



# NEWSLETTER

ST PETER'S CATHOLIC CHURCH  
CLIFTON STREET, LYTHAM, FY8 5EP  
Parish Website [www.stpeterslytham.co.uk](http://www.stpeterslytham.co.uk)



Sunday 7th January 2024, The Epiphany of the Lord - Year 'B'  
Parish Priest: Rev Peter D. Clarke - 01253 737037  
Deacons: Rev Michael Harrison - 01253 730508, Rev David Pope 07950844747  
& Rev William Riley (Retired)

## Weekend 6th / 7th January - The Epiphany of the Lord

Sat 6th 6pm St. Joseph's People of the Parishes

Sun 7th 9:15am St. Joseph's John Worsley

**Sun 7th 10:30am St. Peter's In Memory of a Dear Brother**

**Mon 8th 9am St. Peter's Mark William Pollard** followed by *Exposition & Confessions*

Tues 9th 10am St. Joseph's Tom & Monica Hindley followed by *Exposition & Confessions*

**Wed 10th 9am St. Peter's Elizabeth Whelan Cantoni**

*NO MASS THIS THURDAY*

Sacrament of Reconciliation with Exposition:

**Mon St. Peter's 09.30 - 10am & Tues St. Joseph's 10.30-11am**

Confession is also available by arrangement with Fr. Peter. Tel: 737037.

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**This Week's Readings:** God's purposes embrace the whole world and peoples of every race and culture. We meet in his name to celebrate his unchanging love for all.

**1st Reading *Isaiah 60:1-6*** - The prophet Isaiah shares a glorious vision of God's light drawing people of all nations to worship and praise God together.

**2nd Reading *Ephesians 3:2-3, 5-6*** - St. Paul explains that through Christ a new truth has dawned that God's purposes are not exclusive to one race but embrace all peoples and nations.

**Gospel: *Matthew 2:1-12*** - The familiar account of the wise men from a foreign country visiting the infant Jesus reminds us of God's concern and welcome for all humankind.

**Message from Fr. Peter:** So we celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany, when Three Wise Men visited the baby Jesus in the manger with their gifts. At least that's the image on our Christmas Cards and crib, and that's what tradition tells us. But this does raise a few questions. Firstly, the Bible doesn't mention the number of men visiting Jesus, only that there were three gifts. The suggestion that they were 'wise' comes from the fact we are told that they have studied the stars, and the suggestion that they were kings or men of wealth and power comes from the expensive gifts they present to the infant King. The Greek word used for these men is of course 'Maji' which is a term used for Persian priests, probably Zoroastrians, a religion which has many parallels with Jewish and subsequently Christian theology. The suggestions that they were foreign, gentile, wealthy Kings, makes them neatly the opposite of the local, Jewish, poor Shepherds; Jesus was born for everyone, creed, colour, whatever. When did they actually visit Jesus is a question I was asked in the car on the way to see 'Hamilton' last week? Well, Herod heard of the birth of Jesus from the visit of the wise men, and then set about killing first born males of two years or younger. This suggests that Jesus might have been two years old or thereabouts when the Wise Men visited - if they had visited Herod and Jesus much nearer his birth, then Herod need not have called for the slaughter of children up to two years. This also suggests that the Wise Men visited Jesus in the Holy Family's home in Nazareth, to which St. Matthew tells us they returned to after they had fled to Egypt, although as St. Luke implies that the Holy Family went straight to Nazareth directly after the Presentation, on the eighth day, they may have been visited earlier, as no indication is given as to how long it was that Herod realised the Wise Men weren't returning and set about the Slaughter of The Innocents. And what happened to the Wise Men's gifts? The importance of the gifts is their symbolism: gold representing Jesus' Kingship, frankincense His Divinity, and Myrrh foretelling of his death. But after their mention in the scriptures, we hear nothing more. Some traditions say the gold was stolen by the thieves who were crucified with Jesus, or that Mary Magdalene carried the oil to the tomb on Easter Sunday. **Confused with all of this? I am!** Lots of questions, conundrums which no doubt theologians have tied themselves in knots over the years. However one thing is clear; we are told that when the wise men saw Jesus, 'they prostrated themselves and did him homage'. That is without question. So perhaps the teaching is for each of us, wise or foolish, rich or poor, now, whenever and forever, to do the very same thing. Incidentally, *did you hear about the three wise men in the House of Commons? They were lost.* I'll get my winter coat... (the new one I got in the sale at River Island).

**Continued Christmas Thanks:** Over the festive season we celebrated four beautiful masses together, and huge thanks to everyone who made them so special. And huge thanks from me personally to: Michael and David, my friends and deacons; our Altar Serving teams and those who work in our Sacristies; the amazing Organists, Musicians and Choirs (I tell everyone how blessed I am with the music in my parishes); The Readers; Ministers (both inside and outside Church); Welcomers; Collectors; Counters; The Flower People and everyone who decorated our Churches, the Bell Ringers (apparently I am the only Catholic Parish Priest in England with two working towers!); everyone who works in the house and the grounds; Eileen in the Office; Those who look after the buildings (a 'Forth Bridge' job); the refreshments people (on Sundays and First Fridays); and those who Fr. Peter gets to whip up refreshments at various points (usually at the last minute - you know who you are); St. Peter's SVP and St. Joseph's Care and all those who help with outreach to those in need not least who bring along food and those who distribute it for us; our social event and fund raiser organizers; all those who work with the children - the Catechists, Children's Liturgists, the Teachers, everyone at St. Peter's School,

the Parents, and all the children; anyone who should be on this list but isn't (forgive me!); and everyone who comes along to our Parishes and makes them living signs of the Body of Christ in the world today. May the coming year bring us many blessings. Blessings and thanks to you all.

**Unwanted Christmas Presents:** If you have any extra presents or something which you might not be using, please bring them in to Church so that if suitable they can be distributed to those in need, or used as fund raising prizes for our parish gatherings. Even socks from Aunty Brenda are welcome (unworn)! (I won't tell Aunty Brenda.) Incidentally, *sharing socks is a very Christian act: it's good for the sole.* I'll get my coat... and put the crackers in the bin...

### CRIB OFFERINGS

Bishop Paul has asked that our Crib Offerings this year be donated to the work of the **Holy Family Parish in GAZA.** Please be as generous as you can be. **Thank you.**

### St. Vincent de Paul Society South Sudan Baby Feeding Appeal 2023

We have now launched our annual appeal on behalf of the SVP for your help for the people of South Sudan and in particular for the feeding of destitute babies and children. South Sudan, independent from Sudan since 2011 after its own gruesome and long civil war has a population of 11.5 million. With 70% of the population experiencing shortages, the SVP Baby Feeding Centres provide daily meals to babies and young children in some of the poorest communities, but they need our help to fund this vital lifesaving work. Over the years you have generously supported the SVP in this work and we cannot thank you enough. Sadly, these poor people continue to need our help to keep their babies and young children alive, so once again we raise our voices on behalf of them and ask for your support. SVP members will be handing out donation forms as you leave church today. These can be returned with your kind donations up to Christmas and into the New Year. Cheques should be made payable to 'Twinning - South Sudan Appeal' and please do Gift Aid your donation if you are a taxpayer. Thank you and God bless, Deacon Michael.

**Mass Intentions for the year ahead:** If you would like a mass said for a relative or friend for a particular date in the coming year now is the time to make your request. We have the diary ready in the parish office to save the date. There are 3 masses per week available at each church. Please put mass intentions in an envelope and state a preference of where you would like the mass to be said if necessary. Envelopes are available at the back of the church.

**FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK:** Please continue to pray for: Jennie Antoine, Anne Jones, Graham Bentley, Fred & Mary Wylie, Anne Smith, Kath Hywel-Buckley, John Lavelle, Jean Bolton, Tony Bolton, Patrick Gilligan, Michael Golowicz, Brian Craig, Greta Turner, Anne Hayes, Deacon William Riley, Dorothy Riley, Winefred Byrnes, Judith Cross, Red Wood Farago, and all those in the Hospice, Hospital, Rest Homes & Convents. **May God give them His healing grace.**

**2024 Diocesan Directories** are available from Bill Whiteside at the back of Church priced £6.

**The SJSP Ukulele Orchestra.** Rehearsals commence this coming Mon at 7pm in SP's Hall. All welcome - including any newcomers who wish to come and strum along!

**Blessing of Calvary:** The new Statue of Jesus on the Cross of Calvary outside St. Joseph's which has come from the closed Carmel Convent in Preston will be officially blessed on Feb 2nd, the Feast of the Presentation, following a service of Evening Prayer, and torchlight procession to the statue at 7pm, followed by refreshments. All welcome. It will also be a chance to pray in thanksgiving to the people who generously donated to the movement of a statue, for which are all very blessed.

### 'Thank You'

Collection Sunday 31st December:- **£461.50.**

Envelopes via St. Joseph's:- **£135.00.**

Crib Offerings:- **£45.00.**

South Sudan Appeal:- **£87.70** (Running total **£704.30**).

Standing Orders & Online Donations  
received in December:-**£1356.00.**

*Thank you for your generosity.*

### Sanctuary Lamp Bookings -

**Red Lamp:** *"For Father Peter, our Deacons & Sisters of our Parish"*

**Our Lady's Lamp:** *"For the Children of our Parish"*

**Sue has room in her diary for new bookings.** To book, email Sue on [info@stpeterslytham.co.uk](mailto:info@stpeterslytham.co.uk) (or speak to her). Suggested **minimum** donation - £5 each lamp.

**Please pray** for all who have died *recently* - and those whose anniversaries occur at this time: Teresa Kelly, Cecily Spivey, Harry Preston, Millicent O'Brien, Bertha Handley, Eric Todd, Dorothy Branney, Edith Knowles, Gerald Hamblett, Michael Knight, Monica Henderson, Donald Stanning, Thomas Sangster, Anne Holland, James Cross, Sr. Petronella CP, Edith Richardson, Anne Davies, Barbara Zolotarczuk, Pauline Pope, Evelyn Novak, Deacon Frank Bell (Carlisle), Peter F. Bamber, Dec'd Members of D'Cruz Family, Chris Turnbull (Snr.), Elizabeth Million. **May they rest in peace. Amen**

**Responsorial Psalm for  
The Epiphany of the Lord  
and the response is:**

**"ALL NATIONS SHALL FALL  
PROSTRATE BEFORE YOU, O LORD"**