

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.



St Valentine's Dinner and Dance: On the 8th February all parishioners are cordially invited to our annual St Valentine's Dinner and Dance 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 Tina T will entertain us with soul, Motown and club classics. Dancing will continue to midnight. Dress Code is black tie/lounge suit. Tickets, at £40 per head, will be available for sale after every mass on the 4th/5th 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.

YOUR WEEKLY OFFERTORY: I'm a little concerned about the Weekly Offertory plummeting so dramatically over the past month; we have only been achieving a little over a thousand pounds each week. With the Monthly Diocesan Quota Of £2,200 being debited at the beginning of each month, and of course our Staff Salaries; at present the monthly income is not meeting the monthly outgoings. The utilities of heating, lighting, water on all the parish buildings are high. Insurance, general maintenance of all the buildings, repairs Would all parishioners kindly take these comments on board when you make your Weekly Offertory to Almighty God. Please use your Parish Gift Aid envelopes, as we can claim back 25p in the pound for your weekly offertory. If you forget your GA envelopes, there are spare envelopes in the porch of the church. If you would like to join the Gift Aid Scheme, there are applications also in the Porch. Continued thanks for your generosity.

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,

Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord 2020

The great feast of the Epiphany marks the manifestation of Jesus as Messiah of Israel and Saviour of the world. The Magi, the three kings or wise men whom tradition has named Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar, come to worship and adore, thus representing the acceptance of the 'Good News' by the pagan nations.



Their coming to Bethlehem in order to pay homage to the King of the Jews is significant because it shows that they seek in Israel, in the messianic light of the Star of David, the one who will be the King of the nations. The Jewish nation remains God's special and chosen people. The pagan nations can discover Jesus only by turning towards the Jewish people and receiving from them the Messianic promise latent in the Hebrew Scriptures but revealed fully in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

Mission is at the very heart of the feast of the Epiphany because it reveals how those who do not know Christ can be moved compelled and convinced by the gospel (as the Magi were) to bow down and worship. In fact, every effort we make at mission – sharing our faith and giving witness by deeds – is nothing less than an epiphany. Why? Because when we so this God's world is manifested and fulfilled in the world.



On this most holy feast-day we can re-cover and re-discover a sense of our own mission to make Christ known, not only to the nations but to those we live and work among. If we ask him, the Holy Spirit will imbue us with a new confidence to witness to Christ. Whatever is good, whatever is pure, whatever is beautiful and whatever is true in other cultures and natures is of Christ and in Christ. The message of Christ won over the Magi and it will win over pagan nations and those who resist the gospel – not by force or power but by the grace of the Holy Spirit, who reveals and convinces that there is only one King for all the nations, and that is Christ Jesus our Lord.

Dear Friends in Christ,

The Epiphany of the Lord 2020



As the next part of the Nativity story unfolds for us, we see the Wise men arriving from the East. They represent the outside world who would encounter the God-child; their lives would never be the same again! Jesus Christ came for peoples of all nations, and He continues to invite us to share in His life. They brought him gifts as a sign of love and respect; what gift can I bring to the Lord in 2020? As the carol states: 'What can I bring Him, poor as I am; If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb; If I were a wise man, I would do my part; Yet what I can I give him: give my heart!' To give our Love to Jesus is the greatest gift of all! Perhaps this could be at the heart of our New Year's resolutions, to get closer to the Lord through prayer & a deepening of personal spirituality!

THANK YOU: Once again, sincere and grateful thanks to the whole parish community for your incredible kindness and generosity to the Seminarians who were with us over Christmas and New Year. I've had several messages from them expressing their gratitude. Please continue to pray for Vocations to the Priesthood, especially here in our own Diocese of Brentwood. Thank you to all those parishioners who provided desserts and goodies over the holiday period, you are very kind! It was much appreciated! My grateful thank to you all for your Christmas Offerings, I truly appreciate your thoughtfulness and generosity! A Happy New Year for 2020.



OUR PARISH CHOIR: You will have heard some of the beautiful pieces of music that our choir shared with us over the Christmas masses. It has gone from strength to strength over the past 18 months, and I would like to thank our Music Director Sue Farrow. Perhaps you have thought of joining the choir; new members are always welcome. The rehearsals take place Wednesday evening at 7.00pm and Saturday mornings at 11.00am. They usually sing at the 11.00am on Sunday Mornings. The choir are singing motets and classic pieces in four-part harmony, learning new mass settings, and new contemporary pieces. If you are interested in joining please see Sue after one of the masses.

HAPPY NEW YEAR: To all of you as we embark upon 2020. I pray for the whole parish, our families, our community of faith, our parish school. May we invoke the Lord Jesus to be with us in the New Year ahead of us.

With love and peace to 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 2nd February 2020



ST JOHN FISHER PRIMARY SCHOOL VISIT DATES: Visit and meetings for prospective parents. Thursday 9th January at 9.15am. The visit will give parents the opportunity to view the school and ask any questions they may have. If you would like to visit the school on one of the dates please contact the school office on Tel No: 020 8508 6315 or e-mail tmcgrenra@st-johnfisher.essex.sch.uk We look forward to seeing you on the above date.

RCIA PROGRAMME: will resume on Thursday 9th January 2020 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



FIRST HOLY COMMUNION PROGRAMME: Will resume on Sunday 5th January 2020, at 10.00am in the Parish Hall. The next Parents' Meeting will take place on Wednesday 12th February 2020. The Theme will be the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Our guest speaker Dr. Paul Doherty OBE.

FORMING INTENTIONAL DISCIPLES: Our next meeting will be on Monday 13th January 2020 at 8.00pm in the Parish Hall. We meet for prayer, planning and organising social & spiritual events. If you would like to join us, you would be most welcome!

LITURGY COMMITTEE MEETING: Wednesday 15th January at 7.30pm in the Parish Retreat. Would all Committee Members kindly be in attendance please? We have much to discuss and prepare for Lent & Easter.

ALTAR SOCIETY: We are in desperate need for some new members to join. If you can give an hour a month in helping to keep our Church clean and tidy; there are many different jobs to do through the Altar Society. please see Fr. John or Sharon Fitzmaurice.

Altar
Society

EPPING FOREST CHRISTMAS FOODBANK DONATIONS: Thank you to

Food Bank all parishioners who have donated items for the Foodbank. With Christmas fast approaching the Foodbank are collecting festive items for distribution next month. Any of the items below that you can donate will spread some Christmas cheer to those in need: tinned ham, custard, jam, Christmas pudding, Christmas cake, Yule log, biscuits, savoury biscuits, boxes of chocolates, crisps, Christmas crackers Thank you! They are also in need of small boxes of washing powder or pods and men's razors. You can also keep up to date with the Foodbank via their Facebook page: www.facebook.com/EppingForestFoodbank/