



**Sacred Heart**  
Southend-on-Sea  
**St John Fisher**  
Prittlewell

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## PARISH NEWSLETTER

**24<sup>th</sup> December 2017 – 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent (B)**  
and  
**25<sup>th</sup> December 2017 – Christmas Day**



From Fr Graham and Puss!

My dear friends

Some nursery school kids were preparing a Christmas play. Little Cynthia did not like the part she was assigned to play. She wanted to change parts with her friend Monica. When the teacher asked her why, she answered, "Because it is easier to be an angel than to be the mother of Christ." The little girl is certainly right. To be the mother of Christ is no light matter. Yet difficult as it sounds, that is exactly what we are all called to be. In fact, we could say that even though Jesus was born in Bethlehem, his real desire is to be born in the hearts of believers, to be re-produced by believers.

Mother of Christ is a title we usually reserve for Mary. But we all, men, women and children, can and should become mothers of Christ. The idea of Christians called to be mothers is called a spiritual motherhood. What is this spiritual motherhood of Christ and how does it happen? To become mothers of Christ we need to make the prayer of Mary our own: "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word"

This prayer of Mary has been known as the world's greatest prayer. It is the prayer that brought God down from heaven to dwell in the soul and body of a lowly young woman. It is the prayer that brought about the greatest event in human history, God becoming human in Jesus. It is a prayer that changed forever the course of human history some 2000 years ago. This prayer is so very different from what has been called the world's most common prayer, the prayer in which we try to get God to do our will. The world's most common prayer says, "My will be done," whereas the world greatest prayer says, "Thy will be done."

Yes, little Cynthia was right. It is not easy to be the mother of Christ. But in today's gospel Mary shows us how. It is in hearing God's word and saying yes to God even when God's will seems to go against all our plans and hopes for the future. As Christmas draws near, Mary reminds us that the best Christmas, in fact the only true Christmas, is that Christ be born not in the little town of Bethlehem but in the inner sanctuary of our hearts.

Happy Christmas everyone, a Happy new year and may God bless you all

*Father Graham*

### **Collections at Christmas**

The offertory collection during the Children's Nativity Mass, "Midnight" Mass and the two Masses on Christmas morning is your personal gift to support Fr Graham. The crib collection is to support the Brentwood Catholic Children's Society.

### **Festive Refreshments**

Please feel free to come along and join us for some festive cheer after the Christmas Eve evening Mass at St John Fisher and the Midnight Mass at Sacred Heart. Both events will take place in the respective church hall.



## **Brentwood Cathedral on BBC (Radio) Essex**

The recent Nine Lessons and Carols service at Brentwood Cathedral was recorded by BBC Essex (95.3 FM to 103.5 FM) and will be broadcast at 6.00am on Christmas Eve and 6.00am on Christmas Day...or listen again at a more convenient moment! It is a beautiful service and the broadcast will feature Bishop Alan, the Cathedral choir and readers from across the diocese. Details can be found at [www.bbc.co.uk/bbcessex](http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcessex).

## **New Year's Eve Party – Please get your tickets now!**

Welcome in 2018 together at Sacred Heart Church Hall – an evening of fun and laughter kicked off by Laurel & Hardy in their classic 'Saps at Sea', followed by plenty of fun and games including pitting your detecting skills against the murderer in the classic Cluedo game, Murder before Midnight, and much, much, more... Due to restricted funds this year the Social Committee will provide a basic buffet but encourage you all to bring a plate of your favourite something to add to the buffet table to share with everyone. Bubbly at midnight! Free entry, but a ticket is required to control numbers, available from Sandy or phone Liam 07952 954833 or email: [liam.rand@btopenworld.com](mailto:liam.rand@btopenworld.com) - Bring the family for an evening of entertainment for the young and old alike. Bring on 2018!

## **Masses and Services this Week**

There are several changes to Masses and Services this week. Please see the table later in the newsletter for details.

## **Christmas Dinner – 27<sup>th</sup> December 2017**

Once again this year we will be hosting Christmas dinner at Sacred Heart Primary School on the 27<sup>th</sup> December as it was such a lovely occasion last year celebrating with some friends old and new. If you are on your own that day and would like to join us for turkey and all the trimmings then please contact 07711 773008 to reserve a place. We will be serving dinner about 1.00pm. Please mention when booking if you require transport. Look forward to seeing you, Sally Nutman, friends and family.

## **Parish Magazine**

On sale this weekend – just £1.00 per copy.

## **Sacred Heart Christmas Raffle**

Thank you to everyone who supported the Christmas Raffle. It raised £576.76 for the Parish Maintenance Fund.

## **St John Fisher Bring and Buy Sales and Hamper Raffle**

Thank you very much for your support. We raised £230.00 plus £90 from the hamper raffle in aid of the Parish Maintenance Fund. The raffle draw took place during the Coffee Morning on 17<sup>th</sup> December. The winning tickets were: 1<sup>st</sup> prize, **white 23**. 2<sup>nd</sup> prize, white 192 (claimed). 3<sup>rd</sup> prize, blue 180 (claimed). 4<sup>th</sup> prize, **blue 45**. 5<sup>th</sup> prize, **blue 40**. 6<sup>th</sup> prize **white 107**. If you have the winning ticket for an unclaimed prize, please contact Phyllis on 07789 555401.

Thank you once again. We will have another Bring and Buy on the first weekend of February in aid of the Parish Maintenance Fund.

## **Operation Christmas Child Shoebox Appeal**

What a bumper year! A total of 185 boxes! Well done and thank you to everyone from St John Fisher, Sacred Heart, The Prayer Group, our knitters and to surrounding friends, families, day centres, SHSB, and neighbours who contributed to our appeal this year. Our boxes will be going to Romania to a small community village called Bod and also to Harghita (north of Romania).

Age	2-4	5-9	10-14
Girl	26	50	33
Boy	17	40	19

Important information for next year. Due to our Parish's need for urgent maintenance work we will only be coordinating complete boxes. We will not be able to collect financial donations as a contribution towards the boxes therefore donations of individual goods will not be required as there will be no means of paying for the shipping costs. Helen and Karen from St John Fisher and ladies from the Prayer Group, Maddie, Marie and Maria from Sacred Heart will be happy to help with wrapping of the boxes. Please also note that there may be a restriction on toothpaste and sweets next year. Confirmation of this will be in the leaflets distributed in September 2018. Thank you once again for all your kind donations.

## **RCIA**

For those wishing to learn more about the Catholic faith, RCIA sessions will start in the New Year with the first session being on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> January at 7.30pm in Sacred Heart Hall.

## **First Holy Communion Programme**

The first Children's Session will be on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> January at 9.30am in Sacred Heart Hall. The First Holy Communion children will be Presented to the Parish during the 11.00am Mass on that day. It is important that all children on the Programme attend the session and Mass.

## Confirmation Programme

The first session will take place on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> January at 6.30pm in Sacred Heart Hall.

## Stella Dawson Child Friendly Prayer Group

The Prayer Group will not be meeting again until after Christmas and will reconvene on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> January at 10.00am in Sacred Heart Hall. If, during the holidays, you have an urgent prayer need please call Marianna on 07813 207497.

Collections of Food and Toiletries		
	Dates	Priority Items
HARP	6 <sup>th</sup> and 7 <sup>th</sup> January	Coffee, teabags, sugar and toiletries.
Foodbank	23 <sup>rd</sup> and 24 <sup>th</sup> December 30 <sup>th</sup> and 31 <sup>st</sup> December	<b>Tinned puddings and tinned custard</b>

## Baptism Preparation

The next Course for parents and expectant parents who wish to have a child baptised at Sacred Heart or St John Fisher will be on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January at 7.00pm in Sacred Heart Hall. Please pick up a form from the church porch to register for the course and request the Baptism. **Please note that in order for a child to be baptised, at least one of the parents must be a baptised catholic and a copy of the parent's baptism certificate must be attached to the application for the child's baptism. Parents are expected to attend a Preparation Course prior to the baptism of each of their children.**

## Appeals for Volunteers to help our Parish

We need some more volunteers to help with Parish Activities. If you can help with any of the following please contact Fr Graham or Sue in the Parish Office.

**Children's Liturgy Leaders.** Leaders are needed to help with Children's Liturgy at the Sunday 11.00am Mass at Sacred Heart.

**Calligraphy.** We need to bring the Parish Memorial Books up to date and are hoping someone with calligraphy skills could do it for us.

## Brentwood Diocesan Directory 2018

Now available in the Church Porches - £2.75 or £4.00 for spiral bound.

## Message from the Catholic Education Service

Last year the Government promised to lift the 50% cap on faith admissions for new religious schools. This policy had proved to be an effective ban on any new Catholic schools as our Bishops ruled that opening a Catholic school that tuned away Catholics for being Catholic was against Canon Law. The 50% cap was a policy that specifically targeted Catholics as Catholic schools are popular with parents of all faiths and none. Last September the Government acknowledged the cap was unfair to the Catholic community and pledged to scrap it. The Conservatives even included a commitment to remove it in their manifesto.

Unfortunately, the feedback we are getting is that the Secretary of State for Education is thinking about U-turning on this and breaking the Government's promise to Catholics. The Catholic community now needs to make its collective voice heard and tell the Secretary of State that this level of discrimination against Catholic schools, parents and children will not be tolerated. As such we are urging Catholics to write to the Secretary of State and their MP expressing their concern that this promise to our community could be broken. These letters can be easily sent by following this link, <http://catholicnews.org.uk/education-cap> inserting your details and clicking 'send'.

## Gift Aid

Gift Aid is linked to basic rate tax (payable on income over £ £11,500.00 in 2017-18). If your circumstances have changed and you are no longer a tax payer please notify Sue in the Parish Office as soon as possible. Additionally, if you pay less Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax in any tax year that the amount of Gift Aid claimed on your donations, it is your responsibility to pay any difference.

## Are You Going into Hospital?

If you go to hospital, make sure you tell the staff that you are Catholic and that you would like a priest to visit, otherwise the Chaplain has no way of knowing that you wish a visit. If you know of a relative or friend who is in hospital, make sure your parish priest knows, and he can arrange for the Chaplain to visit. The Chaplain for Southend Hospital is Fr Gerry Drummond, who can be reached through the hospital switchboard at 01702 435555.

## Mass for Vocations with Bishop Alan

A Mass for those enquiring or discerning a vocation to the priesthood will be at Our Lady of Lourdes at Leigh-on-Sea at 12.00noon on the feast of St. Thomas Becket, the 29<sup>th</sup> December 2017. All are welcome to come and pray for vocations and to meet our seminarians.

## **Have you thought about the Religious Life?**

On 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> February the Congregation of Jesus is hosting a discernment weekend in York for women considering religious life. The weekend offers guidance on how to discern a vocation, and also how to discern which congregation would suit. The weekend is open to women of any age, and there is no charge (although you are welcome to make a contribution). If you are interested, please contact us first, via [vocations@congregatiojesu.org.uk](mailto:vocations@congregatiojesu.org.uk), so that we can make sure the weekend is appropriate for you, and ensure there is a bedroom available.

## **Walsingham House at Abbotswick – Open Afternoon**

Come any time from 12noon to 4.00pm on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> January to see the newly restored and refurbished house, and the new chapel. There will be refreshments in the dining room, tours of the house, and peaceful prayer in the chapel, with Adoration from 2.30pm to 3.30pm. Everyone is warmly welcome. For more information about the project, or to donate, please visit [www.bcys.net/abbotswick](http://www.bcys.net/abbotswick). The address is Walsingham House at Abbotswick, Navestock Side, Near Brentwood CM14 5SH. It is less than 40 minutes from most of East London and Essex. Come and see!

## **'Chosen' New Year Retreat for Young People (15-35yrs)**

At St Bonaventure's school, Forest Gate from Friday 29<sup>th</sup> December to Monday 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018. The retreat is being run within our diocese by 'Youth 2000', a National Catholic Youth ministry, which runs events all over the country. To include a New Year's Eve celebration, along with praise and worship, adoration, celebration of Mass and the Sacraments, and feature gifted speakers and testimonies. Many clergy and religious from around the diocese will be present, along with our Bishop, Alan Williams. The cost for this event will be whatever you can afford and Youth 2000 simply ask for a donation within your means. If you would like your child to take part, please register your interest at [www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/chosen-youth-2000-london-retreat-tickets-39656106482](http://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/chosen-youth-2000-london-retreat-tickets-39656106482) or by emailing: [info@youth2000.org](mailto:info@youth2000.org).

## **About our Parish**

Within our Parish there are two churches: The Sacred Heart of Jesus, 418 Southchurch Road, Southend-on-Sea, and St John Fisher, 2 Manners Way, Prittlewell (at Cuckoo Corner).

The Parish Priest, Fr Graham Smith, is resident at The Presbytery, 418 Southchurch Road, Southend-on-Sea, SS1 2QB (tel 01702 465720).

## **Catholic Schools**

Sacred Heart Primary School and Nursery (tel 534546) is adjacent to Sacred Heart Church, with its entrance on Windermere Road. Sacred Heart School is the designated primary school for children living in the central and southern parts of the parish (within the boundaries of the former parish of Sacred Heart).

St Teresa's Primary School in Rochford (tel 547918) is the designated primary school for children living in the northern part of the parish (within the boundaries of the former parish of St John Fisher).

St Bernard's High School (for girls) (tel 343583) and St Thomas More High School (for boys) (tel 344933) are the Catholic secondary schools in our area.

## **Sunday Morning Coffee Mornings**

Coffee mornings are held after the Sunday morning Masses at both Churches. All are welcome to attend and enjoy an opportunity to socialise with fellow parishioners.

## **Children's Liturgy – St John Fisher**

The Children's Liturgy at St John Fisher takes place every Sunday during term time and is open to all primary school age children. The children look at the Gospel in a meaningful way that is appropriate to their age. All children are welcome along.

## **Children's Liturgy – Sacred Heart**

Every Sunday during term time, Sacred Heart has a children's liturgy for all pre-communion age children (usually 7 years and under), which takes place in the church hall. We mirror what is happening for you in the Mass, with the Penitential Rite, the Gloria, the Acclamation and the Gospel, maybe a bit more singing, a little bit of acting, a chat and a think about the meaning of the Gospel and how we can use it's wisdom in the week ahead....but in a way a child 7 years and under can (hopefully) understand. Wishing you all a very merry Christmas!  
*The Liturgy Team*

## **Faith Study Group**

The Faith Group has been running for over four years and provides an opportunity for people to explore and deepen their Catholic faith. During the meeting we watch a religious DVD on a chosen subject. This is followed by a discussion in an informal and relaxed atmosphere. There is no expectation of any previous knowledge and everyone is very welcome to come along. Our meetings have been inspirational, affirming and enlightening - a source of real spiritual growth and understanding.

In January, we will reprise the excellent Word on Fire 'Catholicism' DVD by Bishop Robert Barron. Please do come along if you are interested.

We meet the first Thursday of the month (except in school holidays) between 1.30 - 3.00pm. For further information please call Sandy Stidston on 01702 467188.

The Faith Group wish you all the many blessings of Christmas.

## **Sacred Heart CAFOD Project (Supported by the Knight of St. Columba)**

To assist the parish project of raising funds to secure the long term maintenance of both our churches and associated buildings our CAFOD Project has been temporarily suspended until 2019 when we will launch again. This however does not stop you as individuals donating directly. *We wish you all a Holy and Peaceful Christmas and a very happy New Year – and once again thank you for your support. Sandy & Liam Rand.*

## **Sacred Heart and St John Fisher Parish Magazine and 200 Club**

To secure the long term future of the Parish Magazine we have been working tirelessly to find a cost neutral formula for the parish. From now on the magazine will take an A5 form and while this Christmas Edition will have 36 pages future editions will contain 44 pages to keep up with the volume of content. We sincerely hope you will enjoy the new revised edition this Christmas and thank you for your magnificent support. - *Wishing you all a Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year. Sandy, Liam & Paul.*

## **Knights of Saint Columba**

The Knights have enjoyed something of a revival locally during the past three years. New, younger members have started to join giving our Council an energy and freshness not experienced in some time. Covering six parishes first and foremost our mission is to support Pope Francis, the hierarchy of the Catholic Church and your local clergy. On the 1st January 2018 we celebrate our 90th year with Mass at Saint Peters, Eastwood. Nationally we are approaching our centenary year in 2019. Our Charity work includes raising money for MISSIO, BEEF (Brentwood Ecclesiastical Education Fund for the training of new priests), BCCS (Brentwood Catholic Children's Society) and Nazareth House. In October we ran a Community Fayre again where local charities and organisations come together under one roof to inform our local communities of the support and help available to them. The event will be repeated in 2018. This year we have raised in excess of £3,500. A spiritual organisation we encourage gentleman to consider joining our Order to enjoy a life of Unity, Fraternity and Charity. With the proposed restructuring of the Diocese likely to be implemented from 2019 our clergy have never needed more support - If you are interested in joining us please contact Liam Rand 07952 954833 or email: [liam.rand@btopenworld.com](mailto:liam.rand@btopenworld.com) – Please Keep Christ in Christmas - *We wish you and Peaceful and Holy Christmas from Liam Rand (Grand Knight) and all the Brothers of Council 192 Southend.*

## **Stewards of the Gospel**

Liam Rand at Sacred Heart Church and Phyllis Short at Saint John Fisher Church are your Stewards of the Gospel. Appointed by Bishop Alan Williams in February 2016, we are tasked with finding ways of evangelising in the years ahead at a parish, deanery and diocesan level, using the resources at our disposal in each individual parish, finding other parishes to link and share resources with and encourage and reinvigorate our youth to lead prayerful lives and open their hearts to listen to Gods calling. You will have already noticed changes made within both churches instigated by you through your answers to the One Minute Survey. There will be a public meeting on Sunday 21st January at Sacred Heart Church Hall immediately following 11am Mass, to discuss the proposed changes to the Diocese, our Deanery and Parishes. All are welcome. Please keep us in your prayers – thank you. *Wishing you all a blessed and Holy Christmas, Phyllis Short & Liam Rand.*

## **Sacred Heart Social Committee**

We help to organise social events on behalf of the Sacred Heart congregation. We usually meet in Sacred Heart Hall on the first Monday evening of every month. Anyone is welcome to attend and to present ideas for a social event or indeed a programme of events. In the last year, with your generous support we have raised £850 for redecoration of Sacred Heart Hall. We ran 3 coach trips, to Cambridge, to Walsingham, and to St James' in London. We have hosted 10 film shows, 3 children's matinees and one very successful fashion show. Keep an eye on the Parish Newsletter for announcements of future events.

## **St John Fisher CAFOD Project**

Our current CAFOD Project, which we chose through CAFOD's World Gift Programme, was started in January 2015. Since then we have worked hard to reach our target. We chose six individual projects that we believe will help to transform the lives of families and communities in some of the poorest countries in the world. The projects include 2 Community Water Supplies, which will provide clean, safe water to drink and water for irrigation through the building of wells, water tanks and reservoirs; 3 Medical Outreach Teams, bringing healthcare services to remote communities; 2 Camels, enabling families to transport their goods to market; 4 Cows who will provide manure to help families grow crops, milk to supplement their diets plus surplus milk that can be sold and calves that can be passed on to other families; 2 Beekeeping Starter Kits, providing nutritious food as well as sustainable income and 4 Donkeys who will help to carry heavy water cans from distant wells. Through the monthly coffee and cake events the parish has raised £4,514 by the end of October this year. The projects totalled £4,050 leaving a surplus of £464 towards the next project. We have met our target! Well done everyone!

The parish has been extraordinarily generous in its support and we are especially grateful for some of the very generous donations we have received, but more than that, we have really enjoyed sharing the coffee and cake times with you; the warmth, friendliness and care that exists in the parish is a true sign of Christian love. Our sincere thanks to everyone and we wish you all a very happy and peaceful Christmas and a healthy New Year.

## **Southend Foodbank**

The Southend Foodbank has been running since November 2013, is based at Belle Vue Baptist Church and is run by six local Churches.

Food is only given on the presentation of a voucher which is issued by Social Services a local church or any one of a further 60 voucher holders. The food is sufficient for three days, three meals per day. The items make up balanced meals, but of their nature (tinned or dried) is not normally fresh food, although some fresh vegetables are donated on some days. Three vouchers can be issued to the same guests over a period of six months. This can be spread out or in quick succession, depending on the nature of the problem/s affecting the guests. Many guests are given a voucher because of a delay in receiving state benefits or they have incurred a penalty for some reason.

As well as distributing food, we also give advice about services that may be able to help the guest, for example, signposting for help with dealing with debt (Christians Against Poverty).

We collect donations of non-perishable food in both churches on all but the first Sunday of the month (when donations are collected for HARP – our local charity for homeless people). Please look at the weekly newsletter to see what the current priority items are and give as generously as you can. Thank you.

## **St Vincent De Paul Society (SVP)**

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is a Catholic organisation of lay people, founded in 1833 by Frederick Ozanam. The inspiration for his work, and ours, is St. Vincent de Paul, who spent his life caring for others. Our mission is to bring the love of Christ to anyone in need by person to person contact, visiting and supporting anyone in our Parish who is lonely, sick or housebound. We make visits to homes, hospitals and nursing homes, helping both individuals and families. We also make donations of food, food vouchers and clothes vouchers to individuals and families, send children to the SVP Summer camp, help children to join their classmates on school holidays, make donations of food and vouchers to the local homeless and the ex-prisoners' hostel, arrange a Summer party and New Year party for the elderly and housebound, support our twinned conferences in India and support countries in times of natural disasters.

2017 was a bad year for me but the other members took over and kept it all running. Once again we received some great donations and equally good expenditure including 3 going to SVP camp. We also enjoyed two very successful tea parties with both being attended by over 60 people. Unfortunately we

missed out on a few coffee mornings as they just happened to be on special days but with all your help we carried on doing what we always do.

I would also like to announce two new members to our group so our numbers are growing but we could still do with some younger blood.

We meet in Sacred Heart Hall every Tuesday at 6.45pm. If you would like to know more about being a member please contact Fr Graham or one of our members. If you would like the SVP to contact you, a member of your family or someone else you know is in need, please give their details to Fr Graham or one of our members. On behalf of all the people we have had the pleasure of helping I extend my Thanks to everyone who has supported the SVP throughout the year and look forward to another year where we can make a difference.

*Pete Wake*

## **Stella Dawson Child Friendly Prayer Group - Give us your prayer Requests!**

At this gentle and holy time, we would love to believe that everyone is living a life of perfect balance, perfect health and perfect love. A life where we enjoy daily communication and a rich friendship with God, and peaceful interaction with our fellow man. Where illness, financial worry and stress have no hold over us. If that is you, even partly you, WOW! Go you! What truly fantastic news and please share with us all how you managed it, or even in some small way, how God is at work in your life, on the testimony board in the porch! Testimony cards are right there, waiting!

Hearing real life stories of how God is living, breathing and working miracles for us and through us from the inside out, actively loving us, answering our prayers in often unexpected ways and helping us as we work through our lives, is what keeps the journey hopeful, faithful and strengthening.

If however, this description isn't quite ringing true to your situation right now, (that'll be most of us, most of the time!), we invite you to let us pray for you. No prayer request is too big, too humble or too persistent. Any requests are always dealt with in the strictest of confidence and never discussed outside of the prayer room. If you don't feel comfortable writing down the specific details, that's ok too. This is GOD we're talking about! He knows what you need better than you could ever express! Just fill in a prayer request form beside the testimony board (in Sacred Heart porch) and pop it in the box. We'll do the rest.

Meeting on Wednesday mornings in Sacred Heart Hall, from 10.00am during term time, we worship, give thanks, share testimonies and pray for each other and the parish. There is a lot of laughter, honesty, sometimes tears but always hope, compassion and friendship as we reconnect with God in a relaxed, sometimes noisy child friendly environment that is prayer group. And newcomers are ALWAYS welcome! Our next meeting is on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2018.

Wishing you a joyous, peaceful and God-filled Christmas from all at Prayer Group. See you in 2018 and keep those prayer requests coming!

### **• Sacraments and Services •**

#### **Sunday Masses at Sacred Heart Church**

Our regular Sunday Mass times are 5.30pm on Saturday evening and 11.00am on Sunday. During school terms, there is a separate Liturgy of the Word for pre First Holy Communion children at the 11.00am Mass.

#### **Sunday Mass at St John Fisher Church**

Our regular Sunday Mass is at 9.00am. During school terms, there is a separate Liturgy of the Word for children of primary-school age. The first Sunday of the month is usually celebrated as the "children's Mass".

#### **Weekday Masses**

Weekday Mass times may vary: please check the weekly newsletter.

#### **Holy Days of Obligation**

Masses for Holy Days of Obligation are celebrated at 9.30am at Sacred Heart and at 7.30pm at St John Fisher.

#### **Polish Mass**

Polish Masses are held at Sacred Heart at 9.00am every Sunday.

## **Mass in the Syro-Malabar Rite**

This is held at St John Fisher on the first and third Sunday of the month at 11.30am.

## **Mass Intentions**

To "book" a Mass said for a specific intention, please complete one of the special forms in the church porch and give it to Fr Graham. Intentions are assigned on a 'first come, first served' basis. If you want to mark a particular occasion, e.g. an anniversary, it would be best to make the request at least three months ahead of time.

## **Baptism**

Baptism (sometimes known as "christening") is the sacrament by which a baby, child or adult becomes a member of the Church. To help parents to understand the importance of Baptism for their children, we offer a short preparation session. The next course is on Monday 15<sup>th</sup> January at 7.00pm in Sacred Heart Hall. Please pick up a form from the church porch to register for the course and request the Baptism.

## **First Reconciliation and First Communion**

In Holy Communion we receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, as he promised at the Last Supper. Our First Communion programme prepares children - and their parents - for the moment when they first celebrate this most important part of their lives as Christians. The programme normally runs from January each year and is open to children in school year 3 and above. The First Communion programme also includes preparation for the children's first celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

## **Reconciliation**

In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, God welcomes the return of the repentant sinner and offers the grace of forgiveness. This sacrament is also known as Confession (because it involves the sinner making a spoken confession to God through the ministry of a Priest) or Penance (because it requires an attitude of genuine repentance for wrong-doing). Sacramental Reconciliation is available every Saturday, 10.00-10.45am at Sacred Heart, and at other times by appointment.

## **Confirmation**

In Confirmation we receive a sacramental gift of the Holy Spirit. For young Catholics, Confirmation is the moment when they become full, adult members of the Church. The Confirmation programme in our Parish usually begins in the autumn of each year and is open to young people in school year 10 or above.

## **Getting Married**

If you are considering getting married in the course of the next year or two, please bear in mind that both Sacred Heart and St John Fisher Churches are licensed for marriages. It is the Church's firm belief – based on the teachings of Our Lord, and on 2000 years of collective experience - that the full blessings of marriage are most likely to come when the couple make a mature commitment to each other in the presence of God and with the support and prayers of the Christian community. To help you to make this commitment – and to prepare for a joyful celebration of the wedding day – we normally require about six months notice. Please speak to Fr Graham if you would like to get married in one of our Churches.

## **Thinking of Becoming a Catholic?**

Each year a number of people join the Catholic Church in our parish through the RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) programme. The next RCIA course will begin in September 2018, and the new group will be meeting on Thursday evenings. Some of those who follow the course will be received into the Catholic Church at Easter in the following year, others may take longer to reach a firm decision for themselves, and all are welcome to join the course on a "no commitment" basis.

The RCIA course is open to adults who have never been baptised, or who have been baptised in another Christian Church. It may also be suitable for adult Catholics who have been baptised but not yet confirmed. Please make initial enquiries to Fr Graham at the Presbytery (01702 465720 or by email [parish@catholicsouthend.org.uk](mailto:parish@catholicsouthend.org.uk)).

## **Holy Communion for Sick and Housebound People**

A source of spiritual comfort, for those who are not able to attend Sunday Mass, is Holy Communion brought by a Priest or a lay minister. This can be arranged on individual occasions, or as a regular weekly or monthly visit, depending on circumstances. If you believe that you or someone close to you would benefit from the Holy Communion, please contact the Presbytery (01702 465720).

## Hospital Visits

At Southend Hospital there are regular arrangements for visits by the Catholic chaplain (Fr Gerry Drummond) and for Holy Communion on Sunday, however you must let the nursing staff know you would like a visit. Fr Graham can also visit on request. To arrange this please phone the presbytery or, if Fr Graham is away, contact Fr Gerry at Rochford (01702 544334). In emergencies, a Catholic priest can be called by hospital staff.

## Bereavement

The Parish Priest and parishioners are always ready to assist in the event of a death, whether what you need is prayer, guidance, practical support or help with planning a funeral.

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## Money

Offertory – Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2017

£1048.82

The offertory collection at the Evening Masses on Christmas Eve and daytime Masses on Christmas Day is your personal gift to support Fr Graham.

The crib collection is to support the Brentwood Catholic Children's Society.

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## Kathleen Horvers RIP

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Kathleen Horvers who died on 2<sup>nd</sup> December. Her Requiem Mass will be on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> December at 12 noon at St John Fisher followed by cremation at Southend Crematorium. All are welcome at the Reception at the Saxon King from 1.30pm.

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## James Stewart RIP

Please pray for the repose of the soul of James Stewart who died recently. His funeral will be on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> December at 3.00pm at Southend Crematorium.

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## Marguerite Wate RIP

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Marguerite Wate who died recently. Her Requiem Mass will be on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> December at 9.30am at Sacred Heart.

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## Mark O'Connor RIP

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Mark O'Connor who died recently. His funeral will be on Friday 5<sup>th</sup> January at 1.00pm at Southend Crematorium.

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## Kenneth Hayter RIP

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Kenneth Hayter (a former parishioner of St John Fisher) who died on 17<sup>th</sup> December. The funeral arrangements are not yet known.

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## Catherine Ely RIP

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Catherine Ely who died recently. The funeral arrangements are not yet known.

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## Sick Parishioners

Please pray for our sick parishioners and friends, especially; for Jack Allen, Val Armitage, Charmaine Arnold, Marie Biner, Andrew Bines, Julie Borg, David Bunce, Richard Campbell-Carr, Eric Carpenter, Sena Carson, Jenny Chappell, Paul Clark, Chris Coath, Kevin Cossey, Ann Cummings, Mary Curtis, Emily Davis, Bernadette Dawson, John Dermody, Richard Dixon, Pam Dobson, Helen Escott, (baby) Harleigh Farrar, Roy Fitchew, Katie Fitzpatrick, Dorothy George, Lesley Googe, Paul Gunn, Anthony Herman, Joseph Honeyands, Katie Honeyands, Ann Husk, Bartley Igoe Jnr, Teresa Igoe, Alex Jackson, Peter Last, Margaret Lee, Tony Lee, Elaine Liddon, "Dana" Danuta Luniewski, Barbara Ann McLoughlin, Joy May, Carol Middleton, James Moloney, Patrick Moroney, Dr Johnson Odufuwa, Margaret Parsad, Mary Rand, Sister Marika Rebicsek, Irene Reynolds, Jane Richardson, Anita Rogers, Geraldine Scraggs, Kaisha Secre, Jane Smart, Daniel Snelling, Bill Spencer, Geraldine Stephens, Patricia Walford, Jenny Warren and Monty Wood.

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## Rest in Peace

Please remember and pray for those who have died, especially those whose anniversaries fall about this time: Thomas Berke, Fr Wilfrid Thompson, Joseph Organ, Michael Healy, David Sherwood, William Leighton, Douglas Apperly, Fr Francis Greenan, Paul Thompson, William Kilby, Christopher William McHugo Snr, John Joseph Furley, Arthur O'Connor, Luth Farfort, Fr Francis Wilson, James Whiting, Albert Coombs, Ruby Chapman, Eileen Roberts, Iris Neale, Rose Ardin, Jean Hillier, Kathleen Nicholls, Nellie Murphy, Nerina North, Thomas O'Brien, Patrick Greene, Fergus Griffin and Edward Butler.

Masses and Services		Sacred Heart	St John Fisher
<b>Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> December</b>	First Mass of Sunday	<b>5.30pm</b> <i>People of the Parish</i>	
<b>Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>Fourth Sunday of Advent (B)</b>	9.00am <i>Polish Mass</i> <b>11.00am</b> <i>Jerry O'Driscoll RIP</i>	<b>9.00am</b> <i>Intentions of Helen Adey</i>
<b>Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>The Birth of Jesus Christ the Lord</b>	<b>11.00pm "Midnight Mass"</b> <i>People of the Parish</i>	<b>6.00pm Children's Mass</b> <i>People of the Parish</i> 11.00pm <i>Polish "Midnight" Mass</i>
<b>Monday 25<sup>th</sup> December Holy Day of Obligation</b>	<b>Christmas Day</b>	9.00am <i>Polish Mass</i> <b>11.00am</b> <i>People of the Parish</i>	9.00am <i>People of the Parish</i>
Tuesday 26 <sup>th</sup> December	St Stephen		9.30am <i>Intentions of Florence McCann</i> 11.00am <i>Polish Mass</i>
Wednesday 27 <sup>th</sup> December	St John	9.00am <i>Mollie Keeble RIP</i> <i>(No Stella Dawson Child Friendly Prayer Group this week)</i>	
Thursday 28 <sup>th</sup> December	The Holy Innocents	<i>(No Mass today)</i>	<b>12 noon Requiem Mass</b> <i>Kathleen Horvers RIP</i>
Friday 29 <sup>th</sup> December	St Thomas of Canterbury	9.30am Requiem Mass <i>Marguerite Wate RIP</i>	
		<b>Mass for Vocations with Bishop Alan 12 noon at Our Lady of Lourdes, Leigh-on-Sea</b>	
<b>Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> December</b>	Sixth day within the Octave of Christmas	10.00am to 10.45am Confessions	9.00am <i>Ollie Hickey RIP</i>
<b>Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> December</b>	First Mass of Sunday	<b>5.30pm</b> <i>Mary and Patrick Greene RIP</i>	
<b>Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> December</b>	<b>The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph</b>	<b>9.00am</b> <i>Polish Mass</i> <b>11.00am</b> <i>James O'Sullivan RIP</i>	<b>9.00am</b> <i>People of the Parish</i>

**The Angelus** will be recited 5 minutes before Sunday (and Saturday 5.30pm) Masses from next weekend.  
**Rosary** - The Rosary is said in both Churches before the Saturday evening and Sunday morning Masses. It is also said at Sacred Heart after 9.00am weekday masses and 6.30pm when there is evening Mass.  
**Morning Prayer** begins 15 minutes before weekday Masses

### Mass Text for 24<sup>th</sup> December – Fourth Sunday of Advent (B)

**Entrance Antiphon** Drop down dew from above, you heavens, and let the clouds rain down the Just One; let the earth be opened and bring forth a Saviour.

**First Reading** 2 Samuel 7: 1-5. 8-12. 14-16

**Psalm** 88:2-5, 27, 29 response V2 **Response: I will sing for every of your love, O Lord.**

- 1 I will sing for ever of your love, O Lord; through all ages my mouth will proclaim your truth. Of this I am sure, that your love lasts for ever, that your truth is firmly established as the heavens.
- 2 'I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant: I will establish your dynasty for ever and set up your throne through all ages.
- 3 He will say to me: 'You are my father, my God, the rock who saves me.'  
I will keep my love for him always; for him my covenant shall endure.

**Second Reading** Romans 16: 25-27

**Gospel Acclamation** **Alleluia, alleluia! I am the handmaid of the Lord: let what you have said by done to me. Alleluia!**

**Gospel** Luke 1: 26-38

**Communion** Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son; and his name will be called Emanuel.

**Antiphon**

## **Mass Text for 24<sup>th</sup> December – Nativity Mass – 6.00pm at St John Fisher**

**Entrance Antiphon** Today you will know that the Lord will come, and he will save us, and in the morning you will see his glory.

**First Reading**        **Isaiah        62:1-5**

**Psalm 96**

**Response**    **I will sing for ever of your love, O lord.**

- 1     'I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant:  
I will establish your dynasty for ever and set up your throne through all ages.'
- 2     Happy the people who acclaim such a king, who walk, O Lord, in the light of your face,  
Who find their joy every day in your name, who make your justice the source of their bliss.
- 3     'He will say to me: "You are my father, my God, the rock who saves me."  
I will keep my love for him always; for him my covenant shall endure."

**Gospel Acclamation**        Alleluia! Alleluia! Tomorrow there will be an end to the sin of the world and the saviour of the world will be our king. Alleluia!

**The Gospel is the script for the Children's Nativity and is from the Gospels of Matthew and Luke**

**Communion**                The glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all flesh will see the salvation of our God.  
**Antiphon**

## **Mass Text for 24<sup>th</sup> December – "Midnight" Mass – 11.00pm at Sacred Heart**

**Entrance Antiphon** The Lord said to me: You are my Son. It is I who have begotten you this day.

**First Reading**        **Isaiah 9:1-7**

**Psalm 95:1-3 11-13** response Luke 2:11 **Response: Today a saviour has been born to us; he is Christ the Lord.**

- 1     O sing a new song to the Lord, sing to the Lord all the earth.  
O sing to the Lord, bless his name.
- 2     Proclaim his help day by day, tell among the nations his glory  
And his wonders among all the peoples.
- 3     Let the heavens rejoice and earth be glad, let the sea and all within it thunder praise,  
Let the land and all it bears rejoice, all the trees of the wood shout for joy  
At the presence of the Lord for he comes, he comes to rule the earth.
- 4     With justice he will rule the world, he will judge the peoples within his truth.

**Second Reading**        Titus 2:11-14

**Gospel Acclamation**        **Alleluia, alleluia! I bring you news of great joy: Today a saviour has been born to us, Christ the Lord. Alleluia!**

**Gospel**                      Luke 2: 1-14

**Communion**                The word became flesh, and we have seen his glory.

**Antiphon**

## **Mass Text for 25<sup>th</sup> December – Christmas Day**

**Entrance Antiphon** A child is born for us, and a son is given to us; his sceptre of power rests upon his shoulder, and his name will be called Messenger of great counsel.

**First Reading**        **Isaiah 52:7-10**

**Psalm 97:1-6** response v 3 **Response: All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God**

- 1     Sing a new song to the Lord for he has worked wonders.  
His right hand and his holy arm have brought salvation.
- 2     The Lord has made known his salvation; has shown his justice to the nations.  
He has remembered his truth and love for the house of Israel.
- 3     All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God  
Shout to the Lord all the earth, ring out your joy.
- 4     Sing psalms to the Lord with the harp, with the sound of music.  
With trumpets and the sound of the horn acclaim the King, the Lord.

**Second Reading**        Hebrews 1:1-6

**Gospel Acclamation**        **Alleluia, alleluia! A hallowed days has dawned upon us. Come, you nations, worship the Lord, for today a great light has shone down upon the earth. Alleluia!**

**Gospel**                      John 1:1-18

**Communion**                All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

**Antiphon**