

PETERPOST

Parish of St. Peter and the Winchester Martyrs

Alresford • Stockbridge • Winchester

7th January 2024

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD – YEAR B

We all need blessing; we all need to bless

Father Mark writes:

I was reminded this week of these words from Fr Ron Rolheiser OMI:

Several years ago, I preached a homily on the baptism of Christ within which I remarked that the words that God speaks over Jesus at his baptism: “This is my beloved child in whom I take delight!” are words that God daily speaks over us. Some hours later my doorbell rang, and I was approached by a young man who had heard my homily and who was both moved and distraught by it.

He had not been to church for some time but had gone on this particular Sunday because he had, just that week, pleaded guilty to a crime and was awaiting sentence. He was soon to go to prison.

The homily had struck a painful chord inside of him because, first of all, he had trouble believing that God or anyone else loved him; yet he wanted to believe it.

Secondly, and even more painful, he believed that nobody had ever been pleased or delighted with him: “Father, I know that in my whole life nobody has ever been pleased with me. I was never good enough! Nobody has ever taken delight in anything I’ve ever done!” This man had never been blessed. Small wonder he was about to go to prison.

What does it mean to be blessed? What is a blessing?

*The word blessing takes its root in the latin verb: *Benedicere*, to speak well of (Bene—well; *dicere*—to speak). Therefore, to bless someone is, in the end, to speak well of him or her.*

But this implies a special form of “speaking well. ”To bless someone is, through some word, gesture or ritual, to make him or her aware of three things:

- 1 the goodness of the original creation where, after making the earth and humans, God said that it was “good, very good”;*
- 2 that God experiences the same delight and pleasure in him or her that he experienced with Jesus at his baptism when he said: “This is my beloved child in whom I take delight”;* and
- 3 that we, who are giving the blessing, recognise that goodness and take that delight in him or her.*



Thus, the ritual blessing that we are given at the end of Mass: “I bless you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit” could be paraphrased to sound like this: “As we leave this celebration, let us feel deeply and take with us the deep truth that we, the world, and our lives are good, very

good. There is no need to live in guilt and depression. We are, despite our faults, very good and delightful to God. Let us, therefore, take delight in each other and in ourselves. We are, after all, extremely pleasing to God.”

When I left home as a 17-year-old boy, my father and mother blessed me. They had me kneel on the old linoleum floor of our kitchen, placed their hands on my head and said the ritual words of Christian blessing.

In effect, however, what they were saying to me was: “We love you, we trust you, we are proud of you and we send you off with our full spirit. You are our beloved child and in you we are well-pleased.”

I suspect that had the young man I spoke of above been blessed in the same way by his parents or by anyone else significant to him, he would not have been on his way to prison. To be unblessed is to be bleeding in a very deep place.

So much of our hunger is a hunger for blessing. So much of our aching is the ache to be blessed. So much of our sadness comes from the fact that nobody has ever taken delight and pleasure in us in a non-exploitive way.



When has anyone ever made you the object of delight? When has anyone taken, in a nonexploitive way, delight in your body, your beauty, your intelligence, your person? When have you last felt that you are someone in whom others, and God, take pleasure and delight?

Only a few, I suspect, move about in their daily lives with the joy, confidence and grace that comes from knowing that they are, as persons, good, beautiful and objects of delight. Depression is more the rule.

Most of us are more like the young man spoken of above—bleeding, less than whole, unconfident, depressed, going through life without a sense either of its goodness or of our own, going through life without being able to really give or experience delight.

Scripture says that when Jesus was baptised the Spirit came to him in bodily form and said: “This is my beloved child; in him I take delight!”

What we need, more than anything else, is to precisely give bodily form to this blessing. We need, daily, within our families and within our relationships in general, to do things and say things that help those around us believe that life is good, that their lives are good, that they are good and that we, and God, look on them with great pleasure and delight.

*I was reminded of these words, I think, for two reasons. Firstly, because I have been struck by the beautiful document, *Fiducia Supplicans* (*On the Pastoral Meaning of Blessings*). The original context, and most of the headlines, have been around the possibility of blessing couples in irregular situations and same-sex couples without officially validating their status or changing in any way the Church’s perennial teaching on marriage. The declaration, however, has much wider implications. It “offers a specific and innovative contribution to the pastoral meaning of blessings, permitting a broadening and enrichment of the classical understanding of blessings”. It reminds us that we **all** need blessing and that Jesus Christ is the great blessing of God given to save us **all**. You can read the full text [here](#).*

Secondly, because I was struck by a phrase in our Gospel for this weekend that I’d never really noticed before: “The sight of the star filled [the Magi] with delight”. These Wise Men had travelled far to bring an offering and blessing to the new-born King. They were looking in the wrong place (Herod’s palace) and there met trickery and deception. It is not until they see the star again, in front of them, halting over the place where the child was, that they are filled with delight. The star leads them to the child who, being God, will look on them with great pleasure and delight and give them his blessing. May God bless you this week and fill you with delight as you offer blessing to your loved ones and to those whom you meet.

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD (Year B) – 7th January 2024

Gospel Acclamation:

Mt 2:2

Entrance Antiphon: Cf. Mt 3:1,1Ch 29:12
Behold, the Lord, the Mighty One, has come;
and kingship is in his grasp, and power and dominion.

R. Alleluia, alleluia!
We saw his star as it rose
and have come to do the Lord homage.
R. Alleluia!

First reading: Isaiah 60:1-6

Gospel: Matthew 2:1-12

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 71:1-2,7-8,10-13. R. Cf. v.11
All nations shall fall prostrate before you, O Lord.


Communion Antiphon: Cf. Mt 2:2

Second reading: The Letter of St Paul to the Ephesians 3:2-3,5-6

We have seen his star in the East,
and have come with gifts to adore the Lord.

Changes to Masses in the Coming Week.

**The Baptism Celebration Mass is at 10.30am at St Peter's on Saturday 6th January and replaces the 9am Mass.
The 10.30am Mass at St Peter's on Sunday 7th January is a Family Mass.
There is no Mass at St Gregory's on Tuesday 9th January.**

 **Welcome to Mateo Rafael Stockwell and Ethan Obianya**, who were baptised at St Peter's Church last weekend. May God bless them with His love and grace, today and always.



PRAYER CORNER: Each week, this section will contain an intercession that I hope every parishioner will pray for during the coming week. In this way, we will all pray to the Lord for the parish's mission, because "if the Lord does not build... in vain do the builders labour" (Ps 127:1) Fr. Mark
This Week's Intention: Let us pray for all those involved in the Ministry of Baptism, ordinary ministers, catechists, parents, godparents and the community. May they all be moved by their own faith to bring our children and infants closer to Christ in love, hope and joy.



PLEASE PRAY FOR the repose of the souls of those who have died recently
Marion Smith RIP
Win Bromley RIP
John Wilson RIP
Ian Parker RIP
Carol Embry RIP

Funeral Notices:

Marion Smith RIP – **Funeral Mass at St Peter's Church, Winchester on Monday 22nd January at 10.00am.**
Please pray for her family and friends at this difficult time. May God grant them eternal rest.



Christmas Thank You from our Priests

Fr Benedict and I (Fr Mark) would like to offer a heartfelt thank you for your generosity over the Christmas period, in the form of cards and gifts and the Christmas collection and, most importantly, your prayers. We are both very grateful for these gestures of kindness and love.

Announcement of the Date of Easter, and of the Moveable Feasts

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The Announcement of Easter and the Moveable Feasts

On the Epiphany of the Lord, after the singing of the Gospel, a Deacon or cantor, in keeping with an ancient practice of Holy Church, announces from the ambo the moveable feasts of the current year according to this formula:

Know, dear brethren, (broth-ers and sis-ters,) that, as we have re-
-joiced at the Nativity of our Lord Je-sus Christ, so by leave of
God's mer-cy we announce to you al-so the joy of his Resur-
-rection, who is our Sav - ior. On the . . . day of [February] will
fall Ash Wednes-day, and the beginning of the fast of the most
sacred Lent-en sea - son. On the . . . day of [March
A - pril]
you will celebrate with joy East-er Day, the Paschal feast of our
Lord Je - sus Christ. On the . . . day of [A - pril
May
June]
As-cen-sion of our Lord Je - sus Christ. On the . . . day of [May,
June]

Some of you may have heard Deacon Martin make the solemn announcement of the birth of Christ, at Christmas Mass in the Night, at St Peter's.

At some of the Masses on the solemnity of the Epiphany this weekend, the Deacon (or cantor) has the privilege of making another announcement: of the date of Easter and other "moveable feasts", such as Ascension, Pentecost and Corpus Christi. These celebrations take place on different dates each year, according to the date of Easter, whose occurrence was defined at the Council of Nicaea in 325 as "the Sunday following the first full moon (14 Nisan) after the vernal equinox" ([Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1170](#)).

Most of us have paper or electronic calendars, or can find such dates using Google, so this announcement should not be seen as a communal diary-fixing session. Instead, this formal proclamation, early in the Church's year, is "in keeping with an ancient practice of Holy Church", reminding us that all time is consecrated to the Lord.

When chanted, the announcement uses the same tone as is used by the Deacon (or cantor) at the *Exsultet* at the Easter Vigil. Therefore, this announcement already looks forward to the Paschal Mystery, and especially the Resurrection, which "fills the whole liturgical year with its brilliance" ([Catechism, 1168](#)). As Christ is "revealed" at the Epiphany as Light of the World ([Lk 2:32](#), [Jn 8:12](#); [Isa 60:3](#)), so we look forward to His being revealed as Victor over Death, when He "shed his peaceful light on humanity" (*Exsultet* at the Easter Vigil, *Roman Missal*, p390)

So, this announcement is a timely reminder of the centrality of the Resurrection of the Lord in the liturgical year, and throughout our lives. As the priest proclaims at the Easter Vigil:

"Christ yesterday, and today,
The Beginning and the End,
The Alpha and the Omega,
All time belongs to Him, and all the ages.
To Him be glory and power through every age and for ever. Amen."

The Great Story of Jesus Retreat - Winchester Saturday 13th January 2024

Start the new year with this retreat delivered by Sr Margarida Mondral of the Verbum Dei Community. Refresh yourself with a renewed appreciation of the core of our faith: the gift of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit to animate our lived faith. This will take place in the Parish Centre 10am-4pm, but please apply for a place and more details about the day: lnahajski@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk.



Being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a definitive direction
- Pope Eminentissimus Benedict XVI -

January Seminar Placement My name is Owen, I am a seminarian for this Diocese of Portsmouth studying at St. Mary's College, Oscott. I was born in Portsmouth and grew up in Gosport on the south coast. After completing my A-Levels I began my journey towards priesthood in the seminary. I then joined the Franciscan Order and spent five years as a friar - mostly in the south of Italy but spending also a short time as a friar here in England and in the Philippines. I am currently studying my first year of theology at St. Mary's Oscott and will be here in Winchester for the next few weeks on my January Pastoral Placement. I look forward to meeting many of you and seeing the many different aspects of the life of the Parish. Please keep me in your prayers as I will keep you all in mine, and I wish you this weekend a very happy feast of the Epiphany! Let us learn from the Our Lady, St. Joseph and the Magi how to adore the Lord in humility of heart. God bless you all.



Allegra will once again be leading her online course on prayer themed '**Lord, teach us to pray**'.

Pope St John Paul II once said that 'our Christian communities must become *genuine "schools" of prayer*, where the meeting with Christ is expressed, not just in imploring help but in thanksgiving, praise, adoration, contemplation, listening and ardent devotion, until the heart truly "falls in love" (NMI 33). But we know that prayer can be a challenge. Why pray? How? Through these sessions, we will not only explore different forms of prayer, but we will have the opportunity to practise together that way of praying, helping us grow closer to Christ.

Includes: Praying with Scripture (bible), Intercession, Silence, and Journaling prayer.

Online from Monday 15th January 2024. Time: 7pm-8.30pm. To register for the course, visit:

<https://bit.ly/LordTeachustoPray>

Ananias Accompaniment Course

A five-session online course commences on Wednesday 17th January 7-9pm. Learn about accompaniment, the journey into relationship with Jesus, and how this can help us to sensitively accompany others on their journey. Please contact Liza Nahajski if you would like to join this course: lnahajski@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk



Laudato Si Corner

There are copies of our Pope's latest document "**Laudate Deum**" in the Parish Centre Shop. We recommend reading a copy (which can also be obtained from the Vatican website) and understanding where our Pope is proposing actions following so little has been achieved internationally in the last 8 years since he published **Laudato si**.

ADORE spiritual mini-retreat - 27th January 10am-1pm "**Chosen to be holy – transformation by the Holy Spirit.**"

Including Mass, Adoration, Praise, Prayer for the gifts of the Holy Spirit and inspiring guest speaker **Charles Whitehead KSG**.

Please register for the Zoom meeting in advance at bit.ly/ADOREJAN2024 More information at www.altonrenewal.com



Message from St Peter's School:

Welcome

Happy New Year!

The staff would like to thank our families for the many cards, kind words and gifts given for Christmas. As always, your thoughtfulness means a lot.

We wish all our families a happy and healthy 2023.

As we begin the new year, we welcome our new SENDCo, Grace Foster, back to St Peter's. Mrs Foster was previously a class teacher here and returns having been SENDCo at another local primary school. She is also a SENDCo at Kings School.



When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. Matthew 2:10

Christmas Fun

Thank you, School Council and Mrs Woolgar, for organising our Christmas Fun Day. The children worked with different year groups, completed art and crafts, and took part in a treasure hunt. The day culminated in our annual carol sing-along, led by our school band. We raised £102.05 for CAFOD.

Thank you also to our school band for the excellent concert that you gave at the end of term. We were all very well entertained and I was so proud. Thank you Mrs Postlethwaite.



We currently have a vacancy for a Deputy Headteacher, a Higher-Level Teaching Assistant and a Teaching Assistant. Please see our website for further details: <https://www.stpetershants.co.uk/vacancies/>

If you have pre-school children and like the sound of St Peter's School, then why not contact us to find out about the application process?

Telephone 01962 852820 or email admin@st-peters.hants.sch.uk.

Best wishes

Louise Buxton (Miss) Headteacher

St Peter's School has a vacancy for a Deputy Headteacher in September 2024.

St Peter's is a school built on strong Catholic ethos and values. We deliver high quality, rounded education, focussing not only on individual academic excellence, but also on each pupil's spiritual, moral, physical and emotional development. We have a strong leadership team; dedicated teaching and support staff; supportive governors, who all work well together with shared purpose. We are seeking a like-minded professional to complete our team for September 2024. For more details on the role, including the application form, please visit the school website at:

<https://www.stpetershants.co.uk/vacancies/>

Mass Timetable	6 th January 2024 – 13 th January 2024		
Date	Mass Times & Intentions		
SATURDAY – January 6 th – Liturgy of the Day Epiphany of the Lord – Vigil	10.30 AM	Baptism Celebration Mass at St Peter's	
	5.30 PM	Mass at St Peter's	All Souls in Purgatory
SUNDAY – January 7 th – THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD, solemnity (transferred).	8.00 AM	Mass at St Peter's	CWL – Prison Advice & Care Trust
	9.00 AM	Mass at St Thomas More's	
	9.15 AM	Mass at St Stephen's	People of the Parish
	10.30 AM	Family Mass at St Peter's	Intentions of Marg Keenan & Family
	11.00 AM	Mass at St Gregory's	People of Ukraine
	5.30 PM	Mass at St Peter's	Pamela Henry RIP
MONDAY – January 8 th – THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD, feast.	12.15 PM	Mass at St Peter's	Janice Margaret Holloway RIP
TUESDAY – January 9 th – BEGINNING OF ORDINARY TIME.		No Mass at St Gregory's	
	12.15 PM	Mass at St Peter's	Kevin Ryan RIP (anniversary of death)
WEDNESDAY – January 10 th – .	10 00 AM	Mass at St Peter's	Intentions of the Neil Family
THURSDAY – January 11 th –	10.00 AM	Mass at St Peter's	Soul of Richard Spencer & concelebrating local priests.
FRIDAY – January 12 th – St Aelred, Abbot.	10.00 AM	Mass at St Gregory's	
	12.15 PM	Mass at St Peter's	Soul of Maureen Marsh
SATURDAY – January 13 th – St Hilary, Bishop & Doctor of the Church. 2 nd Sunday in Ordinary Time – Vigil	9.00 AM	Mass at St Peter's	Jeanette Witcher RIP
	5.30 PM	Mass at St Peter's	Joss Datson RIP

Confessions every Saturday 9.30am till 10.30am and 4.30pm-5.00pm at St Peter's Church – booking not required.

Morning Prayer (livestream and open to public), every weekday 8.00am at St Peter's followed by Adoration till 9.00am.

To participate in any service online (including Morning Prayer & Adoration) or to see the recorded services, go to our [YouTube channel](#)

ALL SERVICES (INCLUDING MORNING PRAYER) FROM ST PETER'S ARE LIVESTREAMED.

Our Parish Operations Manager Vacancy

The Parish of St Peter & The Winchester Martyrs is currently in the process of reorganising its staff team.

We are looking for a highly motivated and dynamic individual to join our parish team as the Operations Manager. The successful candidate will have substantial experience of general operational management in a busy and complex organisation.

Full time: 37.5 hours per week Mon-Fri, but with flexibility to allow at least one Sunday morning per month (approx. 4 hours) and occasional evenings and weekends. Salary: £40-45k

For a full job description and person specification, plus details of how to apply, please contact: recruitment@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Closing date for applications: Friday 9th February 2024, 12 Noon. Interviews: Fri 1st March

Parish Operations Manager – Message from Fr Mark

The parish has begun recruiting an "Operations Manager". This is a different and more senior role to the one previously filled by Michaela as Parish Administration Manager. We are looking for another "people person", capable of building and leading teams (paid employees and volunteers), not afraid to be hands-on, whilst supporting me in the day-to-day operational aspects of running the parish. They will be part of the parish leadership team and will play a key role in enabling me to focus on preaching, teaching, sacramental ministry and the pastoral and spiritual aspects of leadership. I cannot overstate how crucial I feel this role is to help me flourish as your parish priest, and you to flourish as my parishioners. Please do bring the post to the attention of those you know who might be interested and pray for a successful appointment.

CAFOD School Volunteers needed.

Do you enjoy working with children and young people? Could you help to inspire and empower children and young people in your local Catholic schools by delivering an assembly or a workshop? Supported by CAFOD with training and all resources provided please consider the role of CAFOD school volunteer. For more information contact Jo Lewry jlewry@cafod.org.uk or phone 07710 094447

The Boaz Project Vacancy

The Boaz Project are looking for a deputy manager at their base in Sutton Scotney near Winchester.

Boaz is a farm-based charity, set up to provide brighter futures for people with learning difficulties (mainly young adults).

The ideal candidate will be sympathetic to the ideals of the charity and have plenty of energy!

Interested? - For more information, please contact the Manager, Stuart Palmer, in the first instance, on 01962 761749 or 07971 688930

Vacancy for Part-time Admin Assistant for Winchester Basics Bank Salary: £11.44 per hour for 16 hours per week -Tuesday and Friday 9 am - 2 pm at warehouse in Winnall, Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 9am - 11am home-working (some flexibility possible but 30min must be prior to 10am). During busy periods, additional hours may be required (by prior arrangement). Annual leave is 5 weeks pro rata, plus Bank Holidays. For further information and an application form please email, Lesley Little, Chair at chair@winchesterbasicsbank.co.uk. Closing date: **12th Jan 24.**

