

### Mass Times

**Sundays:** 9 am & 11 am  
**Saturday Vigil:** 6.00 pm  
**Tuesday & Friday:** 9.30 am  
**Fr. Michael Keohane Co-PP**



### Baptism

**Keziyah Carol Delaney.**  
**Peace Osaro Odi.**  
**Shelbeigh Catherine Cummins O'Leary.**  
We welcome them into the Christian Family



### Advent and Christmas

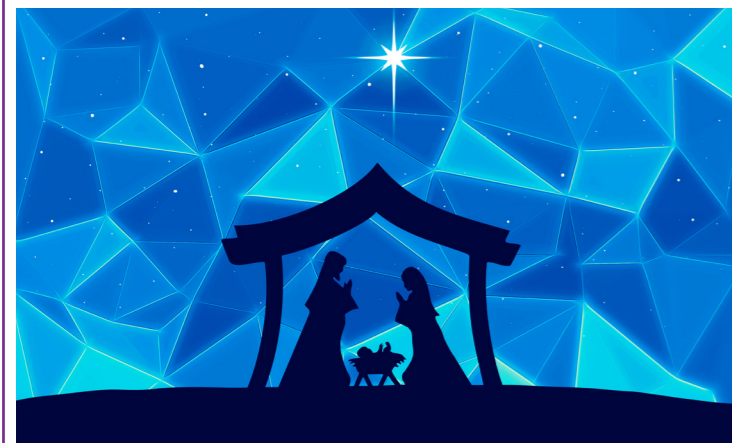
The presence of the newborn infant in our church crib on Christmas Eve and Christmas morning will put a smile on our faces. Our faces can be tired and worn from the events of life and of the past year. Perhaps this year someone is absent from your house? We lovingly remember those who have died during 2023. Perhaps, due to a disagreement, someone will be somewhere else this year and that brings sadness.

Jesus is the 'Emmanuel', God-with-us. Truly believe that God is with you in your sadness and loneliness. Truly believe that God is in your joys and happiness. Perhaps there is a new baby or grandchild since this time last year. Perhaps there has been the joy of a wedding in the family. Perhaps someone has come home as a surprise?

This year, we put our lives and hearts in front of the Infant Jesus and we humbly ask God's blessings. Fr. Michael

### Do This in Memory Mass

Well done to all who participated in the Do This in Memory Mass for the First Holy Communion children and their families last weekend. The next Mass will be on Saturday 10th February @ 6pm.



### Christmas Arrangements 2023

**Sunday 24th December**  
Morning Masses @ 9am & 11am  
Vigil Masses @ 6pm & 8pm  
**Christmas Day, Monday 25th December**  
Masses @ 9am & 11am  
**St. Stephen's Day, Tuesday 26th December**  
Mass @ 9.30am



Sacrament of Reconciliation will be available after weekend Masses on Saturday 16th/Sunday 17th December.

### A brief commentary on today's readings

First reading Isaiah 61:1-2, 10-11

As Christmas draws near, we all feel a certain anticipation and excitement. Our first reading captures that mood: it is full of the happiness of faith and joy in life and in God.

Second reading 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

I suppose no one can "command" us to be happy...and yet, Paul does just that in this reading! But he expands and illustrates how we can be not just "reasonably contented" but deeply happy.

Gospel John 1:6-8, 19-28

You don't often hear a Gospel passage where Jesus is absent! But if you listen carefully, you will notice he is present.

### The Papers Say.....

Irish Catholic. (1). Russia cracks down on Catholic Church in occupied Ukraine. (2). David Quinn: We are rapidly moving far beyond the family based on the love of one man and one woman for the good of children. (3). Breda O'Brien: There is nothing simple about the conflict in the Holy Land. (4) Fr. Martin Delaney: Hollow out a space for Christ this Christmas

Synodal Times. (1). The Church in Africa is on the march. (2). Fr. Gerry O'Hanlon SJ: Reflections on the Synod. -- Another Door Opening? (3). Prof. Eamonn Conway: What Synod 2021-2024 is and is not about -- Personal reflections from a Synod expert. (4) Every lay Catholic now needs to be an activist for a new Church

Catholic Voice. (1) Anne Keeling: The Mosque of Tralee. (2). Ella Whelan: Ireland needs to talk about immigration. (3). Advent -- Watching for Jesus or Santa?

Tablet of 2/12. (1) Liturgical Year II. -- In praise of Mark. (2). Pope tells German Church that it cannot go it alone. (3). Archbishop of Dublin Dermot Farrell has appealed to people to challenge misinformation that 'seeks to sow doubt, suspicion, resentment and fear'

Tablet of 9/12. (1). The Synod and safeguarding - A flawed reform? (2). Jewish - Muslim dialogue -- Feeling the other's pain. (3). Four die as terrorists attack Mass in Philippines

### BLACKROCK ST VINCENT DE PAUL

Fr. Michael has generously offered the poor box near the exit as a collection point for SVP.

If you wish to contribute any time, it would be appreciated.

### Rally to the Rockies

The Rockies GAA Club takes pleasure in extending a Hearty Céad Míle Fáilte to its Friends and Followers to a general Get-Together at the Rockies Club, Church Road on **Thursday December 21st from 10.30 am to 12.00 pm**. Tea, coffee and light refreshments will be served.

Meet old friends and make new ones at the Rockies



### BLACKROCK ST VINCENT DE PAUL

The Christmas Collection last Sunday raised €7155  
A great response and support from parishioners.  
Thank you.

### Observations

**John the Baptist: a second look...**

The third Sunday of Advent in Year B affords us a second opportunity to reflect on John the Baptist. It is worth noting that all the Gospels are uneasy about John and feel the need to "locate" him carefully. The Gospel of John is a kind of extreme example of the anxiety triggered by John. You might wonder, why? Fundamentally, because John baptised Jesus, a certain historical event which could easily give the impression that John — the one giving — is somehow more important than Jesus — the one receiving. The tradition cannot dispense with John. His role is inextricably linked to Jesus — linked but yet distinct as we see in today's Gospel reading.

### Reflections

1. John the Baptist came to bear witness to Jesus. Who have been the people who have borne witness to you of the good news of the gospel that God loves you— a friend, a parent, a teacher, for example? To whom have you borne that witness?

2. John appears in the story as one who had the courage to be himself in the face of loud and aggressive people. He was also a person who knew his own value, did not make exaggerated claims and was content with his mission. Can you recall times when you have been able to be yourself, even in the face of criticism from others?

3. John was "the voice of one crying out in the wilderness"—announcing confidently to those in the wilderness that they must not despair because God's grace will come to them at any moment. Have you had the experience of being in the wilderness, feeling lost? From whom did you hear a voice that gave you hope? Have you been able to give hope to other people when they were in the wilderness?

4. The priests and Levites challenged John the Baptist on his authority for speaking as he did and tried to put a label on him so that they could more easily dismiss what he had to say. When were you open to accept a truth from a person whom you had previously dismissed as having nothing to say to you?

### PRAYER

*O God, most high and most near, you send glad tidings to the lowly, you hide not your face from the poor; those who dwell in darkness you call into the light.*

*Take away our blindness, remove the hardness of our hearts, and form us into a humble people, that, at the advent of your Son, we may recognise him in our midst and find joy in his saving presence.*

*This prayer we make through him whose coming is certain, whose day draws near, your Son, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, forever and ever. Amen.*

### PARISH DEFIBRILLATORS

There are 2 Defibrillators located in the Parish, one in the village & one outside Murphy's Circle K PetrolStation. The code to operate both is 2017

### Christmas Dues

Envelopes have been delivered to homes last week. In the off chance you've not got one, they are available in the church.

**Anam Cara Cork**, Anam Cara West Cork the organisation that supports bereaved parents, is holding a Parent Evening on Tuesday 19th December at 7:20pm in the Fernhill House Hotel, Clonakilty, P85 X322.

This is a free event and open to all bereaved parents. For further information please contact us on 085 288 8888 or info@anamcara.ie



### Thought for the day

In the words of John's Gospel, John the Baptist came as a witness, to speak for the light, the true light who was coming into the world. In this season of Advent, the Baptist points us towards the coming one and he invites us to reflect on our need of the light of Jesus in the darkness of our lives. Darkness means many things: a sense of being lost, a lack of direction, helplessness, sin or indeed lack of faith. This Christmas, may the God who said "Let light shine out of darkness," shine in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ ( 2 Corinthians 4:6).

### Prayer

*We come before you in the darkness of our lives, aware of our need of Christ, the light of the world. Let us receive him in faith so that we may become witnesses to that light which has truly come into the world.*

K O'Mahony OSA

### ENTRANCE – O COME EMMANUEL

O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
To free your captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here,  
Until the Son of God appear.  
Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! O Israel,  
To you shall come Emmanuel.

O royal branch of Jesse's tree,  
Redeem us all from tyranny;  
From pain of hell your people free,  
And over death win victory.  
Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! O Israel,  
To you shall come Emmanuel.

### RECESSIONAL – THE LORD MADE KNOWN TO ISRAEL

The Lord made known to Israel,  
His great redeeming plan.  
He speaks to us his people now  
Through Christ his Son made man.  
We have been called like Israel,  
To witness to God's grace,  
A people he has made his own,  
A royal priestly race.

God brought his people to the mount,  
As we are gathered now,  
To hear His holy word proclaimed  
And their allegiance vow.  
We have been called like Israel,  
To witness to God's grace,  
A people he has made his own,  
A royal priestly race.

If you would like to receive a weekly commentary on the Weekly Scripture Readings, both in AUDIO, VIDEO and in PDF, please log on to [www.tarsus.ie](http://www.tarsus.ie) and register to receive the emails. K O'Mahony OSA

