



ST. JOSEPH'S HIGHGATE PARISH BULLETIN

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Registered Charity 234436



Fr. Pat (pfcp44@yahoo.com) Fr. Tiernan (tiernanpc@gmail.com)

Masses: Sunday: (7pm Saturday) 8am, 10am, 12noon, 1.30 (Polish), 7pm.

Holydays: 6.30pm vigil, 9.30am, 11am, 6.30pm

Weekdays: 9.30am, 6.30pm. **Saturday:** 9.30am, 7pm. **Bank Holiday:** 9.30am

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday 10-10.30am, 6.30 -6.45pm

Weekdays: immediately after Mass (on request)

27th November 2016 – First Sunday of Advent

Endings and Beginnings

(Below is a letter from our Superior General to mark the beginning of Advent)

Dear Brothers, Sisters and Friends in the Passionist Family,

last week the Holy Father, Pope Francis closed the Holy Door at St Peter's Basilica in Rome, officially bringing to a close the Holy Year of Mercy which he proclaimed one year ago. Personally, I found so much richness in the reflections and catechesis of Pope Francis throughout this Year, both comforting for my soul and challenging to my conscience. So, what happens now? Is it all over? Doors closed! Where do we go from here?

Speaking of opening and closing, beginning and ending, can give the impression, and possibly the false notion, that one thing has finished and now we search for a new focus. However, this is not to be the case! Rather, what we have lived in this special time of the Holy Year, the graces and conversion which we have encountered and has shaped us even in a small way, must continue to inspire and inform our daily lives and actions as Passionist disciples of Jesus.

In declaring a Year of Mercy, Pope Francis as the leader of the Church was outlining his vision for the Church and the world of today. He has a strong sense of a "wounded humanity" in need of mercy and he wants us, as members of the Church, to be part of this shared vision which is ongoing and not ended.

"This is a time of mercy. The Church is showing her maternal side, her motherly face, to a humanity that is wounded. She does not wait for the wounded to knock on her doors, she looks for them on the streets, she gathers them in, she embraces them, she takes care of them, she makes them feel loved...I am ever more convinced of it, this is a *kairós*, our era is a *kairós* of mercy, an opportune time". (Pope Francis)

Throughout the Year of Mercy, Pope Francis not only reflected on and encouraged us to engage and confront God as a Merciful Father, but he also challenged us in turn, and showed us by his own example, how to be merciful to our fellow sisters and brothers... "Be merciful as your heavenly Father is merciful" (Lk. 6:36). The Pope's words and gestures reflecting acts and actions of mercy sought to bring about healing and dignity to a wounded humanity.

As Passionists who are members of the Church, it is important that we too support and adopt a vision which fits-in and merges with the vision of the wider Church -naturally from the standpoint of our specific mission which flows from the Passion and Cross of Jesus reflecting God's immense mercy for humanity and all of creation.

The Christian life is always about new beginnings and new opportunities. The rhythm of our yearly cycle in celebrating the liturgical seasons is designed to nourish our growth in Christ and offer us a fresh start – a new opportunity. A favourite saying of Catherine De Hueck Doherty (social justice worker and founder of Madonna House Apostolate in Canada) was: "With God, every moment is the moment of beginning again."

This time of Advent is another opportunity – a moment to ponder our beginning again with God "as we wait in joyful hope for the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ". This 'coming' of the Saviour is the 'coming of God' which we commemorate in the Mystery of the Incarnation: God becoming human (flesh) in the human birth of the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

Jesus, as the human face of God, is the face of Mercy. Through his life and mission Jesus is the one "who is to save his people from their sins" (Mt. 1:21) and he is "Immanuel, a name which means God-is-with-us" (Mt. 1:23). During the Year of Mercy, Pope Francis' reflections led him to declare that mercy is the very identity of God. In fact, he said: "The Name of God is Mercy". So, the coming of God in the Mystery of the Incarnation – which we prepare for with patience and hope and commemorate in the birth of Jesus at Christmas – is the coming of Mercy: yesterday, today and tomorrow. Not only in his birth, but in his entire life – passion, death and resurrection -Jesus is the Mercy of God.

“Mercy is the divine attitude that embraces, it is God’s self-giving that welcomes, that leans down to forgive.” (Pope Francis)

How privileged we are and so how necessary it is that we not miss the opportunity this Advent to “treasure these things and ponder them” in our hearts, like Mary did quietly contemplating the face of the Christ-Child.

At the end of the Holy Year and the beginning of the Advent season, perhaps we Passionists in particular can prepare ourselves to celebrate the birth of Jesus not by ‘closing’, but by continuing to keep alive our focus on the Mercy of God, contemplating the face of Christ: always comforting because of our personal need to know God’s tender love, but also challenging because of our responsibility to be witnesses of mercy to a wounded humanity.

We have received freely, we give freely. We are called to serve Christ the Crucified through every marginalised person. We touch the flesh of Christ in the one who is outcast, hungry, thirsty, naked, imprisoned, ill, unemployed, persecuted, in search of refuge. That is where we find our God; that is where we touch the Lord. By welcoming a marginalised person whose body is wounded and by welcoming the sinner whose soul is wounded, we put our credibility as Christians on the line. (Pope Francis)

Blessings on your Advent journey! May our reflections and prayers shape our lives that we may grow in compassion and act with mercy and tenderness in all our relationships, especially towards those who are marginalised, crucified and excluded. 27 November 2016

P. Joachim Rego CP - Superior General

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We pray for the sick and housebound of our parish – Joyce Oparah; **we pray for those who have died recently** – Mark Fitzpatrick, Rosita Estadilla; **we remember those whose anniversaries occur at this time** – Fr.Aidan Baker CP, Daniel Lucitt, Julia McIntyre, Barbara Mayers, Charlie & Marie Carson.

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Giving Tree:

For those of you who may be new to the parish, or haven’t come across this exercise before, the idea is very simple, and very much in the proper spirit of Christmas. Instead of the usual decorations our trees are bedecked with lots of tags, on each of which has been written a suggestion for a Christmas gift to be given to the poor of our city – in particular the many poor families that our local branch of St. Vincent de Paul deal with, and also for the Cardinal Hume Centre, which does outstanding work with families in distress and with the homeless. We invite you to take a tag from the tree, and then during the following week to purchase the item suggested (please ensure food items are in date!). Items, which should be gift-wrapped should then be brought to the church the following Sunday, with the tags stating what gift is in each parcel attached to them. (Don’t worry, the tags will be removed before being given to any individual.) We promise you that all items will be distributed before Christmas.

Many of the items on the tags are of a practical nature, like warm socks, gloves and so on, but there are also suggestions for small non-essentials, like biscuits, toys, books, games, etc – items which for us we’re inclined to take for granted, but for others are a luxury that they could never afford to buy for themselves. We particularly invite you to encourage your children to become involved in this project, which is a very practical way to help them appreciate how lucky they are, and maybe spend a little of their own pocket money on getting a present for a child of their own age who is much less well-off.

Coffee Morning:

Our next coffee morning will be taking place next Sunday, 4th December, immediately after the 10 o’clock mass. Please take a little bit of time out from your busy schedule to avail of the opportunity to get to know your fellow-parishioners a little better, and make new members of the Parish welcome.

Dates for your Diary:

Other Christmas dates for your diaries: the **Living Crib** will be on Sunday 11th December at 3.00pm, and our evening of **Christmas Readings and Carols** will be on Thursday 15th December at 7.30pm.

Christian Stewardship:

Last week’s collection amounted to £1,696. In addition we also receive approximately £1,900 in standing orders each month. Thanks again for your continuing generosity.

100 Club Results:

The November Draw for the 100 Club was held in the Monastery during the week. The number of entries was 112 and the winners were: £400 Jenny Lee (75), £100 Mary Fysh (189), £50 P.Chamberlain (190). A copy of the results may be obtained from the Parish office on request. As in previous years the December

draw will be held early, before the Christmas holidays, and monthly subscriptions should be paid by Sunday 11th December. Thank you once again to all who support the parish in this way.

Christmas at the Repository:

Christmas Cards, Advent Calendars, and 2017 Calendars and St. Joseph's Parish Diaries are all now available at the Repository shop at the back of church, as well as the usual range of cards, books and devotional items, and the weekly Catholic papers.

School References:

Some Secondary schools demand of parents that they get a reference from the priest of their Parish. Parents enter on the application form the name of their Parish Priest, and the school then sends a form to the priest. At present I have one such form, and haven't the foggiest idea who the child involved is, and so clearly cannot give the required reference. If you know who this might be, then please let me know immediately. It may very well be someone I see every week, but can't put a name to! (Please do not confuse this with the Certificate of Religious Practise which I seem to sign for hundreds of people after the Sunday Masses! Which, by the way, is the best time to come with them.)

In case you are admitted to hospital:

In light of data protection please indicate on entering hospital that your details are to be passed to the RC Chaplain. Also let them know that you would like the RC Chaplain to visit you.

WE PRAY FOR . . .

(27th November)

the sick and housebound of our Parish:

Joyce Oparah,
Frank Domantay,
Fiona Wilson,
William Crawford,
Sean Doherty,
Isabel Gomez-Nino,
David Evans,
Karen Hodges,
Bridget Mc Donnell,

Isabel Pycroft,
Ita Watters,
Kathy O'Brien,
William Pender,
Florence Cass,
May Miranda,
Julian Rea,
Anne Bergin.

We remember those who have died recently:

Mark Fitzpatrick,
Rosita Estadilla.

We remember those whose anniversaries occur around this time:

Fr. Aidan Baker CP,
Daniel Lucitt,
Julia McIntyre,
Barbara Mayers,
Charlie & Marie Carson.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

(27th November)

Our Advent Giving Trees are in the porch this weekend. We invite you to take a tag from the tree, and during the week to purchase the item suggested. The gift-wrapped items, with the tags attached, should be brought to church during Advent so they can be distributed to needy families before Christmas. See the Bulletin for further details.

Christmas Cards, Church Art Calendars, and the 2017 Parish Diaries are all now available at the Repository shop at the back of church.