



**25th DECEMBER 2022 , THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD &
1ST JANUARY 2023, MARY THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD,
YEAR A**

“And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father’s only Son, full of grace and truth.”

John 1:14

Immaculate Conception Church

Within the Pastoral Area of Southampton East
346 Portswood Road, Southampton, SO17 3SB
Tel: (023) 8055 5470
Website: www.immaculateconception.church
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Parish Priest: Fr Anthony Chiatu
Parish Deacon: Dcn Gerard Dailly
Hospital Chaplaincy: (023 8120 8517)
University Chaplain: Sr Emelliana Silva (07426 000213)
Safeguarding Officer: Pat Saunders
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**

Date	Solemnities & Feast days	Times & Liturgies		Mass Intentions
Sat 24 Dec		5.00 pm	Family Mass	Andrew Cole RIP & all deceased members of his family
		8.30 pm	Christmas Carol Service	
		9.00 pm	‘Midnight Mass’	
Sun 25 Dec	CHRISTMAS DAY NATIVITY OF THE LORD	9.30 am	Mass	Deceased members of the Gobbi/O’Brien families
Mon 26 Dec	St Stephen	10.00 am	Mass	Aleck Palmer RIP
Tues 27 Dec	St John	9.00 am	Eucharistic Adoration	Francesca Pereira RIP
		10.00 am	Mass	
Wed 28 Dec	Holy Innocents	10.00 am	Mass	Brendan Barry RIP
Thur 29 Dec	St Thomas of Canterbury	10.00 am	Mass	-
		12.30 pm	Baptism service	
Fri 30 Dec	The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph	9.30 am	Rosary	FUNERAL of Christina Blake RIP
		11.00 am		
Sat 31 Dec	Liturgy of the Day	10.00 am	Mass	- Maria Thi Huong Nguyen & her children
		11.15 pm	New Year’s Eve Vigil Mass	
Sun 01 Jan	MARY THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD	8.30 am	Mass	- Hugh & Maureen Slevin RIP
		10.30 am	Mass	
Mon 02 Jan	Ss Basil the Great & Gregory Nazianzen	-	NO MASS	
Tues 03 Jan	Liturgy of the Day	9.00 am 10.00 am	Eucharistic Adoration Mass	Siobhan, Alex, Katherine, Claire & Keegan
Wed 04 Jan	Liturgy of the Day	10.00 am	Mass	-
Thur 05 Jan	Liturgy of the Day	10.00 am	Mass	-
Fri 06 Jan	The Epiphany of the Lord (Holy Day of Obligation)	9.30 am	Rosary	The Ukraine
		10.00 am	Mass	
Sat 07 Jan	Liturgy of the Day	10.00 am	Mass	-
Sun 08 Jan	THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD	8.30 am	Mass	Anabel & Rowland Surlis RIP Martha & George Ketta RIP
		10.30 am	Mass	



READINGS FOR CHRISTMAS DAY

1st Reading: Isaiah 52:7-10
Psalms: 98:1-6
2nd Reading: Hebrews 1:1-6
Gospel: John 1:1-18

READINGS FOR SUNDAY 1ST JAN

1st Reading: Numbers 6:22-27
Psalms: 67:2-3,5,6,8
2nd Reading: Galatians 4:4-7
Gospel: Luke 2:16-21

PARISH OFFICE CLOSED NEXT WEEK – RE-OPENS TUESDAY 3RD JANUARY

Pondering the Birth of Christ

So they went in haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child. All who heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds. And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart. [Luke 2:16-19](#)

Merry Christmas! Our Advent preparations have been completed, and we are now invited by our Lord to enter into the glorious celebration of His birth!

How well do you understand the awe-inspiring mystery of Christmas? How fully do you comprehend the significance of God becoming a human, born of a virgin? Though many are quite familiar with the beautiful and humble story of the birth of the Savior of the World, that familiarity can have the surprising negative effect of keeping our intellect from deeply probing the depths of the meaning of what we celebrate.

Notice the last line of the Gospel passage quoted above: "And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart." What a beautiful line to ponder this Christmas day. Mother Mary was the one person who would have understood the mystery of the birth of her Son, the Son of God, the Savior of the World, far more deeply than anyone else. It was to her that the Archangel Gabriel appeared, announcing her pregnancy and His birth. It was her who carried her Son, the Son of God, in her Immaculate womb for nine months. It was to her that Elizabeth, her cousin, cried out, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb" ([Luke 1:42](#)). It was Mary who was the Immaculate Conception, the one who was preserved from all sin throughout her life. And it was her who gave birth to this Child, carried Him in her arms and nursed Him at her breast. Our Blessed Mother, more than any other, understood the incredible event that had taken place in her life.

But, again, the Gospel above says that "Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart." One thing this tells us is that even Mary, the Mother of Jesus and the Mother of God, needed time to ponder, reflect and savor this most holy mystery. She never doubted, but her faith continually deepened, and her heart pondered the unfathomable and incomprehensible mystery of the Incarnation.

Another thing this tells us is that there is no end to the depth of the "pondering" to which we must commit ourselves if we want to enter more deeply into the mystery of the birth of the Son of God. Reading the story, setting up a nativity scene, sharing Christmas cards, attending Mass and the like are central to a holy celebration of Christmas. But "pondering" and "reflecting," especially during prayer and especially at the

Christmas Mass, will have the effect of drawing us ever deeper into this Mystery of our Faith.

Reflect, today, with our Blessed Mother. Ponder the Incarnation. Place yourself into the scene that first Christmas. Hear the sounds of the town. Smell the smells of the stable. Watch as the shepherds come forth in adoration. And enter the mystery more fully, acknowledging that the more you know about the mystery of Christmas, the more you know how little you actually know and understand. But that humble realization is the first step to a deeper understanding of what we celebrate this day.

*A reflection for the Nativity of the Lord, Year A
My Catholic Life, www.mycatholic.life.com*

CHRISTMAS EVE AND CHRISTMAS DAY COLLECTIONS

The collections at the Christmas Masses are all donated to the parish priest. Parish priests rely on the Christmas and Easter offerings to support them personally throughout the year. This is an important part of their income. Apart from your donations, they depend on a limited stipend from the Diocese. So please do be generous in return for the dedicated service which Fr Anthony gives to the Church.

Any donations can be made in cash or by cheque via the collection baskets in the church. If you Gift Aid, please remember to add your gift aid number to the envelope. Alternatively you can use our card payment machine in the church porch.

For payments made by bank transfer, the Parish Bank Account details are:

**Name: PRCDTR Immaculate Conception Church,
Sort Code: 30-93-04, Account No: 00887995**

For those who would like to make a donation but are away/unable to attend these Masses over Christmas, the envelopes and means to pay by card will be available until the New Year.

BLESSING OF THE BAMBINELLI

A Roman tradition, celebrated by the Pope each year. Children bring the Baby Jesus (Bambinelli, in Italian) from the family nativity scene for a blessing.

Do bring along your nativity crib baby Jesus for a special blessing at any of the Christmas Masses.



CHRISTMAS CRIB OFFERINGS

All offerings placed in the Christmas Crib collection (basket next to the crib) will be donated to **Friends of the Holy Land**. Please support this important work.

Friends of the Holy Land, work to secure a resilient and enduring Christian community in the West Bank, Gaza, Israel and Jordan - the part of the world that Christians call the Holy Land. Today Christians account for less than 2% of the overall population of the Holy Land. Without support, the Holy places of the Bible, the birthplace of Christianity, could become cultural museums with no Christian presence at all.

CHRISTMAS CARD POST TRAYS

are out in the porch for the sending and receiving of Christmas cards to parishioners!

BAPTISM PREPARATION

Saturday 18th February 10.30 am – 1 pm

For parents of any children to be baptised in the parish. If you would like your child to be baptised, please contact the parish office as soon as possible to register on the course and arrange a date for your child's baptism.

Growing in Faith Group

Tuesdays 10th and 24th January 2023 and ongoing with further dates to be set next year.

7.30 pm – 9.00 pm in the hall

An opportunity for all to explore, question, discuss and grow in your relationship with God, wherever you are in your faith journey. No questions excluded!!

More details to come

CHOIR NEWS

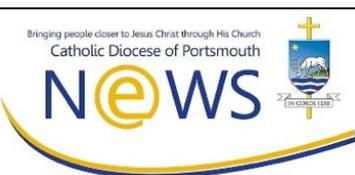
We would like to invite members of the congregation who can play musical instruments to join the choir.



Practices take place every Thursday in the church at 7.30pm and everyone is welcome.

RECENTLY DIED

Christina Blake RIP, died on 7th December, aged 96. Her funeral will be held in the church on Friday 30th December at 11.00 am.



PORTSMOUTH DIOCESE NEWS

Activities, events, news and job vacancies from around the Diocese,

locally and further afield.

<https://mailchi.mp/portsmouthdiocese/issue390?e=34c55ac6ce>

To keep up to date with the news of the Diocese and the Bishop please follow us on:

- Facebook: @PortsmouthRC
- LinkedIn: Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth
- Twitter: @PortsmouthRC

The Diocesan website:

- <https://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk>

If you have news that you would like to share with the rest of the Diocese, please contact:

communications@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

WARM SPACES

coming to Immaculate Conception Church

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS FROM THE PARISH TO HELP

This is a scheme which has been set up across the UK to provide many places where anyone in need of warmth & community is invited to a warm space to share with others – libraries, church halls, community centres etc. With a cost of living & climate crisis, many of us are facing tough decisions. Some of us have moved to working from home following the pandemic and are facing a winter with increased energy bills. Others are facing even harder decisions about whether to heat or eat.

We are providing our church hall as a 'Warm Space' on Tuesday afternoons, starting from 10th January. We hope to serve refreshments and provide access to the internet.

If you have an hour or two you could spare on Tuesday afternoons during January and February, please speak to Fr Anthony, Deacon Gerard or the parish office.

THANK YOU TO FR ANTONY GATT

Our grateful thanks to Fr Antony Gatt for providing supply cover for Fr Anthony during his short trip back to Bamenda, enabling the parish to carry on as usual.

Here is a Christmas message he would like to pass on to all parishioners:

My dear Friends:

In the words of the great mystic, Mevlana Rumi: "On the path of love we are neither masters nor the owners of our lives. We are only a brush in the hand of the master painter."

May the birth of Our Divine Saviour, embrace you in His Love, illumine your paths, and guide your hearts. May you become true, loving masterpieces in the hands of the 'Master Painter'.

**Love, Joy and Peace,
Fr. Antony (Gatt)**

Happy Christmas

Very best wishes to all our parishioners and visitors for a very happy, blessed and peaceful Christmas. We look forward to seeing you over the Christmas period. We would also like to thank you for making us both so welcome after our arrival in the parish.



Fr Anthony and Deacon Gerard