

## PARISH OF THE ENGLISH MARTYRS Goring Way

24.12.2023

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

Deacon Gary Bevans 01903 503514

Safeguarding Rep. Anne Niven 01903 242624

Arundel & Brighton Diocesan Trust is a Registered Charity No: 25287

### Fourth Sunday of Advent

Saturday	23 <sup>rd</sup>	6.00 pm	Martin Evans RIP
Sunday	24 <sup>th</sup>	9.00 am	Intention of Jeff Chater
		6.00 pm	John Mayock RIP
		8.30 pm	Carols & Readings
		9.00 pm	Anne O'Connor RIP
Monday	25 <sup>th</sup>	8.15 am	Roger Davis RIP
		10.30 am	Jeannette Murphy RIP
Tuesday	26 <sup>th</sup>	9.30 am	No Mass
Wednesday	27 <sup>th</sup>	9.30 am	Lottie Mae
Thursday	28 <sup>th</sup>	9.30 am	Intention of Jimmy Dunne
		11.00 am	<b>REQUIEM FOR JOHN MAYOCK RIP</b>
Friday	29 <sup>th</sup>	9.30 am	O'Toole Family Past & Present
Saturday	30 <sup>th</sup>	6.00 pm	Frank Burns RIP
Sunday	31 <sup>st</sup>	8.15 am	The Parish
		10.30 am	Mary & Jack Haugh RIP



**SATURDAY:** Reconciliation: 10.15 -10.45 am and 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

**COLLECTIONS: Church: £502 Digital Collection: £57 Friends of the Holy Land: £854**

**Thank you for your generosity**

**Contributions to the Christmas Crib will be sent to the Friends of the Holy Land**

**NEXT SUNDAY there will be a second collection for 'Turning Tides'**

**PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS:** Jim Simpson, Breda O'Connor, Camilla Jane, Sophie Abbott, Michelle Dielt, Helen Gillespie, Harold Forrest, Maria Brooks, Sarah Johnstone, Tony Kearney, Ella Doll, Paul Curd, Lola Samengo-Meehan, Maureen House, Joan Wand, Samuel Bezants, Thomas Boylan, Terry Stanley, Glenn, Helena & Vittorio Villa, Lena, Ken Harvey, Sienna Coates, Brian Caplin, Valerie Halley, Pat Duggan, Tony Grana, Sister Raymond, John Smith, Ian Threlfall, Lelia Murray, Mary Murphy, Brenda Peazold, Mary Wessel, Gordon Milne, Alfred Deacon, Roni Horstead, Ronnie Tyler, Michaela Finn, Winifred Lyons, Yvette Allen, Kerry McStravick, Lydia Van Melsen

**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, Michael Jarvis, 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.  
*May they rest in peace and rise in glory.*

**3. FIRST HOLY COMMUNION 2024:** Is your son or daughter in Year 3 this term? If so, they are at the age where they can start the preparation course for First Holy Communion. Please collect a letter and application forms from the Sacristy and return it to the Parish Office as soon as possible. The first meeting for parents will be on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> January at 7.30pm in The Good Shepherd Chapel and the first lesson for the children will be on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> January from 4.30 – 5.30 pm.

**4. 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.

**5. THE CAFOD AUCTION** will take place on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> January. Please keep those gifts or unused/good condition items that could be auctioned to raise funds for the work of CAFOD.

**6. THE PARISH CAROL SERVICE** last Tuesday was very well attended. We thank Margaret Murphy for choosing such beautiful readings and leading the choir in singing such beautiful pieces of music. The congregation sang the carols delightfully and the choir excelled themselves. The very happy occasion was rounded off with seasonal refreshments in the Barn, kindly created by Teresa Boyle.

**7. USED POSTAGE STAMPS FOR THE MISSIONS:** As the Christmas Cards have arrived please remember to rescue all those beautiful stamps, leaving about half an inch of envelope around the edges, ( no more than this please as it makes them expensive to forward to the Missionary Society) and put them in the box in the Porch

**8. FRIENDS OF THE HOLY LAND:** We have received two beautiful Christmas cards from the Friends to thank us for our donation – they are on the board in the front porch.

**9. MARY'S MEALS COLLECTION POINT** is one of the small boxes under the notice board to the right in the Front Porch. It now costs £19.15 to feed one child for a year! Your donations will always be much appreciated.

**10. TURNING TIDES:** Copies of the 'Christmas Hampers4Homeless Shopping List' are available in both porches. Everyday items are also needed: Coffee, Sugar, Long-life Milk, Carton juice - large and small, Ketchup, Brown sauce, Marmalade, Jam, Cooking Oil, Hot Chocolate, Tinned Ham, Corned Beef, Tinned Fish, Tinned Meat and Vegetarian Meals. Many thanks to all who are able to help.

**FATHER LIAM SAYS:** No birth in human history has been celebrated year by year over the centuries with such rejoicing as the birth of Jesus. And yet the scriptures have remarkably little to say about his actual nativity. Only the gospels of Matthew and Luke have nativity narratives. Having merely said that "after Jesus had been born in Bethlehem in Judaea during the reign of King Herod" Matthew goes on to speak of the visit of the Magi to the child. Of the actual birth all Matthew tells us apart from that, was that he was born of Mary and that Joseph named him Jesus. Luke has a little more to say of the event, but tantalisingly little. He says of Mary: "She gave birth to a son, her first born. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them at the inn." Luke then goes on to describe the announcement of the event to the shepherds, leading to their visit to the new-born saviour. None of the other 24 New Testament writings have anything to say about what we call Christmas. Matthew and Luke tell us something of what happened before the birth and afterwards, but not as much as we would like. Luke refers twice to the swaddling clothes and three times to the manger. We are given no indication in what sort of building Jesus was born. From early times Christian tradition declared it to be a cave rather than the sort of stable familiar to us in the West. As early as the year 150, St. Justin Martyr says: "as Joseph could not find a lodging in the village, he settled in a nearby cave". In the third century Origen says that it was the practice in Bethlehem to show a cave 'out in the country' to pilgrims and it was on this spot in 325 that the Emperor Constantine built the Basilica of the Nativity. Luke does not make any reference to an ox or an ass but it would be reasonable to assume that a manger presupposed the presence of animals. But writing from the sixth century Pseudo-Matthew says 'the ox and the ass adored him' and 'these animals worshipped unceasingly the babe between them'. The prophet Isaiah wrote at the very beginning of his work: The ox recognises its owner, the ass knows its way to its master's crib. Israel does not know, my people do not understand." (1: 3). The prophet is bemoaning the waywardness of God's people, contrasting them to fidelity of the ox and ass to their master. In any case, artists had introduced the animals to the scene long before the reference to them in the sixth century writing of Pseudo-Matthew. Luke in chapter 2 of his gospels has spoken of the angels and the shepherds who with Mary and Joseph and the child Jesus make up the Christmas scene that is depicted in the Christmas crib. We have added the ox and ass because of their connection to a manger. Matthew has a different supporting cast which make their appearance later. On Christmas Day the Church always puts before us Luke's account of the Nativity. On the feast of the Epiphany, we rely on Matthew to set the scene. He introduces the star and the Magi- not Kings. The Greek word - and all the New Testament writings were written in Greek – 'Magoi' means learned men or astrologers. He does not tell us how many of them set out. Numbers varied in the early church but soon it settled at three, probably because three gifts were mentioned. How did the wise men become Kings? Perhaps because Isaiah's prophecy (60:3-9) 'The nations came to your light and kings to your dawning brightness, bringing gold and incense'. They later came to represent the three known continents of Europe, Asia and Africa. When the explorations of the 14th Century revealed the extent of Africa and the vast numbers of its black population, one of the three was depicted as black! Their names seem to have originated in Armenia where they occur as Caspar, Balthazar and Melchor. Matthew is telling us how the Good News drew believers, and the Magi are gentiles. It was through nature that the gentiles learned of God. They did not have the Jewish scriptures so Matthew shows the Magi receiving a revelation through astrology. The birth star associated with David, King of the Jews, brings them the good news of salvation. But to find Christ they had to be given some knowledge of the Jewish scriptures and so they learn from the Jews where they can find the King of the Jews. But those who have the scriptures do not themselves recognise the Messiah that the scriptures speak of. Both the infancy narratives of Luke and Matthew are the gospels in miniature. Luke alerts us to the fact that the Messiah would be rejected when he says there was no room for him in the inn. And the rejection is alluded to in Matthew where King Herod is depicted as being like the Pharaoh who attempted to destroy Moses. The infancy narratives in the Gospels of Luke and Matthew are more interested in revealing to us the true nature of Jesus than they are in giving us precise details of how he came to live among us.