

18<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2022

**FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT, YEAR A**

“Look, the virgin is with child and will give birth to a son whom they will call Immanuel, a name which means ‘God is with us’”

Matthew 1:23

**Immaculate Conception Church**

Within the Pastoral Area of Southampton East  
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

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

| Date        | Solemnities & Feast days                         | Times & Liturgies             |   | Mass Intentions  |
|-------------|--|-------------------------------|---|--|
| Sun 18 Dec  | <b>FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT</b>                   | 8.30 am<br>10.30 am           | Mass<br>Mass  | Bill & Una Chandler RIP<br>Alfred Rosario RIP                                  |
| Mon 19 Dec  | Liturgy of the Day                               | -                             | NO MASS   | -  |
| Tues 20 Dec | Liturgy of the Day                               | 10.00 am                      | Mass  | Jean Templeton RIP   |
| Wed 21 Dec  | Liturgy of the Day                               | 10.00 am                      | Mass  | Steve Ayoka  |
| Thur 22 Dec | Liturgy of the Day                               | 10.00 am                      | Mass  | Pauline Mabey RIP  |
| Fri 23 Dec  | Liturgy of the Day                               | 9.30 am<br>10.00 am           | Rosary<br>Mass  | -<br>Jim O'Malley RIP  |
| Sat 24 Dec  | <b>VIGIL MASSES FOR THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD</b> | 5.00 pm<br>8.30 pm<br>9.00 pm | Family Mass<br>Christmas Carol Service<br>'Midnight Mass' | Andrew Cole RIP & all deceased members of his family<br>-<br>Eileen Fallon RIP |
| Sun 25 Dec  | <b>CHRISTMAS DAY NATIVITY OF THE LORD</b>        | 9.30 am                       | Mass  | Deceased members of the Gobbi/O'Brien families                                 |



**THIS SUNDAY'S READINGS**

**1<sup>st</sup> Reading:** Isaiah 7:10-14  
**Psalm:** 24:1-6

**2<sup>nd</sup> Reading:** Romans 1:1-7  
**Gospel:** Matthew 1:18-24

**TEA AND COFFEE AFTER MASSES**

Please join us on **Sundays after the 10 am Mass** in the hall for tea and coffee.

**TUESDAYS** – No tea & coffee this week. Re-starting after Christmas, on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> January.



**\*\*TODAY\*\***

**A PARISH CHRISTMAS SOCIAL EVENING AND TALENT CELEBRATION**

**Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> December, 5 pm in the parish hall**

**Adults and children** of all ages and backgrounds - If you can sign a song or two, play some music, tell a story or some jokes, share a dance routine, do some magic, read a poem, perform a short play or sketch..... it can be about Christmas or something else. **Even if you don't plan on joining the talent show, come along for the social and to watch the acts and join in some singing!**

*Refreshments will be served and please bring other food and drinks, as you wish*

**COME AND JOIN US FOR A FUN EVENING!**

**ADVENT PENITENTIAL SERVICE**

**Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> December, 7.30 pm**

This is an opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and/or to spend some reflective time before the Lord during the preparations for Christmas.

Other services in our neighbouring parishes:

- St Edmunds, Monday 19<sup>th</sup> December, 7.30 pm

**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.**



**PARISH OFFICE HOURS NEXT WEEK**

Tues, Weds, Thurs, Fri 9.30 am – 1.30 pm

## Embracing the Mysteries of Life

*“Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the Holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.*

[Matthew 1:20–21](#)

As we begin the Fourth Week of Advent, we focus ever more directly upon the miracle that took place over 2,000 years ago. The passage quoted above presents us with the words of the angel of the Lord who spoke to Joseph in a dream. This was one of four dreams that Joseph had in which an angel spoke to him concerning the Christ Child.

Saint Joseph is described in Matthew’s Gospel as “a righteous man” who was unwilling to expose his betrothed wife, Mary, to shame. We know the story well. Mary became pregnant after being betrothed to Joseph but before they lived together, and Joseph didn’t understand how this happened. Mary’s virtue and goodness would have appeared to contradict the possibility of her becoming pregnant when she did. Joseph was planning on doing what he thought was the honorable thing. He decided to divorce her quietly so that she would not endure public shame.

But God’s plan was so much greater than what Joseph could initially comprehend. The Incarnation of the Son of God within the womb of his betrothed required supernatural understanding. And that’s what Joseph was given. Though he had a dream in which an angel spoke to him, a dream was not enough. The dream also needed to be accompanied by the gift of supernatural knowledge. Joseph listened in the dream and believed by the interior revelation of faith that this incredible reality was true. This Child was indeed conceived by the Holy Spirit within the virginal womb of his betrothed, and Joseph accepted his God-given responsibility.

Joseph’s witness is one to ponder and be inspired by. First, it’s essential that we ponder the story as it happened and be inspired by God’s singularly unique plan by which He took on our human nature. But Joseph also provides us with inspiration for our own callings in life. Joseph inspires us to face any and every mystery in life that we encounter with the utmost trust in God. God’s wisdom and ways are always far beyond ours. Very often in life, God will call us to walk an unknown and mysterious path. Life does not always make perfect sense from a purely rational perspective. Very often, we must allow our human reason to be informed and led by God’s supernatural plan. For each of us, this mysterious path will be different. But if we are to walk by the same faith that Saint Joseph had, then we must always be willing to accept the most sublime mysteries in life and allow God’s revealing Word to clarify them.

Reflect, today, upon any way that you feel challenged by life’s circumstances. What tempts you to doubt, to be confused, or to feel uncertain? What is it that requires supernatural knowledge on your part to embrace? If God the Father chose to bring forth His divine Son in such a mysterious way, then we should not be surprised when God calls us to embrace similar mysteries in life. Walk by faith. Be inspired by Saint Joseph. Say “Yes” to that which God is asking of you. As you do, you will find that you will begin to walk down the most glorious road you can walk.

*A reflection for the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent, Year A  
My Catholic Life, [www.mycatholic.life.com](http://www.mycatholic.life.com)*

### **SECOND COLLECTIONS:–**

TODAY SUNDAY 18<sup>th</sup> December 2022 – No second Colletion

NEXT SUNDAY 25<sup>th</sup> December 2022 – Clergy Christmas Collection

**Any donations can be made in cash or by cheque via the collection baskets in the church or using our card payment machine in the church porch.**

**The Parish Bank Account details are:**

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

### **CHRISTMAS EVE AND CHRISTMAS DAY COLLECTIONS**

As is the tradition, 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.

Envelopes will be available to put your cash or cheque donations in. If you Gift Aid, please remember to add your gift aid number to the envelope. Alternatively you can make a donation using our Card machine in the church porch.

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 from today until the New Year.

### **UPDATE ON CHRISTMAS FAIR INCOME**

A grand total of **£1765.61** was raised for our Christmas Fair. Thank you again to all those who contributed to the success of this event.

### **BAPTISM PREPARATION**

**Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> 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.

## CHRISTMAS CARDS

**RECYCLED CHRISTMAS CARDS** available to buy in the church porch. All proceeds to support the running of our parish

**BOOKSHOP** More Christmas cards available in the bookshop as well as other small religious items/gifts

**CHRISTMAS POST TRAYS** are also in the porch for the sending and receiving of Christmas cards to parishioners!

## Growing in Faith Group

Tuesdays 10<sup>th</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> 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

The International Choir would like to thank Louis (the Pianist) for the valuable contribution he has made to the music at the Sunday 10.30am masses over the past few years.



Louis will be relocating to Coventry where he will be starting a new job and this Sunday will be his last with us and we would like to wish him all the best as he starts a new life in the Midlands.

**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. Rehearsals for Christmas Carols will take place on Thursday, the 22nd of December and everyone is welcome.

## OUR PARISH BASED CARITAS GROUP ACTIVITIES

at Immaculate Conception church Hall

**Cookery Club – Thursday lunch times**

**Christmas Holiday Club – 19<sup>th</sup> December**

**Warm Space 10 Jan – 28 Feb, Tues afternoons**

**More details on the noticeboard in the porch**

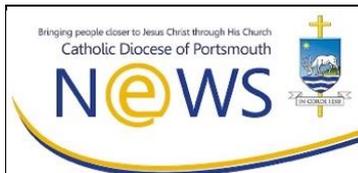
These are parish activities for which we need volunteers to support us. We are very fortunate to also have the support of Caritas to work with us on these. If you can help with any of them, please do get in touch. You'll usually find Jo or Victoria, from Caritas, in the hall on a Tuesday or a Thursday. Alternatively you can email them at [vmayuto@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:vmayuto@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk) or phone them on 07919956975. Alternatively you can contact the parish office.

## FOUND – PHOTOS

A wallet of lots of old family photos found inside a photo album donation to the Christmas Fair. If it is yours or you know who's it might be please contact the parish office.

## NEXT WEEK'S NEWSLETTER

Next week will be a 2 week newsletter as the office will be closed between Christmas and New Year. Any items for the newsletter will need to be send to the parish office by this Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> December.



## PORTSMOUTH DIOCESE E NEWS

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

locally and further afield.

<https://mailchi.mp/portsmouthdiocese/issue389?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](mailto:communications@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)

## TO FOLLOW BIDDING PRAYERS DURING ADVENT Marian Anthem

*Mother of Christ! Hear thou they people's cry  
Star of the deep, and portal of the sky!  
Mother of him who thee from nothing made  
Sinking we strive, and call to thee for aid:  
Oh, by that joy which Gabriel brought to thee  
Thou Virgin first and last, let us thy mercy see.*



*Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit.*