

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice.
Indeed, the Lord is near.

COLLECT

O God, who see how your people faithfully await the feast of the Lord's Nativity, enable us we pray, to attain the joys of so great a salvation and to celebrate them always with solemn worship and glad rejoicing. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

FIRST READING Isaiah 61: 1-2, 10-11

A reading from the prophet Isaiah.
The spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for the Lord has anointed me.
He has sent me to bring good news to the poor,
to bind up hearts that are broken;
to proclaim liberty to captives,
freedom to those in prison;
to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord.
"I exult for joy in the Lord,
my soul rejoices in my God,
for he has clothed me in garments of salvation,
he has wrapped me in the cloak of integrity,
like a bridegroom wearing his wreath,
like a bride adorned in her jewels.
For as the earth makes fresh things grow,
as a garden makes seeds spring up,
so will the Lord make both integrity and praise
spring up in the sight of the nations."
The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM Luke 1

Response:
My soul rejoices in my God.

1. My soul glorifies the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour.
He looks on his servant in her nothingness;
henceforth all ages will call me blessed.
(R.)
2. The Almighty works marvels for me.
Holy his name!
His mercy is from age to age,
on those who fear him. (R.)
3. He fills the starving with good things,
sends the rich away empty.
He protects Israel, his servant,
remembering his mercy. (R.)

SECOND READING 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians.
Be happy at all times; pray constantly; and for all things give thanks to God, because this is what God expects you to do in Christ Jesus.
Never try to suppress the Spirit or treat the gift of prophecy with contempt; think before you do anything – hold on to what is good and avoid every form of evil.

May the God of peace make you perfect and holy; and may you all be kept safe and blameless, spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has called you and he will not fail you.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!
The spirit of the Lord has been given to me.
He has sent me to bring good news to the poor.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL John 1:6-8, 19-28

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John.

A man came, sent by God.
His name was John.
He came as a witness,
as a witness to speak for the light,
so that everyone might believe through him.
He was not the light,
only a witness to speak for the light.

This is how John appeared as a witness.
When the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" he not only declared, but he declared quite openly, "I am not the Christ." "Well then," they asked "are you Elijah?" "I am not" he said. "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No." So they said to him, "Who are you? We must take back an answer to those who sent us. What have you to say about yourself?" So John said, "I am, as Isaiah prophesied:

a voice that cries in the wilderness:
Make a straight way for the Lord."

Now these men had been sent by the Pharisees, and they put this further question to him, "Why are you baptising if you are not the Christ, and not Elijah, and not the prophet?" John replied, "I baptise with water; but there stands among you – unknown to you – the one who is coming after me; and I am not fit to undo his sandal-strap." This happened at Bethany, on the far side of the Jordan, where John was baptising.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

**I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.**

**I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with
the Father;**

**through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,**

(all bow during the next three lines)

**and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the
Virgin Mary,
and became man.**

**For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day**

**in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life,**

**who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored
and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.**

**I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church.**

**I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the
dead
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

May the sacrifice of our worship, Lord, we pray,
be offered to you unceasingly,
to complete what has begun in sacred mystery
and powerfully accomplish for us your saving
work.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**Say to the faint of heart: Be strong and do
not fear.
Behold, our God will come, and he will save
us.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

We implore your mercy, Lord,
that this divine sustenance may cleanse us of
our faults
and prepare us for the coming feasts.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The pilgrims continue to come. Only God knows what each one of us brings, and with what kind of heart. We come mystically to this cave. We know the mess we bring and the often distracted heart that brings it. But this is all we have – all we are. One stretches out his arms to receive.

Basil M Pennington OCSO

THE WORD

Statue of St John the Baptist on the north side of Charles Bridge, one of the most famous tourist spots in Prague

John the Baptist is, in some ways, a transitional figure: he straddles what we usually call the Old and New Testaments, by which we mean the Jewish and Christian scriptures.

He looks backward to the prophets of the Jewish tradition, especially to Elijah, the figure who represents the prophetic tradition. On the other hand, he looks forward to the coming of the Christ and functions as his herald, announcing the near arrival of the kingdom of God.

In today's Gospel episode, we hear how John was a puzzle to those who shared his Jewish faith: was he, in fact, the Messiah? There seem to have been more than a few people who thought that he might well be. The leaders of the people send representatives to ask John to clarify his position, and he states firmly that he is not the Christ, whose sandal-strap he is not worthy to undo.

The New Testament writers clearly had a difficulty with the figure of John the Baptist and his relationship to Jesus. John was obviously a significant person at the time and so has a place in the Gospel tradition. The reading from the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel, the first paragraph of our extract today, presents him as being sent by God – as a witness. No matter how important John was in his own right, his place in the tradition is as a subordinate to Jesus, and once Jesus appears, John's role comes to an end. We might remember that the most important person in the Gospel tradition is Jesus: all other characters, no matter how significant, are always presented in relation to Jesus and never in isolation, separated from him. ■

LEARN

In the Fourth Gospel, the term "the Jews" normally refers to the Jewish leaders who are hostile to Jesus.

In the Gospel according to John, "to believe" is to make a positive decision for Jesus and his teaching.

Priests and Levites are figures principally associated with the Temple in Jerusalem.

REFLECT

Someone once remarked that there is no occurrence of the word "faith" in the Gospel according to John. This statement is, strictly speaking, true. The noun "faith" is not found, but the verb "to believe" occurs well over 100 times. Faith, in this sense, is not something that we possess but rather something we do. The Creed which we declare together at the Eucharist is a statement of doctrine, but faith is essentially a relationship with God. The evangelist John tells us throughout his Gospel version that to believe is to make a choice: it is not a matter of logic, but rather a personal decision to accept Jesus and his teaching.

As we approach the celebration of the birth of Christ, we might reflect on this aspect of our Christian life. Sometimes cradle Catholics say that they envy people who come to the faith later in life, because they have had to make a conscious, adult decision for themselves in a way that others, born into Catholic families and raised in a Christian environment, never had to. At Christmas, we celebrate the coming of the light into the world. It is our choice whether we live in the light or not. We might make this Christmas an opportunity to renew that resolution once more. ■

SAY

**Rejoice in the Lord always!
(Philippians 4:4)**

DO

Look at the state of the roads around your town: how does their condition reflect your readiness to welcome Jesus at Christmas?



PARISH OF OUR LADY IMMACULATE

Seamoor Road, Westbourne BH4 9AE

Roman Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth. Registered charity 246871

NEWSLETTER 13th December 2020 Third Sunday of Advent (B)

Website: www.catholicwestbourne.org

Parish Office: Tel: 01202 760640 (all enquiries)
email: oliadmin@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Parish Priest: Fr Andrew Moore: andrewmoore@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Safeguarding Officer: Matthew French: mail@matthewfrench.net

Survey of the People of the Diocese. The Bishop is conducting a survey of what people think and what they consider is important to them as we journey in faith together to help develop plans and priorities. The online questionnaire can be found at www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk or directly at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2XRKQDS>. Paper copies for those unable to access the digital version can be obtained from: 02394 216496. The results will be published in the Spring.

Mass times and church opening. The public celebration of Mass - by advanced reservation only – has now resumed for Sundays and weekdays (Tuesdays to Fridays inclusive), at 10.00 a.m. The church will remain open after mass for individual visits from 10.30 – 11.00 a.m. To make a booking:

Send an email to oliadmin@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Leave a clear message on the parish office phone **01202 760640**

In writing, and placed in the letter box by the church door, or by post to Our Lady Immaculate, Seamoor Road, Westbourne, BH4 9AE

With the following details:

Name(s) – including the ages of children under 18.

Phone number or email address:

Number of seats required:

Weekday mass or Sunday mass:

Would you like to be added to an ongoing rota? Yes/No

Liturgical Calendar:

To request mass intentions, please email or phone the Parish Office or leave an envelope at the church.

Sunday 13 th December	Third Sunday of Advent (B)	People of the Parish
Monday 14 th	St John of the Cross	-
Tuesday 15 th	of 3 rd Week of Advent	Francis Dorr RIP
Wednesday 16 th	of 3 rd Week of Advent	Thomas Joughin RIP
Thursday 17 th	of the day	Bill Creagh RIP
Friday 18 th	of the day	Charles O'Donnell RIP
Saturday 19 th	of the day	-
Sunday 20 th	Fourth Sunday of Advent (B)	People of the Parish

Please remember in your prayers Jean Watts who died this week. May she rest in peace.

First Communion. The time has come for applications for next year's First Holy Communion programme. Full details, including an online application form, can be found on the parish website at <http://catholicwestbourne.org/fhc/> Closing date for applications is 18th December.

Cafod Gifts. Many will be giving charitable gifts this season. Among the many worthy charitable organisation is, of course, CAFOD who have a range of gift opportunities. These can be found at: <http://www.cafod.org.uk/worldgifts>.

2021 Diaries and Missals. We will not be placing a bulk order this year for diaries and missals, but the following links may be helpful to those who wish to order them direct:

Sunday Missal 2021: St Paul Sunday Missal 2021 (Year B), email <https://stpauls.org.uk/st-paul-sunday-missal-2018.html> or call 0207 828 5582.

St Patrick Missionary Diary 2021: phone 020 8979 1890 or email office@stpatricksuk.co.uk Price £5.00.

Catholic Masses Online: The following is a helpful link to various masses that are available online. <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/home/our-work/health-social-care/coronavirus-guidelines/online-mass-directory/>

Prayer Corner: Please remember all the sick and housebound of our parish especially: Patricia Kowalewska, Win Sheridan, Patricia Plumb, Kathleen Wood, Peter Henry, Phillip Rockford, Germaine McAulay, Geoffrey Dixon, and Joe Bonnici.

Finance. A 'Thank you' to those who are using the 'Donate' button on the website. The 'Donate' button has the facility of adding a reference and also the option to Gift Aid any donation. Any donation with no specific reference will be treated as ordinary offertory. The parish's bank details are set out below for those who may wish to take out a standing order or make a bank transfer.

Bank: Lloyds Account Name: PRCDTR Bournemouth Our Lady Immaculate
Sort Code: 30-93-04 Account Number: 00875075

(You will find information about Christmas masses on the following pages)

Arrangements for Christmas 2020

In normal times we would expect to see over three hundred people in our church at Christmas. As we all know, however, these are not normal times. The physical constraints of our building, Covid-protocols and other factors severely restrict the numbers we can accommodate to a maximum of about twenty! Much as we would all like to come together for a celebration of the great feast of Our Lord's incarnation with mass on Christmas Day itself, this will clearly not be possible. The Bishops' Conference, however, reminds us that the Feast of Christmas has an Octave, which means that the whole period from the Vigil on Christmas Eve to New Year's Day inclusive is one great Christmas Feast: every day in that period is, liturgically, Christmas Day. This opens up the possibility of a more significant number of people being able to attend a 'Christmas' mass over the Christmas period.

Church Opening over the Christmas Period:

Many may wish to make a short visit to the Church over the Christmas period and so, in addition to the arrangements for various masses (see below), the church will be open for individual visits as follows:

Christmas Eve: 3.00 – 4.00 p.m. for Children to visit the Crib

Christmas Day: an extended opening from 10.30 a.m. – 12.00 p.m.

Other days: after mass until 11.00 a.m.

Arrangements for Mass over the Christmas Period:

In order to be as equitable, fair, and as safe as possible, parishioners are invited to register an interest to be allocated one mass over this Christmas period (i.e., from the Vigil on Christmas Eve to New Year's Day inclusive) and to do so **by midnight on Tuesday, 15th December**. Places will then be randomly allocated and parishioners will be advised shortly afterwards which mass they have been allocated. Apart from indicating you would not be available for the evening mass on Christmas Eve or that you are working mid-week, **you will not be able to choose any particular mass** though you may decline if the date you are given is not convenient. Once places have been allocated please notify us (even up to 5.00 p.m. the night before) if you or any of your group cannot attend for any reason, as your place(s) can then be offered to someone else. Applications may only be made in respect of individuals or family/bubble groups. Due to the track and trace requirements, only the names confirmed will be admitted: no substitutions or swapping will be allowed. The random allocation of places will be 'front-loaded', i.e., starting with Christmas Eve and working forward from there. So, if sixty people sign up then they will all be allocated a mass over the Christmas weekend; if a hundred people sign up, then the allocation will be spread further across the week.

Masses will be celebrated as follows:

Thursday, 24 th December	Vigil Mass of Christmas	at 7.00 p.m.
Friday, 25 th December	Christmas Day	at 10.00 a.m.
Saturday, 26 th December	Boxing Day	at 10.00 a.m.
Sunday, 27 th December		at 10.00 a.m.
Tuesday, 29 th December		at 10.00 a.m.
Wednesday, 30 th December		at 10.00 a.m.
Thursday, 31 st December		at 10.00 a.m.
Friday, 1 st January 2021	New Year's Day	at 10.00 a.m.

To register for a place(s) to be randomly allocated at a mass over the Christmas period (even if you have already been booking regular masses) please submit the information below by **midnight** on **Tuesday, 15th December 2020**. You can either (in order of preference): -

Email: oliadmin@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Phone and leave a clear message: 01202 760640

Leave a written message in the Church letterbox

With the following information:

Name(s) (with limited places available and out of fairness, a maximum of six)

Ages of any children under 18

Email address or mobile number or landline number

If you cannot attend on Christmas Eve.

If you are working mid-week.

Parishioners attending mass with confirmed reservations only should queue outside the Church in a socially distanced manner. The door will be unlocked promptly ten minutes before mass and will be closed five minutes before mass starts after which there will be no entry, so please be punctual. Hands must be sanitised on entry and face masks must be worn at all times, except when receiving communion or for children under the age of eleven. Names & addresses will be kept for 21 days and if necessary, may be passed to *NHS Test & Trace*. The QR code is posted on the main notice board for those who have the NHS contact tracing App. Please do not attend if any of your group is unwell or has symptoms of COVID.

Please note: There will be no access to the hall, the lift or to the toilets.

Other local churches are also expected to have booking arrangements for mass at Christmas.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.