

Fourth Sunday of Advent

19-20 December 2020



**Our Vision of the parish
we would like to become ..**

... a welcoming community,
inviting, encouraging and supporting all to have
an ever-deepening relationship with Jesus.
We are inspired to show God's love to the world
with joy and hope.

We have arrived at the final Sunday of Advent. Advent is a precious gift to us as it highlights the attitudes of waiting and preparing that are essential to the entire Christian life. What we do in Advent, we do throughout our lives 'until the Lord comes'.

We are about to celebrate Christmas in circumstances we have not experienced before. It has been almost a year of mental and spiritual anguish, with much fear and anxiety. I have not found it easy to lead the Parish through the pandemic, and with days left until Christmas I am feeling exhausted like so many of you. Only time will reveal the true and lasting impact of the pandemic. I can only seek your forgiveness for my failures or shortcomings this past year.

I express my gratitude to so many who have done so much in these last months in the Parish. Stewarding and livestreaming, for example, meant something different last Christmas. Now they are an essential part of parish life. It was amazing to see people bringing their gifts and talents to the first lockdown when we had to become a virtual parish very quickly. I am grateful to all who have given so much.

I am also conscious of people who have been quietly but discretely reaching out to others. Challenging circumstances have brought out the best in so many. It has been a time of constant adjustment to changing guidance as restrictions inevitably changed as the virus surged and waned. It is encouraging that vaccinations are now underway, but there is also talk of a potential third lockdown. We are getting there, but we are not there yet.

With a busy week ahead, I wanted to be sure of expressing my heartfelt thanks to so many for so much. It was wonderful to see people returning to Mass and the sacraments after the first lockdown. These numbers are increasing again following the second lockdown. Thank you for keeping the faith, though I am aware that for many it has been a time of darkness or just a time when faith seemed not to matter in the same way. My message is simply that the Lord is near at hand. He has been with us and He is with us.

We hear this Sunday the beautiful words of Mary: "I am the handmaid of the Lord, let what you have said be done to me". Those are words of complete abandonment to the will of God at a time when she was most likely to not be entirely aware of the full meaning of what the angel Gabriel had said to her. I invite us all to pray with that same abandonment to God and to His will for us, and for the world.

Fr Michael

All the latest information about the Parish is updated regularly on the website so do check in regularly if you can.

New address www.englishmartyrsrdg.com

We also have a livestream on You Tube.: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WVh4RKNcsEo>



Christmas Mass Times

Thursday 24th December (Christmas Eve)

- 5pm Nativity service for children—not including Mass. **Car park closed to all except those with limited mobility. Please ring the parish office to book a parking bay at the back of the church.**
- 7pm Christmas Vigil Mass—**only Tilehurst Road gate open to cars. Limited parking @ back/side of church.**
- 9pm Christmas Vigil Mass—**only Tilehurst Road gate open to cars. Limited parking @ back/side of church.**
- Midnight Midnight Mass of Christmas—**only Tilehurst Road gate open to cars. Limited parking @ back/side of church.**

Christmas Day

- 7.30am Christmas Mass—**only Tilehurst Road gate open to cars.**
- 9.30am Christmas Mass—**only Tilehurst Road gate open to cars. Limited parking @ back/side of church.**
- 11.30am Christmas Mass **This will now be held inside the church. Car park open as usual**

If you are able to walk to church or to park locally please do.

- Saturday 26th December: 6pm Vigil Mass—parking as usual
- Sunday 27th December: 7.30am, 9.30am and 11.30am parking as usual
- Monday 28th December: 7pm
- Tuesday 29th December: 7pm
- Wednesday 30th December 9.30am (no holy hour or 7pm Mass)
- Thursday 31st December 11.30pm (New Year's Eve) (no 7pm Mass) public Mass, **BOOKING** required
- Friday 1st January Midday (no 7pm Mass) public Mass, **BOOKING** required

Staying safe over Christmas

The church is open for Mass over Christmas but keeping people safe is a high priority. If you consider yourself to be at all vulnerable with this new more highly transmissible Corona-virus please consider staying at home where you feel safe and secure.

Masses during the Christmas Octave (the eight days following Christmas) will all be streamed. We hope to make as many as possible open if it is safe to do so. Please keep an eye on the website to see what is happening. If you know somebody who does not have access to the internet, please pass this message on to them.



CHRISTMAS COLLECTION

The Christmas Collection is traditionally a way to support the parish priest in their ministry and forms part of their annual income. At the moment no collection is taken during Mass so if you would like to give a gift to support Father Michael in his vocation and mission this Christmas, please visit

<https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/fundraising/reading-english-martyrs-clergy-christmas-collection>



Christmas face masks

Members of the parish have been busy preparing Christmas face masks to sell in aid of charity. Available for sale at Masses this weekend. £5 donation to go in the box, no change will be given to avoid handling of money.

Advent Novena

December 16th - December 24th, at 8pm each evening. This will be on Zoom, like our Pentecost Novena but not at such an early time in the morning!

To log into the Novena simply click on the link from about 7.50pm, each evening of December 16th - 24th.

Link: <https://zoom.us/j/94614409302?pwd=bGlybkx6YWRjS3JETHVxR0xKVHBndz09>

Missio & Mill Hill Missionaries RED BOX

The money donated by Red Box holders in 2020 totalled £863.

Thank you to Red Box holders for your generosity



MOVING ON

Josie Coll, who has been a Eucharistic Minister, home visitor and member of our 1130 Mass choir for many years, has sadly left our parish and gone to live in Shrewsbury so as to be nearer her family. We would like to thank her for everything she has done for the parish over the years and to wish her and her family all the very best for the future.



ENGLISH MARTYRS CATHOLIC CHURCH, READING

64 Liebenrood Road, Reading RG30 2EB
Registered Charity No. 246871



Parish Priest: Canon Michael Dennehy
mdennehy@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Assisting Priest: Fr Richard Maniak

Parish Office: phone and e-mail monitored.
0118 957 2149
englishmartyrs@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

Parish Safeguarding Officer:
Charlie McArthur
Contact through parish office number.

Schools: **English Martyrs Catholic Primary School,**
Dee Road, Reading RG30 4BE
Head: Mrs Doberska 0118 937 5466

Blessed Hugh Faringdon Catholic School,
Fawley Road, Reading RG30 3EP
Head: Dr Simon Uttley 0118 957 4730

Mass Intentions: Fourth Week of Advent

<i>Fourth Sunday of Advent Year B</i>		
Saturday 19th December (Vigil Mass for Sunday)	6pm	Timmy and Ita Guidera RIP
Sunday 20th December	7.30am	Michael Heneghan, Martin and Kathleen Gaynard and John Nevin RIP
	9.30am	Rhea de Araujo Ricardo Thanksgiving
	11.30am	Aidan Farrelly RIP
	5pm	People of the Parish
Tuesday 22nd December	7pm Open Mass	Bridie O’Gorman RIP
Wednesday 23rd December	7pm	Katherine Soares RIP
Thursday 24th December	5pm	Children’s Nativity (not Mass)
	7pm	Perera family intentions
	9pm	Thanksgiving for medical staff at RBH
	11.30	Carols outside
	midnight	People of the parish
Friday 25th December	7.30am	Terence Morse RIP
	9.30am	Heike Conroy
	11.30am	Ryan Flood RIP
<i>Feast of the Holy Family Year B</i>		
Saturday 26th December (Vigil Mass for Sunday)	6pm streamed	Holy Souls RIP
Sunday 27th December	7.30am	People of the Parish
	9.30am	Louie Fearn’s RIP
	11.30am streamed	Stanley Perera RIP