

Dear Friends in Christ,
2019

Christmas

As we rapidly approach the Birth of the Christ-child once again, I would like to take this opportunity of sending you all my annual Christmas Greetings. As Jesus was born in obscurity in the town of Bethlehem over two thousand years ago, God had already planned His Saving action through His Son. That Holy Night brought forth the Saviour of the World in the innocence of a child. Every birth is a miracle of God, and Jesus would show us a way of life that would change everything. We are uniquely privileged to share in the life of Christ as Christians; God's love knew no bounds and that Love took on our human nature in Jesus. Let us look forward with great Joy for that birth once again into our lives this Christmas!

During the past twelve months, as a parish, we have continued with our Diocesan process of restructuring with our Stewards of the Gospel Programme. Coupled with our parochial programme of Forming Intentional Disciples, the whole process of Evangelisation continues in earnest. To proclaim the Gospel message is fundamentally at the heart of Christianity. We have held several events both social and spiritual, encouraging the whole community to be involved in the life of the parish. The parish partnership of Loughton, Epping & Waltham Abbey organised two wonderful Youth masses where our young people and their families participated in beautiful liturgy and song. It is the Eucharist that unites us in all our faith endeavours. I encourage the whole parish community to continue to support us in the practice of our faith.

The ongoing Forming Intentional Disciples Programme meets on a monthly basis, praying together, reviewing past events and planning future events. We have a core team of regulars, but everyone is always welcome. We are constantly exploring new initiatives and events for our parish community. If you would like to join us, the next meeting takes place in the New Year on Monday 13th January 2020. All Welcome!

I would like to thank the whole parish community for everything you have done for our parish over the past twelve months! Your ongoing support and involvement mean so much. It is truly an honour and privilege to serve the whole community as your Parish Priest. If ever you need help or assistance in anyway, please don't hesitate to contact me.

I would take this opportunity of wishing you and all your loved ones, both near and far, a Very Happy, Holy & Blessed Christmas; and a healthy & prosperous New Year of 2020.



With Love and Peace to You All

TIMES OF SERVICES & MASSES OVER CHRISTMAS 2019

Monday 16 th Dec	12.15pm	St. Edmund's
Tuesday 17 th Dec	9.00am	St. Edmund's
<u>Penitential Service</u>	8.00pm	With visiting priests
Wednesday 18 th Dec	12.15pm	St. Edmund's
Thursday 19 th Dec	9.00am 9.30am	St. Edmund's. followed by Church cleaning for Christmas. Coffee & M Pies
Friday 20 th Dec	12.15pm	St. Edmund's
<u>HOLY HOUR</u>	11.00am	St. Edmund's
Saturday 21 st Dec	10.00am	St. Edmund's

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Saturday 21 st Dec	6.00pm	St. Edmund's
Sunday 22 nd Dec	9.00am	St. Edmund's
Sunday 22 nd Dec	11.00am	St. Edmund's (Sung Mass)

CHRISTMAS EVE

TUESDAY 24 th Dec	5.00pm	St. Edmund's, Children's Christmas Vigil Mass
Carols at 7.00pm	7.30pm	St. Edmund's (Vigil Mass of Christmas)
Carols at 10.30pm	11.00pm	Midnight Mass (St. Edmund's) Finishing at Christmas Midnight!

CHRISTMAS DAY

WEDNESDAY	9.00am	St. Edmund's
25 th December	11.00am	St. Edmund's. (Family Mass)

FEAST OF ST. STEPHEN

Thursday 26 th Dec	11.00am	Family Mass. Enrolment into the Altar Servers Mass Guild of St. Stephen
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NEW YEAR'S DAY MASS

Wednesday 1st January 2020 11.00am Mass All welcome!

Your Christmas Offertory is your Personal Gift to your

Parish Priest and makes up the major part of his salary throughout the year! Please use your Gift Aid envelopes.

THE FIRST CRIB

*The appearance of the crib in our churches
is a sure sign that Christmas is at the doorstep.*

*St. Francis of Assisi assembled the first crib
in a cave on an Italian hillside in 1223.*

*His aim was to make the Christmas story come alive
for the shepherds and farmers of the locality*

*On Christmas Eve the Friars and the people assembled
with candles and torches to illuminate the night.*

*Then Francis arrived and was very happy
when he saw the preparations they had made*

The crib was put in place.

The hay was brought in.

The ox and donkey were led forward.

The woods rang with their prayers.

The rocks echoed with their hymns

*Francis spoke to them about God's Son coming among
us to help us realise our splendid dignity
as sons and daughters of the same Father*

*At the end of the vigil
They all returned to their homes
full of peace and joy
feeling very close to God
and to one another*



St. Edmund of Canterbury and St. Thomas More



CHRISTMAS 2019