

MASS TIMES AND INTENTIONS

SATURDAY	6.00 pm	Mrs Margaret Aitken (RIP) Vigil Mass
FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT		Day of Prayer for Expectant Mothers
18 December 2016	9.00 am	People of Parish
	11.00 am	Holy Souls (Keeling)
MONDAY	9.00 am	Liturgy of the Word and Holy Communion
	9.15 am	Chapter of Canons Mass Brentwood Cathedral
TUESDAY	9.00 am	Paul Ollis RIP (recently)
WEDNESDAY	3.15pm	Mrs Margaret Hanley RIP Requiem Mass
THURSDAY	9.00 am	Pat & Nora Murrhy's Intentions (Flanagan)
FRIDAY	9.00 am	Pamela Magri RIP (Magri)
CHRISTMAS EVE	6.00 pm	Deceased members of the Lennon Family RIP (Lechley)
	8.30 pm	Christmas Carols
	9.00 pm	Jim Sullivan RIP (Kath & Steve Clayson)
CHRISTMAS DAY		
25 December 2016	9.00 am	Private Intention
	11.00 am	People of the Parish

SACRAMENT of PENANCE Saturday 11am to 12 noon and 5.15pm
(Please note new and longer times on Saturday) and on request to the priest.
DIVINE OFFICE PSALMS from Week 4 of Psalter for Advent Week 4
MORNING PRAYER is said in Church, 15 minutes before 9am Mass
ADORATION & PRAYER BEFORE THE BLESSED SACRAMENT
MONDAY to FRIDAY: 9.30am to 10.30am, and Saturday 11 to 12 noon

PARISH MASS BOOK: FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (Year A)

Page 7 The Beginning of Mass	Page 66 Preface 2 of Advent
Page 91 Collect & Readings	Page 28 Eucharistic Prayer 3
Page 12 The Apostles Creed	Page 56 The Communion Rite
Page 14 Preparation of Gifts	Page 93 Post Communion Prayer

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK AT HOME AND IN HOSPITAL Paula Hall, Tony Mullan, James Bullen, Sean Clohessy, Ann Dowd, Hannah Robinson, Mark Toohey, Daphne McAdam, Roger Minnis.

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OFFERINGS: Offertory Envelopes £180.50, Offertory Loose Plate £277.17
 Standing Orders £700, CAFOD £59.01 *Thank you for your generosity*

The Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, Epping



Parish Priest: Father John McGrath Tel: 01992 572516
Deacon: Rev Duncan Whitehouse Tel: 01992 577173
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Website: www.eppingcatholicchurch.co.uk

Our parish is twinned with Thistle Grove/Lebohang Parish in the Diocese of Dundee, South Africa

Parish Hall Booking: Arnold Verrall Tel: 07764404813 or 01992 001995 (Dial 01992 code even in Epping)

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (Year A) 18th December 2016

Dear Friends,

The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:18-24). On Mothering Sunday in Lent we honour and pray for God’s blessing on mothers, as they share the dignity the Holy Mother, Mary, had in conceiving Jesus, her son. On this Sunday before Christmas the Church asks us to honour and pray for Expectant Mothers, that God the Father may bless and protect them as they carry the child in their womb, just as the Blessed Mother did, with her child Jesus, 2000 years ago.

This Gospel reading shows us that the life and relationship of Mary and Joseph was complex and not free from difficulties, but beset with the troubles which affect many couples today. “Joseph, being a man of honour, decided to divorce Mary informally” when he found that she had conceived a child that was not his”. When a word came to him from the Lord, albeit by an angel in a dream, he was guided by that message and obeyed it. This sets an example for couples who are troubled by difficulties and all sorts of complexities in their relationship(s). It shows the importance of seeking a word from the Lord and being guided by it, in way that leads us to live our life in accordance with God’s plan. Many people today are tempted, like Joseph, to walk away from difficulties and problems rather than face up to the realities and struggle on with the help of God’s grace, in faithfulness to their vows and responsibilities.

At Christmas next weekend, we celebrate the birth of Jesus, our Lord, and Saviour of the world. We can be so preoccupied and hectic with material things in this season that the reason for Christmas can be overshadowed or forgotten in preparations. Thinking about and praying the Joyful mysteries of the Rosary can help focus on the origins of our faith centred on Christ’s birth. Let us prepare to welcome him into our lives, our hearts and homes at Christmas by turning to him in prayer this week, and asking him to come to us in love and save us from our self-centredness and sins.
God bless & keep you, and especially expectant mothers, safe in his care. Fr John

MRS MARGARET HANLEY, formerly of Harlow Parish, who died at Weald Hall Care Home on 21st October 2016. Her funeral will be celebrated with Requiem Mass here in our church on **Wednesday 21st December at 3.15pm** and will be followed by committal at Parndon Wood Crematorium.

May she rest in peace.

May the Lord grant eternal rest and lasting peace to all who have died, and send His Holy Spirit, The Comforter, to all who mourn at this time.

CHRISTMAS CONFESSION & MASS TIMES: Confessions will be heard after the morning Mass on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday of this coming week and from 11am to 12 noon on Christmas Eve. **Masses on Christmas Eve at 6pm, & 9pm. Christmas Eve Mass at 9pm** will be preceded by a half an hour Carol Service starting at 8.30pm. The Mass itself starts at 9pm and should not be more than an hour. Christmas Day Masses at 9am & 11am. Boxing Day Mass at 10am.

ADVENT RECONCILIATION SERVICES: Loughton church **Tuesday 20th December at 8pm.** Waltham Abbey Church **Wednesday 21st December at 7.30pm.**

CHURCH READING Could you **read the Word of God at Mass?** We are looking for some **additional Readers for each Mass** to help to carry out this vital ministry. A **training session took place on Saturday, 10th December.** You would join the reading rota from 30th December and read at your chosen Mass about once every 4-6 weeks. Please phone Deacon Duncan 01992 577173 to confirm your interest in helping with this important ministry...if you did not manage the 10th December training session, you can book-in for a later session.

JOURNEY IN FAITH We invite anyone who wishes to understand our faith, wants to support the faith of a family member or become Catholic, to a course of talks on the Catholic Faith in the Priest's House on Tuesdays at 8pm. It is suitable for anyone wishing to return to the practice of their faith or who is not Catholic but come to Mass. The next session will be on Tuesday the 3rd of January at 8.00pm.

CHRISTMAS DAY LUNCHEON 12.30pm for 1pm: All who may be alone on Christmas Day are invited to join us for Lunch in our hall; Couples & carers who would like company are most welcome. We need drivers to bring and take our guests home. We need small gifts and donations. The Hall will be open 9am -1pm on Christmas Eve to receive your donations of food and gifts. Your help and generosity and kindness is always deeply appreciated. Please give your name & contact number to Fr.John, Deacon Duncan or Mary Morgan on 01992 574719.

PARISH CHRISTMAS CARDS can be collected from the Hall after all Masses this weekend. We need parishioners to distribute cards in your area, where people are unable to get to church or who have lost contact with the church. This is an important way to show the Church is still cares about them.

Parish Nativity & Carol Service this Sunday 18th December at 6.00pm. Please bring children at 4.30pm for casting, costume fitting and a brief rehearsal before the carol service at 6.00pm. Older children/young adults are required to be narrators / readers and will need to collect their readings to practise the previous weekend ideally.

We look forward to welcoming EVREYONE, young and old to this beautiful parish community event.

Adults PLEASE NOTE ** Mulled wine & nibbles in the hall afterwards! **

BRENTWOOD DIOCESAN DIRECTORY for 2017 giving information about the church and parishes in our Diocese. On sale in the church for £2.75.

EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS/READERS ROTAS: Will those involved please collect the new rotas from the post box in the church porch.

APPLYING FOR A PLACE IN A CATHOLIC SCHOOL FOR SEPTEMBER 2017 - DIOCESAN GUIDANCE TO PARENTS/CARERS:

Parents and carers who are **practising Catholics** and wish to apply for a place for their child in a Catholic school for September 2017 should hand in their form to the Priest's House, where it will be attended to by Fr John & Deacon Duncan. Some may be contacted to discuss the reference for their child. Families where parents and children are not practising their faith and do not attend Sunday Mass consistently, should make their application directly to the school but not request a priest's reference unless there are extraordinary circumstances in their situation. It is essential that integrity and truth are respected in in this process.

STAFF Vacancies- All Saints Catholic School, Dagenham RM8 1JT. Midday Supervisors & Full time Caretaker required. Please contact Mrs S Forman on 0208 724 1855 or email sforman@allsaintsschool.co.uk for more details.

NEW PARISHIONER OR CHANGE OF ADDRESS: If you moved into our parish recently, or changed address in the parish, please introduce yourself to Fr John or Deacon Duncan and complete or update a Parish Registration Form.