

CHRISTMAS DAY

JUST LIKE YOU

The greatest compliment that anyone can pay you is to tell you that they want to be like you. And the wonder of Christmas is that God decided to become one of us. He could have chosen a million different ways of leading us fully to himself, but he chose to take on our frail human nature and live subject to all the limitations of our earthly existence. His very name, Emmanuel, means God-with-us. Quite a compliment!

But why did God do it? Quite simply, God became a human being so that he could show human beings how to become like God. Jesus is God's way to be a man, God's way to be a woman.

Although we love to dwell on the Christmas scene, and there's no harm in that, it's actually what Jesus did as an adult that makes a difference to our lives. For it was his way of life and his teaching that offer us the chance of living our lives to the full. Instead of leaving us with a catalogue of regulations, Jesus told us to serve God and treat our neighbour in the same way that we would like to be treated ourselves.

The birth of any baby sets our thoughts on the future. What will become of the child? What lies in store for them in their family life and eventual career? What sort of a person will

they be? Similarly, the Bethlehem scene already hints at the future. For the newborn child will be responsible for the falling and the rising of many, we are told. This is because whether we choose to follow Jesus or not has cosmic consequences: it affects not only our life here on earth, how we live and the people we try to become, but also our future state of happiness in eternity. The manger contains a promise: those who follow this baby will see the face of God.

So Christmas summons each one of us to give birth too, to bring Christ to others. Our glory is to stand before the world as a son or daughter of God, sharing the same nature as God's Son Jesus. We are called to love what is most deeply human in each other and in ourselves, and to see God's living Son made flesh and reflected in those whose lives we touch. For they are just like us. And just like God!



FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY

FAMILY

There's a certain irony about the timing of the feast of the Holy Family. It comes just after Christmas which is one of the most stressful times of the year for families. Our society puts so much emphasis on the trappings of Christmas that when our expectations are not met we tend to become frustrated with those around us at home and there are probably more family rows at Christmas than any other time of the year.

So it's quite comforting to know that things didn't run smoothly for the Holy Family either. We can be sure that Mary and Joseph's incident with Jesus in the Temple was probably just one of many that the two parents had with their soon-to-be teenage son. It would be unreal to believe that they enjoyed uninterrupted bliss together!

Of course, this begs the question of what families are for in the first place. Are they merely an accident of birth? Is it the case that families just happen to be a small link in the vast biological chain that is brought about by people being born? Are they just natural practical units, like a pride of lions or a shoal of fish? In which case it shouldn't matter where children are brought up as long as there is someone there to feed and clothe them. Or

are families a sign and symbol of something greater, something spiritual and something to do with God's plan for those he has created?

Could it be that the family is actually the most fundamental vocation that men and women are called to be part of? Unlike animals we are gifted with God's grace. This means that being in God's image and likeness allows us to share in that creative love of God's when we bring children into the world and agree to take care of them. You could argue that in a certain sense the family is a type of "sacrament", a sign of God's abiding and loving presence in our most basic domestic unit.

To celebrate the feast of the Holy Family shouldn't mean to become depressed at our own family's shortcomings. It should be a challenge to keep before us the privileged task of producing God's gift of life and sustaining it, the commission to live in communion with each other because that's how we want to live with God, and the charge of sharing each other's lives so that we may live with God by finding him in those he has given to us.



MASS READINGS

Feast of the Holy Family

27th December, 2020

1. Genesis 15:1-6. 21:1-3
2. Hebrews 11:8.11-12. 17-19
3. Matthew 2:13-15. 19-23

Psalm 104

He, The Lord, is our God. He remembers his covenant for ever.

Feast of the Epiphany

3rd January, 2021

1. Isaiah 60:1-6
2. Ephesians 3:2-3. 5-6
3. Matthew 2:1-12

Psalm 71

All nations shall fall prostrate before you, O Lord.

St. Gabriel's R.C. Church

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PARISH CLERGY

Fr. Michael Woodford
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SUNDAY MASSES
DURING PANDEMIC

9am and 11am.

Tickets for mass can be obtained from **Eventbrite** via parish website and Facebook page.

SSVP CHRISTMAS APPEAL

Without its traditional box collections, St. Gabriel's SSVP Conference continues to need financial support. As Christmas approaches, we are committed to providing support to needy families in our area and we ask parishioners to help us with their donations.

One-off donations may be made by cheque, made out to "SSVP GL05057" and sent to Frances McKeon, 1/1, 3 Mariscat Road, Glasgow G41 4ND. Online transfers may be made to our bank account:

A/c name: SSVP GL05057

Sort code: 80-07-34

A/c no.: 00834880

Our sincere thanks to all who have helped us to date.

DAY OF PRAYER FOR PEACE

This year the Day of Prayer for Peace will take place on 3rd January, 2021, the Feast of the Epiphany. Bishop William Nolan, President of the Scottish Bishops' Justice and Peace Commission invites us to visit their website to discover what work they do and what campaigns they are involved in: www.justiceandpeacescotland.org.uk

VISITS FOR PRIVATE PRAYER

A few changes to the usual routine of private prayer visit will take place over the next two weeks. There will be **no visit** on Christmas Eve or on New Year's Eve, **nor will there be any service on New Year's Day.**

WELCOMERS/SANITISERS

Since March this has been a difficult time for all of us, especially those who are alone, or families in confined accommodation. Parish members, too, have been deprived of their regular spiritual communal sustenance. What has been possible has only been achievable with the support and generous assistance of our volunteers who welcome you to the church for mass and who clean the church after each service, including the many funerals we have had to celebrate during this time. Thanks to them we can remain open, albeit with restrictions. I wish to express my gratitude for their exemplary and constant willingness in the service of all parishioners.

A few copies of the new **Western Catholic Calendar** are now available from the chapel house price **£3:20**

The parish of St. Gabriel is a parish of the
Archdiocese of Glasgow
A designated Registered Charity, Number SC018140

ST. GABRIEL'S BULLETIN

CHRISTMASTIDE 2020



Fr. Michael, Fr. John, Fr. Brian, Fr. Tony and Annamarie wish to thank you all for your festive greetings. May you have a blessed Christmas with family and friends and may the New Year of Our Lord 2021 bring us all happiness and peace in our families.