

# IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CATHOLIC CHURCH



5<sup>th</sup> November 2023,

**Thirty First Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A**

*"The greatest among you must be your servant. Anyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and anyone who humbles himself will be exalted."*

Matthew 23:12

## WEEKLY INFORMATION & UPDATES

**Address:** 346 Portswood Road, Southampton, SO17 3SB

**Tel:** (023) 8055 5470

**Website:** [www.immaculateconception.church](http://www.immaculateconception.church)

**Email:** [office@immaculateconception.church](mailto:office@immaculateconception.church)

**Facebook:** Immaculate Conception Church, Portswood  
**Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth, (Reg Charity No: 1199568)**

**Bank details:** CDP, Immaculate Conception Church

Sort Code: 30-93-04

Account No: 00887995

**Parish Priest:** Fr Anthony Chiatu

**Parish Deacon:** Dcn Gerard Dailly

**Hospital Chaplaincy:** (023 8120 8517)

**University Chaplain:** Sr Emelliana Silva (07426 000213)

**Safeguarding Officer:** Laura Sparmann  
([safeguarding@immaculateconception.church](mailto:safeguarding@immaculateconception.church))

**Parish Secretary:** Rachel Brady (023 8055 5470)

**Confessions:** After 10 am Mass on Saturdays

**Hall Bookings:** contact the parish secretary

**ALL MASSES ADVERTISED BELOW ARE AVAILABLE TO JOIN LIVE, ONLINE AT**

[www.churchservices.tv/portswoodchur](http://www.churchservices.tv/portswoodchur)

Date	Solemnities & Feast days	Times & Liturgies		Mass Intentions
Sun 05 Nov	<b>THIRTY FIRST SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (BAMENDA SUNDAY)</b>	8.30 am 10.30 am	Mass Mass	Relations of the White family RIP Gerard Perrin
Mon 06 Nov	Feria	-	NO MASS	
Tues 07 Nov	St Willibrord	9.00 am 10.00 am	Euch Adoration Mass	Anna Zepler RIP
Wed 08 Nov	Feria	10.00 am 6.00 pm	Mass Euch Adoration	Wilfred Lorange Perera RIP
Thurs 09 Nov	The dedication of the Lateran Basilica	10.00 am	Mass	Bryan Rosario RIP
Fri 10 Nov	St Leo the Great	9.00 am 9.30 am 10.00 am	Euch Adoration Rosary Mass	Luis Nunes Greaves RIP
Sat 11 Nov	St Martin of Tours	10.00 am	Mass	Deceased members of the Adam and McDermot families
Sun 12 Nov	<b>THIRTY SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME (REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY)</b>	8.30 am 10.30 am	Mass Mass	Kevin McGloin RIP Mary Thomas RIP

### READINGS FOR THIS SUNDAY



**1<sup>st</sup> Reading:** Malachi 1:14 – 2:2,8-10

**Psalm:** 130

**2<sup>nd</sup> Reading:** 1 Thessalonians 2:7-9,13

**Gospel:** Matthew 23:1-12

### REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY – 12<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER

**ROLE OF HONOUR:** Please let us have the names of anyone you know – friends or family – who have died in conflict over the years, so that they can be mentioned in our role of honour on Remembrance Sunday. You can drop a note or an e mail to the parish office or leave it in the orange post tray at the back of the church.

If there is a veteran amongst us who would be willing to read out these names on Remembrance Sunday it would be very appropriate - please let Fr Anthony or Deacon Gerard know if you could help.

**CHRISTMAS FAIR, Sat 18<sup>th</sup> November, 2 – 4 pm**

Raffle tickets on sale after Masses

### TEA AND COFFEE AFTER MASSES

Please join us in the hall for tea, coffee & biscuits:

- **Sundays after the 10.30 am Mass**
- **The first Sunday of each month after the 8.30 am Mass.**
- **Tuesdays after the 10.00 am Mass**

### **\*\*TODAY – BAMENDA SUNDAY\*\***

Please join us for a parish celebration with food and drink in the hall after 10.30 am Mass.

### STUDENT WELCOME PARTY

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> Nov, 6 pm, in the hall**

Food & entertainment provided! Please bring your friends. To help with catering, if possible, please email [office@immaculateconception.church](mailto:office@immaculateconception.church) to let us know if you are coming. However, if you are not able to let us know beforehand, please don't let this stop you!

**PARISH OFFICE OPEN NEXT WEEK:**

**Tues – Fri, 9.30 am – 2.30 pm**

## Exalted Through Humility

*Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his disciples, saying, "The scribes and the Pharisees have taken their seat on the chair of Moses. Therefore, do and observe all things whatsoever they tell you, but do not follow their example." [Matthew 23:1-3](#)*

Sometimes people's words inspire us, but more often it is the witness they give with their actions that inspires. Additionally, when someone's words do not match up with their actions, they are seen as hypocrites. Jesus is very hard on the scribes and the Pharisees for this reason. "For they preach but they do not practice." They spoke about the Law of God, taught it in a detailed way, but they did not truly practice God's Law as it was intended to be practiced. Jesus goes on to give a list of the ways that these religious leaders failed to live the laws of God. They failed in their charity and encouragement of others, they did everything for public praise and for show, and they sought out honors and meaningless titles. As a result, they cared little for others and cared much about themselves.

At the heart of Jesus' criticism of the scribes and Pharisees was their tendency to exalt themselves in the eyes of others. Jesus corrects this tendency by saying that "the greatest among you must be your servant," and that "whoever humbles himself will be exalted." Therefore, if you wish to be truly great and if you wish to be exalted by God, you must serve with the deepest humility.

Humility begins by seeing yourself in the light of truth. How does God see you? The humble soul seeks to discover this insight by using the eyes of Christ to look at their own soul. It would be truly humbling if we could see ourselves in the full light of the truth. But too often we take on a false image of ourselves and look at our lives through a lens of self-righteousness. We tend to quickly defend our actions, justifying the sins we commit and failing to acknowledge our weaknesses.

What would you see if you looked at yourself with humility? One glaring thing you will see is your sin. Our lives are filled with sin. Sometimes they are serious sins, and at other times less serious, but our lives are undoubtedly filled with sins and imperfections. If we are blind to those sins, then we lack the necessary humility we need to see ourselves in the light of truth. The virtue of humility will also take us a step further than seeing our sins clearly. It will also help us to see our need for God's grace in order to change, to love, and to serve God and others. We cannot love by our own efforts. It is impossible. The love of charity is only possible when it is God Who lives in us and acts through us. God alone is able to work true charity through our actions. Knowing and believing this humble truth is the only way to open the door to that grace.

Reflect, today, upon the humility that you need in order to truly love. When you love others with the pure love of

God, you will discover within yourself a need to serve. You will see others as objects of your love. You will discover a burning desire to help them, forgive them, be gentle and merciful to them, and to do all you can to help them discover the truth of their own lives so they will, in turn, humbly turn to God. The scribes and Pharisees failed miserably at this mission, and that is one of the reasons that Jesus used them as an example. Do not follow their lead. Seek to take the opposite approach. Seek humility. Seek the truth. If you do, God will use you in powerful ways and will exalt you on high.

[www.mycatholic.life](http://www.mycatholic.life)

A reflection for the 31<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

### SECOND COLLECTIONS:

**THIS SUNDAY - 5<sup>th</sup> November – Bamenda (GA)**

**NEXT SUNDAY – 12<sup>th</sup> November – No second collection**

### BAMENDA SUNDAY

Today we give thanks for our link with the Archdiocese of Bamenda and for the ministry of their five priests serving in our Diocese (one of whom is our parish priest Fr Anthony); praying for our brothers and sisters in Bamenda, for the restoration of peace and justice in the region; and giving to our annual appeal to support projects in Bamenda in 2024, the 50th anniversary of the formation of the link!

Our annual Bamenda News can be accessed on the Bamenda and Portsmouth website:

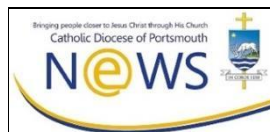
<https://www.bamendaandportsmouth.com/index.php>

Please be as generous as you can in supporting our sisters and brothers in Bamenda in these very challenging times. ANY contribution of ANY size is most welcome, as together we can make a big difference!

Donations can be made via parish second collections or online securely at:

<https://www.bamendaandportsmouth.com/donate.php>

If you are a tax payer you can use Gift Aid envelopes for this collection.



**LATEST EDITION OF  
PORTSMOUTH DIOCESE  
E NEWS & JOB VACANCIES**  
Activities, events, news and job

vacancies from around the Diocese.

<https://mailchi.mp/portsmouthdiocese/issue423>

**ADORATION FOR STUDENTS AND YOUNG PEOPLE**  
**Every Wednesday, 6 – 7 pm in the Lady Chapel**

### DIVERSITY MASS

**Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at 10.30 am**

### RICH FRUIT CAKES, UNDECORATED

- Large Xmas cake (23cm) £20
- Small Xmas cake (20cm) £15

please contact/message:

Lesley Newman on: 07504455925.



## INTERCESSORY PRAYER

Within the parish community there is a small group of people who are dedicated to praying for the special intentions of parishioners. If you have any specific intentions you would really like the group to pray for, please let Fr Anthony know by speaking to him after Mass or by writing a note and posting it in the presbytery letter box. Next week there will be forms in the porch and a box in which you can leave your requests.



Through intercessory prayer, we bring someone else's needs before God, trusting God to take care of others, whether they are loved ones, friends, enemies, or total strangers.

Intercessory prayer is a powerful way to support others spiritually. This can be done in a general way or specifically by praying for a particular person by name. We may not be in a position to help others in a particular way every time a need is expressed, but we are always given the opportunity to pray for them.

## 'I MARK'

### A PERFORMANCE OF MARKS GOSPEL

St Edmund's Church, Friday 24th November, 7pm  
(Tickets £5: any 'profit' will go towards the Organ Fund)

Listening to a gospel in its entirety in one sitting enables us to grasp the whole picture and message. It is certainly beneficial for us to hear it in one sitting before we begin to listen to it little by little. Rt Rev Rowan Williams, former Archbishop of Canterbury said: "Sometimes it takes a living voice to make you hear the Bible for the first time - a voice that presents some saying or episode not as a stray fragment but as part of the rhythm and pace of a story that goes on gathering momentum. Mark's gospel has just that kind of momentum, and this performance gives a memorably strong sense of it." Watch an extract: <https://youtu.be/tg5-eW-W-xc> (The Last Supper). The Eventbrite link to book is: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/i->

## NOVEMBER – MONTH OF THE DEAD

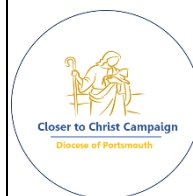
During this month we remember in particular those who have died. Not just the saints or those who have died at war but anyone who has gone before us. If you would like a special Mass intention for anyone who has died, please complete a form on the Mass Intention envelopes available in the porch.

There is also a table in front of the altar throughout November with slips of paper and pens where you can write the name of anyone who has died and place it in the basket in front of the altar for them to be remembered at Masses throughout this month.

## DOUBLE YELLOW LINES

If you park on the road around the back of the church, be aware that there are now double yellow lines in front of the bollards blocking the pedestrian entrance into Kent Road. A couple of parishioners have been caught out, so please avoid parking here when you are visiting the church!

## CLOSER TO CHRIST CAMPAIGN



Thank you so much for your generosity! Last weekend was a great success for the **Closer to Christ** Campaign in our parish. I'm delighted to tell you that based on the cards filled out by parishioners at Mass, our parish stands to receive an additional **£10,000!**

To allow us to draw a line under the campaign we need to make sure that all pledges have been recorded properly. If you completed a small card at Mass recently, you will have received a pledge form for completion in the post or via email this week. I ask that you return the form at your earliest convenience to either the parish office, to me after Mass or directly through the post. While you may not wish to start your pledge immediately I do ask that you return your form, indicating a start date and method of payment that is convenient to you. Our hope is that parishioners will consider what they can as every pledge counts and all gifts will bring us closer to our shared goal.

I know there are some families out there who are still considering their pledge and I would be delighted to receive your support. While we are guaranteed to receive one third of our initial target of £85,000, our parish will receive 50% of everything raised over this and so we have much to benefit from.

We hope to receive the majority of pledges within the next two weeks so that we can see exactly how much has been raised. I will give you a further update in a few weeks' time.

Thank you for your support and please pray for the continued success of the **Closer to Christ** Campaign in our parish.

## THANK YOU!



Over 60 gift boxes were filled and collected from the parish for the Rotary Club Christmas appeal. Here are some of them in the back of Norman's van ready to be delivered to the Rotary Club and then on to children in deprived situations in Eastern Europe. Thank you to Norman and Mary Fairchild for their efforts here.



## LAUDATE DEUM – POPE FRANCIS

On 4 October, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, Pope Francis published an apostolic exhortation, *Laudate Deum* (Praise God). This follows on from his encyclical *Laudato Si*. A summary of the document can be found below but the full document can be read at [https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations/documents/20231004-laudate-deum.html](https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/20231004-laudate-deum.html)

If *Laudato Si* was a gentle and pastoral invitation to care for creation, *Laudate Deum* is a visceral, prophetic call to conversion. Eight years after *Laudato Si*'s initial publication, Pope Francis once again takes on the looming challenges of the climate crisis that have only worsened. Though this focus has drawn criticism from some Catholic commentators, it is hardly a secular document, but one that recognizes that Christians and the Church have a responsibility to the Earth and all of creation. *Laudate Deum* addresses people of goodwill, admonishing the human family that has neglected its relationships with creation, one another, and above all, God. As an apostolic exhortation, it is both shorter and more direct than an encyclical, only about 7,000 words long. This introduction offers readers a guiding overview of Pope Francis's renewed call to repentance and reparation.

**The Global Climate Crisis** Pope Francis begins with the facts. The climate's current situation is volatile and headed toward catastrophe, and *Laudate Deum* clearly identifies this reality. "Our responses have not been adequate, while the world in which we live is collapsing and may be nearing the breaking point," he writes. Pointing to overwhelming scientific evidence that climate change is the result of human activity, Francis describes how the last 200 years of pollution and extraction have led the world to this crisis point. The disastrous situation is already apparent in deadly natural disasters, collapsing ecosystems, and rising temperatures worldwide. Still, many continue to deny the climate crisis or look the other way in favor of profit and productivity. In the face of that neglect, Pope Francis calls on all to remember the connectedness of everything and that salvation is communal.

**Critique of the Technocratic Paradigm** Hard truths in hand, Pope Francis returns to an obstacle he first described in *Laudato Si*, the technocratic paradigm. Technocracy, as the letter explains, is the belief that goodness and truth come directly from advances in technology and the growth of economic power. In the context of the climate crisis, it provides the illusion that it is possible to invent solutions without examining the underlying spiritual and economic problems that brought the world to this point. Expecting that simply moving from gas cars to electric cars or from beef cattle to lab-grown meat will be enough to resolve the crisis is a misguided assumption. Rather, Pope Francis recalls that the human person is also a part of creation, and cannot be separated from it, no matter how powerful scientific developments become. Those advancements tell us little about how they are actually to be used, and most often, the question is not "Should it be done?" but only "Is it possible?"

**Weakness of International Politics** Governments do little to provide real guidance either, let alone constructive legislation. Pope Francis laments the lack of cooperation between countries to address the climate crisis, even though successful efforts on past international concerns offer a helpful model. The sort of collaboration that *Laudate Deum* envisions instead begins not in the centers of power but in the grassroots. "It is no longer helpful for us to support institutions in order to preserve the rights of the more powerful without caring for those of all," the letter states explicitly. For too long, the margins have been ignored, the poor and exploited made miserable by the same filthy, rotten system destroying the Earth. Respecting the dignity of each person and the necessity of our common home requires the creation of new global mechanisms of discussion and decision-making.

**Climate Conferences: Progress and Failures** The current global mechanisms for addressing the climate crisis are fundamentally toothless. Pope Francis briefly details the history of the COP meetings, which have been held yearly since 1995. Over the past thirty years, these international conferences have been a source of hope but have yet to result in action or progress. Scientific understanding of the climate crisis continues to grow, and the international accords seemingly reflect this, though in reality, they fall short of implementation. Too often, wealthy and powerful countries put their own interest ahead of the global common good and are not held accountable.

**What to Expect from COP28 in Dubai?** The trend of making international promises only for nations to back on them, simply put, must come to an end. The crisis is now too dire to ignore the need for substantial change. Though new technology or scientific advances are important for the short term, the change *Laudate Deum* calls for is much more profound. Our problems are deeper than environmental concerns—they are social and political, concerning everyone. You don't need to be a tree-hugger or a wildlife biologist to care about the future of the planet and our children. COP28 has the opportunity to be the conference that finally recognizes the real depth of the crisis that humanity is facing. It can respond and make real, meaningful strides toward climate justice.

**Spiritual Motivations** In this concluding section, Pope Francis offers the image of a community on pilgrimage: United by God to each other and all of creation; we walk a journey of conversion that turns from the sinful degradation of the earth and towards faithfulness to God, the creator of all things. We cannot take God's place. A Christian response to the climate crisis is not about recycling or buying an electric car. Repackaged consumerism will not be enough, though *Laudate Deum* clarifies that wealthy countries like the United States are obligated to renounce extractivism and overconsumption.

"Praise God" is the title of this letter. For when human beings claim to take God's place, they become their own worst enemies." Pope Francis is inviting the whole church to a renewed vision of community and solidarity, where Catholics are willing to stand alongside their poor and exploited brothers and sisters as prophets of another better world. We are being called to collaborate with Christ's liberating grace active in the world, alive in our hearts, our communities, and our Earth.