and will enable them to receive support and encouragement as well as food and clothing over the Christmas Holiday.

**FATHER LIAM SAYS:** Is Christmas just for children? In the opening chapters of the Book of Genesis we hear two very different accounts of the Creation. This should immediately alert us to the fact that Genesis does not set out to teach us science. It has a very much more important task. Its purpose is to impress upon us who God is and how mankind is the crown and glory of everything he has created. In their different ways the accounts we find in chapter one and chapter two teach us these and many other truths about God and his creatures, especially mankind. We do violence to the scriptures if we do not recognise that the Holy Spirit was content to give us these two reflections on God and his creation. They are placed before us in most beautiful picturesque language such as teachers used in the ancient Middle East. They manifestly cannot both be taken literally. This was the kind of language Jesus himself loved to use when he presented his teaching in the form of parables. When Jesus was asked, for example, the question: 'Who is my neighbour' he answered by telling the beautiful story that we know as the Good Samaritan.

In the opening two chapters of the gospels of Luke and Matthew we have two different accounts of the conception, birth and infancy of Jesus. In the Mass of tomorrow – Christmas Day – and next Monday – New Year's Day – the account of Luke is placed before us. On the following Sunday – the Epiphany – we hear from Matthew. We are accustomed to merging these two different accounts together. Children's Nativity plays do it all the time as do the cribs in our churches over the Christmas Season. But we should give them their own space.

Just as the two distinct accounts of the Creation are placed before us to help us ponder the great religious truths about the wonders of creation and our place in God's plan, so the two accounts of the Son of God entering our world are given to us to come to terms with such a manifestation of God's love for us. Each gospel account has its own identity and distinct outlook. It may seem strange to us that only Luke and Matthew give us infancy narratives about Jesus. But their concern is not to supply us with biographies of Jesus, just as the concern of Genesis is not to explain how the world and all it contains came into existence. From the opening verses of their gospels Matthew and Luke wish to emphasise that Jesus was the promised Messiah and therefore was descended from David, the great Shepherd-King of Israel. They are at pains to impress on their readers and hearers that Jesus was conceived by Mary not through sexual relations with Joseph but by the operative power of the Holy Spirit. Jesus therefore was truly the Son of God. But Jesus' descent is to be traced through Joseph who was of the House of David. Joseph's acknowledgement of Jesus, according to Jewish law, would make him the legal father of the child – a status not dependent on physical fatherhood. So Jesus was truly a Son of David. Establishing this dual identity of Jesus as Son of David and Son of God was the great motive behind the infancy narratives of Matthew and Luke. Both accounts insist that the identity of Jesus was quickly shared by others but that many will reject the message and the Messiah.

Central to Luke's account of the Nativity are the shepherds and the manger. Mention of the manger would remind people of what Isaiah prophesied: 'The ox knows its owner and the donkey knows the manger of its master. But Israel has not known me and my people have not understood me' (1:3). There is a further pointer to the rejection of Jesus in Luke's assertion that there was no room for them in the inn. But Luke testifies to those who accepted the Messiah by telling us of the shepherds who when the good news was proclaimed to them went and 'found Mary and Joseph and the baby who was lying in the manger.' They then proceeded to spread this great message 'and everyone who heard it was astonished at what the shepherds had to say, (2:18-19)

Central to Matthew's account of the Nativity are the magi who, led by the star, travelled to Jerusalem and encountered Herod who immediately hatched a plot against the child whom he saw as a threat. This account, which we have in the Mass of the Epiphany every year is remarkably like the story of the infant Moses whom Pharaoh tried to destroy when he set out to kill all the male children as he feared the growing numbers of Jewish people he kept in slavery. Matthew is emphasising – as he does throughout his gospel – that Jesus is the new Moses who is to lead his people from slavery to sin to the freedom of the children of God. For Matthew, the magi represented all the people from outside the Jewish world who would find their way to Jesus while the fury of Herod would be a reminder of the powerful forces which would be arrayed against him.

The opening chapters of Luke and Matthew are full of references to the prophecies of the Jewish scriptures which are now being fulfilled in the coming of Jesus. So many people miss out on the great message of Genesis. In interpreting these opening chapters of the Bible in a very narrow way we fail to see the wonderful teaching of God's love and purpose that is embedded in it. In the opening chapters of Luke and Matthew we are presented with a wonderful résumé of the Gospel message. It proclaims who Jesus is and the pain of rejection he and his followers would experience and the peaceful victory he would share with all of us. Rightly understood the infancy narratives are really the Gospel in miniature and they reveal the adult Jesus.