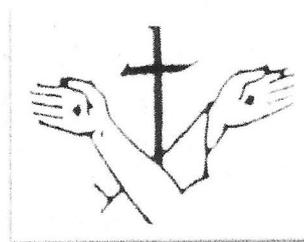




St Francis of Assisi Parish Newsletter "Laudato, Si"



ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI CHURCH
Grove Crescent Road, Stratford, London, E15 1BJ

SOLEMNITY OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD (CHRISTMAS)

SUNDAY DECEMBER 25th Holy Day

"Of her was born Jesus who is called the Messiah".

On this day a light dawned on the earth. The saviour of humankind came down from heaven. Jesus is the radiant light of God's glory and he has destroyed the defilement of sin. Let us draw near to his loving heart with faith, and seek his forgiveness for our failures and sins.

RESPONSES TO THE PSALM:



The Night Mass:

Today a saviour has been born to us: he is Christ the Lord.

The Dawn Mass:

This day new light will shine upon the earth: The Lord is born for us.

Christmas Day Mass:

All the end of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

"The Word was the true light ... coming into the world"

Far away from where Jesus was born, in the city of Rome, there stood a grand temple to the Roman god 'Saturn'. Eight noble pillars still remain, even though it was built nearly five hundred years before the birth of Jesus, it had to be restored after a fire, and eventually fell into ruin. Just as we celebrate feasts and holy days, so did pagan Romans; and Saturnalia, as they called it, was the most popular feast in the Roman calendar. It was a public holiday lasting from 17 to 25 December, with music and dancing, parties and colourful costumes. Homes were decorated with greenery, candles were lit and carried around, and people gave each other presents. If you think this sounds a bit like Christmas, you're right. No one had recorded the date when Jesus was born, and so when the Church decided to fix a suitable day to celebrate it, 25 December was chosen, the last day of Saturnalia. For as well as the singing and merriment, one Saturnalia custom that particularly interested the Church was that domestic slaves changed places with their masters on that day, and the masters waited on the slaves. The Church thought: didn't Jesus say, "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve"? And St Paul had written, "His state was divine, yet he did not cling to his equality with God but emptied himself to assume the condition of a slave." Saturnalia also included the winter solstice, the shortest day of the year, after which daylight begins to increase. As it was a festival of light, Christians thought it an appropriate day to celebrate the coming of Jesus, the light of the world.

The wonder of Christmas is that, like the ancient Roman devotees of Saturn, we know how to celebrate with singing and dancing, with feasting and fun, and exchanging presents as signs of love. Like them, gathering round their temple to rejoice in the light, we too gather here in St Francis Church to rejoice in the light of the world. Christ came down to earth in order to raise us to heaven. He lived an earthly life so that even on earth we might begin to live the life of heaven as children of God. In the words of today's Prayer, he humbled himself to share our humanity so that we might share in his divinity. He is the giver of immortality and we have seen "his glory, the glory that is his as the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth



Dates for your Diary: The Parish Office will be closed from 3pm Friday 23rd December 2022 up to and including Tuesday 3rd January 2023. 18th January 2023 – NIGHT SHELTER AT ST. FRANCIS begins.

Pray for those who have died, and those whose Anniversaries occur around this time, also, please pray for the sick, and, remember the People of Ukraine.

CHRISTMAS

24th Sat 6pm
9pm (Carols at 8pm)
25th Sun 9am
10.15am
12noon
3pm (Ukrainian)

26th Mon Feast of St Stephen

First Martyr
Patron of Altar Servers
All servers invited to serve at
10am Mass
Renewal of Servers Promise.

NEW YEAR

Sun 31st/1st Jan
Octave Day of Christmas
Mary, The Holy Mother Of God
31st Sat 6pm
1st Sun 9am
10.15am
12noon
4.30pm (Ukrainian)

CHRISTMAS CRACKERS

"That Holy Thing"

They were all looking for a king
To slay their foes and lift them high;
Thou cam'st, a little baby thing,
That made a woman cry. George McDonald

A Christmas Carol

The Christ-child lay on Mary's lap,
His hair was like a light.
(O weary, weary were the world,
But here is all aright.)

The Christ-child lay on Mary's breast,
His hair was like a Star.
(O stern and cunning are the Kings,
But here the true hearts are.)

The Christ-child lay on Mary's heart
His hair was like a fire.
(O weary, weary is the world,
But here the world's desire.)

The Christ-child stood at Mary's knee,
His hair was like a crown,
And all the flowers looked up at Him,
And all the stars looked down. G.K. Chesterton

CHRISTMAS APPEAL FOR SOCKS & TOILETRIES FOR THE HOMELESS 2022.

We wish to thank everyone for their extraordinary generosity in making a success of our appeal for Socks & Toiletries for the homeless. Thank you and God bless you all.



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Grove Crescent Rd, Stratford, E15 1BJ

Masses

Monday to Friday 12:15. Tuesday, after Mass, St Anthony Novena.

Saturday: Morning Prayer: 9:40am Mass 10am followed by Holy Hour Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament until 11:30am.

Confession: 10:30am — 11:30am & 5pm — 5:45pm

Sunday: 6pm Saturday,
9am, 10:15am, 12 noon &
4:30pm (Ukrainian).

Friars in Residence:

Fr Patrick Lonsdale, OFM (Guardian)

Fr Michael O'Grady, OFM (Parish Priest)

Fr Brian McGrath, OFM

Address: The Friary, 160 The Grove, Stratford, E15 1NS.

Parish Office: Monday to Friday 9:30am - 3pm

Parish Secretary: Kathleen Allen

Pastoral Assistant: Derek Hoddy

Tel: 0208 534 1964

Website:

Email: stratford@friar.org

stfrancisassisistratford.com