
	<p>Parish Clergy:</p> <p>Mgr John Nelson (Parish Priest & Co-ordinating Pastor)</p> <p>Fr Joseph Awoh (Resident at St Joseph's)</p> <p>Registered Charity Number: 246871</p>	
	<p>64 Liebenrood Road Reading, Berkshire, RG30 2EB Tel: 0118 957 2149 englishmartyrs@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk website: www.englishmartyrs.org.uk</p> <p>Secretary: Gwen Price</p>	

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD – YEAR B

10/11 January 2009

There has been a suggestion recently that people should stop making New Year resolutions because they can easily lead to frustration and despair in people who see themselves as failures because they failed to keep these resolutions. Other people argue that we don't have to wait for the first day of a New Year to make a change in our lives. But, for some of us, the turning of a year is always a good time to take stock of where we are and to look for lessons of the past that may guide us into the future. It is not just a matter of brooding on past events and setting unrealistic goals for the future. It is facing up to the question: *What am I doing with my life?* and taking responsibility for giving it direction.

I think that as we begin 2009, there are lots of lessons to learn from our past for ourselves and our country: there are lessons to be learned from the economic downturn, lessons to be learned from the wars we are fighting, lessons to be learned about 'discipline' at school and at home, and about how we have been preparing our children for the future. This morning, as I write this short reflection, the Prince's Trust is telling us that a significant number of young people are depressed or struggling to cope and the situation is likely to worsen as the recession takes hold. In fact, 27% of the 2,000 young people interviewed across this country said their lives had no purpose!

The Christmas story (which should still be fresh in our minds) emphasizes the importance of the human being and human relations over riches and wealth, especially when the quest for money and wealth becomes the sole objective of our life. As events in the past year have shown, the desire to make as much money as possible and as quickly as possible often leads to regret, frustration and bitterness. On the other hand, the example of numerous Christian saints show that the more we lose ourselves in service of Christ who is to be found in our brothers and sisters, the happier we are. The more we focus on ourselves, the more unhappy we are likely to be. The more we think about others – our family, friends, the underprivileged – and their happiness and welfare, and lose ourselves in their service for the sake of Christ, the happier we shall be. As Saint Augustine discovered, our hearts are restless until they rest in God.

Fr Joseph

MASS INTENTIONS

ENGLISH MARTYRS	TIMINGS		ST. JOSEPH'S	
Henry O'Hare RIP	8.30 pm	Vigil Mass		
Winifred Coniskey RIP	9.30 am	Sunday	8.30 am	Nellie O'Donnell RIP
Anne O'Connor's Intentions	11.30 am		10.30 am	Kathleen Mangan RIP
Fr Pat O'Donnell RIP	5.00 pm	Monday	8.30 am	No Mass
Bridget Tansey RIP	9.30 am		7.00 pm	Indira Thomas' Intentions
Sean Conneely RIP	9.30 am	Tuesday	7.00 pm	Indira Thomas' Intentions
Annie Rockall RIP	9.30 am	Wednesday	9.00 am	Daniel Grant RIP
Bea Tansey RIP	8.00 pm	Thursday	9.00 am	Joe D'Cruz RIP
Tim O'Connell RIP	9.30 am	Friday	7.00 pm	Norman & Joan Bricker RIP
		Saturday	10.00 am	Kevin McSharry RIP

THE FEASTS FOR THIS WEEK ARE:

Monday – St Aelred	Tuesday - St Hilary	Saturday - St Anthony of Egypt
Thursday 7-8 pm	EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT	Tuesday 7.30-8 pm
5.30-8.15 pm	CONFESSIONS - SATURDAY	10.30-11 am

Responsorial Psalm: "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation."

COLLECTIONS FOR 4TH JANUARY 2009

Gift Aid:	£329.26
Planned Giving:	£40.00
Loose Plate:	£226.08
TF5 (Fr Zvonko)	£5.98
Christmas Offerings	£20.00
Crib (Children's Society)	£43.93
Lorry – Car Park Hire	£50.00
TOTAL	£715.25
Running Totals	
Fr Zvonko	£168.32
Crib (Children's Society)	£211.42

REMINDER

The counters for Sunday, 18th January are Tony Chaplin and John Macbeth.

CELEBRATING MARRIAGE 2009

On 25th April 2009, there will be a special Mass at St Bede's, Basingstoke for couples in our diocese celebrating significant wedding anniversaries during 2009. If you are celebrating your 25th, 40th, 50th anniversary during 2009, or any anniversary over 60 years, please let your parish priest know as soon as possible so that Bishop Crispian can send you an invitation. Attendance will be by invitation only and numbers are limited.

For more information contact: *Keith Chappell, Advisor for Marriage and Family Life, Park Place. kchappell@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk. Tel: 01329 835583.*

PARENT/CARER AND TODDLER GROUP

We look forward to welcoming you back again on Thursday, 14th January 2009. The timing will be as usual from 9.30 am – 11 am.

BAPTISM COURSE

The next Baptism course at St Joseph's will be on Wednesday, 14th January and Wednesday, 21st January from 8 pm - 9.30 pm in the main Church hall. We will be using a programme called: Baptism – helping your child get the most out of life. Godparents are also welcome to join us for discussion and to watch a DVD. The courses only run every few months, so if you are new or expectant parents, it might be better to attend this course if you wish your child to be baptised fairly soon.

If you are considering Baptism for your child, whatever their age, please register for the course by contacting *Brigid Parkes on 942 7436 or alternatively email the Parish Office (details on the front of this newsletter).*

CHRISTMAS OFFERING

I would like to thank every one of you sincerely for the very generous Christmas offering which you made this year, in spite of the fact that we are all suffering the effects of the credit crunch. I know how much of a sacrifice it must have been for most of you. I cannot tell you how much I appreciate your generosity, especially as I look forward to beginning my research in Cameroon for a few weeks after Easter. May God bless and reward each one of you abundantly – *Fr Joseph.*

FR JOSEPH'S ABSENCE

Fr Joseph will be away from St Joseph's parish for the period 16th April – 29th May as part of his university studies. Fr John will be making arrangements to cover Fr Joseph's absence nearer the time.

PEACE SUNDAY – 18TH JANUARY 2009

Parishioners' attention is drawn to the message from PAX CHRISTI on the reverse side of the Meditation Sheet this week concerning the need to pray for the people of Gaza and Israel on the occasion of Peace Sunday, 18th January 2009.

FOCUS AFRICA

So far, we have given £3,532.03 since this particular project started 3 years ago. Please note the change of envelope design in the Church porch – *Margaret Chaplin.*

THANK YOU VERY MUCH . . .

to those who have prepared our Christmas celebration; also to those who serve the parish throughout the year in many ways: the Sacristan and those who assist Terry, those who clean the Church and arrange flowers, those who look after the Repository, those who form the Choir and provide the Musical Accompaniment. to those who read, as Ministers of the Word, to the Ministers of the Eucharist and to the Altar Servers, to those who provide Liturgies for the children, to those who provide the Catechetical Instruction to the Leaders of the Youth Groups; Nursery and Play Group to the Child Protection Officer; to the Governors and Staff of the Catholic Schools; to the members of the Parish Pastoral Council and the Parish Working Group; to those who get involved on our behalf in ecumenical work; to those who care for families, the young, the elderly, the sick, in the capacity of parent or relative or as a member of a Society, or provide transport to Mass for those without cars; to those who represent the parish at weekend Mass; to those who type and print and file and help with administration, to those who organise and support fundraising events, to those who ensure the Health and Safety of our Church Property; to those who administer the Church Hall lettings and provide refreshments and attend to the daily cleaning and maintenance; to those who maintain the Church grounds, lighting & other equipment to those who attend to the finances of the Parish, including Gift Aid, Counting, Book-keeping and Banking. And for the computer and servicing, provided free, (without which, none of this would be reaching you!) and for the website. Have I left anyone out? If so, I offer my sincere apologies. Thank you all! Please do keep up your kind service to the Glory of God – *Father Joseph.*

CAN YOU HELP PLEASE?

The Parish is in urgent need of more volunteers to help clean the Church on a weekly rota basis. This is usually one or two hours a week, every month or so. If you can offer assistance, will you please contact *Veronica Williams on 941 8783.*

BISHOP CRISPIAN'S 20TH ANNIVERSARY

Bishop Crispian Hollis was installed as Bishop of Portsmouth on 27th January 1989 – 20 years ago. Arrangements are in hand within the joint parishes of English Martyrs and St Joseph's to send greetings to Bishop Crispian on this special occasion. Parishioners will be invited to sign a greetings message on Sunday next – 18th January.

PASTORAL COUNCILS

Over the last year, there have been meetings of the one Pastoral Council established for St Joseph's and English Martyrs. As the Bishop re-stated in his Pastoral Letter at the start of Advent, the goal is for our Pastoral Area (English Martyrs, St Joseph's, St James & William of York) to become one parish. With this in mind, there are now joint meetings taking place between our Pastoral Council and that at St James & William of York. The Pastoral Council has the task, with the priests, of planning and guiding the pastoral life of these communities. *Minutes of the meetings are available on the notice board.*

CAFOD FRIDAY SELF DENIAL ENVELOPES

Many thanks to everyone who contributed during 2008, a total of £831.31. I am sorry that I can not include December's donations as the Finance Committee decided to put this in with the Congo Appeal - all money going to CAFOD anyway of course. Examples of what your money may have been spent on will follow next week – *Margaret Chaplin.*



6 January 2009

in the skies above Gaza lightning falls on human rights

It is out of a spirit of hope in a time of great sadness and fear that the British Section of Pax Christi calls on Churches throughout the UK to pray and act for peace and justice in Palestine and Israel.

On this the 11th day of the military bombardment of Gaza, with no ceasefire in site, we must show our solidarity with the dispossessed who suffer the violence of the bombs and the violence of the on-going siege. We must show our solidarity with those Christians, Jews and Muslims in the region who bravely call for an end to violence - pointing to futility of violence and military responses to the long and tragic political problems of Palestine and Israel.

We have with Pope Benedict in declaring that, *"the dramatic news that we are receiving from the Gaza Strip shows that the refusal to dialogue leads to situations that weigh unspeakably on the populations who are again victim to hatred and war"* (Speaking in Rome, Angelus, 4th January 2009)

We are with former International President of Pax Christi, Patriarch Emeritus of Jerusalem, Michel Sabbah who has said that *"every hour is not just a war crime but a crime against humanity."* The Patriarch was speaking earlier this week at a service in Jerusalem. *"In the skies above Gaza lightning falls on human rights. We have seen this in the past and what we see in the Strip, unfortunately, is repeated generation after generation. It is not an act of God. God created man in His own image and likeness, created love and reconciliation and justice, but what we see is the destruction of human beings in Gaza and everywhere, and the destruction of all of Palestine."*

In preparing to mark Peace Sunday on 18 January 2009

- We ask that people of faith set aside time each day to pray for the people of Gaza and Israel and for a ceasefire which will allow time for other responses and voices to be heard. On 18th January the Catholic Church in England and Wales celebrates Peace Sunday - on this day special thoughts and prayers should be offered for the people of Palestine and Israel.
- We ask fellow citizens to speak or write to political and religious leaders expressing concern for what is happening and urging them to use their position and voice to call an immediate halt to Israel's military assault and Hamas' rocket attacks on Israel, and work towards the ending of the illegal occupation of Palestine by Israel - at the root of so much of the injustice, fear and anger in the region.
- We ask people of faith to join together at local and national level, with secular groups, to speak out and act nonviolently against the destruction of the people of Gaza and the threats to the civilian population of Israel.

Pax Christi

0208 203 4884

www.paxchristi.org.uk

We aim to offer alternative news and voices from the region on our website.