

**BAPTISMS IN THE PARISH:** If you have a child due for Baptism please let me know as soon as possible. To avoid any disappointment with dates contact the Presbytery to book your date. If you are first-time parents, you need to contact Sharon Chalk, who will organise a Baptismal Preparation of two sessions, and then I will come and visit you in your homes. Please don't forget to collect your Baptismal Information Form.



**FIRST HOLY COMMUNION PROGRAMME 2018/2019:** The next session will take place on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> January at 10.00am in the Parish hall. The next Parents' Meeting will take place on Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> February at 8.00pm in the Parish Hall. I do encourage all the parents of our First Communicants to attend some of the Sunday sessions with the Children.

**St Valentine's Dinner and Dance:** On the 9th February all parishioners are cordially invited to a St Valentine's Dinner and Dance to be held in St Edmund's Hall. The evening will commence with complimentary reception drinks followed by a three course meal with waitress Silver Service. There will be a licensed bar and the wonderful singer Joe Fryd, who will provide entertainment with songs from the Rat Pack, Jazz, Soul and Swing era. Dancing will continue to midnight. Dress Code will be black tie/lounge suit. Tickets, at £40 per head, will be available for sale after every mass only on the 5th/6th January. There will be very high demand for tickets so please make sure you bring your cheque book or cash with you to mass on the day. Cheques should be made payable to "7th Epping Forest Scout Group". For more information please call Iain McLay, 02082819125, or talk to any member of the Scouts Parents Committee.

**PARISH WEEKLY OFFERTORY:** Could I ask all our parishioners who use the Parish Gift Aid Scheme to kindly use their Gift Aid envelopes, without the envelopes each week we are not able to claim the tax back at the end of the year. If you forget your envelopes there was spare ones in the church porch, just write your number or name on the envelope. A big thank you to all parishioners who contribute for the upkeep of the parish on a weekly basis; the parish is truly grateful for your ongoing support of the parish.

**IN CASES OF EMERGENCY:** Tuesday is usually Fr. John's Day Off. In cases of emergency please call one of the local parishes, either in Epping – Tel: 01992 572516, or the St. Thomas of Canterbury Friary at Woodford Green – Tel: 020 8504 1688. This would also apply if Fr. John is away for a few days break or on Retreat. All the local funeral directors have a contact number for Fr. John if a funeral needs to be arranged in his absence.

Dear Friends in Christ, Fourth Sunday of Advent, 2018, Year C, Luke

'O Emmanuel, you are our king and judge, the One whom the people await and their Saviour. O come and save us, Lord our God!' St. Luke narrates his Gospel with beauty and charm, jamming his masterpiece full of rich fare for us to feed upon. Today we celebrate the feminine genius of Mary and Elizabeth. These two giants of faith reveal in their encounter with the Holy Spirit so much of what it means to live a life of faith. These two women were joined in a sisterhood of faith; they were both on an adventure on which they were overshadowed and inspired by the Holy Spirit.



What is the feminine genius so clearly on display to us in today's readings? Perhaps it is best captured by the way in which both women were blessed by God because of the simplicity and straightforwardness of their faith. We could say that faith came naturally to them. They were ready to embrace all that God was doing in their lives. They were both midwives to God's extraordinary grace being poured out at this very special moment in history. The motif of their faith is joy. So infectious was their joy that even the bay in Elizabeth's womb (John the Baptist) leapt with this same joy, the joy of the Holy Spirit

Also striking is the two women's kindness and generosity towards each other – they delighted in God's work in each other's life. Mary rushed to Elizabeth's home, eager to share her good news, Elizabeth, for her part, was full of praise and thanksgiving for Mary, and imparted two blessings: 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed the child you will bear!' and 'Bless is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfil his promises to her!'

These two holy women point us to trust and really on the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life. Through their witness they reveal that the Christian life is an adventure in the Spirit. They show us that as we receive blessings from God, we in turn bless others with the same grace. Elizabeth and Mary are models of discipleship, and we thank God for their stunning witness of the joy and happiness that is our birth right as men and women born of the Spirit.

Dear Friends in Christ,

Fourth Sunday of Advent 2018



*I would like to welcome all the Seminarians from the Pontifical North American College, Rome who arrived last Friday. Two groups will be with us over the Christmas & New Year. Through the years we have got accustomed to the Seminarians visiting us for the major Religious Feasts! Please extend them your welcome and hospitality. If anyone is able to help me with some desserts, or any other goodies, I would be most grateful! With grateful thanks!*

*I would like to take this opportunity of thanking the many parishioners who have sent Cards and Christmas Greetings and gifts during this Blessed Season. I pray for the whole parish community over this sacred time, that you will be able to spend with your families, and that you will also have a good rest and be refreshed for a New Year. I know that many parishioners are going away for the Christmas holiday this year, enjoy your time with family and friends, and have a safe journey! Wishing you all a very Happy & Holy Christmas & Prosperous New Year for 2019*

*God Bless You All, with Love & Christmas Peace,*

**YOUR CHRISTMAS OFFERTORY:** *Is your personal gift to Fr. John, and makes up the major part of his salary throughout the year. Please use your parish Gift Aid envelopes, as we can then claim back the relevant Tax on your offerings. There are also Gift Aid envelopes in the porch of St. Edmund's. With grateful thanks for your continued generosity!*



**YOUR CRIB OFFERINGS** Will go to the work of the Brentwood Catholic Children's Society. This wonderful Diocesan organisation does not receive government funding so is heavily dependent upon all charitable diocesan contributions. You have always been very generous with offerings in the past. The Cribs will remain in our church until the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2019 \_

**CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS TABLEAU:** The Rehearsal for the Tableau will take place on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> December. Please encourage all our young children to participate in the Tableau; we need Shepherds, Kings, Angels, Mary & Joseph, The Animals, sheep & Donkey. It's still not too late to join us!



**RCIA PROGRAMME:** Will resume after the Christmas holidays on Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2019 at 8.00pm in the Presbytery. Theme: Confirmation. If you know of anyone who may be interested in the Roman Catholic Faith, please contact Fr. John at the Presbytery Tel No: 020 8508 3492



**ALTAR SERVING FOR CHRISTMAS:** A quick note to all our Parish Altar Servers. Please ensure you make every effort to attend the Special Mass on St. Stephen's Day, Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> December at 11.00a.m. This is the annual Mass for Altar Servers. Nine of our Servers who have been serving for approximately a year will receive their Guild of St. Stephen Medals. Also Daniel Ruiz will receive his Silver Medal for serving for the past ten years. Please ensure that your Alb is washed and pressed for Christmas and St. Stephen's Day.

**LANDINGS – COMING HOME FOR CHRISTMAS:** Try to invite one person to mass over Christmas; it may be a lapsed member of your own family, a friend or colleague. In this way you're being like John the Baptist in the Gospel. Never be fearful of proclaiming the Gospel through your lives of faith. True happiness is not found in wealth and material possessions, but in loving and helping others. Your challenge in Advent is to love and help others to come back to the practice of their faith!



**APPLICATIONS FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES FOR 2019:** Please ensure that you have made your applications for your child's Reception place for September 2015. All applications have to be completed on line by 15<sup>th</sup> January 2019

**A VERY BIG THANK YOU!:** To the several parishioners who dropped off bottles of scotch during the week for our visitors, and also some mince pies. As you know there will be twelve seminarians with us over Christmas and the New Year until 4<sup>th</sup> January. Thank you for your generosity! Desserts are always welcome!

*Wishing you, and all your loved ones, a Very Happy,  
Holy & Blessed Christmas, and a Healthy &  
Prosperous New Year for 2019  
God Bless You All!*