



*Our Vision is a Person, Our Vision is Jesus Christ*

**21st DECEMBER 2025: FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

This Newsletter Also Covers Sunday 28th December 2025 & Sunday 4th January 2026

## THE NATIVITY SCENE

When I was little, I think I was around 10 years old, during Advent my parents bought me some moulds and clay to build a nativity scene. So, with my parents' help, I made the figurines of Jesus, Mary and Joseph; then I made the shepherds and the angel, and finally I made 6-7 sheep. Once the clay had dried and hardened, I painted the figurines. I remember that the result was not bad at all, and I was very proud to have a nativity scene that I had literally built from scratch. That nativity scene lasted for decades, and perhaps some of those figurines are still at my parents' house among the Christmas trinkets.

At that time, the nativity scene was more of a game to me than a symbol of a true story that happened two thousand years ago. Yet in my heart, that game slowly took shape and became a reality in my daily life. I still reconstruct that nativity scene, the scene of Jesus' birth, even if no longer with clay, but through relationships of affection. Bringing communion to a sick person; giving food to the food bank that will then end up on the table of those who do not have the same opportunities as I do; hearing a penitent's confession or celebrating Holy Mass ... these are all ways in which Jesus can be reborn in this world and be worshipped by people.

The nativity scene, physically represented, invented many years ago by St Francis to commemorate the greatest event in human history – God who became man – was the basis of my faith, it was the playful way in which I began to know Jesus. Over time, I became increasingly aware that the beautiful celebration I had with my family was not just an exchange of gifts and a time of great feasting. Amidst all the festive lights was my simple nativity scene with the baby Jesus in the centre, lying in a manger filled with straw: it was Him we were celebrating! So, over time, I discovered that every 25th of December we were celebrating Jesus' birthday. That poor child in the manger, who stripped himself of his divinity to become small like us, so that he could take our smallness and pettiness and raise it up to the heights of Heaven.

## GLORIA IN EXCELSIS DEO!

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!

For this reason, I decided this year to recreate the nativity scene with clay in Bishop's Waltham, involving children and families who wanted to participate. As this is not a normal or traditional activity, not many children contributed. However, the nativity scene remains an extraordinary way to help children understand the origin and meaning of Christmas.

In your families, have your children build a nativity scene under the tree! One day they will thank you because, even if they may be disappointed to discover that their parents bring them their presents, they will understand more easily that the greatest gift they receive is a God who becomes flesh to love and to save them, to be close to them from an early age like a little brother until he becomes their Saviour.

Happy birthday to Jesus and Merry Christmas to all of you who celebrate Him!

*Fr Mario*

## GEM OF THE WEEK



Letter from Bishop Philip on Priestly Vocation  
If anyone has suggestions for GEMs please contact [website.sswp@gmail.com](mailto:website.sswp@gmail.com)

For the next Newsletter, items should be received into the Parish Office by **10am on Wednesday 7th January 2026**, please email your messages/notices to: [office@stswithunwellsparish.org.uk](mailto:office@stswithunwellsparish.org.uk)

If you wish to make a donation to our parish please go to: <http://www.stswithunwellsparish.org.uk/financesdonations>

## LITURGICAL INDICATIONS



Sunday 21st December 2025 YEAR A - YEAR 2 - PSALTER WEEK 4

PSALM RESPONSE: LET THE LORD ENTER; HE IS THE KING OF GLORY.

1st Reading Isaiah 7:10-14 Psalm 24 (23) 2nd Reading Romans 1:1-7 Gospel Matthew 1:18-24

Sunday 28th December 2025: YEAR A - YEAR 2 - PSALTER WEEK 1

PSALM RESPONSE: BLESSED ARE ALL WHO FEAR THE LORD, AND WALK IN HIS WAYS

1st reading Sirach 3:2-6,12-14 Psalm 128 (127) 2nd reading Colossians 3:12-21 Gospel Matthew 2:13-15,19-23

Sunday 4th January 2026: YEAR A - YEAR 2 - PSALTER WEEK 2

PSALM RESPONSE: THE WORD BECAME FLESH AND DWELT AMONG US.

1st reading Sirach 24:1-2,8-12 Psalm 147 2nd reading Ephesians 1:3-6,15-18 Gospel John 1:1-18

Sunday 11th January 2026: YEAR A - YEAR 2 - PSALTER WEEK 3

PSALM RESPONSE: THE LORD WILL BLESS HIS PEOPLE WITH PEACE.

1st reading Isaiah 42:1-4,6-7 Psalm 29 (28) 2nd reading Acts 10:34-38 Gospel Matthew 3:13-17

## MESSAGES



**Christmas Collection** - There are several ways to make an offering to our priests:

- Loose cash or cheques in the collection baskets at Christmas Masses. Gift aid these donations using a yellow envelope;
- All donations for Christmas collections handed in outside Christmas masses must be clearly designated **Christmas offerings** and placed in yellow envelopes if you wish to gift aid the donations;
- Cheques made out to **CDP 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 'donate' button on the Homepage of our website and then click 'Clergy Christmas Collection 2025'.

**Christmas Crib Collection 2025** - this year's donations will be given to Friends of the Holy Land as our brothers and sisters in Christ there are suffering greatly. Please **do not** use the yellow envelopes for this collection.

**Advent Penitential Services** – Will be held at:

- St Andrew's on Friday 19th December at 7.30pm
  - Holy Cross on Saturday 20th December at 10am
  - OLQA on Tuesday 23rd December at 7.30pm.
- with the opportunity for individual confession.

**Christmas Craft Sale** - Join us after 11am Mass at Holy Cross Church on Sunday 21st December where there will be Christmas craft items for sale, made by members of the Ark of Fellowship.

**CL Christmas Carols** - We will sing outdoors in front of the Swan Centre in Eastleigh at 2pm on Saturday 20th December. A rehearsal will be held in Holy Cross Church at 1pm on Saturday 20th December.

**Christmas Carols at Waitrose** - Join us at 6pm on Monday 22nd December inside Waitrose, Chandler's Ford to sing Christmas carols. The event is organised by Churches Together in Chandler's Ford.

**St Edward's CAFOD Fundraising** - Thank you to everyone who supported the recent Christmas Fayre at St Edwards. £400.30 was raised for CAFOD.

**St Swithun Wells and OLQA Carol Services** -

annual Carol Services on Sunday 21st December at 3pm at St Swithun Wells and 6pm at OLQA. Come and have a good sing and enjoy mulled wine, mince pies and other festive refreshments!

**Parish Office Closures & Parish Newsletter over the Christmas period** - The Office will be closed from 12 noon on Tuesday 24th December, reopening on Tuesday 6th January 2026. For any urgent enquiries over the festive period please contact our priests on 02380 612430. The next newsletter to be published will be the 11th January 2026 edition.

**Message from the Parish Office** - We would like to wish all of our parishioners peace, joy, health and happiness over the Christmas period and throughout 2026! *Best wishes, Christina, Faye and Patricia*

**Priest Availability** - Our priests are not available over Christmas, however they are able to meet at the usual times and places week commencing 5th January 2026.

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**St Swithun Wells Catholic School** would like to thank all parishioners who generously donated raffle prizes for the Christmas Fayre. Your support is very much appreciated and the event was a huge success.

**Christmas Fundraising** - Both Poitiers Care and Eastleigh Basics Bank would like to thank the Knights of St Columba for their generous donations at Christmas. Poitiers also recognise the donations of gifts and festive items from St Edward's parishioners.

**Upcoming Funeral** - Please pray for the repose of the soul of Geoffrey Hurst and for his family. Geoffrey's Funeral Mass takes place on **Wednesday 7th January at 11am in St Joseph's church** to be followed by burial at St Mary Extra, Sholing, Southampton.

**Eucharistic Ministers & Readers Retreats** - Saturday 17th January at 2.30pm - 4pm in St Edward's for all Eucharistic Ministers of the parish. For readers, please save the date of **Saturday 31st January** - more details to follow.

**Rimini Meeting** - there will be a trip to Italy for young people aged 18 to 25 from **20th to 27th August 2026**. If interested, please contact Fr Matteo by 11th January.

## MASS TIMES FOR OUR CHURCH COMMUNITIES

DATE	TIME	CHURCH	MASS INTENTION
Saturday 20th December	9.30am <u>10.00am</u> 5.00pm 6.00pm 6.00pm 6.30pm	Holy Cross <u>Holy Cross</u> St Swithun Wells OLQA St Joseph St Edward	Maureen Burnett <u>Penitential Service</u> People of the Parish Dudley Roberts RIP FM Eileen Murphy & Family (Wellbeing) John Edward Milne RIP (10th Anniversary)
Sunday 21st December <i>Fourth Sunday of Advent</i>	8.30am 9.00am 9.00am 9.30am 11.00am 11.00am 5.30pm	Holy Cross St Edward St Andrew OLQA Holy Cross (& livestreamed*) St Joseph Holy Cross	<i>Polska Msza Święta</i> Anna Biczko RIP Daniel Smith RIP (Anniversary) Marcelle Brunag RIP Rolf Tage Nordstrom RIP Mary & Theo Williams RIP Adelyn Alexa Binu (Birthday Intention)
Monday 22nd December	9.30am	Holy Cross	Antonio Cicu RIP FM Theo Osime RIP (1st Anniversary)
Tuesday 23rd December	10.00am 6.00pm <u>7.30pm</u>	St Andrew St Edward <u>OLQA</u>	Cristeena Tennyson (Wellbeing) Mary Ellen Connolly (Thanksgiving) <u>Penitential Service</u>
Wednesday 24th December <i>The Nativity of the Lord</i>	<u>6.00pm</u> <u>6.00pm</u> <u>6.00pm</u> <u>6.00pm</u> <u>7.00pm</u> <u>11.00pm</u> <u>12.00am</u>	<u>OLQA</u> <u>St Edward</u> <u>Holy Cross</u> <u>St Swithun Wells</u> <u>St Andrew</u> <u>St Joseph</u> <u>Holy Cross</u>	Karen Kelly, Adrien Yeoman & Family Gerrardina & David Allen RIP  Andrew Breen RIP (Anniversary)
Thursday 25th December <i>The Nativity of the Lord</i>	<u>9.00am</u> <u>9.00am</u> <u>9.30am</u> <u>11.00am</u> <u>11.00am</u>	<u>St Edward</u> <u>St Andrew</u> <u>OLQA</u> <u>Holy Cross</u> <u>St Joseph</u>	Mrs Edward Christian FM  Vera & Joe Kelly (Wellbeing & Intentions) Thomas Thomas RIP Samantha Harris Friends & Family
Friday 26th December <i>St Stephen</i>	10.00am 10.00am 12 Noon	St Joseph St Edward OLQA	Kathleen & Leslie Board RIP Great Awakening Catholic Evangelisation Geraldine Kelly & Dave Lucas
Saturday 27th December <i>St John</i>	9.30am 5.00pm 6.00pm 6.00pm 6.30pm	Holy Cross St Swithun Wells OLQA St Joseph St Edward	Margarita, Cedric & Charles Harris FM  Carmel & Eddie Burke & Family Peggy Carmody (Wellbeing) Gina Rohs RIP
Sunday 28th December <i>The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary &amp; Joseph</i>	8.30am 9.00am 9.00am 9.30am 11.00am 11.00am 5.30pm	Holy Cross St Edward St Andrew OLQA Holy Cross (& livestreamed*) St Joseph Holy Cross	<i>Polska Msza Święta</i> Mrs Edward Christian FM Jackie Lebburn RIP (Anniversary) People of the Parish Keith Clark & Raymond Harrison RIP Robert Twigg RIP (Anniversary)
Monday 29th December <i>St Thomas of Canterbury</i>	9.30am	Holy Cross	

\* 11am Mass at Holy Cross is also livestreamed - please go to our website <https://stswithunwellsparish.org.uk> to view

## MASS TIMES FOR OUR CHURCH COMMUNITIES (CONTINUED)

DATE	TIME	CHURCH	MASS INTENTION
Tuesday 30th December	10.00am 6.00pm	St Andrew St Edward	George, Gertrude & Mary Lawton RIP
Wednesday 31st December	9.30am 10.00am	Holy Cross St Edward	Pamela Webster RIP
Thursday 1st Jan <i>Mary, the Holy Mother of God</i>	9.30am 12 Noon 6.00pm	Holy Cross OLQA St Joseph	Holly Harris RIP
Friday 2nd January <i>Ss Basil the Great &amp; Gregory Nazianzen</i>	10.00am 10.00am 12 Noon	St Joseph St Edward OLQA	Eric & Roslyn Lasker & Family RIP
Saturday 3rd January	9.30am 5.00pm 6.00pm 6.00pm 6.30pm	Holy Cross St Swithun Wells OLQA St Joseph St Edward	People of the Parish  Audrey Fearon RIP (Anniversary) In loving Memory of Roy Glen Haslam RIP
Sunday 4th January <i>Second Sunday after The Nativity</i>	8.30am 9.00am 9.00am 9.30am 11.00am 11.00am 5.30pm	Holy Cross St Edward St Andrew OLQA Holy Cross (& livestreamed*) St Joseph Holy Cross	<i>Polska Msza Święta</i>  Domenico Bibbo RIP (2nd Anniversary) John Gare RIP
Monday 5th Jan	9.30am	Holy Cross	Canon John Doran FM
Tuesday 6th January <i>The Epiphany of the Lord</i>	<u>9.30am</u> 10.00am <u>7.00pm</u> <u>7.00pm</u> <u>7.00pm</u>	<u>Holy Cross</u> St Andrew <u>St Edward</u> <u>St Joseph</u> <u>OLQA</u>	Family of Margaret Allan
Wednesday 7th January	9.30am 9.30am	Holy Cross St Edward	Mrs Edward Christian FM
Thursday 8th January	9.30am 12 Noon 6.00pm	Holy Cross OLQA St Joseph	Mike Walsh RIP
Friday 9th January	10.00am 10.00am 12 Noon	St Joseph St Edward OLQA	Deceased members of the Roddy Family Albert James Boaden FM
Saturday 10th January	9.30am 5.00pm 6.00pm 6.00pm 6.30pm	Holy Cross St Swithun Wells OLQA St Joseph St Edward	Michael Lane RIP FM  People of the Parish Beppie Marsh RIP (Anniversary) Blaine Pressacco RIP
Sunday 11th January <i>The Baptism of the Lord</i>	8.30am 9.00am 9.00am 9.30am 11.00am 11.00am 5.30pm	Holy Cross St Edward St Andrew OLQA Holy Cross (& livestreamed*) St Joseph Holy Cross	<i>Polska Msza Święta</i>  Pasquale Marucci RIP (5th Anniversary)

\* 11am Mass at Holy Cross is also livestreamed - please go to our website <https://stswithunwellsparish.org.uk> to view