

HOPE:
THE EMBERS OF THE FIRE OF JOY

My dear friends, I sincerely believe that we are living through a crisis of joy in our society. I'm originally from Bournemouth and when I go back to my hometown, I walk through the Highstreet and feel immediately depressed – not simply about the lack of investment in the local infrastructure, but the lack of joy on people's faces. I really sense that the embers of hope are burning out, and with it, so is the fire of hope.

Certainly, we can sense this joylessness in our current society – whether it be economic, social or political. I'm sure I don't need to name anything in particular! But also, in our typical Church communities – despite their being joy, there still is a joyless voice when we think of the future: churches closing, lack of priests, lack of young families. It's no wonder when we hear such doom and gloom in the statistics we are worn out in our western society and the Church in the West. We are tired!

Today's readings challenge the prophecies of doom and joylessness. In the first reading we hear: "Shout for joy! Rejoice, exult with all your heart." To the psalm we hear that beautiful anthem: "Sing and shout for joy for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel." The second reading, "Always be happy in the Lord."

We strike gold, however, when we reach the mountain summit of the Gospel. We hear John the Baptist say, "He [Jesus] will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire" (Lk 3:16). Fire. Fire is such a powerful image. When I read this part of today's Gospel it took me back to sitting in the Church of the Venerable English College in Rome – where I studied for five years before ordination to the diaconate.

In the Church there is the most beautiful image of the Trinity, painted by an Italian artist (Durante Alberti) in 1579, which was commissioned for the English College. For five years I was able to just gaze at it and every time it would inspire me in new ways – during the good and the bad days. But one detail of the painting can speak to us today. Jesus is held in the arms of the Father, and you can see the blood of his crucified body pouring out over the earth that is beneath him. I know it sounds gory but stick with me. As the blood drops onto the earth, it sparks flames and spread rapidly. It comes from that beautiful passage later in Luke's Gospel, where Jesus says, "I have come to put fire on the earth" (Lk 12:49).

It begs the question – what is this fire? Historically, fire has been used throughout history to show the wrath of God and the strength of His anger. And indeed, fire is scary, especially when it is out of control, and we cannot tame the flames.

But again, what really is this fire? I would say it is the fire of joy, and the fuel of that joy is hope. Hope is the scolding ember of the fires of Joy. What exactly is this hope and joy for us Christians though? It is the knowledge that Jesus the Lord loves us intimately, more than we can imagine & He calls us to Heaven, to be embraced by His loving Father.

My friends, God loves you as you are. God loves you in your joys and in your struggles. God gazes at you and loves the things about you that you don't like about yourself. God gazes at you and loves the things that people tell you are odd, strange and weird. He loves you in your totality. He calls you to rejoice in the way He has formed you – as one of his mysteries of love.

The Church's mission, the mission of all baptised Christians, is to stoke these embers of hope and keep the fire of joy roaring in the world. The world, which is in a crisis of joy, needs the Church – you! - to stand as a continuous sign of joy. The Church by its nature is the vessel of joy. The readings on this Gaudete Sunday are a reminder that we are all called to be signs of joy through the love we share with others – whether it be at work with that annoying colleague, on the bus, or in the street with that stranger who looks dodgy.

We cannot give into the temptation as Christians to become barriers to God's love and mercy. As Pope Francis reminded young people at World Youth Day in Lisbon this summer – God calls everyone, everyone, everyone. Who are we to come in the way of this because we may lack joy and hope?

I'm not a very original writer, so let me end by quoting a very beautiful piece on hope by an English priest who passed away last year: "As a Christian hope is your vocation. We live for the future, of which we have had a glimpse, and it's great. We are to be full of hope, and we are to radiate hope to our people. However bad the present may be, we have a glorious inheritance among the saints, and it is rich, rich, rich" (Mgr Tony Philpot, *Spiritual Conferences*, p. 313).

My dear brothers and sisters, as we approach the Jubilee Year of Hope in 2025, let us continuously stoke the embers of our hope for our home of Heaven. By doing this, I believe that we can be truly joyful and spread a roaring fire of joy to set our world ablaze.

O Sacred Heart of Jesus – which burns with unimaginable love for all of humanity.
Have mercy on us.

Rev Ryan Browne

Priest in Charge: Fr. John Chadwick
Parish Administrator: Mrs Jan Hughes **Office open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday mornings**
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Please note we now have CCTV Cameras around the premises for security purposes.

SACRED HEART PARISH

Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth
Reg. Charity No. 1199568



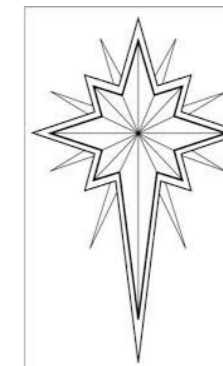
FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT, CHRISTMAS. & THE HOLY FAMILY - Year C - 22, 25 & 29 December 2024

On behalf of Fr. John and the Parish Office,
we wish you all a

"Holy, Blessed & Peaceful Christmas".

Thank you to everyone who has contributed of their
time and talent to preparing the church, liturgy and
helping us all in our worship of God.

May Christ our Saviour bless us all during
this Festive Season.



MASS TIMES

Mass in the Convent on Monday mornings at 9:30am

Daily Eucharistic Service at Maryfield Convent at 10:00am (Tues, Wed, Thurs, Fri & Sat)

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Saturday 21 Dec	12:00 noon	Baptism	Kathleen Wall
	6:00 pm	Mass	People of the Parish
Sunday 22 Dec	10.00 am	Mass	Damian Maranzano RIP
			& The Sister's of Maryfield Convent
Monday 23 Dec	9:30 am	Mass	In the Convent

CHRISTMAS

Tuesday 24 Dec	4.00 pm	For the Children of the Parish	
	8.00 pm	Carol Service	
	8.30 pm	Mary Chardry RIP	Live Streamed
Wednesday 25 Dec	10.00 am	Bridle & Blackburn Family	Live Streamed



ST STEPHEN'S DAY MASS

Thursday 26 Dec	10.00 am	For our Altar Servers
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**Children attending the Nativity Mass on Christmas Eve at 4:00pm
are invited to dress as Angels and Shepherds, if they wish to.**

THE HOLY FAMILY

Saturday 28 Dec	6:00 pm	Mass	People of the Parish
Sunday 29 Dec	10.00 am	Mass	Rev Claire Gerrard, Jean Foster RIP & Pam RIP
Monday 30 Dec	9:30 am	Mass	In the Convent



Celebrating Christmas



We welcome all Visitors to our Parish over the Christmas Season

who are visiting Family and Friends.

Thank you to everyone who contributed of their time and talent in preparing the Churches and helping in our

Worship of God.

May Christ the Saviour whose coming we now celebrate Bless you and all your loved ones now and in the New Year ahead.

PLEASE PRAY FOR ALL THE SICK IN OUR PARISH

Lord, have all those who are unable to be with us at Mass in Your safekeeping as we remember:



Debbie Cavedon, Jacob Weston, Mike Murch, Fr Paul Leonard, Ken Musgrave, Sylvia Hosking, Patrica Ringrose-Voase, Fr Jean Patrice, David Xavier

CHRISTMAS COLLECTION

Tradition holds that the Christmas and Easter Offerings are, if you wish, your opportunity for a personal gift to Father John and it is the main source of annual income for him. Many thanks.

The link if you wish to donate online the link is:

<https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/fundraising/hook-sacred-heart-catholic-church-christmas-collection-2024>

ILL AT HOME OR IN HOSPITAL

If you are ill and are unable to attend Mass, please let Jan know in the office, we can arrange for communion to be brought to you. If you are in hospital or know that you are going to go in, let us know in the office.

By phone 01256 577007 or by email office@sacredhearthook.org

If you find yourself in Basingstoke Hospital over Christmas Deacon Tony will be visiting with Holy Communion on Christmas Day, 27th December, 3rd & 10th January. Please let the office know if you require a visit, over Christmas.

CHRISTMAS TREE

This Christmas as we remember all our dearly departed Family and Friends. On the table at the back of church you will find some silver and gold stars, please write the name of your loved ones on one of them and place the star in the basket provided.



ADVENT WREATH HYMN—4th Sunday of Advent

During the lighting of the advent candle this weekend, we will be singing the Fourth verse of the Advent Wreath Song

Light the Advent candle four
Think of joy for ever more
Christ Child in the stable born
Gift of love that Christmas morn

*Candle, candle burning bright
Shining in the cold winter night
Candle, candle burning bright
Fill our hearts with Christmas light*

CHRISTMAS EVE AND DAY

During the lighting of the advent candle this Christmas we will sing the final verse of the Advent Wreath Song

*Light the Christmas candles now
Sing of donkey, sheep and cow
Birthday candles for the king
Let the alleluias ring.*

*Candle, candle burning bright
Shining in the cold winter night
Candle, candle burning bright
Fill our hearts with Christmas light*

ADVENT & CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES



Advent Confessions

After Saturday evening and Sunday morning Masses

Christmas Eve (Tuesday)

4:00pm Children's Christmas Service
8:00pm Carol Service
8:30pm Christmas Eve Mass

Christmas Day (Wednesday)

10:00am Mass During the Day



St Stephen's Day (Thursday)

10:00am Mass

HOOK PARISH OFFICE HOLIDAY TIME!

Please note: The Parish Office will be closed from Monday 23rd December until Monday 6th January 2025. Please leave a phone message or email if urgent, both will be checked daily.



LITURGY OF THE WORD

Fourth Sunday of Advent

First Reading Micah 5: 1 – 4

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 79

God of hosts, bring us back;

Let your face shine on us and we shall be saved.

Second Reading: Hebrews 10: 5 - 10

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!

I am the handmaid of the Lord:

let what you have said be done to me.

Alleluia!

Gospel Luke 1: 39 - 45

Christmas Eve—Mass During the Night

First Reading Isaiah 9: 1 – 7

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 95

Today a saviour has been born to us;

he is Christ the Lord.

Second Reading: Titus 2: 11 - 14

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!

I bring you news of great joy:

Today a saviour has been born to us, Christ the Lord.

Alleluia!

Gospel Luke 2: 10 - 11

Christmas Day—Mass During the Day

First Reading Isaiah 52: 7 – 10

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 97

All the ends of the earth have seen

the salvation of our God

Second Reading: Hebrews 1: 1 - 6

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!

A hallowed day has dawned upon us.

Come, you nations, worship the Lord,

For today a great light has shone down upon the earth

Alleluia!

Gospel Luke 2: 10 - 11

Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

First Reading Ecclesiasticus 93 2 - 6, 12 - 14

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 127

O blessed are those who fear the Lord

and walk in his ways!

Second Reading: Colossians 3: 12 - 21

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!

May the peace of Christ reign in your hearts;

let the message of Christ find a home with you.

Alleluia!

Gospel Luke 2: 41 - 52

THE SACRISTY

Is a place of prayer and contemplation and should be an oasis of calm, before and after Mass. The Priest and Servers need time and space in order to prepare them selves for The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Please respect this and refrain from visiting the Sacristy in the last 15 mins before Mass. Unless there is an emergency, of course

THE CHURCH—BEFORE MASS

Many have asked me that we try and keep our voices down before Mass so that we can all offer our prayers to God in relative peace before Mass begins. We are a beautiful family of faith at Sacred Heart, therefore very important we chat and catch up. But if we can try and leave this until after Mass it would be much appreciated.

Many thanks. Fr J

THANK YOU

Thank you to the cleaners, flower arrangers, the choir and the organists, Extraordinary ministers, those who play or contribute to the Music Mass, all who serve on the altar, the readers and those who help set up and clear away before and after Mass, the greeters, the sisters, the coffee servers, the liturgists, the ladies who do the laundry, the brass cleaners and everyone who has helped throughout the year.

Your help is invaluable and very much appreciated.

CARPARK ATTENDANTS

We need a team of three for each of the weekend Masses, to help with the parking of cars in the carpark. If you are able to help please contact the Parish Office.



PARISH FINANCE

Dona Plates Contactless giving made easy with Gift Aid optional

Standing Orders

Please contact the Parish Office for more details.

BACS Transfer

Our bank details if you need them are:

CDP Hook Sacred Heart (Lloyds Bank)

Sort Code 30-93-04 Account 00880117

Cheques Payable to 'CDP Hook Sacred Heart'

Gift Aid payers are encouraged to contact in confidence at: office@sacredhearthook.org