



Parish of the Sacred Heart & St Thérèse of the Child Jesus

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(Part of the Plymouth Diocesan Trust – Reg. Charity No: 213227)

Parish Priest: Fr Ralph Candy

Third Week of Advent – Year B, Psalter 3	
Saturday 12 December Vigil Mass of the Third Sunday in Advent	Ashley Shibu
Sunday 13 December - Mass of the Third Sunday in Advent 8.30am Mass 10.00am Mass	The Parish Circle of friends – deceased members
Monday 14 December – <i>St John of the Cross Memorial</i> (Mass in private for Cynthia Foxton) 3.30pm Reception of Ron Durston RIP into Church	
Tuesday 15 December – 12 Noon Requiem Mass for Ron Durston RIP	
Wednesday 16 December – 9.30am Mass	John and Marie McDermott
Thursday 17 December – 9.30am Mass	John Bennett RIP
Friday 18 December – 9.30am Mass	Maurice Brown
Saturday 19 December 6pm Vigil Mass of the Fourth Sunday in Advent	Eileen Dillon
Sunday 20 December – Mass of the Fourth Sunday in Advent 8.30am Mass 10.00am Mass	Hipwell family and friends The Parish

Sacrament of reconciliation: Saturday before Mass 5.15 – 5.45pm. Please note there will not be a communal celebration of the sacrament this year, but private confession is available on Saturdays and upon reasonable request.

Pastoral visits for the anointing of the sick are permitted at home, in our care homes (some) and in hospital, so do please contact the parish office as necessary to arrange a visit by the parish priest.

This week's Gospel... A Voice Crying in the Desert (John 1:6-8. 19-28)

John the Baptist came as a witness to the light, but what, or rather, who might he be referring to? Jesus Christ, the true light of the world. If we choose to live in darkness, it is not always easy to find Jesus. All the way through the Gospel of John there are misunderstandings about Jesus; people fail to recognise him for what he is: there's the Samaritan at the well, Nicodemus in the night, Mary Magdalene beside the empty tomb, even Peter and the disciples as they fish on the Lake. We can easily become so wrapped up in our own troubles and worries that we fail to recognise the one figure who can provide the solution to them, although he is standing among us, the one who 'has the words of eternal life'. He may come to us in a way we do not like, as a corrective - blocking or diverting the way we have chosen. He may come as suffering, disappointment, failure or bereavement. All of these may be acts of God's love, to show us the way, though we cannot see it at the time. It is just like John the Baptist, saying steadily 'No!', until eventually we turn around and see Christ as our true light. How can I find Jesus in the crowded events of my busy life? He often comes in unexpected ways. Is he in the quiet voice of a friend? Is he in the anger of someone I have annoyed? Is he in the rebuke of someone who knows me better than I know myself? Is he in my failures and frustrations?

Now slowly and prayerfully read the Gospel once again but this time in silence. Consider how this Gospel could apply to your life in general. Then thank God for any insight you may have received. Conclude by asking God to bless you with one of the following spiritual gifts to help you act on any resolution you have made: love, understanding, wisdom, faithfulness, peace, self-control, patience, or joy. Please remember to pray for the Church and particularly our school families. Then conclude by requesting the prayers of Our Lady & St Joseph.

Fr Ralph writes...

During the last week of Advent it seems as if the liturgy can no longer hide the excitement about the coming of the Lord and bursts forth into anticipatory joy. During Vespers the 'O' antiphons express unrestrained exhilaration. 'O Wisdom that proceeds from the mouth of the Most High, O Adonai and leader of the House of Israel, O Root of Jesse who stands at the ensign of the peoples, O Key of David and Sceptre of the House of Israel, O Orient, Splendour of eternal Light, O King of the nations, the One for whom they long, O Emmanuel, the Expectation and Saviour of the nations – come to us, O Lord, Our God.' Every evening between December 17 and 24 a new 'O' is sung and, slowly, waiting and welcoming, expecting and seeing, hoping and receiving, future and present merge into one song of praise to the Lord who has visited his people.

Please pray for the repose of the souls of all who have died recently, especially **Ron Durston RIP**, and remember in prayer their loved ones at this very difficult time. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace and rise in glory. Amen.

ADVENT on ZOOM! - WAITING IN JOYFUL HOPE - Thursday 17th December at 7pm.

Do join with me and other parishioners in following a four-session course, 'The Joy of Hope' filmed on location on the beautiful Greek Holy Island of Patmos, where Scripture tells us the Book of Revelation was written. Email: zoomsacredheart@gmail.com to receive the Zoom link. (If you are unsure about using Zoom, Keith Taylor will be happy to talk you through the process - just indicate this in your email.)

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION – this Saturday morning our children made their first Holy Communion together with their families. We continue to pray for David, Owen, Poppy, Preston, Frankie, Adrian, Arihanna, Lennie, Alan, Michal, Adam, Jessica and Mimi, that the Lord will continue to sustain them on their spiritual journey towards ever closer friendship with the Lord, and with their parish family at the Sacred Heart.

A Precious Place of God's Grace is the title of a document prepared by our Bishop concerning the pastoral provision for the parishes of our diocese. Most people will be aware that there will have to be some reorganization because of the shortage of priests and over the years we have recognized that there will eventually have to be changes in our area as with the rest of the diocese. The Bishop, however, wishes to ensure that the future plans will be directed first and foremost to the effective proclamation of the Faith in whatever new structures are envisaged. You can read the Bishop's document on the Plymouth Diocesan website – follow the link on the homepage.

And finally Mass times for Christmas!

Vigil of the Nativity of the Lord, Thursday 24th at 6pm

Nativity of the Lord, in the night, Thursday 24th at 8pm (NO Midnight Mass this year)

Nativity of the Lord, dawn, Friday 25th at 8.30am

Nativity of the Lord, day, Friday 25th at 10.00am

We will have to oblige social distancing and thus limit numbers in church to around 50 people at each Mass. PLEASE do not all come at once to the Vigil Mass on Christmas Eve, otherwise folk might have to go home disappointed. I would imagine that the dawn Mass on Christmas Day will be quieter, so if you're vulnerable and having to mind yourself, why not come along to that one instead? To give me an idea of numbers, do please put your names down on the sheets provided at the back of church – ONE NAME PER LINE please. God bless you all.

Parish Collections: week of 2-9 December: £897.96 – thank you for your generosity, and especially to those who saved up their weekly offering during the lockdown and presented them to the parish on their return to Mass.