

## PARISH OF THE ENGLISH MARTYRS, Goring Way

23.12.2018

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

### Fourth Sunday of Advent

Saturday	22 <sup>nd</sup>	6.00 pm	Charlie Gillespie RIP
Sunday	23 <sup>rd</sup>	8.15 am	The Parish
		10.30 am	Lottie Mae RIP
Christmas Eve	24 <sup>th</sup>	6.00 pm	Mike Steere RIP
		9.00 pm	The Parish
Christmas Day	25 <sup>th</sup>	8.15 am	Roger Davis RIP
		10.30 am	Intentions of Robert Gibbs
Wednesday	26 <sup>th</sup>	No Mass	
Thursday	27 <sup>th</sup>	7.30 pm	Michael Farrell RIP
Friday	28 <sup>th</sup>	9.30 am	Gerry Potter RIP
Saturday	29 <sup>th</sup>	6.00 pm	Intention of Tommy O'Toole
Sunday	30 <sup>th</sup>	8.15 am	Dr Alfie Donovan RIP
		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:** Micah 5:1-4; Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-44

**NEXT WEEK'S READINGS:** 1 Samuel 1:20-22, 24-28; 1 John 3:1-2, 21-24; Luke 2: 41-52

**COLLECTIONS:** Church: £559 Thank you for your generosity.

Contributions to the Christmas Crib will be sent to Friends of the Holy Land  
NEXT SUNDAY there will be a second collection for the Turning Tides (W C H P)

**PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS:** Michael Butler, Brenda Peazold, Sue Withnell, Margaret Dunne, Rosie Grove, Mary Wessel, Gina Palermo, Elizabeth Hoskins, Peggy Gallagher, Joan Cutmore, Christine Watson, David Hall, Gordon Milne, Bernard Bandy, Jeany, Peter, Deacon Pat Moloney, Finlay, Alfred Deacon, Ester Park, Marie Garselis, Roni Horstead, Ronnie Tyler, Jenny Begley, Bill Hogg, Breda Schlimgen, Michaela Finn, Winifred Lyons, Yvette Allen, Leslie Lee, Kerry McStravick, Lydia Van Melsen

**2. THOSE WHO HAVE DIED RECENTLY:** JOHN BURNETT and those whose anniversaries occur about now: Mamie Devine, Lionel Foster, Eileen Oxendale, Peggy Moutrie, 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

**3. CHRISTMAS DAY LUNCH** - We invite you to join us for lunch and festivities in the Barn on Christmas day 12-4pm. Tickets by donation- which will go towards sending our young people from the Deanery to Lourdes. Transport is available on request. If you are able to offer your time to help, make a desert or your driving skills on the day we would be most grateful. For further details please contact Dermot and Jane-Anne on 01903 502070

**4. CHRISTMAS PRESENTS FOR CHILDREN:** For the last twelve 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. A REMINDER TO ALL PREPARING FOR THEIR FIRST HOLY COMMUNION:** There will be a rehearsal at 10.00 am on Monday 24th December in the Church for the 'Innkeepers Story'. This will be performed at the end of the 6.00pm Children's Candlelight Mass

**6. 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.

**7. THE 'CAFOD AUCTION' AND SUPPER** will be held in The Barn on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2019 at 7.00 pm. Please remember to save any 'surplus' gifts or unused items for the Auction. Call Charles for collection/information on 01903 505546

**8. USED POSTAGE STAMPS FOR THE MISSIONS:** As the Christmas Cards arrive please remember to rescue all those beautiful stamps, leaving about half an inch of envelope around the edges, and put them in the box in the Porch so that they can be used to raise money for the Mission

**9. 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. Please keep our brothers and sisters in the Holy Land in your prayers at this time.'

**10. A BIG THANK YOU** to all the cooks and washer-uppers who helped during the recent Alpha course. Delicious meals were enjoyed by everyone every week and we couldn't have done it without you! Many thanks to you all.

**11. MARY'S MEALS:** We are now in particular need of Soap, Toothpaste, Colouring Pencils and Crayons and serviceable children's shoes. Many thanks to all who so generously contribute to these backpacks

**12. TURNING TIDES (Worthing Churches Homeless Projects):** Items needed: Cereals (no Cornflakes or Porridge), Cooking Sauces, Ketchup, Brown Sauce, Salad Cream, Cooking Oil, Squashes, Tea, Coffee, Washing Powder, Shampoo, Shower Gel, Pump Hand Soap, Sanitizer Sprays, Floor cleaner, Toilet Bleach, Washing-up brushes, Hoodies, and Cereal bowls. Many thanks to those who are so generous in their donations

**Father Liam says: The Gospels of Matthew and Luke** begin with the narratives of the conception and birth of Jesus – often called the Infancy Narratives. Neither of the other two gospels or any other New Testament writings tell us anything about the details of the birth of Jesus. We are totally dependent on Matthew and Luke and they both approach the coming of the Son of God in human form in their own distinct way. We hear Luke's account of Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth in today's Mass and his account of Jesus' birth in the Christmas Masses. In Luke's account we hear of the census ordered by Caesar Augustus, which caused Mary and Joseph to travel from their home in Nazareth to Bethlehem, 'the town of David' as Joseph was 'of David's House'. There Mary gave birth to her Son whom 'she laid in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn'. Luke goes on to speak of the shepherds to whom 'the angel of the Lord' appears with 'news of great joy' followed by 'the throng of the heavenly host praising God and singing: 'Glory to God in the highest heaven'".

Matthew's account is given to us on the Feast of the Epiphany, two weeks from today. He does not mention any of the events narrated by Luke apart from the names of Mary and Joseph and the fact that 'Jesus had been born at Bethlehem in Judaea'. Instead Matthew focuses on the Magi or wise men who followed the star to Jerusalem where King Herod, having 'consulted the chief priests and the scribes of the people where the Messiah was to be born' sent them off to Bethlehem. They set off again following the star which 'halted over the place where the child was... and going into the house they saw the child with his mother Mary and falling to their knees they did him homage..and, offered him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh. But they were warned in a dream not to go back to Herod and returned to their own country by a different way.' This led Herod to slaughter the infants so paranoid was he that he would be usurped by 'the infant King of the Jews'. Herod's infanticide led to the Holy Family fleeing to Egypt.

Why did Matthew and Luke begin their gospels in this way? In the past such questions would not have been asked. The gospels were looked on as biographies of Jesus so it would make sense to include material about his birth. Now there is a growing understanding that the gospels are not primarily biographical in their origins. They stem from the preaching of the Apostles about the saving work of Christ. It was this that determined what was written down about him in the gospels and in the other New Testament writings. The oldest preaching was on the supreme saving action of Christ in his death and resurrection. The Passion Narratives of the gospels were the oldest part of the gospels. In the light of Christ's death and resurrection the true meaning of the events of Jesus' ministry became clear. The first of the gospel writers, Mark, called the baptism of Jesus 'the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ'. It was with his account of Jesus baptism that he begins his gospel. Clearly Mark's interests were not biographical. He tells us nothing of Jesus' origins. He does not even mention Joseph. In his approach Mark is far from alone. Even John does not refer to the Mother of Jesus by name. None of the other twenty four books of the New Testament, apart from Matthew and Luke, show any interest in the life and origins of Jesus before he began his ministry. Neither were Matthew and Luke simply composing a life of Jesus. Accounts of his birth had to have religious value in order for them to be part of their 'good news'.

The Scriptures – especially the New Testament – were written to help us reflect on Jesus life. The great events of that life – the Resurrection, the Baptism and eventually the Conception – were used to clarify who Jesus was. He was the Messiah or anointed King of the House of David and the unique Son of God, through the Holy Spirit. Because the stories of the birth of Jesus became the vehicles of that message they could appropriately be included in the written Gospels. This identity of Jesus is proclaimed in the infancy accounts of Matthew and Luke by an angel as God's messenger. Similarly Paul insists that he did not receive his gospel from human sources but from God. In the baptismal accounts of Matthew, Mark and Luke God's voice speaks from heaven about his Son. The scriptures emphasise that the identity of Jesus was a divine revelation – not mere human deduction. In Matthew the revelation given to Joseph is in God's plan made known to the Gentile Magi. In Luke the revelation given to Mary is in God's plan made known to the Jewish shepherds.

In their infancy narratives Matthew and Luke are telling us about the identity of the adult Jesus. The cast of characters is different, but each of these evangelists, in his own way, is teaching us that Christ's identity is never intended to be kept a private possession. They both also convey a warning that not all will accept the gospel – especially some who should have been most eager. In Matthew's infancy narrative we are told that the King (Herod was Jewish) the chief priests and the scribes who possess the Jewish heritage and scripture are hostile to Jesus. In Luke we are told there was no room for them at the inn and there was a warning that the child is set for the fall as well as the rise of many in Israel and a sign that will be contradicted. The Christmas Crib lies under the shadow of the Cross.