

The Parish of
STONY STRATFORD
 with
CALVERTON



THE PARISH NEWSLETTER
THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY & JOSEPH
SUNDAY 27th December AD 2015



The devotion to the Holy Family was born in Bethlehem, together with the Baby Jesus. The shepherds went to adore the Child and, at the same time, they gave honour

to His family. Later, in a similar way, the three wise men came from the East to adore and give honour to the new-born King with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh that would be safeguarded by His family.

We can go further to affirm that in a certain sense Christ, Himself, was the first devotee of His family. He showed His devotion to His mother and foster father by submitting Himself, with infinite humility, to the duty of filial obedience towards them. St Bernard of Clairvaux said in this regard, "God, to whom angels submit themselves and who principalities and powers obey, was subject to Mary; and not only to Mary but Joseph also for Mary's sake..... God obeyed a human creature; this is humility without precedent. A human creature commands God; it is sublime beyond measure."

Today's celebration demonstrates Christ's humility and obedience with respect to the fourth commandment, whilst also highlighting the loving care that His parents exercised in His keeping. Saint Joseph shines among all mankind, since by divine will, he was the guardian of the Son of God and reputed as His father among men. Joseph became the guardian, the administrator, and the legal defender of the divine house whose chief he was. It is, then, natural and worthy that as St Joseph ministered to all the needs of the family at Nazareth and gave it his protection, he should now be understood as a protector and defender of the Church of Jesus Christ.

This guardianship is also afforded Holy Church by Our Lady Consequently, the liturgical feast of the Holy Family speaks to us of the fond and loving care that we must render to the Church as Christ's Body. We can understand this in a mystical sense, as guardians of the Church, and also in the Eucharistic sense. Mary and Joseph took great care of Jesus' physical body. Following their example, we can and must take great care of His Mystical Body, the Church, and the Eucharist which He has entrusted to us. Mary was, in some way, the first tabernacle in history in which Our Lord chose to reside in person. His Real Presence (as we refer to the consecrated Bread and Wine), was also entrusted to us. We can learn from Mary and Joseph! What would they ever have overlooked in the care of Jesus' physical body? Is there something, therefore, that we can withhold for the right and adoring care of His Eucharistic Body? No amount of attention, no sane act of love and adoring respect will ever be too much! On the contrary, our adoration and respect will always be inferior to the great gift that comes to us in the Holy Eucharist.

In the Holy Family, we see the love, the protection, and the diligent care that they gave to the Redeemer. We can not fail to feel uneasiness, perhaps a shameful thought, for the times in which we have not rendered the appropriate care and attention to the Blessed Eucharist. We can only ask for forgiveness and make amends for all the sacrilegious acts and the lack of respect that are committed in front of the Blessed Eucharist. We can only ask the Lord, through the intercession of the Holy Family of Nazareth, for a greater love for their Son Incarnate, who has promised to be with us every day until the end of time.

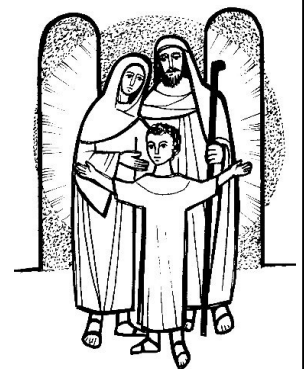
THIS WEEK IN OUR PARISHES

- TODAY:** **The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph**
9:30am **PARISH MASS at St Mary & St Giles**
11:00am **Family Mass at All Saints**
 6:00pm Service of Nine Lessons & Carols at St Mary & St Giles
Pray for: Our Parish
- Monday:** **The Holy Innocents, Martyrs**
 8:00pm Bell Ringing Practice
Pray for: The Sick, Housebound & Handicapped & Children facing Martyrdom today in Iraq & Syria
- Tuesday:** **St Thomas Beckett, Bishop, Martyr**
10:30am **Mass at All Saints + 'Elevesnes'**
Pray for: The Archbishop of Canterbury
- Wednesday:** **Within the Octave of Christmas**
 6:00pm Parish Office Open to arrange: Banns, Marriages & Baptisms
7:30pm **Mass at St Mary & St Giles**
Pray for: The Peace of the World
- Thursday:** **Within the Octave of Christmas**
10:30am **Mass at St Mary & St Giles**
Pray for: For Faith, Hope and Love to abound
- Friday:** **Octave Day of Christmas**
Mary, Mother of God
Pray for: God's blessing on the Year ahead
- Saturday:** **St Basil the Great & St Gregory Nazianzen, Bishops & Doctors of the Church**
Pray for: The Unity of all Christians,
- Next Sunday: 2nd Sunday after Christmas**
9:30am **PARISH MASS at St Mary & St Giles**
11:00am. **Family Mass at All Saints**
Pray for: Our Parish

READINGS NEXT SUNDAY

2nd Sunday after Christmas

- 1st Reading: Sirach 24:1-2,8-12
 Psalm: 147 (part)
 2nd Reading: Ephesians 1:3-6, 15-18
 Gospel: John 1:1-18



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|--------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Sidesmen | Team 5 |
| Altar Servers | Team 2 |
| Offertory | Gary & Claire Stilton |
| Cleaning | Team 4 |
| Gardening | Team 1 |
| Worshipping Numbers Last Sunday: 336 | |

MASS TEXTS PROPER TO TODAY'S OBSERVANCE

Personal Prayer Thought Before Mass:

To-day we remember that, in becoming man, Christ was born a member of a human family, and lived within his family for the greater part of his earthly life. Through his experience of family, he attained to that maturity which enabled him, in later life, to carry out his Father's work. We thank God to-day for the gift of our families through which we have received from him the gifts of life, love and faith, and pray for those who have no family or whose experience of family life is contrary to the Gospel.

The Collect

Heavenly Father, whose blessed Son shared at Nazareth the life of an earthly home: help us to live as the Holy Family, united in love and obedience, and bring us at last to our home in heaven; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. **Amen.**

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD (SIT)

The First Reading

Sirach 3:2-6,12-14
SMSG Reader: Mary Saggars Old Testament Page 540
All Saints Reader: Eilish Friedman

The Responsorial Psalm

(from Psalm 128)

R/. They are happy who dwell in your house, O Lord.

How lovely is your dwelling place,
Lord, God of hosts.
My soul is longing and yearning,
is yearning for the courts of the Lord.
My heart and my soul ring out their joy
to God, the living God. ®

They are happy, who dwell in your house,
for ever singing your praise.
They are happy, whose strength is in you;
they walk with ever growing strength. ®

O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer,
give ear, O God of Jacob.
Turn your eyes, O God, our shield,
look on the face of your anointed. ®

Second Reading

Colossians 3:12-21
Reader: Pat Eales New Testament Page 169

Gospel Acclamation

(STAND)

Alleluia, alleluia!

Alleluia!

The Gospel

Luke 2:41-52
New Testament Page 51

The Prayer of the Faithful

(Biddings: The Rector)

Priest: The love of God has burst forth in the coming of Christ. Let us pray that the church, a family of faith, will abide in love.

Intercessor: That our worship of God and celebration of the Saviour's birth will deepen our bonds of unity as brothers and sisters in faith, we pray:

V/. Lord of mercy...

R/. Receive our prayers, O God.

That the humanity of Jesus will help us to value the hu-

man dignity of every person, we pray:

That the mutual love of husband and wife will be a source of security and blessing for their children, we pray:

That adult children will clothe their elderly parents with kindness, respect, and care, we pray:

That respect for parents will take root in young children, we pray:

That family harmony will be safeguarded through each member's willingness to be an instrument of peace and goodwill, we pray:

That the sick, aged and infirm may know the healing peace of Christ and the warmth of human compassion... Wendy, Fiddy Abraham, Anna Archer, Maggie Baker, Mary Barry, Henry Blake, Richard Coley, Michael Doolan, Gill Edwards, Sue Gower, Russell Herbert, Margaret Hooton, Rebecca, Magnus John, Martha John, Isaac Lyon, Sue Maton, Cyril Millward, Capt John Richards CA, Alma Steinmetz, Fr Edmund, June Wilde, Janis Williams, Marian Wright... we pray:

That the dead who have acclaimed Christ as God's revealing light will be found praising God in the heavenly temple, particularly... Brian Barnes, Lyn Butterworth, Gloria Dixey, Gay Millward, Joan Orchard, Francis Pitfield... and for those whose anniversaries of death occur during this week...**27th** Edward Reeve, Rodney Henson, Mary Sanders, Joy Taylor, Albert Howells; **28th** Kenneth Wright (Priest); Richard Salter (Priest); Hilary Coley; **29th** Robert Smith, Thomas Millar; **30th** Robert Hindley, Doug Jones; **31st** Edward Ranson, Rene Williams, John Etheridge, Richard Maycock; **1st Jan.** Nicholas Dytham, Bernard Robert, Anne Hope-Lang; **2nd** Thomas Ambrose... we pray:

✠ Rest eternal grant to them, O Lord.

And let light perpetual shine upon them.

Priest: God of enduring kindness, hear our prayers. In Christ you call us to be a family of faith. May each household be enriched in wisdom and love and know your help in time of trial. Grant our prayers through your Word-Made-Flesh, Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

Communion Reflection:

Lord Jesus, you came to us as man and made your home among us. I thank you that you have made your home with me in this Eucharist. I pray that your word in all its richness may find a greater home in my life, and that I may live your word in my own home and among the members of my own family. Bless our home and make it holy. Let it become a community of life and love, a place where all the members can grow and increase in wisdom, in stature and in favour with God and men. Prevent our family from becoming inward looking and give it the strength to reach out to other families in need, living witnesses of your abiding presence among us, for you are Lord for ever and ever. Amen.

Please join us at the back of church for tea or coffee after Mass. A priest will be near the main door shortly after the end of Mass should you need to talk with one.

Please take this Service Sheet home with you and use as part of your devotions during the week.

PARISH NEWS AND NOTICES

Worship this evening: At 6:00pm we celebrate the traditional service of 9 Lessons & Carols at St Mary & St Giles.

VERY IMPORTANT - Sound System: It is really important that the sound system at St Mary & St Giles is operated each week, but for this to happen we need volunteers to be trained in its use. Please have a word with the Rector or Churchwardens if you would be willing to be part of a rota of volunteers who manage this during the Parish Mass on Sundays and Feast Days. Thank you.

Thank you: to everyone who has helped in any way with the preparation for, and participation in, our Christmas worship and activities.

Also to Chris Crompton for the new base for the Nativity Scene and Easter Garden, as well as his splendid work on the Blessed Sacrament Chapel Altar Rails, which can now be preserved as a sacred space by utilising the cord and hooks.

Rector's email address: Please note that the email address for the Rector has changed - see back of the Newsletter.

Aladdin Pantomime at Milton Keynes Theatre on Tuesday, 5th January at 7pm: Those who have booked seats please meet Lesley Salter in the Theatre foyer from 6.30pm to receive your tickets. Anyone who needs transport please let Lesley know. There are still a few tickets available, so it's not too late to book - let me know today! Any questions text 07789 898847.

Saturday, 9th January Beetle Drive and shared tea in SMSG School Hall 3-6pm: Come and play Beetle - all ages welcome - bring a little food to share at tea time. Tea, coffee and juice will be provided. Please let Lesley Salter know if you need transport 01908 567404. A fun afternoon for everyone and time for a chat and sharing a meal together. A rough idea of numbers would be helpful for planning, so please let Lesley Salter know if you are thinking of coming.

Saturday, 16th January 10am - 12 noon Musical Bite Coffee Morning in the Parish Hall: Enjoy tea, coffee and cakes in the cosy Parish Hall and have the added pleasure of hearing the piano, played by Dave King.

Thursday, 21st January TT@TT: SMSG Band will be giving a lunchtime Concert at 12.30pm. 45 minutes of fun music, with hot drinks on tap - you bring your sandwiches - we provide the rest! A warm welcome awaits to this free concert. Why not bring a friend or work colleague along?

Urgent Request: Do you know of any organists or pianists who would be willing to play at the 11:00am Family Mass at All Saints to cover two Sunday's per month. Please let Fr Ross know if you do, or indeed if you are hiding your light under a bushel and might be willing to have a go.

Readers at All Saints: If any one would like to be added to the list of Scripture readers at the Family Mass would they please have a word with Jane Hardy. Thank you.

Seating at St Mary & St Giles: the overwhelming choice over whether to have a cushioned seat pad or a sea-grass seat, following the great 'Sit down and Try Out' last Sunday is that we should have them with cushioned seat pads.

As previously reported the PCC is committed to seeing the disabled access project completed first. One or two people have asked whether we could decorate the church before doing anything else. While that is understandable, it should be borne in mind that it makes sense to do all the structural

work first, otherwise it means decorating twice (and the cost of decorating the church is very, very expensive).

Similarly, there are two very good reasons for replacing the seating before decorating and they are: a) because it is important that you are able to sit in comfort; and more importantly b) because all the present seating is infected with woodworm and we need to replace it as soon as is possible otherwise we run the risk of woodworm infecting the structural woodwork in the building. The cost of such an infestation would be ruinous.

Once the faculty is granted for the current works, we shall be launching a grant seeking and fundraising effort. A number of people have asked if they can donate chairs in memory of loved ones to which the answer is, "Yes, and that is very generous of you."

The Diocesan Advisory Committee for the Care of Churches has visited St Mary & St Giles and considered our proposals. At its subsequent meeting it recommended approval. We now await the receipt of the faculty, although there will be a slight delay due to the disabled access part of the proposals requiring a modest repositioning of two ledgers in the floor of the tower area. The Chancellor has asked for a little more information, but as these are not being removed, but kept adjacent to their present position, this is a minor part of the faculty application. By repositioning them they will still be visible rather than the new interior doors obscuring part of them.

N.B. The Rector will be taking his post-Christmas break this week. Fr Joseph will be celebrating Masses on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday at the usual times.

FUTURE DIARY DATES

TODAY

Sunday 27th December

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph
9:30am Parish Mass at SMSG
11:00am Family Mass at All Saints
6:00pm Nine Lessons & Carols at SMSG

Wednesday 6th January 2016

The Epiphany of the Lord
7:30pm Sung Mass at SMSG

Saturday 9th January

3-6pm Beetle Drive and Shared Tea in SMSG School

Saturday 16th January

10:00am 'Musical Bite' Coffee Morning at SMSG

Thursday 21st January

4:00pm Governor Training at SMSG School
7:30pm Parochial Church Council in Parish Hall

Wednesday 27th January

Almshouses Charity Meeting

Monday 1st February

Rector at 'Shared Conversations'

Tuesday 2nd February

CANDLEMASS

10:30am Mass & 'Elevenses' at All Saints
7:30pm Parish Mass at SMSG

Tuesday 9th February

Shrove Tuesday

5:30pm Confessions

Wednesday 10th February

ASH WEDNESDAY

7:30pm Parish Mass with Imposition of Ashes

Saturday 13th February

10:00am 'Musical Bite' Coffee Morning at SMSG

Wednesday 17th February

7:00pm the 1st of this Lent's weekly celebrations of the Stations of the Cross at SMSG
7:30pm Mass at SMSG
8:00pm the start of the Course 'A Faith for Skeptics' in the Parish Hall

Sunday 5th March

The Rector, at the Invitation of the Bishop of Dorchester, will be participating in the Diocesan 'Shared Conversations' on Human Sexuality
Fr Joseph has kindly agreed to celebrate both Masses today.

Saturday 12th March

10:00am 'Musical Bite' Coffee Morning at SMSG

Tuesday 15th March

7:30pm Parochial Church Council in Parish Hall



vals – and it is hoped that wherever possible every church will take part. In addition, to coincide with The Queen's birthday, we hope that every church will be able to organise an exhibition of the life of its parish over the previous ninety years. Such exhibitions could, be charting the changes in the lives of our communities since 1926, highlight the ways in which parish churches have been and remain the focus of those communities, and be a celebrations both of our churches and of the people whom they serve. We hope that most parishes will be able to find photographs, artworks and oral history connected with their church and the local area. Though the onus will be on parishes to arrange their events, the Church Buildings Council will act as a hub for ideas and as a central co-ordination point. Parishes will shortly receive information packs and guidance notes to assist in organising events.

In her 2014 Christmas broadcast the Queen described Jesus Christ as 'an anchor in my life' and a 'role-model'. It is the most recent of many public references the Queen has made to her Christian faith. An organization called HOPE is working in partnership with Bible Society and the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity to publish a very special book focusing on the Queen's Christian faith as a tribute on her 90th birthday. *'The Servant Queen - and the King she serves'* is a beautifully illustrated short book, which uses the Queen's own words to draw out the central role of her trust in Jesus Christ, offering us all an inspiring, multi-faceted insight into a life well-lived for others. The book will have a royal endorsement and will be available in early February to buy in bulk at £1 a copy.

It would help me if you could place an advance order with me with the next two weeks.

The key dates in 2016 are:

- The Queen's actual birthday on 21 April;
- four days of celebrations in Windsor 12-15 May;
- a service of thanksgiving at St Paul's Cathedral on Friday 10 June;
- the traditional Trooping the Colour ceremony - on Saturday 11 June in Horse Guards Parade;
- a street party for 10,000 people on The Mall on Sunday 12 June.

The whole country is invited to join the celebrations with thanksgiving services and parties in our own villages, towns or cities. Just like the Diamond Jubilee celebrations in 2012, HOPE will be supporting churches with resources and ideas to mark this special milestone in the Queen's life, highlighting her Christian faith and bringing communities together. This is a great opportunity for churches to bring communities together.

We are being encouraged to start planning our local events now. Your help will be vital in making this a significant feature in the life of our town and village just as the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations saw the Parish Churches at the forefront of local celebrations.

The Bishop of Worcester writes:

'With the approval and agreement of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, the Church Buildings Council is encouraging every parish church in England to organise a festival on the weekend of 10-12 June 2016 to celebrate The Queen's 90th birthday and her role as Supreme Governor of the Church of England. This will coincide with official celebrations taking place in London. The variety of potential forms for the celebrations is huge, from flower to organ, bell-ringing or choir festivals, from food to beer festi-

The Universal Prayer (attributed to Pope Clement XI)

Lord, I believe in you: increase my faith.
I trust in you: strengthen my trust.
I love you: let me love you more and more.
I am sorry for my sins: deepen my sorrow.

I worship you as my first beginning,
I long for you as my last end,
I praise you as my constant helper,
And call on you as my loving protector.

Guide me by your wisdom,
Correct me with your justice,
Comfort me with your mercy,
Protect me with your power.

I offer you, Lord, my thoughts: to be fixed on you;
My words: to have you for their theme;
My actions: to reflect my love for you;
My sufferings: to be endured for your greater glory.

I want to do what you ask of me:
In the way you ask,
For as long as you ask,
Because you ask it.

Lord, enlighten my understanding,
Strengthen my will, purify my heart, and make me holy.

Help me to repent of my past sins
And to resist temptation in the future.
Help me to rise above my human weaknesses
And to grow stronger as a Christian.

Let me love you, my Lord and my God,
And see myself as I really am:
A pilgrim in this world,
A Christian called to respect and love
All whose lives I touch,
Those under my authority,
My friends and my enemies.

Help me to conquer anger with gentleness,
Greed by generosity,
Apathy by fervour.
Help me to forget myself
And reach out toward others.

Make me prudent in planning,
Courageous in taking risks.
Make me patient in suffering, unassuming in prosperity.

Keep me, Lord, attentive at prayer,
Temperate in food and drink,
Diligent in my work,
Firm in my good intentions.

Let my conscience be clear,
My conduct without fault,
My speech blameless,
My life well-ordered.
Put me on guard against my human weaknesses.
Let me cherish your love for me,
Keep your law,
And come at last to your salvation.

Teach me to realize that this world is passing,
That my true future is the happiness of heaven,
That life on earth is short, and the life to come eternal.

Help me to prepare for death
With a proper fear of judgment,
But a greater trust in your goodness.
Lead me safely through death
To the endless joy of heaven.

Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.



Rector: Fr Ross Northing SSC - Tel: 01908 562148
Email: info@parishstonystatfordcalverton.com - Mobile: 07718 884779

Honorary Assistant Priests:
Fr Joseph Loveday SSC - Tel: 01327 351511

Fr Tunji Adebisi - Tel: 01525 790954

Assistant Curate: Fr Benjamin Drury Tel: 01908 569724
Email: benjamin.drury@gmail.com - Mobile: 07719 202333

Church Army Officer: Sister Janet Northing CA - Tel: 01908 562148
Email: jf.northing@btinternet.com

Parish Website: <http://parishstonystatfordcalverton.com>