



ST. JOSEPH'S HIGHGATE PARISH BULLETIN

St Joseph's Church, Highgate Hill, London N19 5NE
Tel. 020 7272 2320

e-mail: joseph.highgate@gmail.com website: www.stjosephshighgate.org.uk

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)

18th December 2016 – Fourth Sunday of Advent A Man of Action

You really do have to feel a little bit sorry for Joseph, don't you? When you think of it, he really was put through the mill. We've no real idea of what age he was at the time of Jesus's birth, but all the indications are that he was no chicken! Can't you easily imagine the state of the man's mind? There he was, getting on a bit in life, possibly resigned to the fact that he was going to die a bachelor - that he was never going to have the fulfilment of having a child of his own – someone to pass on to all the values that were so important to him. And then, God only knows how, he finds himself engaged to the most beautiful young woman in the world – in reality little more than a girl. She exuded purity and goodness and gentleness and love. God really had looked down on him and blessed him. Except for the fact that he didn't know the word, we might say that he must have thought that all his Christmases had come at once!

And then his world was shattered. Mary, his betrothed, was expecting a baby, and he knew that he wasn't the father. He just couldn't understand it. He was certain that she wasn't that kind of person, to have betrayed him. And yet, how to explain it? The soul-searching he must have gone through – what does he do now? The law offered him two choices - denounce her, which would have led to certain death for her, or alternatively quietly divorce her, and return to his life as a confirmed bachelor. Neither option would give him much pleasure. If only there were some other way!

And, all of a sudden, there was. Out of the blue there pops this angel, who tells him not to have such a suspicious mind – didn't he ever think that God could do things in a way that he mightn't understand? "Trust your instinct – you were right in the first place – Mary was all those positive things that you had ever imagined her to be, and more besides. Take her home! You can't dream of the wonders you are letting yourself in for. You won't believe it, but you're going to change the course of history!"

And the rest is history. But not just the history of two thousand years ago – isn't it so often our history too? How many times has the bottom seemed to have fallen out of our world, when we've seriously asked 'is there a God there at all?' How often have we felt betrayed by people whom we trusted, and wondered could we ever trust anybody again? How often has our life seemingly taken a disastrous turn, only for us to realise afterwards that it was indeed only the beginning of a whole new, and positive, chapter in our lives?

And do you know another interesting thing about Joseph, the key figure in our Gospel passage today? Can you remember any of those profound words he spoke? No? Neither can I – because the Gospels don't give us any. Joseph was a man of action, not of words. And all the actions we hear about are caring actions – looking after the safety of Jesus and Mary. Not surprising then, with a father like that, the Jesus should lay so much emphasis in his preaching on doing rather than saying.

And here in St. Joseph's Parish, surely we above all should be learning from Joseph. Yes, we will use many words over this coming Christmas, but far more important are the actions that prove that the words really mean something to us. I know many of you won't be here next week-end when we'll be formally wishing one another a Happy and Blessed Christmas, so I will take this opportunity on my own behalf and on behalf of all our community here, to wish you every joy and happiness wherever you may be, and may you feel the loving, caring action of Christ in your lives.

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We pray for those who have died recently – Kathy O'Brien (funeral 11.30am Tuesday 20th December), Edwin Hedge (funeral 11.00am Friday 23rd December), Mark Fitzpatrick; **we remember those whose anniversaries occur at this time** – Lelia O'Niel, Ermias Mehari, Elizabeth O'Gorman, Joan Coupland, Pat Foran, Alan Slow, Kieran Crosby, Dan O'Mahony, Brendan Nolan.

Advent, Christmas, New Year Schedule:

The detailed list of events is available in the porch. Here's a summary of the principle services.

Saturday, 24th at 5.30 – Children/Family Mass – children are encouraged to come dressed as angels or shepherds, and to bring their singing voices;
at 12 midnight – Mass, preceded by carol singing from 11.30.

Sunday, Christmas Day – morning Masses only – at 8, 10 and 12. No evening mass.

Monday 26th & Tuesday 27th Bank Holidays, Mass at 9.30am only.

Saturday 31st /Sunday 1st January: Masses at the usual week-end times.

Hopefully you can join us for some of these celebrations.

Giving Tree:

Our Giving Tree is once again evoking a wonderful response from so many people. You still have time – just barely! – to drop your gifts in, as we are expecting the people from the Cardinal Hume Centre to come on Monday morning to pick up the gifts for the people there, and our local branch of the St. Vincent de Paul society are already working on getting their food and gift hampers ready for local distribution. So please make sure you have handed in all gifts by this, Sunday, evening. Once again we thank you for your wonderful generosity in supporting these very worthy causes – we've already had to move the gifts from one room in the monastery to another, larger, room. It is just a pity that we won't be able to see the many joyful faces of those who will benefit from your kindness – but be assured, they are massively appreciated. May God reward you for bringing so much joy into the world – which of course is the whole meaning of Christmas.

100 Club Results:

The December Draw for the 100 Club was held in the Monastery during the week. The number of entries was 115 and the winners were: £400 Angela Bartley (54), £100 Gillian Kaul (137), £50 Melinda Cheung (77). A copy of the results may be obtained from the Parish office on request. The January draw will be held as usual in the last week of the month, and monthly subscriptions should be paid by Sunday 22nd January.

Are you ready to Volunteer and make a difference in Lourdes?

Every year, the Diocese of Westminster takes a pilgrimage to Lourdes in the French Pyrenees. They bring a large number of sick pilgrims to Lourdes and rely on the help of people like you to care for them. If you are **between 16 and 18**, you can serve as a 'Red Cap', helping people in wheelchairs and taking part in the processions and many other tasks. Please contact Katrina Lavery at katrina.lavery@clovershipping.com if you would like to learn more.

If you are **over 18**, your help would be very much appreciated as a St Frai Helper. Some of the sick pilgrims in most need of support and medical care stay in the Accueil St Frai. It is well-equipped for their care and they are looked after by a team of doctors, nurses and volunteers. The role of a St Frai helper is to support the nurses and provide the sort of care for which you don't need a medical qualification. This includes helping the pilgrims get up and ready in the morning; making large amounts of tea; helping to keep the wards clean; taking the pilgrims to various pilgrimage events; shopping and socialising with them; and putting them to bed at night. The timetable is shared across two shifts so there is enough time to rest, make your own pilgrimage, spend time with your groups and make new friends. Although many people come back year after year, at least half the helpers will be working in the St Frai for the first time, and training is organised. Helping in Lourdes is an extremely moving and rewarding experience. If you're interested in helping please email Nick Leonard and team at westminsterstfrai@gmail.com

Christian Stewardship:

Last week's collection amounted to £1,584. In addition we also receive approximately £1,900 in standing orders each month. Thanks again for your continuing generosity.

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.

Meditation Group:

The Christian Meditation Group will not meet over the Christmas period. The group will resume on 13th January 2017. The Charismatic Prayer Group also will not be meeting during the Christmas break. Meetings resume at 7.30. pm on Tuesday 10th January 2017.

Whittington Carols:

Carol Singing on the Wards at the Whittington hospital will take place on Christmas Eve at 7.00 pm. If you would be interested in helping out in this very much appreciated event organised in the Hospital, they will be delighted to welcome you. All involved will meet in the Chaplaincy office at 6.45pm.