



Sacred Heart Church, Oxford

Fourth Sunday of Advent

24th December, 2023

Balfour Road, Blackbird Leys, Oxford, OX4 6BD

Parish Priest: Fr. Harry Curtis

(Also serving Our Lady Help of Christians, Cowley, 01865 770910)

Parish Secretary: Reena Bartrip

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This Parish operates in accordance with Statutory Safeguarding Guidance and the National and Archdioceses policies & procedures at all times. At present, our Parish Safeguarding Representative is Margaret Lawes. She can be contacted at: sg.sacredheart.oxford@rcaob.org.uk or alternatively the Diocesan Safeguarding team can be contacted on 0121 230 6240/ safeguarding@rcaob.org.uk if you have any concern.

Sunday, 24 th December Fourth Sunday of Advent <i>Day of Prayer for Expectant Mothers</i> Christmas Eve	<i>(5.30 pm Saturday Vigil Mass at Our Lady's)</i> 7.45 am Office of Readings & Morning Prayer 9.00 am Mass <i>(11.00 am Mass at Our Lady's)</i> <i>(2.00 pm Baptisms at Our Lady's)</i> 6.00 pm Crib Service, followed by the First Mass of Christmas 11.30 pm <i>Carols and Readings</i> 12.00 Midnight Mass	<i>Deceased Lyons & Kennedy Families</i> <i>Rita Da Silva</i> <i>Kathy McGurn</i> <i>Alessandro & Jamaya</i> <i>Somtochukwu Blaise Stephen Ifemeje</i> <i>Private Intention</i>
Monday, 25 th December CHRISTMAS DAY: SOLEMNITY OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD	8.00 am <i>Morning Prayer</i> 9.00 am Mass <i>(11.00 am Mass at Our Lady's)</i>	<i>John & Michael Cullen</i> <i>All Parish helpers</i>
Tuesday, 26 th December <i>Feast of St. Stephen, the first Martyr</i>	8.00 am <i>Office of Readings & Morning Prayer</i> 10.00 am Mass <i>(12.00 noon Mass at Our Lady's)</i>	<i>The People of the Parish</i> <i>Sr. Maureen Grigg (Intentions)</i>
Wednesday, 27 th December <i>Feast of St. John, Apostle</i>	No Public Mass Today	
Thursday, 28 th December <i>Feast of the Holy Innocents</i>	8.00 am <i>Office of Readings & Morning Prayer</i> 10.00 am Mass	<i>All Parish helpers</i>
Friday, 29 th December <i>Feast of St. Thomas Becket</i>	8.00 am <i>Office of Readings & Morning Prayer</i> <i>(10.00 am Mass at Our Lady's)</i>	<i>Stephanie & Christine Allen (Ints)</i>
Saturday, 30 th December <i>Sixth Day in the Christmas Octave</i>	8.00 am <i>Office of Readings & Morning Prayer</i> 10.00 am Mass <i>(5.30 pm Vigil Mass at Our Lady's)</i>	<i>John Boyle and Family (Ints)</i> <i>Michael Iago</i>
Sunday, 31 st December Feast of the Holy Family	7.45 am Office of Readings & Morning Prayer 9.00 am Mass <i>(11.00 am Mass at Our Lady's)</i> 6.00 pm Mass	<i>Jean Bradley (Anniversary)</i> <i>Josie Coughlan (Intentions)</i> <i>The People of the Parish</i>

Welcome to Sacred Heart for Mass today, especially if you are visiting for the Christmas and New Year holidays. Happy Christmas, everyone!

I am happy to announce a Christmas miracle! Our heating system, which had been declared dead, has come back to life. Let us rejoice and luxuriate.

Our Parish Prayer: Help us, Lord, to receive you with an open heart this day.

May our community receive your grace and deepen its faith in you.

Make us lights to shine forth with your love, giving life and hope to those who have fallen away or who have never known you. Amen.



Our Parish Christmas Tree

I invite you decorate our Christmas tree by writing your prayer for Christmas – for yourself, your family and friends, for the poor, for peace, and so on - on one of the paper stars and hanging it on the tree. The star led the Wise Men to the Baby Jesus and they can inspire us to praise and prayer. Our tree is not just a decoration: it is a focus for our hope and prayer this Advent and Christmas.

If you are unable to come to church and wish to watch the Mass at your home, go to

<https://www.mcn.live/Camera/our-lady-help-of-christians>

Prayers for the Sick. Please pray for Iris O'Brien, Mary Doyle, Thomas Gaughan, Barry Holland, Rosalind Ingrams, Betty Duff, Inna, Beatrice Upham and Eileen McGarry and all those we know who are sick. If someone is sick and would like to be prayed for, please let me know.

Please pray for Anne Mullagh and Sean Jennings who died recently, and all those whose anniversaries occur at this time: Bishop Francis Thomas, Mgr. Canons William Flint and Thomas Gavin, Mgr. Patrick O'Mahoney, Frs. Patrick Wall, Anthony Ireland, Thomas N Meagher, Denis Murphy, Colum McCabe, James (Seamus) McInerney, David O'Callaghan and Patrick Lynch, Deacon Peter Mason, Sr. Ann Hoskison FMA, and also Cherry Judith Smith and Anacletus Prosper. May they rest in peace.

Prayer at the end of Mass:

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy, hail, our life, our sweetness and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve: to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus, O merciful, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary! *Pray for us, O holy Mother of God,* that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Remember: refreshments are available in the hall after the 9.00 am Mass on Sundays. Come and have a chat with friends.



Commemorative Candles. For £5 you can buy a candle that will be blessed at Christmas and then will burn in the sanctuary, by the Sacred Heart or Our Lady, for any week of your choice during the coming year. It can be to remember a loved one; for a special intention; or why not give one as a Christmas present?

Crib Offerings. As you can see, our Crib has been put up. As usual, your crib offerings will be divided between a local charity and an international charity. This year we are supporting Emmaus (Oxford) and the Friends of the Holy Land. From FHL: "Overall, the situation for our Christian family in the Holy Land has gone from very difficult to critical, and **we face the possibility of the last members of the ancient Christian community leaving the homeland of our faith forever.** Our office in Bethlehem and contacts in Gaza, Israel and Jordan are well-placed to get urgent, direct aid to the families across the Holy Land most in need – we've done it before and we're doing it again, powered by your help. After such a major disaster, we know that our aid is going to be needed well into next year as we help the community rebuild and recover."

Thank you to everyone who has helped me and our parish family over the past year: Sacristans, servers, readers, church cleaners, flower arrangers, catechists, musicians, providers of hospitality, the Finance Committee and fundraisers. I shall offer Mass for your intentions.

Christmas Offerings. Traditionally the collection at the Christmas Masses is your personal offering to your priest. There are envelopes at the back of Church to use if you wish. Thank you.

This weekend we welcome Fr. Martin Flatman who will be here to celebrate the Sunday evening Mass (6.00 pm). This will be the first Mass of Christmas. Mass will begin with a Crib Service, so please aim to be here ready to start at 6.00 pm.

I shall be here (God willing!) for the other services on Christmas Eve and Christmas morning.

Deputy Headteacher Vacancy. St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Headley Way, is seeking to recruit a Deputy Headteacher from April or September 2024. If interested please visit the school website www.st-josephs-pri.oxon.sch.uk/about-us/vacancies

Altar Servers' Retreat - "Called to Serve" 8th-10th March 2024. The Diocesan services are offering their first weekend Retreat especially for altar servers at Alton Castle. 'Called to Serve' is for those in school years 5-13. There will be reflection, fellowship, fun and outdoor activities. The Archbishop will be celebrating Mass, and there will be a special candlelight procession. To book a place: deacon.owen@vocations.org.uk

Tailpiece: As the family divided up the Christmas cake, little Billy shouted, "I want the biggest piece". "Billy," said his mother. "That's very rude. You shouldn't demand the biggest piece like that." "Well, then," said Billy, "How else do I get it?"

I wish you all a very happy and holy Christmas. Thank you for your friendship and help this year, and may God bless you and all those who are dear to you.

Fr. Harry