



St Nicholas of Tolentino RC Church, Lawford's Gate, Bristol BS5 ORE

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Download this Bulletin from the Parish Website: www.tolentino.org.uk

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FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY - NEW YEAR'S EVE



HOLY FAMILY - POOR FAMILY

Mary was a poor, young unmarried mother; Joseph a simple labourer, odd job man around his impoverished home village of Nazareth. They were a displaced family at the time of Jesus' birth and within a couple of years had to flee Bethlehem to escape a massacre of the children. Refugees, seeking safe asylum in a foreign land! And from this Family, poor and oppressed, came forth perfect love, the fulness of compassion and humanity and the inner strength to hold fast to truth and speak truth to power, whatever the cost, trusting God in the unknown.

Family in the 21st century takes many forms, yet whatever form it takes, however 'irregular' that might be, the Vocation of Family remains the same - to be a school of love and faith, a network of loving relationships creating a safe place for all members of the family to grow into Christ's humanity!

SUNDAY: PARISH MASS of the Holy Family at 10am (*streamed on website*)

WATCH-NIGHT MASS preparing for 2024 at 10.30pm

MONDAY: FEAST OF MARY THE MOTHER OF GOD - Day of Prayer for World Peace
Adoration at 9.30am Mass for Peace at 10.00am

TUESDAY: Feast of SS Basil the Great & Gregory Nazianzen, Bishops & theologians (4th C)
Adoration at 6.00pm Mass at 6.30pm

WEDNESDAY: Feast of the Holy Name of Jesus
Adoration at 6.00pm Mass at 6.30pm

THURSDAY: Adoration at 11.30am Mass at 12 noon

**The Gospel says: 'John came as a witness, to speak for the Light
Who is Christ Jesus - that all might believe in Him' - will we witness to the Light?**

FRIDAY: *Adoration* at 8.30am **Mass at 9.00am**

SATURDAY: *Adoration* at 11.30am **Mass at 12.00 noon**
Sacrament of Reconciliation: after Mass and 4.00-4.30pm

TODAY: [1] The **Sunday after Christmas is the Feast of the Holy Family**, celebrating that God enters into the most normal, human situation, but one that is at once the most demanding and also the most fulfilling of human realities. Families today are very diverse - single parents, second marriages with multiple 'parents', adoptive parents and children, same gender parents. Yet every family can be inspired by the Holy Family to be a school of love, a 'little church of faith'. The greatest enemies of family life are poverty and war - just dare to look at Gaza today! Every child is a gift of infinite value and immense dignity - let us protect all our children and build for them a safe, sustainable and peaceful world.

[2] In addition to the Sunday Mass there is also the special '**Watchnight Mass**' seeking healing and forgiveness for the errors and injustices of the past year, and praying peace and New Beginnings for 2024 - let us make it a Year of Hope, a Year of Peace!

NEXT SUNDAY: [1] We celebrate the **Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord**, one of the great 'Feasts of Mission'. The Church, the Body of Christ, is called to be Light to the Nations, to share a radical wisdom of 'love without limits'. This is what drew the Wisdom-seekers (the 'Magi') to travel far - drawn on by the promise of Light and Wisdom expressed by the Star. Are we a community whose love draws people to Christ and new Life?

[2] We joyfully celebrate the **Rite of Child Catechumen**, welcoming the children and families preparing for Baptism on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord.

[3] Mass with the **Catholic Handicapped Fellowship** at 3.00pm - all are welcome.

HAPPY NEW YEAR A New Year is a time for reflection upon the past, and commitment to the future. Our Faith is faith in the future - the future God and ourselves will forge together for our own lives and for the world. A Future of Peace rather than war; a Future without poverty and injustice; a Future of harmony with our planet rather than our abuse and pillaging of 'our Common Home'. Does this seem an impossible dream? BUT...

Our Faith is a faith in God's New Beginnings, who always redeems and heals the mistakes and tragedies of the past and launches us confidently upon the paths of the future. Our Faith is faith in a God who walks with us through dark threatening valleys towards light-filled joyous mountain tops - and helps us see the creativity and beauty of both! Let us as a parish community embrace this New Year with a new determination to place Christ first, to rebuild our community of love, prayer and inclusion of all. Let us serve the Mission of the Church as Good News to the Poor. I wish you every blessing this new Year - let us together make it a Year of Mission, a Year of Contemplation, a Year of Friendship with our Emmanuel, our God who walks always at our side in our hearts.

THOUGHT FOR THE FEAST OF MARY THE MOTHER OF GOD

CALLED TO BE BEARERS OF GOD: The first defined doctrine concerning Mary was to name her 'Theotokos' - Greek for 'Bearer of God'. This was solemnly declared by the Council of Ephesus (where Mary was believed to have ended her life and then been assumed into heaven): you can visit the 'holy house' reputed to be the home she shared with John the Beloved Disciple into whose care Jesus placed his mother at the Cross. Mary is the great sign from God showing us what it is to be a redeemed people, what it is to let the Spirit grasp hold of our lives and shape them in the service of the Lord and his Kingdom. She is the 'bearer of God' to the world - and that is our vocation too! If we are to bear Christ to our 21st Century world we need to allow the Spirit to overshadow us, we need to utter our profound 'YES' to God, we need to abandon ourselves to the divine will and love, we need to embrace God's world as Mary did! Let Mary teach us how to bear God with our whole being and all our love

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DIOCESAN PRAYER The Diocese prays today for the Parish in Communion for Mission of St Thomas More, Marlborough with Holy Family, Pewsey, Wiltshire, served by Fr John Blacker, and all the community.

PRAY FOR THIS WEEK'S PARISH MINISTRY OR MISSION We pray for our **Ministry of Hospitality**, teams of people who ensure that each Sunday we have the opportunity to share fellowship with each other over tea/coffee and other refreshments in the Parish Hall. This is an essential part of building community, a community of committed love one for another. Jesus said 'By this shall all people know you are my disciples, that you love another as I have loved you.' We need more volunteers willing to support this simple but important ministry, Sunday by Sunday - please contact Richard or Margaret to serve the building of a loving community in this way.

COLLECTION LAST WEEK

G.A.Env £24.00 + Loose £201.34 + Card Reader £55.00 + S/O £165.88 = £391.22 - thanks!

Covenant with the Poor £25.00 - **Christmas Offerings** £698.11 - many thanks for your generous Christmas offerings which contribute to the annual 'wage' for your priest.

CRIB OFFERINGS Please visit the crib at the altar and pause to reflect and pray for the children of Gaza at this tragic and dangerous time for them and their families. ALSO please make your crib Offering - which is given to support our Catholic Clifton Children's Society. CCS is keen to hear from anyone who may be interested in adoption. They work with prospective adopters, preparing and supporting them through the adoption process and provide long term support to families after adoption as they continue their new lives together. If interested in finding out more please contact CCS Adoption on 0845-122-0077 for an information pack. Alternatively, visit their website at www.ccsadoption.org where you can also hear podcasts.

DATES FOR THE DIARY 2023

31st Dec	'Watchnight' Mass to pray the New Year in at 10.30pm
1st Jan	Feast of Mary, Mother of God - Mass for Peace at 10.00am
5th Jan	First Parents Baptismal Session at 6.30pm (Assisi Centre)
7th Jan	Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord with Rite of Child Catechumen
12th Jan	Second Parents Baptismal Session at 6.30pm (Assisi Centre)
13th Jan	First training Session for new altar servers at 10.30am (church) - contact Richard
14th Jan	Feast of the Baptism of the Lord - Baptismal Sunday
17th Jan	St Nick's School Governors meet
18th Jan	First Eucharist Programme begins at 4.00pm (Assisi Centre) also Parents session
18th Jan	Parish Pastoral Council meets at 7.30pm (Assisi Centre)
19th Jan	First Reconciliation Programme begins at 4pm (Assisi Ctre) also Parents session
21st Jan	United Service for Christian unity Week at Parkway Methodist Church 4.00pm
26th Jan	Holocaust memorial Day - Civic Event in City Hall 12noon
27th Jan	Meeting of Joint Committees (PPC, PFC, Legacy Group) 9.30am-12noon
1st Feb	Parish Finance Committee meets on Zoom 7.30pm
7th Feb	St Edmund of Abingdon Pastoral Area Clergy meeting
11th Feb	Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes - World Day of the Sick
13th Feb	Parish pastoral Council meets at 7.30pm (Assisi Centre)
14th Feb	Ash-Wednesday - Lent begins
21st Feb	Safeguarding Training for Clergy

POPE CALLS A YEAR OF PRAYER PREPARING FOR THE JUBILEE YEAR OF HOPE 2025

Pope Francis invites us to hold a 'Year of Prayer' 2024, to deepen our prayer life as individuals and as the Church as we prepare for the **Jubilee Year 2025 - a Jubilee of Hope**, building towards a more

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Synodal Church. Pope Francis emphasises especially the Prayer of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and the 'Lectio Divina', prayer reflection upon the Word of God. Let us reflect how as a parish community we might embrace this call to deeper prayer, seeking personal and communal renewal.

BAPTISMAL PREPARATION FOR PARENTS Our next Baptismal Sunday will be the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, 14th January.

First Parents Baptismal Session Friday 5th January at 6.30pm (Assisi Centre)

Rite of Child Catechumen - Feast of the Epiphany 7th January at 10.00am Mass

Second Parents Baptismal Session Friday 12th January at 6.30pm (Assisi Centre)

Parents seeking the baptism of their child contact Eustace Tameh or Richard now.

THE PARISH DATABASE If you have not filled our Parish Data forms (perhaps for the second time!), please do so after Mass today. The purpose of this is to enable effective pastoral care, community building and effective communication. *The information given will be used solely for internal parish and pastoral reasons and will not be divulged to any other party. Please sign the forms giving your permission for us to hold your details on our database - this is essential for compliance with GDPR (Data Protection legislation). THANKS!*

STARTING SCHOOL? If you have a child born between **1 Sept 2019 & 31 August 2020**, now is the time to apply for a place at a primary school for admission from **September 2024** onwards. You must complete an application form available from the school admissions team of the Local Council (Bristol/North Glos, Banes etc). If your child has been baptised and you are applying for a Catholic school, you **must** also provide a copy of the baptism certificate to the school. Please ensure you apply by the closing date of **15 January 2024**.

ANY OFFERS FOR A VENUE AND CONVENER FOR AREA HOUSE MASSES?

We want to encourage these in the coming months as a way of bringing the Eucharist into the centre of our Christian lives and build our diverse, widespread community as one Eucharistic Community in Mission. We hope to celebrate a number of House Masses in December, January and February. Contact Richard or Margaret as soon as possible. Thank you.

RECRUITING NEW ALTAR SERVERS Training starts on Saturday 13th Jan 10.30am - any young person who wishes to serve God and our community in this way please contact Richard or Mary as soon as possible. This is an important ministry in our community, serving God and serving our community to pray and worship God with joy and celebration.

GOD'S CALL TO SERVE THE LIFE AND MISSION OF YOUR PARISH It is very clear that our parish, together with all churches and voluntary organisations around the country, has not yet recovered fully from the effects of the Covid Pandemic and the restrictions placed upon our meeting together during that time. A significant number of our community are not coming to Mass here for a variety of reasons. It is a joy to welcome new families and individuals who have found their way to St Nicks. However there has been great difficulty in drawing members of the parish into being part of the many ministries and tasks of the parish. Whether it is the SVP, the welcoming Ministry, Church Cleaning, the Foodbank, Catechists, too few are doing too much in support of the parish's life and mission. We are all called by our baptism to serve and build the Church as a mission community. We are all called to sacrifice time and energy to build our parish community and supports the Mission of Christ entrusted to us. I realise only too well that many have heavy commitments caring for children or elderly family members and juggling work and family. They are indeed serving Christ in these ways. But I do ask everyone to reflect whether some time can be given to sustain the parish's life and mission as we move towards a lay-led parish. This will be a great challenge for all of us. Please pray about this urgent need in building our parish.

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