

**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.

Once again I appeal to the whole parish community; the weekly offertories are not meeting the monthly outgoings – Please take this into consideration when you place your envelope or offering in the basket on Sundays. This past month our outgoings have resulted in the Diocesan Monthly Quota - £2,230.00. Staff salaries - £1,400.00. Utilities – Gas, Electric & Water £1,250.00. Repairs in Parish Hall (New boiler tank, toilet repairs, various leaks) £750.00. As you can appreciate, I have cut back considerably on many things in the parish; I don't have a secretary anymore; but we are still running monthly at a loss! I'm always grateful for your generosity!

**FIRST HOLY COMMUNION PROGRAMME 2018/2019:** The next session will take place on Sunday 13<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.

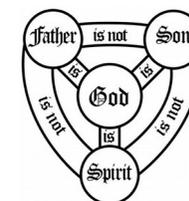
**St Valentine's Dinner and Dance:** On the 9th February all parishioners are cordially invited to a St Valentine's Dinner and Dance to be held in St Edmund's Hall. The evening will commence with complimentary reception drinks followed by a three course meal with waitress Silver Service. There will be 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.

**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,

The Baptism of the Lord 2019

Today the season of Christmastide draws to a close. It reaches a wonderful climax in a definitive event in the Lord's life: his baptism in the Jordan. Jesus' baptism was a remarkable event because the baptism offered by John the Baptist was for repentance. The immersion in the waters of the Jordan was a sign of conversion, or a person changing direction in life. John's message was addressed to tax collectors, soldiers and ordinary men and women. It was a message of moral reform, of preparing for the coming of the Messiah. Jesus' baptism is a baptism of solidarity with sinners and began his public life and in this moment God is revealed as Blessed Trinity.



The Trinity is unique to Christian faith. We are united to Muslims and Jews because we share a common belief in One God, but at this point our faith departs sharply from these two others faiths because we believe that God is three Persons in One God – The Holy Blessed Trinity. God is Father, God is Son and God is Holy Spirit. Jesus' baptism was the manifestation, of Jesus as Messiah of Israel and the Son of God. The unveiling of Jesus' nature and mission brought forth from the Father a tender and heart-warming affirmation: You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased.'



Jesus' baptism was the acceptance and inauguration of his mission as God's Suffering Servant. He allowed himself to be numbered among sinners – he is truly 'the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!' In today's Gospel we are seeing unfolding before our very eyes the 'fulfilling of all righteousness.' We are witnesses of Jesus consenting to submit himself entirely to his Father's will, which was his death on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins.

The coming down of the Spirit of Jesus' baptism looked forward to the coming down of the Holy Spirit on us – a prelude, if you like, to the new creation. We commit ourselves to entering more deeply into the mystery of our baptism, praying about it, seeking to understand it and growing in our appreciation of this wonderful grace.

Dear Friends in Christ,

The Baptism of the Lord 2019

*Pope St. John Paul II said that the greatest day of his life was the day he was baptised. But when you come to think about it, it's a fact that in baptism our lives are totally caught up with God, who is Father, /son & Holy Spirit. He is always generous in his giving, and doesn't hold back; we receive the fullness of God at baptism, which leaves an indelible mark on our soul forever. Nothing can ever take away that grace of baptism, even if a person rejects God or leaves the Church, baptism remains forever! Today let us celebrate the beauty of our Baptism!*

**FORMING INTENTIONAL DISCIPLES:** *After a very successful programme before Christmas, which a good number of parishioners attended on a weekly basis. The next phase of the Forming Intentional Disciples programme will continue on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2019 at 8.00pm in the Parish Hall. This next phase will involve the whole community pooling resources and suggestions with regard to time, talent & treasure; also establishing effective and pastoral ways of Evangelisation. There is so much good will in our parish community, and so many people already do so much for the community. But enriching the life of faith will be a magnet and means whereby people will be welcomed and encouraged in their lives of faith. Even if you didn't attend the formal programme before Christmas, new comers are always welcome; your input will be truly valuable! Please come along on Monday!*

**LANDINGS – RETURNING TO THE PRACTICE OF THE CATHOLIC FAITH:** *Over the Christmas and New Year, a handout was given to all people inviting those who have been away from the Church for a long time, to seriously think about returning to full-practice of the faith. This programme, called Landings, is a welcoming programme, non-judgemental to try and help answer many people's questions. There's no quick-fix for people who have had problems with their faith and the Church, but we invite you to come and explore the possibilities of trying to re-engage with the faith once again! There will be an informal 'Landings Meeting' on Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> January at 8.00pm in the Parish Retreat, tea and coffee will be provided. Please make this meeting known to lapsed family members and friends. In a confidential*



*setting people will have the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification of Church teaching? May God Bless You*

All,

**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 \_



**RCIA PROGRAMME:** Will continue on Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> January 2019 at 8.00pm in the Presbytery. Theme: The Catholic Priesthood of Jesus Christ. 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

**PARISH LITURGY COMMITTEE:** Meeting will take place on Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> January at 7.30pm in the Parish Retreat. Would all committee members kindly be in attendance? We have to discuss Lent and Holy Week

**THE GOSPEL OF LUKE:** On Wednesdays 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> January at 7 pm Fr Adrian Graffy will lead an exploration of the Gospel of Luke, the gospel being read on Sundays in 2019. These 'Gidea Park Faith Evenings' will take place in the hall at Gidea Park Catholic Church (410 Brentwood Road, Gidea Park, RM2 6DH). Please book by email to [GPstudydays@gmail.com](mailto:GPstudydays@gmail.com) Refreshments provided. Admission free.

**EPPING FOREST FOODBANK DONATIONS:** Thank you to all parishioners who donated items for the Foodbank in 2018. Your donations are needed as much as ever at this time of year so please do continue to support the Foodbank in 2019 if you can. Basic staple items are always welcome including the unbranded supermarket basic ranges which can make your generous donations go even further. In January they are in particular need of the following items: UHT milk, powdered milk, long-life fruit juice, instant mash, sponge pudding, tinned spaghetti, small jars of coffee and toilet rolls. Thank you! You can also keep up to date with the Foodbank via their Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/EppingForestFoodbank/](https://www.facebook.com/EppingForestFoodbank/)



**THANK YOU: My sincere & grateful thanks to Pat Marchant for being one of our Sunday Sacristans for the past ten years. I'm truly grateful for his dedication and loyalty, also especially during the week, during these past years and wish him a very happy retirement. Thank you Pat!**