

# HIGH TIDE

*Parish  
Magazine*

*Weymouth  
St Paul  
with Fleet*

JAN 2025



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*Put a few words into Chat GPT, give a few directions... and you have a simple but captivating poem for us all to read and - may God grant this grace! - to follow.*

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*As an important part of our social outreach, St. Paul's runs Warm Welcome with the help of many volunteers. The highlight of this outreach is Christmas Lunch offered to all those who otherwise would be on their own or who would struggle to have a proper meal.*

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*Many thanks to all who have contributed to the Parish Magazine and to Liz Evans for the proofreading. The next Magazine will be published on **Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> January**. Please, send all articles, information, news you wish to be published by Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> January.*

Front cover: "The Conversion of Saul" (fresco, detail)  
by Michelangelo (ca. 1542-1545), Cappella Paolina, Vatican Palace, Vatican City

## From the Vicar

Dearly Beloved,

Behold, the first Parish Magazine of 2025... Quarter into it already, I still remember the excitement of starting a new century and also a new millennium in 2000. With what great hopes did we all look ahead. Now we know that many of the scientific and technological achievements exceed our original expectations; AI alone opens horizons and possibilities we cannot even start to appreciate now. The world has enough resources and sufficient technology to eradicate poverty and social injustice, to mitigate the climate crises, to offer equal opportunity of education and access to health care for everyone. We have enough of everything to live in peace, justice, and prosperity.

Yet, in hindsight, the excitement over a new century was rather unjustified and even inexplicable. Nothing changes by turning a page in the Calendar — be it at the end of a month, a year, a century, or a millennium.

Well, actually, this is not completely true. Many things change. Let me put it this way: simply turning a page in a Calendar will not change the only thing that should change — human heart. Hate, jealousy and crime are still very much around. As are violence and exploitation, war and famine to which they naturally lead. And so are misinformation and lack of access to good education that, in turn, fuel hate, jealousy, and crime. A vicious circle, you see, difficult to break.

I was equally shocked and terrified by the riots seen on TV last summer as I was by hearing a father say that he was worried as the time for his daughter to start school was approaching. He was convinced his child would only get brainwashed at school. A “real danger” confirmed to him by various parents on social media...

We were all left shaken by the senseless incident on Abbotsbury Road, just a few steps away from our church, in which Anthony Jacob, “Jake”, died. His murderer, a 19-year-old young man, was himself a victim of drugs. A life ended prematurely, many more destroyed — his own included. Now, in prison, he receives online messages of hate and death threats.

*“What comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles”* says Jesus in Matthew 15,18. For this reason, Jesus warns us that it is not even our actions and thoughts we must guard. No! We must be a step ahead of those. We must guard the source of our actions, thoughts, and emotions: we must guard our very heart. Jesus here simply reaffirms the teaching God gave his people in the Old Testament. Indeed in Proverbs 4,23 we read: *“Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.”*

So there is no misunderstanding of his words and teaching, Jesus clearly reaffirms: “*You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not murder’; and ‘whoever murders shall be liable to judgement.’ But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgement; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, ‘You fool’, you will be liable to the hell of fire’*” (Mt 5,21-22).

We will not be judged only for our words and actions which sometimes we manage to control and sometimes we don’t... but firstly for whatever we have decided to let grow and cultivate in our heart. Again, the Lord Jesus is unmistakably clear about this when he says: “*Learn from me for I am gentle and humble in heart*” (Matthew 11,29).

Gentleness and humility of heart is what we lack. And as every virtue, gentleness and humility of heart, too, come to us by practice only (and God’s grace, of course, which, however, we cannot reasonably expect without our honest efforts in this matter).

I am well aware, of course, of the fact that no one here at St. Paul’s has ever started a war, caused famine, or killed someone. Equally no one is part of organised crime or does exploit others. But do we put enough effort into forming our heart, with God’s help, to the likeness of the gentle and humble Heart of Jesus?

Honestly, after all, is there *that* much harm in a small, innocent gossip? And has anybody ever died because of a small word that came out a bit harsher than it should have? Or because of some “healthy” or “constructive” criticism? And as for judging others in our thoughts... they may not even be aware of it after all, eh? Also, can we be *really* expected to be patient, forgiving, kind, and generous *all* the time? Is that even realistic? And what if the fault *objectively* lies with the other person, and with the other person *alone*? What if we *are* the innocent part?

You see, it is relatively easy to form these questions in such a way that, at the end of the day, we come out well enough of any situation. That we can tap ourselves on the shoulder.

The question then, if we take all this “Christian stuff” seriously at all, should be asked differently. The question should always be: is this what the gentle and humble Heart of my Lord would do, say, or think? Will this my word, action, or thought form my heart unto the likeness of His?

The pages of Calendars will continue turning, sometimes frightfully quickly. Will my heart change in time as they do?

Assuring you of my prayers, I am,  
ever yours in Christ,

Fr. Gregory<sup>5</sup>

## Respect and forgiveness — a poem

*Jeanne James writes:*

I typed a few words for a poem into Chat GPT regarding respect and forgiveness. This is what it came back with.

In the quiet of our church we sit  
A family bound by faith, close knit.  
Yet hearts are human, quick to stray  
In moments when we turn away.

But grace, like sunlight, breaks the night  
And calls us back to what is right.  
In kindness let our words be sewn  
And in respect let love be grown.

For forgiveness like a gentle rain  
Washes away all hurt and pain.  
It heals the wounds we cannot see  
And sets the captive heart so free.

So let us walk with humble care  
And lift each other up with prayer.  
In every act, in all we say  
Respect and love will light our way.

Together we are stronger still  
Bound by His mercy and His will  
And through forgiveness we will find  
A peace that flows, heart, soul and mind.

***Prayers to help to forgive** — Lord, I often find it challenging to be kind to those who have wounded me. I struggle to be friendly, let alone to forgive. Please help me find comfort in knowing I do not have to rely on my strength for things like this. Instead, it is You who I get to rely on, so please soften my heart and help me to forgive. Amen.*

*Lord, it is so hard at times to put aside my hurt and anger towards those who sin against me. In these times, I ask that You please help me to remember that Your Word invites us to forgive seventy times seven, as You have done for me. I strive to be more like You every day and ask that You give me the strength to forgive even under these painful circumstances so I may show Your love to others. Amen.*

## **Adrienne Naylor**

*Eileen Galling writes:*

Monday 23 December 2024 saw Eileen Galling, Julie Isbell and Liz Evans attend the funeral of Adrienne Naylor. It was a lovely service for a very well loved mother, sister, grandma and friend. It was made even lovelier by this poem that her granddaughter Amara had composed and read.

### ***Beloved Mother, Sister and Grandma***

If we laid out all the days of your life,  
Side by side in a line,  
Would we question if your life was full enough,  
Or feel that we ran out of time?

If we looked at all of the faces,  
That would be smiling back at us,  
See al of the days and the moments,  
I know it would be enough.

I think we would see lots of ice cream,  
And elephants and chocolates and Braais,  
And days spent under the African sun,  
So much joy reflected in your brown eyes.

We would see you surrounded by family,  
Scabble nurses and cheese,  
Your sons and daughters, and everyone you've loved,  
A life full of precious memories.

I hope that when my days are over,  
If I'm blessed with as many years as you,  
That I know that I lived it well,  
That I will have a life as beautiful as yours too.

So as you swim amongst the stars,  
until we see you again,  
Rest in peace and love, and joy and sunlight.  
Our beloved Adrienne.

## Three days that changed the world

### Part one: The Cross

*Irene Leader writes:*

God created humans because He wanted a family to love that would love Him and love each other. However, we became increasingly more sinful. A Righteous God cannot let sin go unpunished (Prov 11,21), but because He loves us and is merciful to us, He came to earth as a man to atone for sin. He himself, in Jesus Christ, decided to repair what sin damaged (our nature, divine justice, our relationship with God, etc.) so we would never have to suffer that punishment, and we would be righteous before God.

Philippians 2,6-8 tells of *Kenosis* (a Greek word that means *the act of emptying*). He (Jesus) had always been God by nature but did not cling to His prerogatives as God's equal but striped Himself of all privileges by consenting to be a servant by nature and being born as mortal man. He humbled Himself by living a life in utter obedience to His Father, even to death. Jesus, while being fully and truly God, was also fully and truly man. He possessed both the divine and the human nature but without "mixing" them. He wasn't half God and half man. This clear separation of natures means that while Jesus, as the second Person of the Holy Trinity, had a divine will (fully shared with the Father and the Holy Spirit), he also had a true, free, independent human will. This made it possible for Jesus, while being fully and truly God, to perform free and fully human acts. Otherwise, we could not be sure what He did He didn't simply do as God.

The wages of sin are death and so a sinner deserves death. In the Old Testament, as one of the signs of God's mercy, a "substitute" to this death was introduced. One of the chief sin-offerings consisted in the priest laying his hands on an animal and confessing his and/or the people's sins. The animal, while itself remaining innocent of course, due to this divine permission of substitution, carried the "sins" - more precisely: the consequences of sin, including the punishment of death - of Israel. Being an imperfect and insufficient substitution, this rite had to be repeated annually.

2 Corinthians 5,21 writes that on the Cross Jesus became our sin (literally: *he was made sin*). This is interpreted in the light of the above described animal sacrifice. While he himself remained innocent and untouched by sin, he took upon himself our transgressions and iniquities (sins). Not only; he also carried sin's consequences: our pains, sorrows, sicknesses, and griefs (Isaiah 53,3-4). As true man, according to his human will, he freely "volunteered" to do so (unlike the animals, of course). But



since he is also truly God, his actions have infinite value and so he only had to atone once for all sins (past and future) and does not have to do it again.

Sin is any thought, word, deed that is in disobedience to the will of God. So, if we do not believe we are who God says we are, then we are calling God a liar, someone not to be trusted. That is a sin. In the language of the Bible, there are different types of sin:

(Intentional) trespass — which is crossing a boundary and is an offense against God. Peter crossed a boundary by denying his friend Jesus. We all trespass many times a day in thought, word, or deed. Transgression is making a choice to do wrong; it is a wilful violation of God's standards of trust because the transgressor knows them, but they decide to do it anyway. Saul transgressed when he did not kill all the Amalekites as God commanded (1 Samuel 15,3-9).

Iniquity (lawlessness) is about inner moral character. It is a premeditated choice, an intent to sin and a time of deliberation beforehand, an intentional defiance of God's standards. David's sin with Bathsheba is an example of iniquity.

Jesus took our griefs (Hebrew word is *choli* also means sicknesses, diseases, illnesses), and sorrows (*mak'ob* meaning pains both physical and mental suffering - see Isaiah 53,3-4). He bore them and carried them in His body. He said, 'This is My body which is *given* for you' (Lk 22,19).

His body was pierced/wounded for our transgression and bruised by our iniquities and by this there was healing for us (Is 53,5-6.10a). Jesus experienced not only physical but also "spiritual death" when he underwent the feeling and experience as if being abandoned by his Father. Thus through Jesus' suffering we are delivered from the consequences of our sin, both spiritual (fully) and (to some extent) physical.

Sin demeans the glory of God. It has to be addressed by a Just and Righteous God, but He is also Loving and Merciful, and He chose to bear the punishment and consequences of sin himself in Jesus Christ to save us from an eternity in Hell (separation from God). In this merciful act of His, He is glorified. God was pleased by the work of salvation brought about by Jesus — not because of Jesus' sufferings (God does not delight in suffering) but because of his perfect love and obedience with which Jesus gave Himself for us, God's precious children.

Piercing (blood flowing from the body) and bruising (blood release within the body) clearly refer to the bloody sacrifices of the Old Testament which point to the Sacrifice of Jesus, in which they find their true meaning and fulfilment. This is why Jesus said at the Last Supper, 'This cup is the New Covenant in My blood which is poured out for you' (Lk 22,20).

In Isaiah 53,5 we read: ‘and by His stripes we are healed.’ Stripes and bruising have the same root in Hebrew and so this prophecy is clearly about Jesus. It is about his sacrificial death and has nothing to do with the scourging by the Roman soldiers.

Jesus died the death of a sinner although He Himself was sinless (Heb 4,15; 1 Pt 2,22) because He was the only one who ever fulfilled the law perfectly (Mt 5,17). The curtain in the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom. This way it could only have been done by God who was showing us that the curtain which separates God from His people no longer exists, and He was making a way to Himself through Jesus (Mt 27,51).

Jesus cried out, ‘It is finished.’ In the Old Testament on The Day of Atonement as soon as the Priest had killed the animals, he would emerge from the place of sacrifice and declare to the waiting crowd, “It is finished.” In this sacrifice, all the sins of Israel were symbolically placed on the animal that was killed and punished in their place. The Bible teaches that this sacrificial system was never finished because, for various reasons, the death of animals could never atone for sin. They were only symbols and figures pointing to the one true Sacrifice that could do that. When Jesus died on the cross, He became the perfect and final sacrifice for all sin (Heb 10,7-10).

On the Cross an exchange took place. Jesus underwent all the curses of Deuteronomy 28 (from verse 15) so that we would not have to suffer them. Jesus became our sins (past, present, and future) so that we would not have to pay the penalty for our sins, and He gave us His righteousness so that we could be justified before God. He took our weakness and gave us His strength.

This is not automatic. We must receive the salvation accomplished by him by accepting and making him Lord of our lives and by entering into a relationship with Him. A theoretical faith, so to say, is never enough. To perceive and enter a reality that can only be seen through the eyes of the heart, is a work of the Holy Spirit.

The Cross is the fulfilment of the prophecy in Ezekiel where God said, “I will establish My Covenant with you [...] when I provide an atonement for you” (see 16,60-63). Jesus became our atonement for sin, which He could do because He Himself was without sin, and He took on himself the consequences of sin so we are saved from an eternity of suffering and separation from God. He died so we can have peace (Phil 4,7; Jn 14,27). This peace is more than just an absence of conflict. This peace is a state of mind, a fulfilment of promises, a restored relationship with God.



## Christmas Lunch

*Tony Cox writes:*



Once again, we had a successful Christmas Lunch here at St. Paul's. Our guests enjoyed the food and the company.

We cooked for about thirty people, including one takeaway for a housebound person.

Thanks are due to Weymouth Town Council, Weymouth Lions Club and Buxton House for their generous donations, not forgetting Howell's Butchers (for the free pigs in blankets) and for some individuals who made donations or helped in various ways before the event. It didn't cost St. Paul's a penny.

We even had help setting up the tables on Christmas Eve from a young couple who heard about us and travelled down from Dorchester specifically to help out.

Many thanks to the kitchen staff and servers!!

The afternoon was rounded off in true British style with the King's speech.

## Christmas Lunch at St. Paul's

*Pam Winspear writes:*

After Mass on Christmas morning 25 people from the church and the parish were treated to a first class lunch in the hall.

This was organised and cooked by Tony Cox, Gill Cox, and June Hornby. All went well with plenty of good food and good company. Everyone enjoyed themselves.

Thank you Tony, Gill, and June for all your hard work!



## BLESSING OF A HOME IN EPIPHANY-TIDE

*The whole family, or a member of it says:* Bless, O Lord, almighty God this home that it be the shelter of health, chastity, self-conquest, humility, goodness, mildness, obedience to your commandments, and thanksgiving to God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. May blessing remain for all time upon this dwelling and them that live herein. Through Christ our Lord. Amen. *(Another possible prayer is printed on the following page; or it can be used as a closing prayer.)*

*After each prayer the appropriate room is sprinkled with Holy Water. At the entrance:* O God, protect our going out and our coming in; let us share the hospitality of this home with all who visit us, that those who enter here may know your love and peace. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*In the sitting room:* O God, give your blessings to all who share this room, that we may be knit together in companionship, in peace and charity. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*In the kitchen:* O God, you fill the hungry with good things. Send your blessing on us, as we work in this kitchen, and make us ever thankful for our daily bread. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*In the dining room:* Blessed are you, Lord of heaven and earth, for you give us food and drink to sustain our lives and make our hearts glad. Help us to be grateful for all your mercies, and mindful of the needs of others. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*In the bedrooms:* Protect us, Lord, as we stay awake; watch over us as we sleep, that awake we may keep watch with Christ, and asleep, we may rest in his peace. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

*In the garden/on the terrace:* Blessed are you, Lord of heaven and earth. You formed us in wisdom and love. Refresh us in body and in spirit, and keep us in good health that we might serve you. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

*They all say together the Lord's Prayer and an appointed person writes the following above the entrance door (or next to it) with the blessed chalk:*

**20 + C + M + B + 25**



*Hear us, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty and Eternal God, and send your holy Angel from heaven to watch over, cherish, protect, be with, and defend all who live in this house. We/I call upon your saints, Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar, to protect this family and this home from every harm and danger, and we/I place the marks of their holy names over the doors of this home to remain there as a constant reminder to us and to all who enter here that this house is truly a house of the Lord. O God, make the door of this house wide enough to receive all who need charity and companionship, narrow enough to shut out all envy, pride, and strife. Make its threshold smooth enough to be no stumbling block to anyone but rugged and strong enough to turn back the Tempter's power. O God, make the door of this house the gateway to your eternal Kingdom. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

## On blessing of homes

Our homes are very important – they are where many of us first experience love, where we rest, they may be where we work. For Christians, the home is also the place where we pray and grow spiritually.

Jesus did much of his ministry in different homes – visiting them to teach, heal and share food with others. Therefore, the Church has always felt it important to pray God's blessing over peoples' homes. Indeed, this is an ancient practice still shared both by the Western and Eastern Churches.

The goal of any house blessing is simple: invite God's presence to rest in your home, wherever that may be. There is no hocus-pocus that takes place. Instead, the house blessing opens the door to the home, welcoming God to be in charge; acknowledging the truth that God is the one who provides our homes, our friends, our health, our faith.

In Western tradition, especially on the continent, the doorframe at the entry of the home is marked with chalk, harkening back to the Passover. On the lintels are inscribed the cross of salvation, together with the indication of the year and the initials of the Three Wise Men (C+M+B) which can also be interpreted to mean "*Christus mansionem benedical*" (*May Christ bless this home*).

Blessing the house is a visible sign that, through his incarnation, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, 'lived among us' and acts in our souls every day, in the humility of everyday domestic life.

***Blessing of home in the Bible*** — While the Bible does not provide a specific ritual for blessing a house, it does offer numerous passages that emphasize the importance of blessings, hospitality, and the presence of God's peace in a home.

Luke 10,5: “*And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house.*” Jesus instructs His disciples to pronounce peace when they enter a house. This greeting is more than a simple salutation; it is an invocation of divine blessing. It sets a precedent for Christians to seek God’s peace in their homes and in the homes they visit. The peace of God surpasses all understanding (Philippians 4,7) and brings harmony, safety, and divine presence to a household.

Matthew 10,12-13: “*And when ye come into an house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.*” — These verses reiterate the importance of offering peace to a household. They emphasize that not every house may be receptive to the blessing, but the attempt to bring peace is a key aspect of Christian hospitality and mission.

Romans 12,13: “*Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.*” — Offering hospitality is a way to welcome God’s presence into our homes. This aligns with the practice of blessing a house, as it acknowledges God’s provision and invites His grace into the everyday lives of those who live and visit there.

Hebrews 10,21: “*And having an high priest over the house of God*” — The concept of Jesus as the high priest over the house of God forms a spiritual foundation for why Christians might bless their homes. If our homes are to reflect the house of God, then the same reverence, holiness, and blessing should be sought for our personal dwellings. A blessed house is a small sanctum where God’s presence is acknowledged and revered.

Matthew 21:13: “*And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.*” — While Jesus speaks specifically about the temple here, the principle that a house should be a place of prayer can extend to our own homes. By dedicating our homes to prayer and seeking God’s presence, we invite His blessings and make our dwelling a place of divine encounter rather than mere habitation.

A house blessing, while not explicitly detailed in the Bible, finds rich support through Biblical themes of peace, hospitality, reverence for God’s dwelling, and the transformative blessing of salvation. By invoking peace, practicing hospitality, acknowledging Jesus’ spiritual authority, and fostering faith within the household, Christians can ensure that their homes reflect the sanctity and blessings bestowed by God. This practice can transform a physical dwelling into a spiritual haven, blessed with God’s enduring peace and presence.

*Orthodox practice* — An Orthodox mother writes: “We had our house blessed on Saturday. For most Orthodox Christians, the house blessing is an annual event. Some time between Theophany and the beginning of Lent, your priest comes to your home. There are prayers at your icon corner. Then the family and the priest process through the house. If there is a child in the family, the child leads the procession, carrying a candle - and likely dripping wax on the floors. The corners of every room get splashed with holy water, along with every window, every door, and every bed.

So Saturday morning, I did a little extra tidying. Because it’s not just the public rooms of the house that are blessed. Not just the rooms that are kept tidy and presentable, not just the parts that are company ready. When you have a house blessing, every room gets blessed. Before the blessing, we open the doors to every room, and turn on all the lights. In every room. Even the laundry room, with baskets of dirty clothes on the floor and unmated socks piled on top of the dryer. And the unused bedroom that has turned into a jumbled up mess of a storage room, with the exercise bike and punching bag that nobody uses, boxes of Christmas wrapping paper, an old mattress on the floor, and the ironing board set up and ready to use. And the unheated room under the garage. For the house blessing, every door is opened. Every room is blessed.

Some people struggle to bear the shame of the mess that they live in, day in and day out. But those people miss something important about the house blessing. God doesn’t ask us to open our hearts and our homes to Him in order to judge us. He doesn’t send the priest to inspect our homes and find them wanting. The priest comes to give us God’s blessing on us and our homes, in whatever condition we find ourselves in.

It’s significant, I think, that the house blessing is an extension of Theophany. At Theophany, Orthodox Christians process to lakes and rivers and oceans. As Christ blessed the River Jordan when he entered the water for his own baptism, we renew that blessing every year.

The Jordan wasn’t blessed because the water in it was especially good or pure or holy. It wasn’t. The water was blessed because Christ entered it. And as the water that surrounded Christ flowed over him to the sea, and evaporated into clouds, and fell as rain on distant lands, all water, and all the earth, was blessed. And we take that water into our homes, and as the priest throws it into every corner of our homes, every part of our lives is blessed. Not because we are especially good or pure or holy. But because Christ has entered. Let’s open the doors to him with joy.”

*An Orthodox rite for the blessing of a home:*

*Priest:* Blessed is our God always, both now and ever, and to the ages of ages.

*All:* Amen.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. (3x)  
Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and to the ages of ages. Amen. All-Holy Trinity have mercy on us. Lord, be gracious to our sins. Master, forgive our transgressions. Holy One, visit us and heal our infirmities, for your name's sake. Lord, have mercy; Lord, have mercy; Lord, have mercy. Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and to the ages of ages. Amen. Our Father ...

When You in Jordan for Your baptism were come, O Lord, then was revealed unto us to worship the Trinity, for lo, the Father's voice spoke to bear witness of You, by Name, declaring You His well-beloved Son; and the Spirit in form like a dove appeared to confirm the sure truth of the spoken Word; O Lord made manifest and light of the world, we give glory to You, O Christ our God.

*Priest:* Let us pray to the Lord. Lord have mercy. O God our Saviour, the True Light, Who was baptized in the Jordan by the Prophet John, and Who did deign to enter under the roof-tree of Zacchaeus, bringing salvation unto him and unto his house: do You, the same Lord, keep safe also from harm those who dwell herein; grant to them Your blessing, purification and bodily health, and all their petitions that are unto salvation and Life everlasting; for blessed are You, as also Your Father Who is from everlasting, and Your All; Holy, Good and Life; creating Spirit, both now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

*And the Priest shall bless the whole house with Holy Water, saying the "When you in Jordan" prayer (see above).*

May He Who condescended to be baptized in the river Jordan by the Forerunner and Prophet John, for our salvation, through the intercessions of His immaculate Mother, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, and of all the Saints, have mercy on us and save us, for He is our good and loving Lord. O Lord, a prosperous and peaceful life, health and salvation, and the furtherance of all good things to all Your servants who dwell herein, and preserve them for many years.

*All:* Many years! (3x)



**Calendar, Service times,  
and Prayer Intentions**

**Anniversaries of death**

**Order of Morning and Evening Prayer**

## Calendar for January 2025

WED	1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>CIRCUMCISION OF OUR LORD</b>	10am
THU	2 <sup>nd</sup>	<i>Feria</i>	6pm
FRI	3 <sup>rd</sup>	<i>Feria</i>	12pm
SAT	4 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Of the Blessed Virgin Mary</i>	9.30am
SUN	5 <sup>th</sup>	THE MOST HOLY NAME OF JESUS	10.30am, 4pm
MON	6 <sup>th</sup>	<b>EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD</b>	12pm, 6pm
TUE	7 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Feria</i>	9am
WED	8 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Feria</i>	10am
THU	9 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Feria</i>	6pm
FRI	10 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Feria</i>	12pm
SAT	11 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Of the Blessed Virgin Mary</i>	9.30am
SUN	12 <sup>th</sup>	<b>THE MOST HOLY FAMILY</b>	10.30am, 4pm
MON	13 <sup>th</sup>	BAPTISM OF OUR LORD	12pm
TUE	14 <sup>th</sup>	St. Hilary Bishop, Doctor	9am
WED	15 <sup>th</sup>	St. Paul the First Hermit	10am
THU	16 <sup>th</sup>	St. Marcellus I Pope, Martyr	6pm
FRI	17 <sup>th</sup>	St. Anthony Abbot	12pm
SAT	18 <sup>th</sup>	<i>Of the Blessed Virgin Mary</i>	9.30am
SUN	19 <sup>th</sup>	<b>2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY</b>	10.30am, 4pm
MON	20 <sup>th</sup>	Sts. Fabian Pope & Sebastian, Martyrs	12pm
TUE	21 <sup>st</sup>	St. Agnes, Virgin & Martyr	9am
WED	22 <sup>nd</sup>	SS. Vincent Deacon & Anastasius, Mart.	10am
THU	23 <sup>rd</sup>	St. Raymund of Penafort	6pm
FRI	24 <sup>th</sup>	St. Timothy Bishop, Martyr	12pm
SAT	25 <sup>th</sup>	<b>CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL AP.</b>	9.30am
SUN	26 <sup>th</sup>	<b>CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL AP.</b>	10.30am
MON	27 <sup>th</sup>	St. John Chrysostom, Bishop	12pm
TUE	28 <sup>th</sup>	St. Peter Nolasco	9am
WED	29 <sup>th</sup>	St. Francis of Sales Bishop, Doctor	10am
THU	30 <sup>th</sup>	King Charles the Martyr	6pm
FRI	31 <sup>st</sup>	St. John Bosco	12pm

## Daily Intentions



## Anniversaries of death

*We pray for...*

- 1<sup>st</sup> Our Parish - *Harriet & Edward Davison, Earin Dean, Hilda Everett, Ron Samways*  
2<sup>nd</sup> Priests & vocations - *Maug Wignall, Janet Formosa, Peter Moss pr.*  
3<sup>rd</sup> Dying - *Howard Butler, Thomas Sefton pr, Roger Keat pr., Dora Burgess*  
4<sup>th</sup> Shrine of Walsingham - *Phyllis Bruford*
- 5<sup>th</sup> Our Parish - *Arthur Stonton pr, Edie Bowring, Glyn Price pr.*  
6<sup>th</sup> Our Parish - *Fred Parsonage, Fred Palmer, John Bentley, Henrietta Cooper, Paul Sylvester*  
7<sup>th</sup> Victims of human trafficking - *Ernest Cooper, Edna Humm, Barbara Smith*  
8<sup>th</sup> Beechcroft - *Ivy Waight, Sheila Colwell*  
9<sup>th</sup> Peace in Ukraine  
10<sup>th</sup> Peace in Gaza, Israel, & Palestine - *Rbeta Mogasha*  
11<sup>th</sup> Cell of O.L.W. - *Sylvia Toop, Frank Harvey, Nora Hooper*
- 12<sup>th</sup> Our Parish - *Irene Heasman, Bob Wray, Celia Hoskins*  
13<sup>th</sup> Persecuted Christians - *Brian Humm, John Buffrey pr.*  
14<sup>th</sup> People with eating disorders - *Jack Biles, Mary Buxton, John Pryer*  
15<sup>th</sup> The elderly & lonely - *David Green pr, Norman Print pr., Helen Galling*  
16<sup>th</sup> Westham - *Frank Uphill*  
17<sup>th</sup> Religious vocations - *Frank Anderson, Cyril Hicks, Patrick Weavis, Alun Taylor,*  
18<sup>th</sup> Unity of the Church *17 Jan: Ross Staddon, Mary Jackson*
- 19<sup>th</sup> Our Parish - *Martin Gibbs pr., Brian Day*  
20<sup>th</sup> Unity of the Church - *Doris Lansdowne*  
21<sup>st</sup> Unity of the Church - *Reginald Uphill, Leonard Toop*  
22<sup>nd</sup> Unity of the Church - *Doris Moore*  
23<sup>rd</sup> Unity of the Church  
24<sup>th</sup> Sick - *John Tute pr.*  
25<sup>th</sup> Unity of the Church - *Lucy Hussey, Iris Fitt, Kit Jackson, Brenda Chedzoy,*  
*Monica Tarrier*
- 26<sup>th</sup> Our Parish - *Sybil Bridge, Reginald Gentle, Ivy White*  
27<sup>th</sup> Families  
28<sup>th</sup> The homeless and deprived - *Brian Groves*  
29<sup>th</sup> Bishop Paul of Oswestry - *John Jones*  
30<sup>th</sup> HM The King  
31<sup>st</sup> Young people - *Alice Wray, Olly Denman, Eric Goddard, Scott Tolman*

*If there are names missing from the list or you want to add names, please, talk to the Vicar.*

Open, O Lord, my mouth to bless thy holy Name; cleanse also my heart from all vain, evil, and wandering thoughts; enlighten my understanding and kindle my affections; that I may worthily, attentively, and devoutly recite this Morning Prayer, and so be meet to be heard before the presence of thy divine Majesty. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## MORNING PRAYER

**V.** The Angel of the Lord brought tidings to Mary.

**R.** And she conceived by the Holy Ghost.

**V.** Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

**R.** Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death. Amen.

**V.** Behold the handmaid of the Lord.

**R.** Be it unto me according to thy word.

**V.** Hail Mary... **R.** Holy Mary...

**V.** And the Word was made flesh.

**R.** And dwelt amongst us.

**V.** Hail Mary... **R.** Holy Mary...

**V.** Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

**R.** That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

**V.** Let us pray. We beseech thee, O Lord, pour thy grace into our hearts, that as we have known the Incarnation of thy Son Jesus Christ by the message of an angel, so by his Cross and Passion we may be brought unto the glory of his Resurrection; through the same Christ our Lord. **R.** Amen.

**V.** O Lord, open my lips. **R.** And my mouth shall proclaim your praise.

**V.** O God, make speed to save me. **R.** O Lord, make haste to help me.

**V.** Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. **R.** As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Alleluia!

**V.** Let us rejoice in the Lord; let us joyfully sing to God our Saviour! Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us joyfully sing psalms to him!

**R.** O taste and see how sweet is the Lord!

**V.** For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In his hands are the depths of the earth; and the heights of the mountains are his.

**R.** O taste and see how sweet is the Lord!

V. The sea is his, for who but he made it; and his hands fashioned the dry land. O come, let us worship and fall down, and weep before the Lord who made us! For he is the Lord our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.

R. O taste and see how sweet is the Lord!

V. Today if you shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts: As in the provocation, on the day of temptation in the wilderness, where your fathers tempted me, and put me to the test, and they saw my works.

R. O taste and see how sweet is the Lord!

V. For forty years I loathed that generation, and I said: They always err in heart, they have not known my ways, so I swore in my wrath: they shall not enter my rest.

R. O taste and see how sweet is the Lord!

V. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

R. O taste and see how sweet is the Lord!

### HYMN

O Jesu, King most wonderful  
Thou conqueror renowned,  
Thou sweetness most ineffable,  
In whom all joys are found!

O Jesu, light of all below,  
Thou fount of life and fire,  
Surpassing all the joys we know,  
And all we can desire:

When once Thou visitest the heart,  
Then truth begins to shine;  
Then earthly vanities depart;  
Then kindles love divine.

May every heart confess thy Name,  
And ever thee adore;  
And, seeking thee, itself inflame  
To seek thee more and more.

Thee may our tongues forever bless;  
Thee may we love alone;  
And ever in our lives express  
The image of thine own. Amen.

*The appointed Psalm(s) and Reading(s) follow:*

1	Psalm 103	Genesis 17,1-13 Romans 2,17-end	3	2	Isaiah 60,13-end John 1,43-end
2	1	Isaiah 60,1-12 John 1,35-42	4	3	Isaiah 61 John 2,1-12

<b>5</b>	<b>18 v. 1-30</b>	<b>Exodus 3,13-16 Philippians 2,1-11</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>145 v. 1-13</b>	<b>Isaiah 49,1-7 Acts 16,11-15</b>
6	132	Jeremiah 31,7-14 John 1,29-34	20	23	Amos 6 1 Corinthians 6,1-11
7	5	Isaiah 63,7-end 1 John 3	21	27	Amos 7 1 Corinthians 6,12-end
8	6	Isaiah 64 1 John 4	22	28	Amos 8 1 Corinthians 7,1-24
9	8	Isaiah 65,1-16 1 John 5,1-12	23	30	Amos 9 1 Corinthians 7,25-end
10	14	Isaiah 65,17-end 1 John 5,13-end	24	31	Hosea 1 1 Corinthians 8
11	15	Isaiah 66,1-11 2 John	25	66	Ezekiel 3,22-end Philippians 3,1-14
<b>12</b>	<b>89 v. 29-34</b>	<b>Sirach 3,2-6 Ephesians 5,21 - 6,4</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>Deuteronomy 30,11-15 3 John 1,5-8</b>
13	89 v. 19-29	Isaiah 42,1-9 Acts 19,1-7	27	32	Hosea 2 1 Corinthians 9
14	16	Amos 1 1 Corinthians 1	28	34	Hosea 3 & 4 1 Corinthians 10,1-13
15	17	Amos 2 1 Corinthians 2	29	36	Hosea 5 1 Corinthians 10,14-end
16	19	Amos 3 1 Corinthians 3	30	41	Hosea 6 1 Corinthians 11,1-16
17	20	Amos 4 1 Corinthians 4	31	42	Hosea 7 1 Corinthians 11,17-end
18	21	Amos 5 1 Corinthians 5			

*Each reading ends with these words:*

**V.** This is the word of the Lord.

**R.** Thanks be to God.

**BENEDICTUS** – *One of the following antiphons is used:*

*Ant:* He gave Himself to deliver His people, and to get Himself an everlasting Name. Alleluia.

Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel, \*  
    who has come to his people and set them free.  
He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour, \*  
    born of the house of his servant David.  
Through his holy prophets God promised of old \*  
    to save us from our enemies, from the hands of all that hate us,  
To show mercy to our ancestors, \*  
    and to remember his holy covenant.  
This was the oath God swore to our father Abraham: \*  
    to set us free from the hands of our enemies,  
Free to worship him without fear, \*  
    holy and righteous in his sight all the days of our life.  
And you, child, shall be called the prophet of the Most High, \*  
    for you will go before the Lord to prepare his way,  
To give his people knowledge of salvation \*  
    by the forgiveness of all their sins.  
In the tender compassion of our God \*  
    the dawn from on high shall break upon us,  
To shine on those who dwell in darkness and the shadow of death, \*  
    and to guide our feet into the way of peace.  
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, \*  
    and to the Holy Spirit.  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, \*  
    world without end. Amen.

*Ant:* He gave Himself to deliver His people, and to get Himself an everlasting Name. Alleluia.

*V.* Let us pray. – *Intercessions* are offered for the Church, for the Sovereign (the world), for those in need, and for the dead. Then follows one of the Collects:

O God, you have appointed your Only-begotten Son to be the Saviour of mankind, and have commanded that His Name should be called Jesus; mercifully grant that we who here on earth worship that most Holy Name may be made glad in heaven by His Presence. Through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. **R.** Amen.

V. Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

V. The Lord bless us, and preserve us from all evil, and keep us in eternal life.

R. Amen. V. Let us bless the Lord. R. Thanks be to God.

V. And may the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. R. Amen.

*Morning Prayer ends with the final Antiphon of Our Lady:*

Mother of Christ, hear thou thy people's cry - Star of the deep and Portal of the sky! - Mother of Him who thee from nothing made. - Sinking we strive and call to thee for aid: - O, by what joy which Gabriel brought to thee, - Thou Virgin first and last, let us thy mercy see.

V. After childbirth thou didst remain a virgin.

R. Intercede for us, O Mother of God.

V. Let us pray. O God, who, by the fruitful virginity of blessed Mary, hast bestowed upon mankind the reward of eternal salvation: grant, we beseech thee, that we may experience her intercession, through whom we have been made worthy to receive the author of life: our Lord Jesus Christ thy Son.

R. Amen.

## EVENING PRAYER

V. The Angel of the Lord brought tidings to Mary.

R. And she conceived by the Holy Ghost.

V. Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

R. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now, and at the hour of our death. Amen.

V. Behold the handmaid of the Lord.

R. Be it unto me according to thy word.

V. Hail Mary... R. Holy Mary...

V. And the Word was made flesh.

R. And dwelt amongst us.

V. Hail Mary... R. Holy Mary...



V. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

V. Let us pray. We beseech thee, O Lord, pour thy grace into our hearts, that as we have known the Incarnation of thy Son Jesus Christ by the message of an angel, so by his Cross and Passion we may be brought unto the glory of his Resurrection; through the same Christ our Lord. R. Amen.

V. O God, make speed to save me. R. O Lord, make haste to help me.

V. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

R. As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen. Alleluia!

### HYMN

Jesu, the very thought of thee  
With sweetness fills my breast;  
But sweeter far thy face to see,  
And in thy presence rest.

Nor voice can sing, nor heart can frame,  
Nor can the memory find,  
A sweeter sound than thy blest Name,  
O Saviour of mankind!

O Hope of every contrite heart,  
O Joy of all the meek,  
To those who fall, how kind thou art!  
How good to those who seek!

But what to those who find? Ah! this  
Nor tongue nor pen can show:  
The love of Jesus, what it is  
None but his loved ones know.

Jesu, our only joy be thou,  
As thou our prize wilt be;  
Jesu, be thou our glory now,  
And through eternity. Amen.

*The appointed Psalm(s) and Reading(s) follow:*

1	Psalm 115	Deuteronomy 30,1-10 Acts 3,11-16	6	98	Baruch 5 John 2,1-11
2	4	Ruth 1 Colossians 2,8-end	7	10	Baruch 1,1-15 Matthew 20,1-16
3	7	Ruth 2 Colossians 3,1-11	8	11	Baruch 1,15-end Matthew 20,17-28
4	9	Ruth 3 Colossians 3,12-end	9	12	Baruch 2 Matthew 20,29-end
<b>5</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>Deuteronomy 30,11-end Acts 3,1-10</b>	10	13	Baruch 3 Matthew 21,1-11

11	18	Baruch 4 Matthew 21,12-17	22	38	Genesis 8,1-14 Matthew 24,1-28
<b>12</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>Sirach 3,12-14 Matthew 2,13-15 &amp; 19-23</b>	23	39	Genesis 8,15-end Matthew 24,29-end
13	46, 47	Isaiah 55,1-11 Romans 6,1-11	24	149	Isaiah 49,1-13 Acts 22,3-16
14	22	Genesis 1 Matthew 21,18-32	25	119 v. 41-56	Ecclesiasticus 39,1-10 Colossians 2,1-7
15	24	Genesis 2 Matthew 21,33-end	<b>26</b>	<b>33 v. 1-12</b>	<b>Numbers 9,15-end 1 Corinthians 7,17-24</b>
16	25	Genesis 3 Matthew 22,1-14	27	40	Genesis 12 Matthew 25,1-30
17	26	Genesis 4 Matthew 22,15-33	28	49	Genesis 13 Matthew 25,31-end
18	29	Genesis 5 Matthew 22,34-end	29	52	Genesis 14 Matthew 26,1-30
<b>19</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>1 Samuel 3,1-20 Ephesians 4,1-16</b>	30	53	Genesis 15 Matthew 26,31-56
20	35	Genesis 6 Matthew 23,1-12	31	58	Genesis 16 Matthew 26,57-end
21	37	Genesis 7 Matthew 23,13-end			

*Each reading ends with these words:*

**V.** This is the word of the Lord. **R.** Thanks be to God.

### MAGNIFICAT

*Ant:* You shall call his Name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins, alleluia.

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,+  
my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour;\*  
he has looked with favour on his lowly servant.  
From this day all generations will call me blessed;+  
the Almighty has done great things for me\*  
and holy is his name.

He has mercy on those who fear him,\*  
from generation to generation.  
He has shown strength with his arm\*  
and has scattered the proud in their conceit,  
Casting down the mighty from their thrones\*  
and lifting up the lowly.  
He has filled the hungry with good things\*  
and sent the rich away empty.  
He has come to the aid of his servant Israel,\*  
to remember his promise of mercy,  
The promise made to our ancestors,\*  
to Abraham and his children for ever.  
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, \*  
and to the Holy Spirit.  
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, \*  
world without end. Amen.

*Ant:* You shall call his Name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins, alleluia.

*V.* Let us pray. – *Intercessions* are offered for the Church, for the Sovereign (world), for those in need, our Benefactors, and for the dead. Then one of the following Collects is said:

O God, you have appointed your Only-begotten Son to be the Saviour of mankind, and have commanded that His Name should be called Jesus; mercifully grant that we who here on earth worship that most Holy Name may be made glad in heaven by His Presence. Through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. *R.* Amen.

*V.* Let us pray with confidence as our Saviour has taught us: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

*All:* The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. Amen.

*V.* Let us bless the Lord. *R.* Thanks be to God.

*V.* And may the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. *R.* Amen.

*Optional private prayer to be said after Evening Prayer:* To the Most Holy and undivided Trinity, to our Lord Jesus Christ Crucified, to the fruitful Virginity of the most blessed and most glorious Mary, always a Virgin, and to the holiness of all the Saints be ascribed everlasting praise, honour, and glory, by all creatures, and to us be granted the forgiveness of all our sins, world without end. Amen.

### ***Litanies of the Most Holy Name of Jesus***

*To be used in times of temptation, in joy, or in sorrow;  
and to be meditated upon for an increase of faith, hope, and love.*

*Jesus, splendour of the Father.*

*Jesus, brightness of eternal light.*

*Jesus, King of glory.*

*Jesus, sun of justice.*

*Jesus, Son of the Virgin Mary.*

*Jesus, most amiable.*

*Jesus, most admirable.*

*Jesus, the mighty God.*

*Jesus, Father of the world to come.*

*Jesus, angel of great counsel.*

*Jesus, most powerful.*

*Jesus, most patient.*

*Jesus, most obedient.*

*Jesus, meek and humble of heart.*

*Jesus, lover of chastity.*

*Jesus, lover of us.*

*Jesus, God of peace.*

*Jesus, author of life.*

*Jesus, zealous lover of souls.*

*Jesus, our God.*

*Jesus, our refuge.*

*Jesus, father of the poor.*

*Jesus, treasure of the faithful.*

*Jesus, good Shepherd.*

*Jesus, true light.*

*Jesus, eternal wisdom.*

*Jesus, infinite goodness.*

*Jesus, our way and our life.*

*Jesus, joy of Angels.*

*Jesus, King of the Patriarchs.*

*Jesus, Master of the Apostles.*

*Jesus, teacher of the Evangelists.*

*Jesus, strength of Martyrs.*

*Jesus, light of Confessors.*

*Jesus, purity of Virgins.*

*Jesus, crown of Saints.*

*Lord Jesus Christ, You have said, 'Ask and you shall receive; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you'; mercifully attend to our supplications, and grant us the grace of Your most divine love, that we have loved You with all our hearts, and in all our words and actions, and never cease to praise You.*

*Make us, O Lord, to have a perpetual fear and love of Your holy name, for You never fail to govern those whom You establish in Your love. You, Who live and reign forever and ever.  
Amen*

## Commentary on Zechariah's Song (The Benedictus) - part 1

The Benedictus, given in Luke 1,68-79, is one of the three great canticles in the opening chapters of this Gospel, the other two being the *Magnificat* and *Nunc dimittis*. The *Benedictus* was the song of thanksgiving uttered by Zechariah (or Zachary) on the occasion of the birth of his son, St. John the Baptist. It is Jewish in form, but Christian in sentiment.

The whole canticle naturally falls into two parts. The first (verses 68-75) is a song of thanksgiving for the realization of the Messianic hopes of the Jewish nation. While the Jews had impatiently borne the yoke of the Romans, they had continually sighed for the time when the House of David was to be their deliverer. The deliverance was now at hand but not for the sake of worldly power, but that we may serve God without fear, in holiness and justice.

The second part of the canticle is an address by Zechariah to his own son, who was to take so important a part in the scheme of the Redemption; for he was to be a prophet, and to preach the remission of sins before the coming of the Orient, or Dawn, from on high. He was to prepare the Lord's ways, an allusion to the well-known words of Isaias which St. John himself afterwards applied to his own mission.

*Blessed be the Lord the God of Israel, \* who has come to his people and set them free.  
He has raised up for us a mighty Saviour, \* born of the house of his servant David.*

Zechariah's prayer quickly reminds us that the Christian faith does not arise *de novo*. We rest on the shoulders of spiritual giants: Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and Joshua, to name but a few. We have a history as believers that transcends physicality. Putting this prayer in the Daily Office puts it into our lips: we sing a song about how God has saved his people, and that people is us.

Notice how impossible this song is to understand without our Old Testament. What is Israel? Who is this God? What is he like? Who are his people? Who is David? What is his house?

All of these questions have answers, and those answers assume a context that is not provided in any other place than the books of Moses and the Prophets. To divorce the Christian faith from the first half of the Bible is an old heresy: Marcion, the arch-heretic, was infamous for how he removed any reference to this part of Scripture from the New Testament, making mincemeat out of the Gospels and turning the God of Abraham into a monster of hell. Including this song in the Daily Office safeguards us against this mindset.

## Who are the Christians in Lebanon?

*by Jonah McKeown for CNA (8/10/24)*

The Middle East edged closer to large-scale crisis this week as Iran launched a volley of missile attacks on Israel and Israel continued its bombardment of southern Lebanon.

For a Middle Eastern nation, Lebanon has a large and influential Christian population. The latest figures show that Lebanon remains about 70% Muslim and about 30% Christian, according to a 2022 international religious freedom report — a far higher percentage of Christians than its neighbours.

Christianity in Lebanon traces its roots to the dawn of Christianity itself — in fact, Christ himself visited Lebanon. The Bible mentions the ancient pagan trading towns of Tyre and Sidon, both of which still exist today as major cities in southern Lebanon, dozens of times.

Just a couple of years ago, Lebanon was one of the most peaceful nations in the Middle East and — despite some serious domestic problems that can't be overlooked — a model for other countries in the region for how Christians and Muslims can coexist in the same country in relative peace.

Of the Muslims in Lebanon, they are split about evenly between Sunni and Shiites. Hezbollah, the political party and militant group that has been in the news, is Shia and deeply aligned with Iran, which is also majority-Shia.

The majority — over half — of Lebanon's Christians belong to the Maronite Church, an Eastern Catholic rite in full communion with Rome. There are about 3.5 million Maronites worldwide.

St. Maron, the Church's namesake, was a Syriac-speaking hermit who is believed to have died in the early fifth century. Later on in the mid-fifth century, Maron's disciples established a monastery named after him that thrived for many years until the Muslim conquest of the region, which led the Maronites to move their monastery from present-day Syria to the mountains of Lebanon.

Enduring persecution by various groups over the centuries, the Maronites retained a strong relationship with the popes. The Maronite College in Rome was founded by Gregory XIII in 1584.

Gaining influence within Lebanon and abroad, Maronite emigrants began leaving the country in the mid-19th century, bringing their religion with them.

Other Christian groups present in Lebanon include Greek Catholics (Melkites), Armenian Orthodox, Armenian Catholics, Syriac Orthodox, Syriac

Catholics, Assyrians, Chaldean Catholics, Copts, Protestants (including Presbyterians, Baptists, and Seventh-day Adventists), and Roman Catholics.

After a long civil war from 1975 to 1990, Lebanon gained a reputation for being one of the most peaceful and prosperous nations in the Middle East. In later years, however, Lebanon's people began suffering from a nationwide financial crisis.

Then came the August 2020 Beirut port explosion, one of the largest nonnuclear, man-made explosions in human history, which took place at Beirut's vital port caused by a stockpile of dangerous chemicals that had sat at the port for years amid negligence and corruption.

Most of the neighbourhoods of Beirut destroyed in the explosion were majority-Christian, which exacerbated an exodus of Christians from the country.

In addition, the country's Muslim population has been massively bolstered since 2011 by an influx of mostly-Muslim refugees from neighbouring Syria, fleeing that country's brutal civil war. According to the U.N. refugee agency, Lebanon has taken in at least 1.5 million Syrian refugees — a massive number for such a small country and one of the highest proportions of any country in the world.

The best-known Maronite saint, other than St. Maron himself, lending his name to Maronite churches across the world, is perhaps St. Charbel. He was born Yussef Antoun Makhlouf to a humble Lebanese family in 1828, the youngest of five children. As a boy, he spent a great deal of time outdoors in the fields and pastures near his village, contemplating God amid the inspiring views of Lebanon's valleys and mountains.

His family wanted him to get married, but the young man had other ideas. He trekked on foot to the Monastery of St. Maron, where he took his monastic vows in 1853. After studying for the priesthood, he was ordained and returned to the monastery where he would humbly serve for the next 19 years. He showed great devotion to the life of prayer, manual work, and contemplative silence.



In 1875, he was granted permission to live in solitude at a nearby hermitage. He spent the next 23 years there, until his death.

St. Charbel was deeply devoted to God's presence in the Eucharist. On 16 December 1898, Charbel suffered a stroke while celebrating the Maronite Divine Liturgy (the Maronite equivalent of the Mass). He died on Christmas Eve of that year, and Pope Paul VI canonized him in 1977.

The former monastery and nearby hermitage where St. Charbel lived out his last days is located in Annaya, an hour north of Beirut and in the hills nine miles inland from the coast. It remains a place of pilgrimage for Christians and Muslims alike, who come seeking miraculous healings.

Since 1950, when St. Charbel's tomb was first opened, the shrine has archived some 29,000 medically-verified healings.

### ***What's the latest in Lebanon?***

ACI Mena, CNA's Arabic-language news partner in the Middle East, has been reporting on the plight of Christians in Lebanon. In late September, it reported that the Keserwan district of Mount Lebanon, known as the heart of the Christian community due to its large Maronite population and the presence of important religious sites like the Maronite Patriarchate and the Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon, has been subject to Israeli airstrikes targeting a Hezbollah official.

Aid to the Church in Need reported in December that about 90% of those living in southern Lebanon's Christian villages have fled their homes amid the rocket strikes between Israel and Hezbollah.

The situation in Lebanon is evolving and changing every day. A 26 September report from the agency noted that amid the Israeli attacks, "Christian towns remain far from direct bombardment, even if they have their share of shrapnel."

However, Christian cities and towns across Lebanon are now crowded with people displaced from the southern villages. Beirut and its suburbs are seeing some Christian families move to their summer homes in rural areas.

A Maronite priest, Father Marwan Ghanem, personally witnessed the recent Israeli pager attack that killed and wounded hundreds of Hezbollah operatives and told ACI Mena about the experience.

Fr. Ghanem said that after the coordinated explosions happened he stopped to help three wounded people. He said he did not consider whether they were Muslim or Christian but rather recognized "the face of the wounded Christ on the road." In such dire circumstances, he said, there is no distinction between a Christian and a Muslim but rather everyone is human, created in the image of God.



## The Holy Family in Egypt

There exist in Egypt several wonderful tales of the Holy Family that remain unknown throughout much of the world. They are held close to the hearts of Egyptians – Christians and Muslims alike – who believe fervently that the Holy Family visited their homeland nearly 2,000 years ago.

Today in the Cairo area three such tales prevail; anyone who hears them is touched by their simplicity and sensitivity.

In Heliopolis, once an ancient seat of learning and now a suburb of modern Cairo (Moses is believed to have been educated there), a shrine marks the spot of the Virgin Tree and Well. According to the story, the Virgin Mary rested under a tree. Afterwards, she washed her son's clothes in the nearby well. As she pulled them out of the water, droplets fell onto the desert sand below. The droplets sprouted into balsam trees. For centuries pilgrims have spoken of this miraculous balsam grove that surrounds the ancient well.

A second legend relates how, after months on the run, Joseph sought refuge for his wife and son in a stone cave. The cool cavern promised relief from the scorching sun and shelter from the blowing sand. This cave, where the Holy Family dwells for months, is still showed to pilgrims.

In the seventh century a church dedicated to the Egyptian monk Sergius was rebuilt over the cave – an earlier Roman built church had been damaged during the Arab invasion in 641. Today one may look down a series of steps inside the ancient Coptic church to see the seeping waters of the Nile.

Our third tale recounts how the Holy Family stopped for a night at a temple beside the Nile in the town of Maadi. According to the legend, Jesus told his mother a shrine would be built and that it would bear her name forever. Today the Monastery of the Holy Virgin stands on the sacred spot. From inside the ancient church, a stairwell descends to the river where the local people are certain the Holy Family embarked as they left the town for the security of Upper Egypt. Each year a pageant commemorates this event. A boat, bearing a leader of the church, departs from this site for a sail along the Nile.

Later in the first century, long after Christ commissioned his disciples, Mark the Evangelist brought the Gospel to the land of the “Copts” – “Coptic” is derived from the Greek word Aigyptios, meaning “Egyptian.” A disciple of Peter and Paul and the author of the Gospel, Mark established the first patriarchal See in Alexandria, which in its day was second in importance only to Rome. St. Mark was martyred in 63. His remains rest in Cairo's modern Cathedral of St. Mark.

## Epiphany welcomed: from Bulgaria to Antarctica

*by Lutz Lazárova for Radio Bulgaria (7/1/16)*

By tradition on Epiphany, 6 January, a cross is thrown in the icy waters of a river, lake or in sea waters, and young men dive in a race to retrieve it. The man who grabs the cross will be healthy and happy throughout the year. By baptizing water the world is injected with new virtue and power. This is the end of the “dirty days”, as evil forces are banished and defeated, according to traditional beliefs.



On this day the town of **Kalofer** becomes the scene of an exclusive male chain dance in the waters of the River Tundzha. This year, early in the morning, a row threatened to mar the otherwise joyous occasion. About 8am when

the Orthodox priest was expected to throw the cross in Tundzha, the Kalofer men got angry that another group of men – from another town in Bulgaria - entered the river first. There was a bit of squabbling. However, positive emotions of the locals prevailed, and the Kalofer men entered the river to perform the ancient rite.

21-year-old IT student Yordan Bogoev took the Epiphany cross from the river. He was lucky to do so on his name day – Yordan (Jordan) is a name celebrated on Epiphany. Hundreds watched the ceremony and many kissed the cross retrieved by Yordan.

A record was set in **Sinemorets** on the Black Sea as 90-year-old fisherman Yanko Yankov jumped into the sea to join the Epiphany Cross race. He was formerly a military pilot and it took him a few days to prepare for the jump. He even stopped smoking for a while.

The festive mood in Plovdiv was slightly marred by rumors that some of the young guys had drunk more alcohol than needed to warm up for the race...



Swimmer Svetlin Ivanov from **Silistra** took out the Epiphany Cross from the Danube for a 15th consecutive time which is a record. He has been the Silistra race's unchallenged fastest swimmer all those years.

In Varna the cross was thrown in the Black Sea. The race in the Black Sea off Varna was joined by 46 men. The fight was short, and the wooden cross was saved fast.

***Epiphany Cross celebrations near the South Pole*** — Early in the morning on Epiphany a new group of the Bulgarian Antarctic expedition reached the island of Livingstone on board the Spanish ship *Hesperides*. Despite the stormy sea with 4-meter waves the nine pole explorers landed successfully on the island.

An Epiphany ritual for retrieving the cross from the icy Antarctic water was also performed. Senior Lieutenant Stanislav Stefanov, maintenance officer in the crew of the Bulgarian naval research vessel *Sv. Kiril i Metodii* (RSV 421), rescued the cross..

On Epiphany, 6 January, traditionally called Yordanovden (meaning: *The day of Jordan*), 151,852 Bulgarians celebrated their name days. They are named Yordan and Yordanka (derivatives of Jordan) and other related names.



## Saint of the month: St. John Bosco

31 January

On 2 June 2017 some upsetting — and for the rest of the world, bizarre — news swept across Northern Italy: police forces are investigating the missing relic of the *brain* of St. John Bosco, which was stolen from its reliquary on Friday night. The Salesians, the religious order founded by St. John Bosco, issued desperate pleas for prayers for its return. The reliquary was kept in the Basilica of John Bosco in Castelnovo, less than 20 miles east of Turin. It contained a small piece of the saint's brain.

*“We trust — Fr. Ezio Orsini, rector of the basilica said in a statement — that John Bosco can touch the heart of whomever committed this act, as he transformed the lives of young he met. We are also confident that though you can steal a relic of John Bosco, as has happened, you cannot steal John Bosco from us and from the many pilgrims who daily visit these places.”*

The basilica, located in the saint's birthplace, has experienced some other minor thefts in recent weeks, though nothing of spiritual value. Archbishop Cesare Nosiglia of Turin also commented on the missing relic, saying it was news *“you would never want to hear, because it makes us think of a profound moral misery”* that someone would steal something of spiritual and devotional value.

Now, luckily the relics were discovered and returned by the police two weeks later but who is this Saint, the theft of whose relics saw such a speedy and extended investigation in an otherwise rather disorganised and inefficient Italian administration?

St. John Bosco was a 19th-century Italian priest who had a particular love and apostolate for at-risk and underserved youth. Today, the order serves youth throughout the world primarily in schools, homeless shelters and community centres.

John Bosco's theory of education could well be used in today's schools. It was a preventive system, rejecting corporal punishment (in the 1800s!!) and placing students in surroundings removed from the likelihood of committing sin. He advocated frequent reception of the sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion. He combined catechetical training and fatherly guidance, seeking to unite the spiritual life with one's work, study and play.

Encouraged during his youth in Turin to become a priest so he could work with young boys, John was ordained in 1841. His service to young people started when he met a poor orphan in Turin, and instructed him in

preparation for receiving Holy Communion. He then gathered young apprentices and taught them catechism.

After serving as chaplain in a hospice for working girls, Don Bosco opened the Oratory of St. Francis de Sales for boys. Several wealthy and powerful patrons contributed money, enabling him to provide two workshops for the boys, shoemaking and tailoring.

Though a genius of education, John Bosco was widely seen as a lunatic as he roamed the streets and back alleys of Turin, a scruffy priest surrounded by an entourage of ragamuffins. There he came, smiling in a threadbare cassock at the centre of a rough and rowdy crowd—but joyful, one and all. And there he went, his “Wandering Oratory” booted from place to place, with hundreds who looked to their patron for support and salvation. These were the sons of Don Bosco, whom he loved as a father as they wandered together, looking for refuge where they could play, learn, and pray.

John Bosco famously espoused St. Francis de Sales’s words in his educational approach: “*You can catch more flies with a teaspoon of honey than with a barrel of vinegar.*” And so, Don Bosco formed the Salesian spirit of understanding, with tactics that consisted chiefly in friendly supervision, with the aim of building character and guarding against degrading influences: the combination of vigilance and affection to prevent falls rather than punish for them. “*This system,*” the saint wrote, “*is based entirely on reason, religion, and kindness.*”

By 1856, the institution had grown to 150 boys and had added a printing press for publication of religious and catechetical pamphlets.

John’s preaching fame spread and by 1850 he had trained his own helpers because of difficulties in retaining young priests. In 1854, he and his followers informally banded together, inspired by Saint Francis de Sales.

With Pope Pius IX’s encouragement, John gathered 17 men and founded the Salesians in 1859. Their activity concentrated on education and mission work. Later, he organized a group of Salesian Sisters to assist girls.

John Bosco educated the whole person—body and soul united. He believed that Christ’s love and our faith in that love should pervade everything we do—work, study, play. For John Bosco, being a Christian was a full-time effort, not a once-a-week, Mass-on-Sunday experience. It is searching and finding God and Jesus in everything we do, letting their love lead us. Yet, because John realized the importance of job-training and the self-worth and pride that come with talent and ability, he trained his students in the trade crafts, too.

## Know the Bible! - The Book of Judges

Judges is divided into three large sections: introduction (ch. 1-2); the judges (ch. 3-15); the people (ch. 16-21). The book is a turning point in Israel's existence. Joshua dies and what follows is not a happy story. On the contrary, Judges ends in a complete tragedy.

**Chapters 1-2** set the stage: Israel has conquered the territory but has not driven out the natives. Since Joshua didn't designate a leader, the 12 tribes themselves must pass on Moses' teaching — but they don't. It is completely forgotten. Israel doesn't keep to the Law and they are continuously tempted by the gods of the land. Through inter-marriage with the locals come their mixed loyalty to God. As they abandon the Law, they lose God's protection and blessing. The surrounding nations occupy them and so they cry out to God who raises a deliverer. The oppressors are defeated and peace follows... until Israel forsakes the teachings of Moses again and the whole vicious circle starts from the beginning.

**In chapters 3-15** we see these deliverers who are called judges. They are tribal leaders and local heroes (they are not judges in the modern sense of the word). Some of them are some sort of prophets as well. Their main role is to overthrow Israel's oppressors.

These judges might well be heroes for Israel but in terms of the biblical narrative, they very rarely are. Some of them really do mess up. Only because they are "good guys" for Israel, not all what they do is good and can be condoned. The author of Judges, indeed, does not condone them either.

We have 12 judges split into two groups: 7 and 5 (symbolic numbers).

Some judges get a lot more attention and several chapters are dedicated to them. For example Deborah has even a song attributed to her. They are called major judges. They all have a story. The minor judges, on the other hand, have only a few verses: they did this, had so many children and so many donkeys. Full stop.

The first judge is Othniel from a prominent family. He is related to Caleb who in the Torah was one of the few loyal contemporaries of Joshua and Moses when people wanted to kill Moses and go back to Egypt. The Spirit of God comes upon him. He is followed by Ehud who is an assassin. Then comes Shamgar, Deborah, and Barak.

A famous judge comes next: Gideon. He gets the most focus in the whole book by far. An angel announces him being chosen as judge. In addition to overthrowing the oppressor and bringing about peace - something that every "standard" judge does - he also removes the names of false gods

from the land. Loyalty to God increases in his times. When they want to make him king, he refuses the offer but it's unclear how sincere he was.

At any rate, he isn't perfect either: he introduces an alternate form of divination which is a clear disobedience to the Law. When he dies, his eldest son causes a lot of trouble and kills his own bothers. His name is Abimelech which means "*son of the king*". Hence the uncertainty about Gideon's sincerity.

Then come Tola and Jair. They are followed by an interlude. Israel follows foreign gods again. Their oppression grows so they cry out to God who says: you serve them, let them save you. But, of course, they don't so Israel removes them. As God can't tolerate Israel's situation, he sends them a new "set" of judges. There comes Jephthah, son of a prostitute, rejected by his family. But the Spirit descends on him. However, then he sacrifices his own daughter because of a foolish vow and causes inter-tribal violence. He is followed by three minor judges squeezed into 8 verses... (12,8-15).

The next judge is Samson. The strongest of all, a chaos-agent against the Philistines. Like in Gideon's case, Samson's judgeship is announced by an angel, too - before his birth. He is miracle child as his parents couldn't have children. And yet, the Bible doesn't have a good thing to say about him. He marries a Philistine which is how Israel gets always in trouble. He is motivated by personal vengeance. He is such a trouble maker that Judah, one of the tribes, rejects him. They plot against him, tie him and hand him over to the Philistines.

If this wasn't bad enough, **in chapters 16-21** we get four stories that gives an image of the sad state of Israel. The first story is of Samson and Delilah, his girlfriend who tricks him. Samson is compromised, he kills himself (tragic end!) and takes quite a few Philistines with him.

Then we have Micah's story of idolatry. Micah and his family set up a private shrine, make an idol, and install their own priests — all things expressly against the Torah (Moses). Even some of the Levites are compromised by joining the new (illegal) sanctuary.

Dan's migration-story follows where an entire tribe abandons the land assigned to them by Joshua. They come to Micah's sanctuary, take his priests and capture their own city.

Finally, the last story tells us about the nationwide civil war. Rape leads to murder, then to war, and because of another foolish vow almost the whole tribe of Benjamin is wiped out. This is followed by kidnapping and corruption. The four stories tell about Israel's failure on all levels: of individuals, families, tribes, the nation. The reason Judges gives? *Because there is no king...* The perfect ending and set up for the next books (1-2 Samuel) where we will meet Israel's future kings for the first time!

## The Psalms

### *Psalms 45: The royal wedding song (2)*

After having explored the historic background of Psalm 45 - a love and wedding song, in reality - now we are going to look more closely at its text in the light of Christ and his Bride, the Church.

While in Isaiah we read about the undistinguished appearance of the Messiah during his earthly life (53,2-3), from the Book of Revelation we know how the Ascended Lord is the fairest among men in his heavenly glory. However, the beautiful lips of the King praised by Psalm 45 has little to do with physical appearance. These lips are considered beautiful because “*grace is pour out upon*” them. The word “grace”, it is well worth to mention, is only used twice in the whole Book of Psalms. These anointed lips, then, appear to us beautiful because they speak words of grace and kindness to us, the royal subjects, reflecting not only the King’s rule of righteousness, justice, and truth (see verse 4) but also his character. What a truthful, moving, and loving description of the Lord Jesus!

Verses 6-8 of Psalm 45 are quoted by Hebrews 1,8-9. “*Your throne, O God, endures for ever [...] You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness. God has anointed you above all your brethren.*” Perhaps nowhere else in the Old Testament the astonishing truth is proclaimed more clearly: the Messiah is God’s Son, is God himself. And Christ - and thus God himself - greatly rejoices in truth and righteousness. Even in the hours of his deepest Passion, when he performs the Great Sacrifice as the only true High Priest, this inner joy is not missing from Christ’s loving and tender heart.

In John 15,1 Jesus further confirms what is prophesied of Him in Psalm 45: that truth makes His heart rejoice. The words in John 15 are already spoken in the Upper Room where Christ, the High Priest, is getting ready for his Sacrifice. And yet, shockingly for us, part of his priestly prayer for the Apostles is that their joy may be full. Psalm 45 is the key to understand how can Christ’s Passion and Death bring joy to the Apostles, and through them to the whole Church. The Cross reveals the Truth, it reveals Christ’s most inner character, it reveals God himself: a God of immeasurable, unrestrained, and unconditional Love.

Verses 8-9 introduce a change of scene. We see the King not as a victorious warrior anymore but as a beautifully dressed Bridegroom ready for a wedding feast of gladness, rejoicing, and happiness. The idea of a marriage between Christ and his Church is not so much revolutionary if we consider how the Old Testament likens God’s relationship to Israel to marriage (Hosea 1-3; Jeremiah 2, Ezekiel 16, Isaiah 62,5).



Yet another deep connection between Christ's saving death and his Church is in verses 8-9 where the Bridegroom's dress is described as fragrant with myrrh. The same precious spice will be given, as gift, to the Infant Christ by the Magi, prefiguring his death, and again the same spice will be carried - though in vain this time! - by the women to the Sepulchre on the morning of the first Easter. It will be in his own sacrificial death that Christ shows forth his love most clearly towards his Church.

In verses 10-15 the focus shifts to the royal Bride, the new Queen, and her beauty. Surprisingly, the Hebrew word used here is not the usual *malkah* or *gebireh*. Instead we have the word *shegal*, a rare word to indicate a Chaldean or Persian Queen Consort. The Queen here, then, is a Gentile.

In subsequent verses we see the beauty of the Queen described, and the procession with her virgin companions. They are all full of joy and gladness as they enter the "ivory palace". A palace made of ivory is not only the symbol of the indescribable beauty of Heaven Christ left behind in his Incarnation. The expression will be used by Christian piety to describe the beauty, purity, and precious character of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Indeed, in the Litanies of Loreto we call unto her to join her prayers to ours, addressing her as "Tower of Ivory".

The beauty of the Bride's wedding dress reminds us of Christ adorning the Church with holy garments in Ephesians 5,25-28.

As we pass to the concluding verses (16-17), it is difficult not to feel a little bit disappointed over the fact that the holy author decided not to describe the royal wedding. What splendour, joy, and love we could have witnessed! It is left to our imagination to picture the Bridegroom and Bride making their vows, the interior of the royal palace, the splendour of their Guests — and the joy of them all.

And so Psalm 45 ends with a blessing. Christ, the King, has been enthroned by God and rules in righteousness, revealing his loving heart filled with grace. The Church, his Bride, is called upon to leave her home and worship the King. But the ultimate blessing of the marriage is that of children, the future generations of Saints (us!) through and in whom the kingdom would flourish even before its complete and final fulfilment at the end of times.

The final blessing is specifically linked to the Name of the King so it is immortalised and glorified through the blessing bestowed on the Bride and her children by God himself. How could we not, especially in the month of January (see page 28), think of that Name "*which is above every name, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth*" (Philippians 2,10).

## A few quick, simple and filling recipes

### *Baked potato-and-salmon dish*



1. Stir fry a finely chopped onion or leak (or both, why not!) in plenty of olive oil. Keep the oil as well. (You can use half olive oil, half butter.)

2. Pre-boil some potatoes (as much as the size of your dish requires). Once they cool down, cut them into ca. 5mm thick slices.

3. Open two packs of smoked salmon.

4. Mix a pot of cream (single, double,

sour... whatever you prefer) with fresh, finely chopped green herb (I prefer dill with salmon).

5. Pour some of the oil/butter you used to fry your onions into the bottom of an ovenproof dish. Mix the rest with your cream and green herb. Salt to taste.
6. Make layers of potato slices, smoked salmon, cream mixture. Repeat as many times as you can.
7. Bake in preheated oven at 180 until gold and crispy on the top.

How much of what to use...?? I don't know. You will see how much is enough or how much is not! :) Make sure there is enough cream mixture so your dish doesn't turn out too dry (the potatoes will soak in a lot of moisture).

### *Potatoes and pork*

A very similar dish as above but for carnivores.



1. Grease a baking tray with olive oil or lard or goose/duck fat. Don't be too stingy, this is not a dish to help your post-Christmas diet.

2. Cut 2-3 large onions into thick (ca. 5mm or even thicker) slices and place them into your baking tray so they cover the whole tray. Salt them.

3. Season your pork shoulder steaks

- or pork loins (or similar cut of pork) with salt and pepper and dry (!) fry them in an already hot pan on the hob for 2 minutes on each side.
4. Some people, once the pork is ready, put some mustard on it but I personally don't like it. Anyway, you can try it. Place your fried pork slices on top of the onions.
  5. Now, pour some water or wine into the empty frying pan (where you pre-cooked your pork) and gather all the juices. If you are using wine, make sure you simmer it until the alcohol evaporates.
  6. Pour half a glass of the meat juice in the baking tray.
  7. Now cover the meat with potato slices (raw, and more on the thin side). Sometimes I use regular and sweet potatoes as well.
  8. Season the potatoes with salt, pepper, and caraway seeds. Cover and seal the tray with aluminium foil.
  9. Bake in preheated oven at 180 for 40-50 minutes. Then remove the foil, turn the oven up to 200 and bake until gold and crispy on the top.

### *Pasta and peas*



The simplest dish you've ever cooked in your life (*no, beans on toast is not a dish! and it's certainly not cooking!*) — also, who doesn't like pasta. So...

1. Boil some water in a kettle and keep it hot.
  2. Fry some finely chopped onion and some bacon (cubes, stripes, whatever) in olive oil in a frying pan.
  3. Add a glass of frozen petit peas (per person) and cook until almost tender.
- Add a little bit of boiling water if the peas do not release enough moisture. Salt to taste.
4. Add some short pasta (like *orecchiette*, *cavatelli*, *macaroni*, *chioccioline*, *ditali*) (80 grams of dry pasta per person) to the frying pan and add a little bit of boiling water. As the water evaporates, add some more, paying attention to end up both with cooked pasta *and* a water-free frying pan by the end of the pasta's cooking time.
  5. You can add some finely chopped parsley 2-3 minutes before the pasta is ready but this is optional. Salt to taste.
  6. Finally, don't be a foreigner: resist the temptation of adding cream to your dish!!! :) The pasta should release enough starch to make the dish creamy.

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*The Vicar's day-off is Tuesday. With enquiries about Baptisms, Weddings, Banns, or Funerals, please, contact the Vicar. If you are in hospital, live in a care home, or are house-bound and you wish to receive Holy Communion and/or Anointing, or to make your Confession, please let the Vicar know and he will be very happy to visit you.*

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