



Our Vision is a Person, Our Vision is Jesus Christ **19th DECEMBER 2021: FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

We are God's beloved children

On 17th December, Pope Francis turned 85 years old. He has reached a considerable age, and he is able to speak to everyone starting from his wise gaze. When he meets young people especially, he is able to speak to their heart.

Recently, he met some young people in Athens, during his Apostolic Journey to Cyprus and Greece. He addressed the young people with words that really impressed me.

Explaining what faith is, he said,

'This is what faith is in its deepest sense: we are God's beloved children! We are beloved children because we have a Father who watches over us and who never stops loving us. Think about this: whatever you may think or do, even the worst things possible, God continues to love you. I would like you to understand this well: God never tires of loving. Someone might say to me: "But if I slip into the worst kind of things, does God love me?" God loves you. "And if I am a traitor, a terrible sinner and things end up badly, in drugs... does God love me?" God loves you. God always loves. He cannot stop loving. He loves always, without exception. He looks at your life and sees that it is good (cf. Gen 1:31). He never abandons us. If we stand before a mirror, we may not see ourselves the way we would like, because we are too concerned with the things we don't like. But if we stand before God, the perspective changes. We cannot help but be amazed that, for all our sins and failings, for him we are, and always will be, his beloved children. So, instead of starting the day by looking in the mirror, why not open your bedroom window and focus on everything beautiful that exists, on the beauty that you see all around you? Go out of yourself. Dear young people, think about this: if nature is beautiful in our eyes, in God's eye each of you is infinitely more beautiful! Scripture says: "He has wondrously made us" (cf. Ps 139:14). In God's eyes we are a wonder. Allow yourself to be caught up in that wonder. Let yourself be loved by the One who always believes in you, by the One who loves you even more than you succeed in loving yourself. It is not easy to understand the breadth and depth of God's love, it is not easy to grasp it, but it is like this: simply let yourself be gazed upon by the gaze of God.'

And then, explaining the grace of forgiveness, he continued,

'When you feel sorrow for something you have done, you should feel another kind of wonder: the wonder of forgiveness. I want to be clear about this: God always forgives. We can grow tired of asking for forgiveness, but he always forgives. In that wonder of forgiveness, we rediscover the Father's loving face and peace of heart. He gives us a new beginning and he pours out his love in an embrace that lifts us up, dispels the evil we have done, restores the irrepressible beauty that is within us as his beloved children, and enables it to shine forth. May we never let laziness, fear or shame rob us of the treasure of forgiveness. May we always be amazed by God's love! We will rediscover ourselves: not what other people say about us, or where the whims of the moment may lead us, or the hype we see in advertisements, but our deepest reality, the truth that God sees, the one he believes in: our unique beauty.'

I think that meditating on these words of the Holy Father is the best way for us to rejoice for the Nativity of the Lord which is so close.

Fr Marco

GEM OF THE WEEK



This week's GEM is a short video by Bishop Barron, *The Three Comings of Christ* - you can find this on our homepage. If anyone has suggestions for GEMs please contact website.sswp@gmail.com

For the next Newsletter, items should be received into the Parish Office by 9.30am on Wednesday 22nd December, please email your messages/notices to: stswparish@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

LITURGICAL INDICATIONS



Sunday 19th December 2021: Year C - Year 2 - Psalter Week: 4

PSALM RESPONSE: GOD OF HOSTS, BRING US BACK; LET YOUR FACE SHINE ON US AND WE SHALL BE SAVED.

READINGS: 1st reading Micah 5:1-4a Psalm 79 2nd reading Hebrews 10:5-10 Gospel Luke 1:39-45

READINGS FOR SUNDAY 26TH DECEMBER 2021:

READINGS: 1st reading Samuel 1:20-22, 24-28 Psalm 83 2nd reading 1 St John 3:1-2, 21-24 Gospel Luke 2:41-52

Youth Groups

Stars of Abraham (school years 3, 4, 5 & 6)

Grail Seekers (school years 7, 8, 9)

Student Youth (school year 10 until sixth form)

These groups meet regularly in person. For more details and how to join please go to the parish website www.stswithunwellsparish.org.uk

Communion & Liberation Groups

School of Community in Holy Cross meets every **Wednesday**, for more information please click the link on the homepage of our website. All are welcome!

School of Community in St Edward meets every **Thursday at 8pm** in St Edward's cloister. All are welcome!

Sacramental Preparation for Adults (RCIA)

If you would like to be baptised, confirmed or received into the Catholic Church (or know more about the Catholic faith) please email Deacon Paul Owen: powen@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk or alternatively please speak to a priest.

Growing In Faith Together (GIFT) Group

Tuesdays 10.15am to approx. 11.30am in the Holy Cross Resource Centre. We are meeting on **Tuesday 21st Dec** for coffee and informal sharing. We then

PARISH GROUPS



break for Christmas returning on Tuesday 4th Jan where we will be discussing the Synodial Questionnaire. On Tuesday 11th Jan we start a series of eight studies, the first being 'Mysteries of the Bible'. All are welcome!

Fellowship Group - Is now on a Christmas break. Meetings will resume in the New Year, date to be announced.

Afternoon Club - **St Joseph's Parish Centre (26 Abbey Water)**, first Tuesday in the month. Come and join us for tea, games and good fun. All are welcome!

CAFE - is on **2nd and 4th Tuesday** in the month at **2pm** in St. Joseph's Parish Centre and **7.30pm** in St. Andrew's. All are welcome. For more information please contact Ann Heslop: ann.heslop@virginmedia.com / 02380 734429.

The Little Flowers Baby & Toddler Group

Will start on **Wednesday 12th January, 10am**, at Holy Cross Resource Centre and each **Wednesday** thereafter. The group is for 0-4 years and their families. More information is on the website or you can email: littleflowers.sswp@gmail.com More volunteers are always welcome.

MESSAGES



Christmas Collection

Our Christmas Collection celebrates and gives thanks to our Parish priests and all the dedication, guidance and care they give across our Parish. For your convenience there are several ways to make an offering:

- Loose cash or cheques in the collection basket;
- Cheques made out to **PRCDTR St Swithun Wells** with Christmas on the back;
- Bank transfer into the main parish account sort code **30-93-04**; a/c **01786599** using the reference **Christmas**;
- Click on the green 'donate' button on the homepage of our website and then click 'clergy Christmas offering'.
- If you are a tax payer and wish to gift aid your offering you can use the yellow envelopes provided in the reception area of each church. Ensure all relevant information is included so we can reclaim the gift aid on your behalf. **Please write "Christmas Offering" on the envelope** - this can be placed in any collection between now and Christmas.

Penitential Services

Friday 17th December, 7.30pm in St Andrew.
Saturday 18th December, 11am in Holy Cross.

St Joseph's Church Private Prayer times - the church will be open for private prayer every **Thursday (10am-6.30pm)** and **Sunday (10am-12noon)** starting from **Thursday 23rd December**.

Changes to Mass - Please be aware there will be no morning Masses celebrated on Friday 24th December, nor will there be Vigil Masses celebrated on the evening of Sat 25th December. Please see the back page of the newsletter for Mass times.

Parish Office Closure & Newsletter

The office will be closed on **Christmas Eve** and will **re-open on Tuesday 4th January 2022**. Please send all newsletter submissions to the Parish Office by 9.30am on Wed 22nd as a double newsletter will be produced for 26th December. The newsletter to be produced after this is the 9th Jan 2022; submissions need to reach the office by 9.30am on Wed 5th Jan 2022.

MESSAGES CONTINUED

Parish Advent to Christmas Carol Service at St Swithun Wells Church, Fair Oak Sunday 19th December at 3.30pm

Please remember to wear your mask for the service, as you do for Mass. Mulled wine and mince pies will be served afterwards for those who wish to stay.

Carol Service in OLQA

Sunday 19th December at 6pm followed by a reception in the hall. All are welcome!

Romsey United Reformed Church have cancelled their Carols by Candlelight (19th December) due to Covid precautions.

Invitation from Churches Together in Chandlers Ford

On the evening of **Monday 20th December** we are inviting all members of local churches to join us in **Carol singing at ASDA between 6pm and 7pm**. We will be singing outside, so please dress up warmly and bring a small torch with you, if you have one. Please meet outside the main entrance at 5.55pm or in case of bad weather meet in the large trolley shelter near the main entrance so you will be dry! We will be accompanied by musicians and will be singing a selection of well known carols - words provided - so no need to practice beforehand.

Two Saints urgently need new unwrapped hats, gloves, socks and scarves only (for Christmas). There is a collection box at St Edward.

Ark of Fellowship - Group for learning disabilities or learning difficulties, their families and friends

We would like to create a new group to accommodate young adults with learning disabilities or learning difficulties, their families and friends. We will meet regularly on **Thursday at 6.30pm at Holy Cross Resource Centre for a couple of hours, commencing Thursday 27th January**.

We will have fun and games and meals together. We are open to suggestions to make this group an inclusive and enjoyable one. It is important that we build a good community spirit which recognises that there is value in every individual, no matter their strengths or perceived weaknesses and certainly that there is value to be found in the bonds created within such a group.

We are looking for volunteers to help run the group. If you would be interested in volunteering or you know some young adults who would like to join the group, please contact Fr Luca at: arkoffellowship.sswp@gmail.com

Parish Pilgrimage to Rome

Tuesday 28th June - Sunday 3rd July 2022

More details including the itinerary, prices and booking are available on our website. The **deadline for booking is 20th December 2021**. You can also find details on our website about alternative cheaper accommodation which will be made available for families. We have received a donation to help financially, if you need help covering the costs then please speak to Fr Raffaele.

Communion & Liberation Christmas 2021 Posters

are now available in our churches please, pick up your copy.

Viva Voce - The Christmas/New Year edition of our quarterly Diocesan Newsletter Viva Voce is now available in our churches, these will be handed out at the end of weekend Masses.

Message from Clare Lasker - Huge thanks to all who supported the Advent fundraising events for CAFOD at St Edwards, **£718.90** was raised which was fantastic.

CAFOD Appeal - CAFOD is combining efforts with the DEC to launch the Afghanistan Crisis Appeal. In Afghanistan, 8 million people are on the brink of famine because of drought, collapsing economy, food shortages, conflict, and COVID. CAFOD is supporting sister Caritas agencies to reach communities most in need with food, clean water, and fuel. During Advent, when we open ourselves to the needs of others, let's do all that we can to save lives. You can donate at cafod.org.uk/AfghanistanAppeal and please pray for the people of Afghanistan.

CONFESSION (SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION)

Tuesday:	6.30pm-7.30pm	St Edward
Tuesday:	9.30am-10.00am	St Andrew
Saturday:	<u>Penitential Service 11am on 18th Dec, Holy Cross</u>	
	5.30pm-6.00pm	OLQA
	5.30pm-6.00pm	St Joseph
Sunday:	8.30am-9.00am	St Andrew
	9.00am-9.30am	OLQA

CLERGY & PARISH OFFICE

Fr Raffaele Cossa (Parish Priest)
Tel: 023 8061 2430; E: rcossa@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Fr Luca Speziale (Assistant Priest)
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Fr Marco Vignolo (Assistant Priest)
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Fr Bruce Barnes (Assistant Priest)
Tel: 01489 890947 (OLQA Office)

Deacon Bob Birtles
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Deacon John di Meo
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Deacon Paul Owen
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Deacon Paul Wilson
Tel: 023 8061 6618; E: pwilson@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Parish Office: Holy Cross Church, 53 Leigh Road, Eastleigh, SO50 9DF
Tel: 02380 273882

Holy Cross Resource Centre & Finance Admin: Linda Roberts
Email: lroberts@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Parish Secretary: Sarah Goodfellow
Email: stswparish@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Website Contact: website.sswp@gmail.com

MASS TIMES FOR OUR CHURCH COMMUNITIES

DATE	TIME	CHURCH	MASS INTENTION
Saturday 18th December	9.30am	Holy Cross (also Live Streamed)	Paddy McMahon RIP FM
	11.00am	Penitential Service	
	5.00pm	St Swithun Wells	Catherine Haslam RIP
	6.00pm	St Joseph	The Pigniczki Family
	6.00pm	OLQA	
	6.30pm	St Edward	Patrick & Mary Burke FM
Sunday 19th December <i>Fourth Sunday of Advent</i>	8.30am	Holy Cross	<i>Polska Msza Święta</i>
	9.00am	St Edward	For the People of the Parish
	9.00am	St Andrew	Denis Keefe RIP Anniversary
	9.30am	OLQA (also Live Streamed)	
	11.00am	Holy Cross (also Live Streamed)	Flora Kelly RIP FM
	11.00am	St Joseph	Sean Kelly RIP Anniversary
Mon 20th Dec	9.30am	Holy Cross (also Live Streamed)	Dudley Roberts RIP FM Leonard Scott RIP
Tues 21st December	10.00am	St Andrew	Brenda Hubbard (Special Intention)
	6.00pm	St Edward	Felino & Angie Cagampang (Special Intention)
Wed 22nd December	9.30am	Holy Cross (also Live Streamed)	Antonio Cicu RIP FM
	9.30am	OLQA	
	10.00am	St Edward	Margaret Martindale RIP
Thurs 23rd Dec	9.30am	Holy Cross (also Live Streamed)	Anna-Claire Anthraper (Thanksgiving)
	12 Noon	OLQA	
	6.00pm	St Joseph	Fr Bob Douglas RIP
Friday 24th Dec <i>The Nativity of the Lord</i>	6.00pm	St Edward <i>(Carols from 5.30pm)</i>	Paul O'Dwyer RIP
	6.00pm	St Swithun Wells	Jamie Vokes (21st Birthday Intentions)
	7.00pm	St Andrew	
	9.30pm	OLQA	
	11.00pm	St Joseph <i>(Carols from 10.30pm)</i>	Special Intention
	Midnight	Holy Cross (also Live Streamed) <i>(Carols from 11.30pm)</i>	Mr Pappachan RIP
Saturday 25th December <i>Christmas Day</i>	8.30am	Holy Cross	<i>Polska Msza Święta</i>
	9.00am	St Edward	Mrs Edward Christian FM
	9.00am	St Andrew	For the People of the Parish
	9.30am	OLQA	
	11.00am	Holy Cross (also Live Streamed)	Palmira Mesquita RIP
	11.00am	St Joseph	John Gare RIP
Sunday 26th December <i>The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph</i>	8.30am	Holy Cross	<i>Polska Msza Święta</i>
	9.00am	St Edward	Mrs Edward Christian FM
	9.00am	St Andrew	Michael Jeffery RIP Anniversary
	9.30am	OLQA (also Live Streamed)	
	11.00am	Holy Cross (also Live Streamed)	Catherine O'Brien & Andrew Breen (Anniversary)
	11.00am	St Joseph	Robert Twigg (Anniversary)

CHURCH ADDRESSES

St Edward the Confessor
Our Lady Queen of Apostles (OLQA)
Holy Cross
St Swithun Wells
St Andrew
St Joseph

191-193, Winchester Rd, Chandlers Ford, SO53 2DU
Martin Street, Bishop's Waltham, SO32 1DN
53 Leigh Road, Eastleigh, SO50 9DF
Allington Lane, Fair Oak, SO50 7DB
Fleming Avenue, North Baddesley, SO52 9EP
Abbey House Drive, Romsey SO51 8YB