



IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CATHOLIC CHURCH

SUNDAY 11th January - The BAPTISM of the LORD

"a voice from heaven said, 'This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.'"

Matthew 3:13-17

**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/Thursday 9:00-3 pm, Friday 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

*Please Note Mass timings may
change as Fr. Anthony is away*

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



11th Jan **1st Reading:** Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7

Psalm: Ps 29(28):1-2. 3ac-4. 3b, 9b-10.
R11b

2nd Reading: Acts 10:34-38

Gospel: Matthew 3:13-17

MASS INTENTIONS

Sun 11th Jan, 8:30 am Mrs Christina Neyenhuizen
Sun 11th Jan, 10:30 am Karenza Michels
Tue 13th Jan Jean Templeton RIP
Wed 14th Jan Leonor Fonte
Thu 15th Jan John Mary Bartholomew Sewell RIP
Fri 16th Jan Wilfred Perera RIP
Sun 18th Jan --

SECOND COLLECTIONS THIS MONTH

Sunday 25 January Cathedral

OTHER REGULAR WEEKLY ACTIVITIES 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

TODAY'S GOSPEL REFLECTION:

The Baptism of the Lord

Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. John tried to prevent him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and yet you are coming to me?" Jesus said to him in reply, "Allow it now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed him. Matthew 3:13-15

John the Baptist was the last of the Old Testament prophets, entrusted with the mission to immediately prepare the way for the Messiah. Today's feast marks a pivotal transition from the Old Law to the New. Prior to Jesus' baptism, John's mission was in full motion. With Jesus' baptism, the mission of the Old Testament prophets is fulfilled, and the New Law of grace begins.

Why did Jesus enter the waters of baptism? He was sinless and had no need of repentance. Yet, in His divine wisdom, Jesus chose to be baptized to sanctify the waters, opening the gateway of grace for all who would follow. By entering the waters of baptism, Jesus set a precedent. Every Christian who enters the waters of baptism meets our Lord there, sharing in His life of grace.

As we reflect on Christ's baptism today, we are invited to consider our own. Most of us were baptized as infants and have no memory of the event. Others came to baptism later in life, fully aware of the grace they were receiving. Regardless of when it occurred, baptism's effects are profound and enduring. That singular moment of sanctification forever changed us, and its transformative power remains active within us.

Through baptism, Jesus meets us under the waters. When baptism is performed by full immersion, it powerfully symbolizes the reality of this encounter. We enter the waters of repentance, as John offered, but we emerge united with Christ. Just as the Father's voice declared at Jesus' baptism, "You are my beloved Son...", so too does the Father continually speak to us after our baptism, affirming our identity as His beloved children. The Holy Spirit descends upon us, and we are offered every gift of the Spirit, provided our hearts remain open.

Baptism occurs only once in our lives and imprints on our souls an "indelible spiritual mark (character)" (see Catechism of the Catholic Church #1272 and 1274). This mark configures us to Christ and signifies our permanent belonging to Him and His Church. It cannot be lost or removed, even by mortal sin. However, while this character endures forever, the state of sanctifying grace within our souls can be lost through mortal sin. In such cases, the grace of baptism is restored through the Sacrament of Reconciliation in which our souls are once again cleansed and brought back into full communion with God. Marked as members of Christ's Body, we are continually disposed to receive sanctifying grace through the other sacraments, as long as we remain in a state of grace. Baptism accomplishes this disposition, enabling us to participate fully in the life of grace that flows from Christ.

As we celebrate the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, reflect today on your own baptism. You are forever marked as a child of God. You encountered our Lord under the waters of baptism, were cleansed of all sin, and were filled with sanctifying grace. Though sin diminishes or even extinguishes that grace when it is mortal, the Sacrament of Reconciliation restores it, and the Eucharist and other sacraments increase it. Always return to your baptismal grace, seeking to live out your identity as God's son or daughter, as this sacred mark intends.

A reflection for Sunday after January 6 (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

Our Crib at Immaculate Conception



“Some of you might be wondering: why is the crib still up? Isn’t it usually taken down after the Twelfth Night, at Epiphany? We’d like to share why we are keeping the crib in place until Candlemas, which is celebrated on 2 February. Candlemas gets its name from candles, which are used on this day to celebrate Jesus as the Light of the World. In many countries, it’s traditional to keep Christmas decorations up until this feast, marking the true end of the Christmas season. Even St John Paul II followed this tradition. Each year, after evening Mass on 2 February, he would make his final visit to the crib in St Peter’s Square. Only after that would the crib be taken down.

Candlemas remembers an important moment in Jesus’ early life. Forty days after his birth, Mary and Joseph brought him to the Temple in Jerusalem. They offered a sacrifice, as the Jewish law required, and Mary was ritually purified. It was there that they met Simeon, a holy man who had been promised by God that he would not die before seeing the Messiah. Guided by the Holy Spirit, Simeon recognised Jesus, took him in his arms, and praised God, saying that his eyes had seen salvation — ‘a light to enlighten the nations and the glory of Israel.’

Candlemas is also a turning point in the Church year. It’s the moment when we begin to turn from the crib to the cross. We remember that Jesus didn’t just come into the world to be born among us, but to give his life for us. The crib reminds us where the story began — and Candlemas reminds us why it matters.”

Introducing ChurchSuite – Our new Parish Database



Our parish has been using PAMIS as our parish database for some time. Over the coming months, we will be moving to **ChurchSuite**, a new system that is being adopted by **all parishes across the Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth**. This change has been requested by the Diocese and will help us work more closely together as a diocesan family.

What does this mean for you?

As we make this transition, we will need your **support and cooperation**. We’ll be asking parishioners to share some basic personal information so that we can build an accurate and up-to-date parish database on ChurchSuite. Please be assured that we will keep this process as **simple, clear, and respectful** as possible.

To begin with, we will only ask for essential details. Over time, and with your help, we hope to build a richer picture of our parish community so that we can communicate better, support one another more effectively, and help everyone feel more connected to parish life.

Once your initial details have been added, you will receive a follow-up email with a link to **MyChurchSuite**, a secure online portal where you can view and manage your own information. This gives you control over your details and how you stay connected with the parish.

As we work through this process, we kindly ask for your patience, understanding, and support. This is an important step forward for our parish, and we are grateful to be taking it together as a community.

Thank you for your continued cooperation and support. If you have any questions at this early stage, please contact **Gerard or Cynthia in the Parish Office**, who will be very happy to help.

An Invitation to Alpha – For the Curious, the Cautious, and the Committed

On **Wednesday 25th February (not the 25th January - diary clash means this has been pushed out)** at 7:30pm in the **Hall**, our parish will be launching **Alpha** — and everyone is warmly invited.

Alpha is a series of relaxed, welcoming sessions designed to explore the Christian faith. Over eleven weeks, each gathering focuses on a different question of life and faith — questions many of us already carry, whether we voice them or not. There is no pressure, no homework, and no expectation to have all the answers. Alpha is simply a space to listen, to share, and to belong.

What makes Alpha special is that it is **not a lecture or a debate**, but a **conversation**. It creates room for open and honest discussion, where every viewpoint is respected. You are free to come as you are — whether you are deeply rooted in faith, quietly questioning, returning after time away, or simply curious.

Alpha is also more than a course; it is a **tool for evangelisation and parish renewal**. It helps us grow as a Church that listens well, welcomes generously, and encourages each person to discover their unique calling and gifts. Through Alpha, parishioners are empowered to become **missionary disciples**, grounded in faith and confident in sharing it through everyday life.

If you are interested please save the date as we will be publicising and sharing more information in the coming weeks.

Christmas Offering for Our Priest

With apologies to those who have already generously contributed, we would like to gently remind parishioners who may have been away over Christmas that there is still an opportunity to support this important collection.

The Christmas Offering is our way of saying **thank you** to our Fr Anthony our priest for his faithful service to our parish throughout the year. Any gift, of any amount, is deeply appreciated, and prayers for our priest are always valued.

To help with the Christmas Offering, you can make your donation in one of the following ways:

- An envelope marked **“Clergy Christmas Offering”**
- Using the **Contactless terminal** in the Porch
- Transferring directly into the **Parish bank account**

Thank you for your kindness, generosity, and continued support of our parish community.”

Have Your Say – A Once-in-a-Generation Opportunity

An important moment is approaching for the Catholic community across the City of Southampton. A proposal is being considered to bring together the existing parishes into one new Canonical Parish, to be known as Our Lady Star of the Sea.

This consultation is not a formality — it is a genuine invitation to be part of the conversation. Every parishioner is encouraged to take part, whether you feel hopeful, unsure, or even sceptical about the proposal. All views matter, and this is the moment when they can be heard.

A questionnaire is available to help gather the thoughts, hopes, and concerns of parishioners. Before completing it, please take time to read the letter available in church today, which offers background information and guidance to support your reflection.

Your response will help shape the future of parish life in our city. If you care about how our parishes grow, change, and serve future generations, this is your opportunity to contribute. All responses will be treated confidentially.

The questionnaire is available online, and paper copies can be found in the Church Porch. We warmly encourage everyone to take part — not simply to respond to change, but to help shape it together.

Our Lady Star of the Sea - Parish Merger Questionnaire

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We are writing to you today to take the next step in discerning the proposed implementation of our Diocesan Pastoral Plan, *You Will Be My Witnesses*, in Southampton area.

The Plan proposes new structures to help bring about a renewed focus on mission. This is centred on three priorities:

- To be a Christ-centred Church (putting Christ at the centre of our hearts and our lives).
- To be missionary communities (going out on Christ's service and mission).
- To be prudent stewards of Christ's Church (making wise choices to leave a sustainable legacy).

The Proposal for the Future of Catholic Southampton

To achieve this vision, Bishop Phillip suggests that we consider a merger of the 10 existing Southampton Parishes in our Pastoral Area into a single new Parish of Our Lady Star of the Sea, Southampton. These comprise the churches of: (Christ the King and St Colman, Our Lady of the Assumption and St. Brigid, Holy Family, St Boniface, St Joseph and St Edmund, St Patrick, Annunciation, St Vincent De Paul, Immaculate Conception, St. Theresa of the Child Jesus) The existing churches would retain their current names, and our Bishop would appoint one Parish Priest as the leader of the team of priests and deacons within the area.

Coming together into a single, larger Parish could allow us to focus more on active mission and outreach, benefiting from the combined talents and resources of our church communities.

1. Prudent Stewardship

A combined budget and pooling of talents, enables us to:

- Reduce unnecessary administrative overlap. For example, we remove the need for 10 separate sets of bookkeeping, and basic admin costs. This would release significant funds for charitable work, ministry programmes and direct mission.
- Develop major capital works and building maintenance that individual parishes might not be able to afford.

2. Developing Our People in a Christ-Centred Church

One parish would allow us to optimise our greatest resource, our people, by pooling experiences and expertise for the benefit of all. For example,

- Our clergy could be enabled to focus on their own gifts/interests, for example they may focus especially on youth ministry, on hospital chaplaincy, the housebound, adult formation, and mission to seafarers.
- Our laity could share their talents across the Southampton area according to need and expertise, as part of a cohesive plan, for example city wide sacramental preparations, and charitable projects.
- The increased financial stability could allow consideration of wider paid employment roles for the benefit of the parish.

3. Our Mission to Wider Southampton

Forming a single parish would empower a unified Catholic voice in Southampton, strengthening our presence in advocacy, inter-faith dialogue, and coordinated charitable outreach across the city. United under the patronage of Our Lady Star of the Sea, our diverse communities would be drawn together in shared identity and purpose, reflecting our mission in this vibrant port city. This renewed unity would enable us to deepen our commitment to serving the poor and the marginalised, while nurturing and growing our faith communities in hope and solidarity.

How You Can Help

We invite everyone to play an active part in developing this renewed and shared vision for the Catholic Church in Southampton. Hence this consultation of our parishioners.

By inviting you to complete this consultation survey we are giving everyone an opportunity to express their views. This is not a vote. The responses will be carefully considered.

1. Please Read the Diocesan Plan: We recommend everyone reads this Plan, which can be accessed on the diocesan website: **www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/about/ten-year-plan/**
2. Please Share Your Views: Please complete the accompanying Questionnaire and return your response to your Parish by the end of January 2026.
3. Please Keep the Process in Prayer: The consultation phase will take place over the coming months. We ask Our Lady Star of the Sea to pray for us as we navigate our way forward.

In Christ,

Fr. Anthony Chiatu

Questionnaire on Southampton's Potential Parish Merger



This questionnaire aims to gather the views and opinions of parishioners regarding the potential merger of Catholic parishes in the Southampton area to form a new Parish called Our Lady Star of the Sea. Please read the letter provided in church today to give you some background and assistance before completing this survey. Your feedback is important and will help guide the decision-making process. All responses will be kept confidential.

To complete the survey online please scan the QR Code or visit <https://forms.office.com/e/uZ2PjhsW8k>

General Background

While these questions are optional, they help us to know how representative the responses are.

1. **What is your age group?** Please circle your age band:

Under 18	18-29	30-44
45-59	60 – 67	68+

2. **How long have you been a member of your parish?** Please tick the box:

- ☐ Less than 1 year
- ☐ 1-5 years
- ☐ 6-10 years
- ☐ More than 10 years

3. **Please give your Parish name here:**

4. **Which of the below best describes your presence**
your situation.

scribes

- ☐ **I consider myself a Parishioner of this Parish, and I:**

- ☐ live within the Parish boundary.
- ☐ do not live within the Parish boundary.
- ☐ live within the Parish boundary at some parts of the year (e.g., academic terms).

☐ **I do not consider myself a Parishioner of this Parish, but I:**

- ☐ live within the Parish boundary at some parts of the year (e.g., academic terms).
- ☐ am a regular visitor to this Parish, and often participate in liturgies and services.

5. **Would you be interested in participating in focus groups or discussions about the merger in the future?** Please provide your details here for contact:

☐ Yes

☐ No

Name:

Phone:

Email:

6. **If the current Parishes were to come together to become the Parish of Our Lady Star of the Sea, how best do you feel these statements would represent the new Parish?** Please tick the box that best represents your views.

The new Parish...	I agree	I disagree	I'm not sure
1) Would improve Outreach and mission.			
2) Would give better opportunities for the clergy to use their talents, expertise and experience.			
3) Would harness the talents and expertise of the laity more effectively.			
4) Would cause transport and access issues for some parishioners.			
5) Would lead to a loss of identity and traditions in some current church communities.			
6) Would enable more available and accessible provision of the Mass and Sacraments.			
7) Would reduce unnecessary overlaps and costs through better sharing of resources.			
8) Would lead some communities to feel neglected.			
9) Would provide a more cohesive Catholic voice and presence in the City.			
10) Would provide me with more choice and/or opportunities to participate in parish life.			

7. **Do you have any further comments you wish to make regarding the potential merger?** Please feel free to attach any additional comments.

Conclusion

Thank you for taking the time to provide your feedback. Your insights are valuable as we consider the potential for merging with other parishes to better serve our community and advance the mission of the Church in the Southampton area.

GDPR Notice The information you have provided on this form will be stored and used by the Parishes of Southampton Pastoral Area and the Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth only for the purpose of informing consultation on the new parish, and contacting those who have consented to us doing so for the purpose of further discussion. Details of how we process your data, and your rights, are included in the Diocesan Privacy Statement which can be accessed on the Diocesan website or by request from the Governance Team at gdpr@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk.