



St Francis of Assisi

Parish Newsletter

".....we can celebrate the most beautiful Christmas ever. In one of your woods, in Greccio, there is a cave similar to that of Bethlehem. I would like to represent the Christmas scene and see with our eyes, the poverty in which the Child Jesus came into the world. I want to see how he was placed in a crib and lay there between the ox and the donkey".
St Francis of Assisi.



ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Grove Crescent Road, Stratford, London, E15 1BJ

SUNDAY CYCLE: YEAR B (MARK)

WEEKDAYS CYCLE: II

31st DECEMBER 2023 -

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY & JOSEPH



Today's feast offers us the image of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph to help us in our own family lives. The choice of date for its celebration is to coincide with the time of the year when we are most likely to be coming together in our own family units...for better or worse! The Lord's presence among us heals and enlivens us.

Today's Readings

Genesis 15:1-6; 21:1-3: The Lord promises the childless Abraham and Sarah a son; an heir and innumerable descendants.

Response to the Psalm: All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

Hebrews 11:18. 11-12. 17-19: It is through faith that Abraham receives the gift of his family.

Luke 2:22-40: The child Jesus is presented to the Lord in the Temple and blessed by Simeon and Anna. Also a glimpse of life in Nazareth,

He will be a sign that is rejected

Simeon is a delightful character. He is a good man of the people; he keeps in his heart the hope of one day seeing the "consolation". "Led by the Spirit of God", he goes up to the temple at the very time Mary and Joseph enter with their child. Simeon recognizes the Saviour in the child that this poor couple have brought with them. They are pious Jews as who have been expecting the Saviour for so many year's .Simeon is happy. He gathers the child in his arms with great love and affection. He blesses God and he blesses the parents. Without doubt the Gospel-writer is presenting Simeon as a model. This is how we have to receive the Saviour. Suddenly Simeon goes to Mary and his expression changes. His words do not presage anything reassuring. "A sword will pierce your soul". This child you have in your arms will be "sign that is rejected: a source of conflicts and clashes". Some will receive him and their lives will have a new dignity; their existence will be filled with light and hope. Others will reject him and their lives will be lost. The rejection of Jesus will be their downfall. When we come closer to Jesus, we will see our inconsistencies and discrepancies, what is true and false in our Christianity, and what is sinful in our hearts and in our structures, in our lives and in our religion.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:

WEDNESDAY 3RD JANUARY 2024 – NO 12:15 MASS.

WEDNESDAY 10TH JANUARY 2024- NIGHT SHELTER BEGINS - IN THE LARGE HALL. SIGN UP SHEETS ARE AT THE BACK OF THE CHURCH.

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. Our thoughts and prayers for the people of Turkey, Syria & Morocco, following the devastating earthquakes, also, the people of Libya who suffered floods. We also pray for peace in the Holy Land.

SOLEMNITY OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD (CHRISTMAS)

“Of her was born Jesus who is called the Messiah”.

Matthew begins his gospel with a genealogy to show that Jesus was the fulfilment of Israel's longing for a Messiah. Matthew traces Israel's history through three sets of fourteen generations, from the days of glory when King David sat on the throne to the days of agony when God's people were taken into exile in Babylonia. Matthew's genealogy is symbolic rather than historic. The number 14 is the number of all the consonants in the Hebrew version of David's name (DVD, 4+6+4=14), suggesting that the whole genealogy has a Davidic character. Jesus is the Messianic King whose throne stands firm forever. Although Joseph (of the house of David) assumed legal paternity for the child, the virginal birth shows that Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus' family tree also shows some surprising irregularities. Except for Mary, the mother of Jesus, the other four women mentioned are all non-Jews—Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba. Jesus was the faithful son of Abraham through whom all nations would be blessed. The child was given the title “Emmanuel” meaning “God is with us.” At the end of Matthew's gospel, Jesus told his disciples, “Know that I am with you always, until the end of the world”.

THE OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS

Since at least the fourth century, Christians have celebrated the most important liturgical feasts with “octaves” (which means eight)- eight days of celebration. The birth of Jesus Christ is today one of the two octaves we still celebrate—the other is Easter. The octave of Christmas begins on Christmas Day itself, the feast of the Nativity of the Lord. It ends on the solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, on January 1. Despite having four days within the octave that are feasts: St. Stephen, St. John the Evangelist, The Holy Innocents, and The Holy Family, each of these days is another “day of the octave of Christmas.”

The traditional Twelve Days of Christmas begins on Christmas Eve December 24 and continues until the feast of Epiphany on January 6. (The Epiphany, this year, is commemorated on Sunday 7th January). This commemorates the recognition of Jesus as the Son of God by the three Wise Men (and by all nations). The season of Christmas ends on the Monday after the Solemnity of the Baptism of the Lord, which signifies the purification of the world, through Christ himself.



THERE IS NO 12:15 MASS ON WEDNESDAY 3RD JANUARY 2024.

EPIPHANY

7TH JANUARY 2024:

MASS AT 10am Sunday

7th January – The

Epiphany Of The Lord.

Masses as on normal Saturday/Sunday. **2pm**

Prayers around the Crib followed by a get-together' in the Hall with Mince Pies and Mulled Wine.



“STRATFORD MONKS”

In 1998, the skeletons of more than 600 medieval Trappist monks were found by workmen excavating for the



Jubilee line in Plaistow. They were from the [Stratford Langthorne Abbey](#) and they were re-buried in the grounds of Mount St Bernard Abbey in Leicester in 2009. This is the Monastery where Blessed Cyprian Tansi was a monk. Stratford Langthorne had been one of the most important monasteries in England, closed in Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries in 1538. After the interment of the bones at a special ceremony on 29 July 2009, a talk was given in the abbey church by the abbot, Dom Joseph Delargy in which he explained: "You notice on the memorial stone is just inscribed, 'St Mary's Abbey, Stratford Langthorne', and not, 'the remains from St Mary's Abbey'. This is to symbolise the fact that the abbey is the people, not the buildings. Seeing that all the human remains from the abbey are now here, the 'abbey' is now here"

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: Saturday: 10:30am - 11:30am & 5pm - 5:45pm
Sunday: 6pm Saturday, 9am, 10:15am, 12 noon & 4:30pm (Ukrainian).

Fr Michael O'Grady, OFM (Parish Priest)

Fr Brian McGrath, OFM

Fr Yusuf Bagh, OFM

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

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