

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CATHOLIC CHURCH

SUNDAY 30th November – SUNDAY 14th December

"Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."

Matthew 24:44

**Our Parish vision is to bring people closer to Christ
by inviting, welcoming, nurturing and nourishing everyone**

Address: 346 Portswood Road, Southampton, SO17 3SB

Tel: (023) 8055 5470

Website: www.immaculateconception.church

Email: 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)

Parish Administrator: Cynthia Barretto (023 8055 5470)

Confessions: After 10 am Mass on Saturdays

Hall Bookings: contact the parish office

PARISH OFFICE OPEN : Tuesday/Wednesday/Friday 9:00 3 pm, Thursday 9-4pm Monday Closed

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

www.churchservices.tv/portswoodchur

REGULAR MASS TIMES

Sunday 8.30 am & 10.30 am

Monday No Mass

Tuesday 10.00 am

Wednesday 10.00 am

Thursday 10.00 am

Friday 10.00 am

Saturday 10.00 am

Holy days of Obligation 10 am & 7.30 pm

MASS INTENTIONS THIS MONTH

Sun 30th Nov 8.30 am Ellen Gobbi RIP

Sun 30th 10.30 am Mavis Rosario RIP

Tue 2nd Dec Audrey Campbell RIP

Thu 4th Dec Andrew Cole RIP

Fri 5th Dec Lorance Perera RIP

Sat 6th Dec Francesca Pereira RIP

Sun 7th Dec, 8:30 For the health of Guardo Martinez family

Sun 7th Dec, 10:30 Thanksgiving service for 60 years of life

Tue 9th Dec Trevor Delves - Thanksgiving

Thu 11th Dec Mary Josephine Shanahan RIP

Fri 12th Dec Wanda Hac RIP

Sun 14th Dec, 8:30 Bill Chandler RIP

Sun 14th Dec, 10:30 Alfred Rosario RIP

SECOND COLLECTIONS THIS MONTH

30th November Flowers for the church for Christmas

OTHER REGULAR LITURGIES & DEVOTIONS

Tuesday 9.00 am Eucharistic Adoration

Wednesday 6.00 pm Eucharistic Adoration

Friday 9.00 am Eucharistic Adoration

9.30 am Rosary

SUNDAY READINGS ADVENT SUNDAYS 1, 2 & 3



30th Nov

1st Reading: Isiah 2:1-5

Psalm: 122(121):1-2. 3-4a. 8-9. R cf.

2nd Reading: Romans 13:11-14

Gospel: Matthew 24:37-44

7th Dec

1st Reading Isaiah 11:1-10

Psalm: 72(71):1-2. 7-8. 12-13. 17. R cf. 7

2nd Reading: Romans 15:4-9

Gospel: Matthew 3:1-12

14th Dec

1st Reading: Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10

Psalm: 146(145):6c-7. 8-9a. 9b-10. R

Matthew 5:3

2nd Reading: James 5:7-10

Gospel: Matthew 11:2-11

OTHER REGULAR WEEKLY ACTIVIES IN THE PARISH

All Welcome to join.....

Mon - Cooking with Confidence – 11 am – 1 pm – church hall kitchen

Tues - Tea & Coffee after 10 am Mass – church hall

- RCIA – 7 pm – 8.30 pm in the church hall

Weds - Parent & Toddler Group (term time only)

10.30am – 12 noon, church hall

- Choir Practice 7 pm in the church.

Thurs - Maintaining the parish gardens – from 10 am

- Multicultural group – 11 am in the church hall

Sun - Refreshments after 10.30 am Mass- church hall

**PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING CHANGES DURING DECEMBER,
TO OUR REGULAR SCHEDULE OF EVENTS IN THE PARISH:**



Please see the Advent and Christmas leaflet for additional Christmas services and events.

TODAY'S GOSPEL REFLECTION:

Being Prepared

"Therefore, stay awake! For you do not know on which day your Lord will come. Be sure of this: if the master of the house had known the hour of night when the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and not let his house be broken into. So too, you also must be prepared, for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come." Matthew 24:42-44

How does one "stay awake" as our Lord commands us? We receive this holy exhortation as we enter into a new liturgical year. In Advent, we begin at the beginning. We ponder the Incarnate Son of God dwelling as a human Child in the precious womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. We anticipate the celebration of His birth into the world at Christmas. As the liturgical year progresses, we will prayerfully walk through each moment of His life, from the events of His childhood, to His public ministry, and ultimately His death, resurrection, and ascension into Heaven.

Our Lord's exhortation to stay awake invites us to be attentive to the ways that the Son of God's human life speaks to us, calling us to become fully united to Him so as to share in the glorious gifts of holiness in this life and eternal salvation in the next. After exhorting us to stay awake, the Son of God said, "For you do not know on which day your Lord will come." Of course, we know He came into this world over 2,000 years ago in physical form. This exhortation is not only a call to ponder that event long ago; it's also an invitation and exhortation to become continuously more attentive to the effect that His historical coming has upon us today. Advent is a season that invites us to reflect on Christ's first coming in Bethlehem, His daily coming to us in grace, and His final coming at the end of time. These moments are intimately connected, as each prepares us more fully for the next.

From Heaven, the Son of God continues to descend to us, inviting each of us to conceive Him in our souls by grace, to be attentive to His divine presence within us, and to nurture His divine presence so that He will grow and live within us, making us true members of His Body, the Church. Staying awake means being aware of Christ's presence in every moment and cultivating a personal relationship with Him that is alive and growing. This Advent, ask yourself: How am I nurturing my relationship with Jesus so that I am ready to meet Him whenever He comes?

Jesus calls us to be prepared at every moment of every day, "for at an hour you do not expect, the Son of Man will come." Though this is a promise that He will return one day to judge the living and the dead at the end of time, it is also a promise that He relentlessly pursues us here and now, communicating to us by grace and inviting us to be transformed more fully, so as to love Him and manifest His love to the world around us. As we mature in our faith, God often speaks in subtler ways, inviting us to listen with the ears of our hearts. These gentle whispers of grace require us to be even more attuned to His presence, ready to respond to His call in the quiet moments of our day.

Reflect today on Jesus' exhortation to be awake, vigilant, attentive, and ready to love Him in the smallest ways. To stay spiritually awake, cultivate habits that keep you attuned to God's presence: set aside time for daily prayer, receive the sacraments frequently, and be mindful of opportunities to serve others. These practices will help you remain vigilant and ready to encounter Christ at any moment. Search for Him this Advent, and never tire of loving Him in your prayer and in those around you. The Son of God continuously comes to you "at an hour you do not expect." By building a spiritual habit of being prepared, you will meet and love Him throughout your day.

A reflection for the First Sunday of Advent (Year A)
www.mycatholic.life

If you like to read these Sunday Gospel reflections, future weeks this month can be found at
<https://mycatholic.life/upcoming-reflections/#cal>

PARISH NOTICES

**Anticipated Feast of
The Immaculate Conception
&
The 70th Anniversary of our Parish Church**
Sunday 7th December, 10 am

**On Sunday 7th December there will be ONLY ONE MASS
at 10 am.** This will be to mark this celebration as a whole parish together. If you were at the Opening Mass for this church in 1955, please let Fr Anthony know ASAP.

Mass will followed by refreshments in the Hall.

INTERESTED IN BECOMING CATHOLIC? OR WANT TO DEEPEN YOUR FAITH?

We warmly invite you to join our **RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults)** program for:

- Those who are not baptised and are exploring the Catholic faith,
- Christians from other traditions who feel drawn to the Catholic Church,
- Baptised Catholics who have not yet received First Holy Communion or Confirmation,
- And anyone who wants to grow in understanding and love of the Catholic faith.

Sessions take place on **Tuesdays from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm** — just 1½ hours each week — in a welcoming and supportive environment. If you've been thinking about the Church, or if someone you know is feeling called to take the next step, this is a wonderful opportunity to explore the journey of faith. To register or find out more, please Email the parish office office@immaculateconception.church and also speak to Fr Anthony or Deacon Gerard after Mass.
“Come and see...” (John 1:39)

CHILDREN'S LITURGY – GROWING TOGETHER IN FAITH
We are blessed to have so many children actively taking part in our parish liturgies. To help them continue growing in faith, we encourage those who have received their First Holy Communion to remain in church during Mass, since they are now full communicants sharing fully in the Eucharist with the parish family. Please be assured that every Mass will continue to include children in prayer, song, and reflection, so that their faith is nourished week by week. In addition, starting in November, every third Sunday of the month, we will celebrate a special Children's Liturgy at Mass. On these occasions, the children will take part more visibly through the readings, prayers, and a homily prepared especially for them. In this way, our parish liturgies will always make space for our children's voices, while also helping them to grow more deeply into the full life of the Church.

YOUNG VOICES

We are looking for readers from Years 6-13 to join our young voices team, we will be hosting special liturgies at our 8.30am and 10.30am Masses. As a young voice you'll get to read scripture and prayers during mass, be part of a fun and supportive team whilst developing your public speaking skills.

Please contact Mary if interested.



Stella Maris Seafarers Christmas Chocolate Appeal 2025

Suggested Chocolate Gifts



The Stella Maris chaplains are planning to collect hundreds of chocolate Christmas presents for seafarers visiting our Southern Region ports in the days before Christmas. Stella Maris chaplains and ship visiting volunteers will go into ships to meet and support the crew, helping them feel they are not forgotten and much appreciated.

Can you help us by donating chocolate gifts? All donations can be left in the church porch or the parish office.

Your gift may be the only present a seafarer receives this Christmas.

EUCARISTIC MINISTERS OVER CHRISTMAS

Please could any Eucharistic Ministers who are available over the Christmas period to assist with the chalice, please let Mary Gobbi know your availability (upto and including the Epiphany).

CAFOD invites everyone to consider buying **World Gifts** this Advent season especially on December 2nd.

BIG THANK YOU to Eleanor and all Parishioners who helped with stalls and in many other ways for the Christmas Fair. It was a great success, raising about £2,500!

NEW DEFIBRILLATOR INSTALLED

We are pleased to inform parishioners that a public-access defibrillator has now been installed at the front of the church. This is an important safety resource for our community, and we hope it offers reassurance to all who visit. Instructions for use are clearly displayed on the unit.



PORTSMOUTH DIOCESE E NEWS & JOB VACANCIES
Activities, events, news and job vacancies from around the Diocese.

<https://mailchi.mp/portsmouthdiocese/issue512?e=34c55ac6ce>

RETREATS – ADVENT & NEW YEAR

Advent Retreat (5-7 Dec) and New Year Retreat (31 Dec - 4 Jan) - "He is our Peace!" (Eph 2:14) - at the Verbum Dei Retreat Centre on the Isle of Wight. These retreats want to give space for us to be and contemplate the Peace that Christ wants to give us. If you are interested to join it or want to know more information about it, please contact us: verbumdei.iow@gmail.com, www.uk.verbumdei.org

FIRST FRIDAY EUCHARISTIC ADORATION

Dear Parish Family,

In a world burdened by strife, wars, abuse, frustration, and illness, many of us carry heavy hearts. Yet even in these turbulent times, Jesus offers us a place where peace is real, hope is renewed, and prayer becomes powerful. That place is Eucharistic Adoration. Our parish is already blessed with three hours of weekly Adoration, shared across Tuesday and Friday mornings and Wednesday evenings, and the fruits of these moments with the Lord have been beautiful. Now, we are ready to go deeper.

Beginning the First Friday of February, we will introduce First Friday Eucharistic Adoration from 9:00 AM to 7:00 PM. A whole day set aside for silence, healing, and intercession.

To make this possible, we need parishioners who can commit to one hour so the Lord is never left alone.

Will you give Him an hour?

One hour to pray for peace.

One hour to intercede for the suffering.

One hour to let Jesus rekindle your heart.

Why come?

- Because Jesus invites us to keep an hour watch with him (Mtt 26:40)
- Because the world desperately needs prayer.
- Our families need prayer.
- We need prayer.

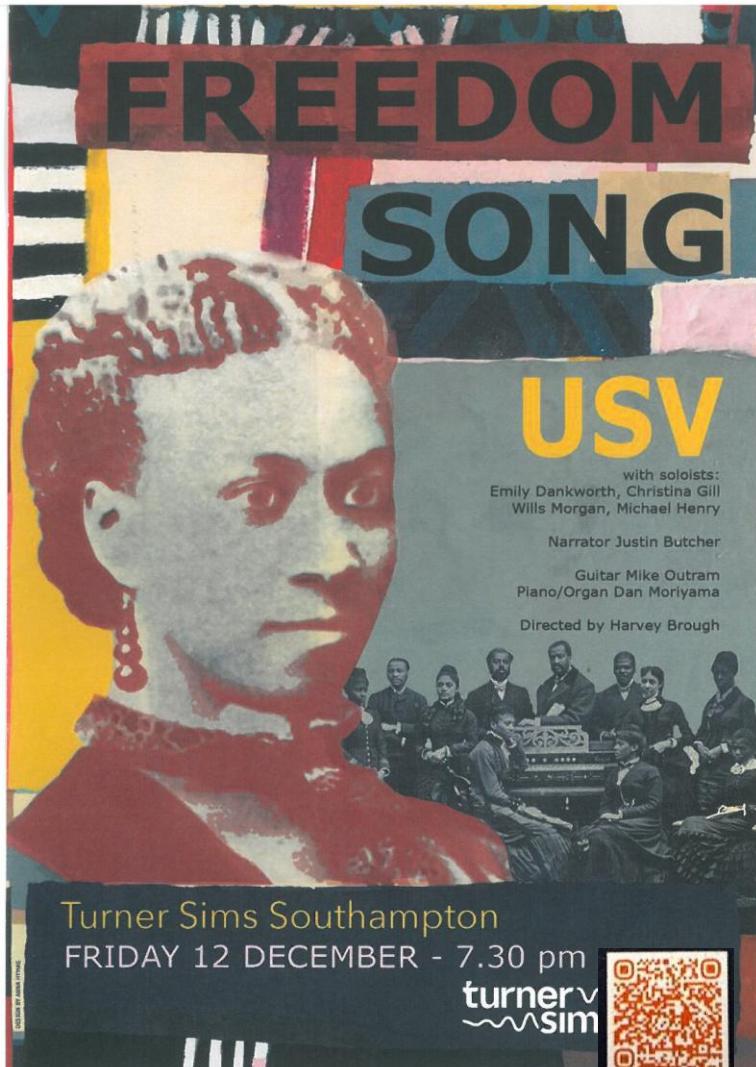
How to participate:

Choose an hour between 9 am and 7 pm

Sign up in the church foyer or through the parish office

Come as you are. Leave renewed.

Let us grow as a parish rooted in prayer—standing before the Lord for our world, our community, and one another.



SING IT LOUD, SING IT CLEAR!

'The Jubilee Singers are to appear in London. I heard them sing once, & I would walk seven miles to hear them sing again... they reproduce the true melody of the plantations, & are the only persons I ever heard accomplish this on the public platform'
Mark Twain, 1873

In 1871 a group of singers from Nashville, Tennessee, took to the road to raise money for their university. But this was no ordinary student choir. The Fisk Jubilee Singers were freed slaves. Their mission was not only to build the first black University after emancipation but to fight for the right of all African Americans to be educated.

Facing down racial abuse and physical hardship, they introduced the world to plantation spirituals: "songs of sorrow" such as **Steal Away** and **Swing Low Sweet Chariot** which were forged in the crucible of slavery and have gone on to become anthems of freedom and equality.

They toured the USA and Europe. They serenaded Queen Victoria and performed in concert halls and cathedrals across Britain. They sang in Hackney and went on to thrill audiences around the world. They remain beacons of the civil rights movement.

'They sing so beautifully, they must be from the Music City.'
Queen Victoria, 1875

Sponsored by the president of the Ragged School Union, Lord Shaftesbury, they sang at Ragged Schools in Hackney and in Dr Barnardo's school at Hope Place.

In **Freedom Song** a century and a half later, USV tell the Singers' inspiring story. Working from diaries, historical records and the choir's own songbook, composer **Harvey Brough** and playwright **Justin Butcher** have reconstructed their struggles. The choir will be joined by a professional band and soloists on a musical journey which celebrates the power of music to overcome oppression and bring people from all backgrounds together.

