



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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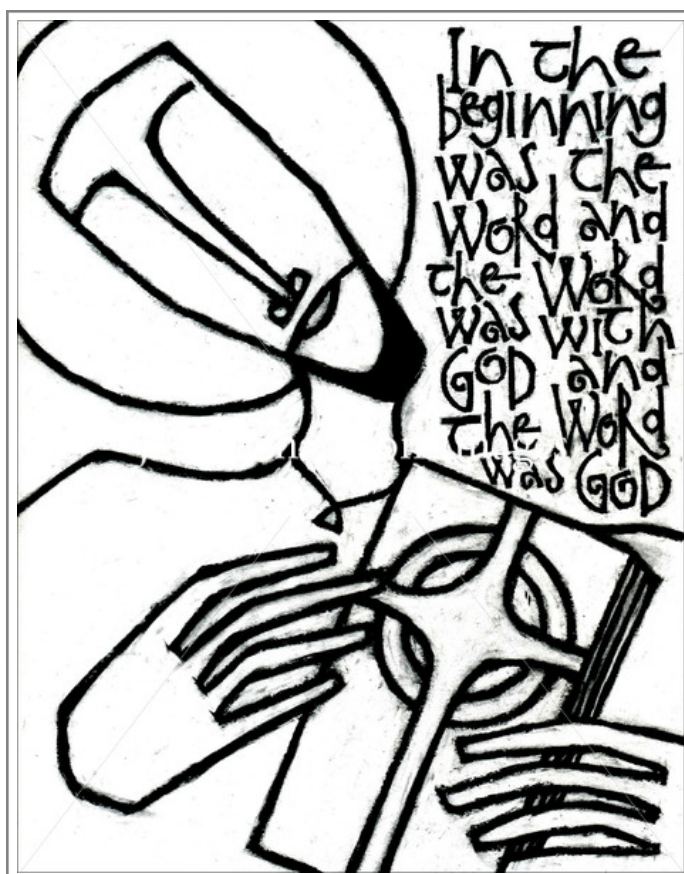
Safeguarding Reps: Mary Hopper (01275-830788) & Paul Bradshaw-Price

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Benedicta Lobela Amba (Youth), Epiphania Chipato (Pastoral)

SECOND SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS



JESUS - WORD & WISDOM OF GOD MADE FLESH, PITCHED TENT HERE!

Have you ever been camping under canvas? If so you know you are vulnerable to weather conditions, you are open to whoever comes - no locked doors. But there is also great freedom to go where you will - just pack up your tent and move on, exploring new places and sights. And of course there are the Nomadic Peoples who whole life is wandering from place to place, hoping they will be welcomed!

God in Jesus is the great 'Tent Dweller' - the Nomad wandering among His People - the Pilgrimage God who is constantly journeying through history, accompanying humanity in peace and in war - in plenty and in poverty. We too often want to 'lock God up' in our churches and temples, in our tabernacles and creeds, in our sacraments and rituals. BUT THE SPIRIT BLOWS WHERE SHE WILLS! Our God who pitched tent in creation's history, among us, cannot be contained. God is freedom - Love's freedom. God surprises us in how and when He draws alongside and whispers in our heart. We find Him where we think He should not be if only we seek his face and open to His Love! 'Let us see your face O Lord' in all around us!

SUNDAY: PARISH MASS at 10.00am (Live-streamed)

MONDAY: No Liturgy

TUESDAY: FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD - Holy Day of Obligation
Adoration at 6.30pm EVENING MASS at 7.00pm

HAPPY NEW YEAR ... BLESSED NEW YEAR ... PEACE TO THE WORLD THIS NEW YEAR

WEDNESDAY: No Liturgy

THURSDAY: SCHOOL MASS OF THE EPIPHANY at 9.30am - all welcome

[NB no midday Mass because of Fr Vincent Ryan's Funeral Mass]

FRIDAY: Adoration at 11.30am Mass at 12.00noon

SATURDAY: Adoration at 11.30am Mass at 12.00noon

Sacrament of Reconciliation: after Mass and 4.00-4.30pm

TODAY [1] With the **Second Sunday of Christmas** we continue our celebration and contemplation of the wonder of the Word made Flesh dwelling among us, full of grace and truth. Jesus is God's Wisdom, journeying among us. In the incarnation of the Word and Wisdom of God in the Child of Mary, the Child of Bethlehem, God has entered into human history - indeed in the evolution of our plant and Universe! God is involved the joy and pain, hopes and despairs of humanity - will we also live a spirituality and discipleship of involvement in the world's development?

NEXT SUNDAY [1] The Christmas Season draws to a close as we celebrate **the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord**. In Jesus adulthood, he commits Himself to His Father's vision for His life on Earth, commits Himself to the Father's Word and Mission, which would lead him to the Sacrifice of the Cross - the ultimate abandonment of Himself in trust into the Father's Hands! This abandonment is glimpsed when He stayed in the Temple at the age of 13 and found a new depth in His submitting to John's Baptism in the Jordan River. **Jesus invites us today to renew our baptismal commitment, and abandon ourselves into God's hands, because He is our Father!**

FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD - A FEAST OF GLORY MANIFESTED!

Seekers after wisdom have travelled far, and bring with them the hopes of the Nations, the gifts of the Peoples, the riches of Learning - and lay them before this vulnerable little child trapped in poverty and soon to be a refugee! These strong men of intellect who gaze upon the stars and research the wisdom of ages in their books: now they bend low, humbled and humbling in the generosity of their spirits and the humility of their minds - bending the knee to the child and His young mother and labourer father. And in the poverty of the Bethlehem home they touch the quiet and hidden glory of Love made Flesh, of God in human skin, of the inter-twining of the Divine and Human stories forever - literally for all eternity. They have found Wisdom - or rather Wisdom made Flesh has found them! drawing them to the strange Glory of this God-touched Humanity. Forever we will walk as wise seekers and lovers! Then the Glory can be quietly and gently manifest in us!

HAPPY NEW YEAR A New Year is a time for reflection upon the past, and commitment to the future. Our Faith is a faith in the future - the future God and ourselves will forge together for our own lives and for the world. 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 and light-filled joyous mountain tops - and helps us see the creativity and beauty of both! 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.

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

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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 then 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 in 2012 how to bear God with our whole being and all our love!

PRAY FOR THIS WEEK'S PARISH MINISTRY OR MISSION We pray for our **Proclaimers of the Word**, co-ordinated by Lucy Lourenco. This ministry of of life-giving importance as the Word of God is our daily 'Bread for the Journey'. Christ is truly present among us in His Word proclaimed in our Liturgical Assembly. The Word is not simply 'read' but is to be proclaimed with faith and love, with understanding passion. We also pray for our **Preaching Team** who regularly 'break the Bread of the Word' for us one Sunday a month and when I am away on a Sunday.

DIOCESAN PRAYER We pray this week for the parishes in communion for mission of St Peter, Cirencester, St Aldhelm, Malmesbury and St Michael, Tetbury, served by Fr Mariaselvan Alexander MSFS, Fr Thomas Kulandaisamy, Deacons Steve Boughton, Remi Thivet, parish Administrator (pending) and all their communities.

COLLECTIONS

28/12/25 GA: £30.00 + Loose £177.00 + Card Reader £75.00 + S.O. £206.35 = £488.35
Christmas Offerings £460.71 - many thanks!

DATES FOR THE DIARY

6th Jan **FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD Holy Day of Obligation Mass at 7.00pm**
21st Jan Parish Pastoral Council meets after 6.30pm Mass (7.15pm - Assisi Centre)
22nd Jan Parish Finance Committee at 7.30pm (on Zoom)
3rd Feb St Nick's School Governors meet at 5.00pm (School)

MANY THANKS FOR YOUR KINDNESS Thank you all for your cards, gifts and kind messages for Christmas and New Year. Thank you also for the 'Christmas Offerings' which contribute towards my annual 'stipend' or salary. I do not take your kindness and generosity for granted, but every day rejoice that I am your brother and priest sharing the journey of our parish as a 'Eucharistic Community in Mission' I wish you all a very blessed and peace-filled New Year.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD (CLOW) If we are to have Children's Liturgy of the Word each Sunday or even every other Sunday, **WE DESPERATELY NEED MORE VOLUNTEERS TO HELP IN ORDER TO SUSTAIN THIS IMPORTANT MINISTRY.** Please offer some time and energy so that our children can enter more fully into the wonder of the Mass - Eucharist and the Word of God.

SACRAMENTAL PROGRAMMES 2026: We begin preparing children for **First Eucharist** on Thursday 8th January at 4.00pm in the Assisi Centre, led by Mary Hopper. First session will be for both for children and parents. **First Reconciliation** begins on Saturday 10th January at 10.00am again in the Assisi Centre and is for both children and parents. **If parents have not yet applied for their children in these courses**, then please do so as soon as possible and before the first sessions in January.

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MONTHLY YOUTH-LED MASS It was so joyous and encouraging to see the involvement of our young people during the Mass for Christ the Universal King. We will hold the Third Sunday of the Month as a Youth-led mass - so parents and others please encourage our young people to fulfil a ministry on Sunday 18th January - our next Youth-led Mass.

NEWS ABOUT THE WILLOW TREE IN OUR CAR PARK Some of you may know that twice in the past four years a major branch of this beautiful tree broke away from its trunk, most recently two months ago. After consultation with Diocesan Property Services we have sadly commissioned Tree surgeons to remove the tree. It presents an unacceptable risk to children in the school, users of the car park and property - cars, the Dunstan Centre etc. A beautiful tree sadly in the wrong place!

FURNITURE AVAILABLE AS PRESBYTERY BEING LEASED At last the diocesan authorities have agreed to our proposal that the vacant presbytery be leased for an initial 4 years to ACH (Ashley Community Housing) for provide accommodation for homeless refugees. This accords with our mission to the most marginalised and deprived of our city and to alleviate at least a little the homelessness crisis our city faces. As a result there are items of furniture to be cleared from the house. We invite anyone interested in these items - all we ask is a reasonable donation to parish funds. A list of the available items are enclosed with this newsletter. **Come and see Sunday January 4th after the Parish Mass, about 12.30pm.**

MASS CELEBRATING FAMILY LIFE Bishop Bosco is to celebrating Mass in the Cathedral on **Saturday 14 February** (12 noon) and is inviting all families to join him to acknowledge the joys & challenges of family life. In addition, we will celebrate those couples with significant anniversaries in 2026. If you are, or know of a couple, celebrating a special anniversary during 2026 please do let us know. You just need to send names to: adult.education@cliftondiocese.com with an address so that a personal invitation can be sent out from the bishop. Please include the number of years celebrating. It is always a wonderful Mass at the Cathedral, we look forward to seeing you there.

Neurodiversity and our Faith research The Catholic Bishops' Conference of England & Wales and Birmingham Newman University are conducting research into Neurodiversity and our Faith. If you're an adult neurodivergent Catholic or a Caregiver of a neurodivergent Catholic, we want to hear from you. Your experiences will help us to become more inclusive and responsive to your needs. To find out more and to fill in our short surveys look here: www.godwhospeaks.uk/neurodivergent-catholic-surveys

NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS [1] We have a beautiful church - we need to keep it beautiful and even more deepen its prayerfulness. We have a rich and involving Liturgy - **let us make sure we arrive in time and prepared to begin Mass promptly at 10.00am.** Especially if we are exercising a ministry in the Liturgy

[2] Please turn all mobile phones off before, during or after Mass in the church! Please do not make phone calls in Church at all - please go outside to make phone calls .

[3] Please help our children to experience the church as a 'Sacred Space' and not a play ground, especially after Mass. Help them to learn even from the earliest age how to act in this 'sacred space', in the presence of God, the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Teach our children how and why to genuflect to the Tabernacle.

THIS IS SACRED SPACE, A PLACE TO ENCOUNTER THE LIVING GOD AND LISTEN PRAYERFULLY TO HIS HOLY WORD - LET US ALL DEVELOP OUR CHURCH MORE AS THIS SACRED SPACE FOR PRAYER & STILLNESS!

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