

MASS TIMES AND INTENTIONS

Sunday 18 December 2016: 4th Sunday of Advent (Year A)	
6.30pm (Saturday)	Carol Waldock RIP
9.00am	Parishioners
11.00am	Graciano Fernandes Pinto RIP
5.30pm	Martin Collins
Monday 19 December	
7.30am	Friars & Benefactors
Tuesday 20 December	
7.30am	Deceased Brothers
Wednesday 21 December	
7.30am	CMA
Thursday 22 December	
7.30am	Vocations
Friday 23 December	
7.30am	Pious Union
Saturday 24 December	
8.00am	Kitty Lynch RIP
6pm Christmas Vigil	<i>In honour of Our Lady</i>
Children's Liturgy	
Christmas: Midnight Mass	For those named on the Christmas Tree Stars

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION this week: Saturday 11.30am-12 noon

Please pray for those members of our community who are sick.

Please pray, too, for those whose anniversaries occur about this time, including:
 Thomas Collings, Francis Cyran, Maud Bint, Margaret Bedwin, Persis Harvey, Raul Casares, Daniel Moore, John Dunworth, Isabel Parmiter, Patrick Browne, Helena Banham, Anthony Grealis & Thomas Curry.
May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace.

COLLECTIONS

Second Collection today: Church Flowers for Christmas

Last week's collection:

<i>Offertory</i>	£581.50	<i>Gift Aid</i>	£114.00
<i>Fr Hudson's Care</i>	£359.31	<i>Gift Aid</i>	n/a

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SS Edmund and Frideswide Roman Catholic Church

Iffley Road, Oxford OX4 1SB

Parish Priest:

Fr Gordon Pesterfield, OFM Cap.

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Emmanuel—God is with us

For Christians, the most famous prophecy of Isaiah is this: 'The Virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall name him Emmanuel.'

Isaiah spoke these words to a king worried about the future of his dominion. God invited Ahaz to ask for a sign of favour; but Ahaz refused. In so many words, Ahaz didn't want to put God to any trouble. Isaiah, exasperated, told the king that God would give him a sign anyway. Whether or not Ahaz wants one, God will give a sign.

The sign Isaiah promises is a child born to a young woman. The child will be given a name that carries a message to the king and his people: Emmanuel—God is with us.

When Matthew wrote about the birth of Jesus in the first chapter of his gospel, he said it fulfilled this prophecy from Isaiah. Jesus is the sign that God is with us. The young woman, his mother Mary, conceived the child while remaining a virgin.

Where in the world do people not want to trouble God? How can you bring them a sign of comfort? No matter how impossible the situation may be, God is with us.

SUNDAY'S READINGS:



1st Reading: Isaiah 7:10-14

Response: **Let the Lord enter! He is the king of glory.**

2nd Reading: Romans 1:1-7

Gospel: Matthew 1:18-24

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.

Gospel Acclamation: Alleluia, alleluia! The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and they will call him Emmanuel, a name which means 'God-is-with-us'. Alleluia!

Communion Antiphon: Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son; and his name will be called Emmanuel.

Today, 18 December, is the Fourth Sunday of Advent (Year A).

Lighting the last candle on the Advent wreath today sets the full symbol ablaze with light, alerting us to the imminent celebration of the coming of Christ. For many weeks the secular world has been celebrating this ‘season’ while we have been celebrating Advent. We have heard the prophecies that proclaim the coming of Jesus not just at Bethlehem, but as judge at the end of time. Today for the first time our Advent scriptures tell the events that lead to the birth of Christ.

There is a second collection at all Masses this weekend, the proceeds of which will go towards buying flowers to decorate the church for the Christmas Season.

This Sunday: Service of Lessons and Carols at 3pm

You are invited to attend a Service of Lessons and Carols by the Greyfriars Choir, under the direction of John Brennan. The service starts at 3pm in the church.

This Week:

Monday 19 December: the Dedication of the Church.

Wednesday 21 December: General Church Cleaning (6pm-7pm)

On Wednesday evening this week, between 6pm and 7pm, there will be a general church cleaning. If you can spare some time, please come and help!. Thank you.

Friday 23 December: Rosary at 7pm

Each Friday evening at 7pm, the Holy Rosary is recited in the church. All are welcome.

Also this Friday Evening: Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession)

This Friday, 23 December, the Blessed Sacrament will be exposed on the altar from 7pm to 8pm, during which time the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be available. Come, spend time before the Blessed Sacrament—relax and let us prepare well to celebrate the birth of Jesus, Our Lord.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation will also be available on Saturday (Christmas Eve) from 11am till 12 noon.

Looking Ahead:

Christmas Mass Times

Inserted in this week’s newsletter are the times of Christmas Mass. Please take one home. **NB.** On Christmas Day there will be **NO** evening Mass.

First Holy Communion Classes

These classes will start on Sunday 22 January at 10am. They will be held in the Friary Chapel. Registration forms can be found at the back of the church.

First Holy Communion Mass will be celebrated on 4 June at 11am.

Confirmation Classes

These classes will start on Sunday 29 January and will meet in the parish hall. Registration forms are available in the church porch. Confirmation candidates must have finished primary school and be entering, or already in, secondary school.

Confirmation Mass will be celebrated on Sunday 21 May at 5.30pm.



The Justice and Peace Group Gatehouse Appeal

Thank you to all who generously contributed presents for the Gatehouse. We took a car load of items there this week. If you are interested in helping at the Gatehouse, please look at their website (oxfordgatehouse.org) for more information. They are in need of volunteers and donations.

Attending Daily Mass Whenever You Can

Morning Mass is celebrated during the week at the Friary (Monday–Friday at 7.30am, and Saturday at 8am). When attending Mass, please enter the Friary chapel via the front door of the Friary (182 Iffley Road) and follow the sign to the chapel.



The Christmas Tree

The Christmas tree has its origins in the middle of the first thousand years of Christianity. In some regions it was part of the great pageants and dramas, representing the paradise tree that stands in the centre of the Garden of Eden. At the same time, it represented the tree of the Cross, standing in the new paradise established by Christ’s Death and Resurrection. In other regions it represented the one who connects heaven and earth, standing as a bridge between earth and eternity—the tree rooted in the earth with an angel or a star on its top.

No matter its origin, this sign of Christmas now adorns houses, churches and public places. The lights of the tree are also fundamental signs of Christ, who is the Light of the World. The tree is decorated in festive ornaments, and all its brilliance reminds us of the one for whom we wait until the end of time.

On Christmas night, the night in which we celebrate the great mystery of God’s Incarnation in Christ, we bless and light the tree that stands as a sign of Him who is Emmanuel.



Christmas Tree Star

For a donation of £5, you can have a star put on the Church Christmas Tree in memory of a loved one. Mass will be said for all those whose names are on the tree on Christmas Day. Please complete the form below and return it to Br Gordon with your donation.

CHRISTMAS TREE STAR

Name of person to be remembered.....

(Block Capitals)

Name of donor: Tel. No.: