

# St Mary of the Annunciation Catholic Church

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## EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

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# NEWSLETTER

### “We have Seen His Star in the East”

With this being the first newsletter of 2024, on behalf of Fr David and myself, may I wish you a very happy New Year! Today is the Solemnity of the **Epiphany** when we celebrate the three **wise men** from the East coming to **worship** the Child JESUS, bringing Him gifts of **gold, frankincense** and **myrrh**. This is a continuation of our celebration of the birth of our Divine Saviour, God made man. Up until this point His birth had been revealed only to Israel. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and the shepherds tending their flocks in the field had been told by the Angel of Our Lord's birth and that they should seek Him out. They were all Jews of course. But God didn't only come for the people of Israel. He came for the whole of mankind. This truth is represented today by the coming of the **Magi**.

So who were the Magi? They were pagan kings and astrologers who could never have come to know the True God without what we call **the divine condescension** (God becoming man). We might wonder how they could have known of the birth of our Saviour by means of a star. **St John Chrysostom** (ca 349-407) gives us an answer in his Sermon for the Epiphany:

*“We read in the books of Moses that there was a certain prophet of the Gentiles, Balaam, who foretold in definite words the coming of Christ and His incarnation from a virgin. For among other things he said: A star shall rise out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall spring up from Israel (Numbers 24:17). The Wise men, who saw the new star in the East, are said to be descendants of this Balaam, a prophet from the Gentiles. And seeing the sign of the new star they accordingly believed, knowing that the prophecy of their ancestor was fulfilled.”*

However, this was no normal star. It was something entirely supernatural. It appeared on the night of Our Lord's birth and then promptly disappeared again after the arrival of the Magi. It moved with them and rested exactly over the house where the newborn Child was. Normal stars do not do this. The star was also extraordinarily bright, and although smaller than a normal star, it appeared bigger as it was closer to the earth. These peculiarities are all in the Gospel account. Therefore it seems attempts to explain the

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#### St Mary of the Annunciation Catholic Church

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office@

stmarysloughborough.org.uk

*Served by the Rosminians*

#### Parish Priest

Fr Paul Gillham, IC

#### On attachment

Fr David Jones, OLW

#### Safeguarding Rep

Jane Monaghan

01509 262123

#### Parish Catholic Schools

##### St Mary's Primary

Hastings Street

Loughborough LE11 5AX

01509 212621

office@stmarys-rc.leics.sch.uk

**Headteacher:** Miss P Jordan

##### De Lisle College

Thorpe Hill

Loughborough LE11 4SQ

01509 268739

enquiries@delisle.leics.sch.uk

**Headteacher:** Mr C Maher



*Baptism of the Lord*

**Please pray for those  
who are sick**

**for those who have  
recently died**

Aley Kutty Mathai  
Francisca Ndoh  
Ossen Richards  
Mary Nash

*May they rest in peace*

**and for those whose  
anniversaries occur at  
this time**

Rosemary Pearson, Robert  
Milnes, Marie Paparozzi,  
Tony Kennedy, Gary Moore,  
Helly Claydon, Maria  
Cuff, Laurie Devaney,  
Mary Brookes, Margaret  
Woodhouse, Clarice  
Ryder, Amelia Blake,  
Carmela Brunetti, Helen  
McGreechan

### PLEASE NOTE

Due to government regulations regarding personal data (UK-GDPR), we are not able to publish name details of Mass intentions for the living in this online version of the newsletter.

## MASS INTENTIONS AT ST MARY'S

**Sat 6th Vigil Mass**  
6.00pm Anthony Joseph Heath (RIP)

**Sun 7th Epiphany of the Lord (Solemnity)**  
9.00am Domenico Romano (RIP)  
11.15am For the Parish

**Mon 8th Baptism of the Lord (Feast)**  
9.15am John McDermott (RIP)

**Tues 9th Feria**  
9.15am George Sheppard (RIP)

**Weds 10th Feria**  
6.30pm Intention for the living (Latin)

**Thurs 11th Feria**  
9.15am John Kane (RIP)

**Fri 12th St Aelred of Rievaulx (Memoria)**  
6.00-6.25pm *Confessions*  
6.30pm Colm Fox (RIP)

**Sat 13th Saturday Mass of the Blessed Virgin Mary**  
10.00am Fr Paul Gillham (GE) **NO PUBLIC MASS**  
10.30am *Private prayer with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament*  
-12.30pm *with Confessions 10.30-11.30am & Benediction 12.20pm*  
6.00pm **Vigil Mass:** Salvatore Fele (RIP)

**Sun 14th Second Sunday in Ordinary Time**  
9.00am For the Parish  
11.15am Vivincia Castillo (RIP)  
4.00pm Italian Mass

*Weekday Rosary: Mon, Tues, Thurs after 9.15am Mass; Wed, Fri at 6.00pm*

### This week at St Mary's

**Weds 10th** UCM - 2.00pm in the hall  
**Thurs 11th** RCIA - 7.00pm in the library

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star scientifically are rather pointless, since God put it there simply so as the Magi would know the location of the newborn King. The closest parallel we have, according to **St Thomas Aquinas** (1225-74), is the **pillar of fire and cloud** which led Israel out of Egypt in the Old Testament. Just as God had liberated His people Israel from slavery in Egypt through the pillar of fire and cloud, He has now liberated the Gentiles from slavery to sin by the guidance of this star. As we sing in the well known Christmas carol: *“Oh, star of wonder, star of might. Star with royal beauty bright. Westward leading, still proceeding, Guide us to thy perfect light.”*

*Fr Paul Gillham, IC*

**Blessings:** A number of you have expressed your concerns to me about ‘Fiducia supplicans’, a Declaration issued by the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith with the approval of the Pope on 18th December last year, giving the go-ahead for clergy “to bless couples in irregular situations” and “couples of the same sex” (#31) albeit in an informal way. Unsurprisingly, it has received a lot of media-hype, and it should be noted that many members of the hierarchy in every continent have declared their rejection of the Declaration. The document is confusing, because while it upholds Catholic teaching on marriage being between one man and one woman for life ordered to pro-creation, it seems to open the door for blessing sinful behaviour, which is against Divine Revelation and Church teaching. Sexual activity is lawful only within a valid marriage between one man and one woman. One may always bless individuals, but if you bless a couple, even if it’s done informally, you are effectively blessing their relationship, and this will give the impression that God blesses mortal sin. Reason tells us that God’s blessing cannot be invoked on what He forbids. However, the document also states that these informal blessings may only be given if there is no risk of causing confusion about Church teaching on marriage and sexual morality (#30, 37). As your Parish Priest I have the care of your souls and I believe it would cause confusion and even scandal among the faithful if such blessings were to be given, and consequently we shall not be offering them at St Mary’s.

*Fr Paul*

**Altar Servers:** Congratulations to Dion and Sion who, having completed a year as altar servers, were enrolled in the Guild of St Stephen on St Stephen’s Day. Congratulations also to Terry who received his Silver Medal after 10 years of service. There are three other servers due to receive their Silver Medal very soon. *Fr Paul*

**A special blessing:** The Church has a custom of blessing homes on the Solemnity of the Epiphany (7th January this year, although usually 6th January). Chalk blessed at all this weekend’s Masses will be available for you to take, together with the instructions to inscribe the blessing on your home.

**Christmastide** traditionally ends on **2nd February** which is the Feast of Our Lord’s Presentation in the Temple and the Purification of Our Lady. We will leave the crib up until then and also the Christmas tree, if it lasts that long!

### **Volunteer church cleaners**

Many thanks to our regular volunteer cleaners, and to those that came to help over the Christmas period, your help was very much appreciated. From Friday the Church will be open for cleaning at the new time of 9.30am -11.30am. More volunteers are needed to help keep our church looking the best it can be. Please come along and help if you are able to, stay for as little, or as long as you like. All cleaning materials are supplied. If you are able to help please can you let Emily, or Elvira know – [elviralallo@icloud.com](mailto:elviralallo@icloud.com). Thank you.

## Prayer for vocations to the priesthood and religious life

**Leader:** Please kneel for our prayer for vocations. Let us ask God to give worthy Priests to His Holy Church and Brothers and Sisters to Religious Orders.

**All:** O God, we earnestly beseech You to bless this diocese with many priests, brothers and sisters, who will gladly spend their entire lives serving Your Church and making You known and loved.

**Leader:** Bless our families. Bless our children.

**All:** Choose from our homes those who are needed for Your work.

**Leader:** Mary, Queen of the Clergy!

**All:** Pray for us. Pray for our priests and religious. Obtain for us many more. Amen.

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## Prayer to Saint Michael

Holy Michael, the Archangel, defend us in the day of battle. Be our safeguard against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray; and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God thrust down to hell Satan and all the wicked spirits who wander through the world for the ruin of souls. Amen.

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**Advance notice:** A new translation of the readings at Mass will come into effect on the First Sunday of Advent this year. We will be using the English Standard Version, Catholic Edition, which is already in use in India. So if anyone is thinking of buying a new hand missal, (if anyone uses a hand missal these days), it's probably best to wait until a version with the new translation of the readings appears. The new translation is said to be more accurate and accessible as well as having a greater dignity.

*Fr Paul*

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**End of Christmastide service** led by the young adults of the Loughborough and Sileby parishes: 4.15pm **Sunday 7th January** in Sacred Heart Church, Park Road. Refreshments will be served afterwards in the parish hall. All welcome.

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## From the Saints

*"What are you doing, O Magi? Do you adore a little Babe, in a wretched hovel, wrapped in miserable rags? Can this Child be truly God? ... Are you become foolish, O Wise Men ... Yes, these Wise Men have become fools that they may be wise"*

(St Bernard of Clairvaux, 1090-1153)

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**Thank you** to all who helped prepare the church for Christmas: our cleaners, flower arrangers and decorators. Thank you also to all who helped enhance the liturgy: our altar servers, readers and musicians, and also our stewards who kept everything running smoothly. All the services were well attended, and I was especially pleased to see the church full at Midnight Mass. There were well over 300 people, by far the greatest number I've seen at Midnight in my time here.

Thank you again for all your greetings, good wishes and gifts to Fr David and myself. As always we are most grateful.

*Fr Paul*

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## Finance

### 24th December

**Collection:** £650 of which £123 was gift-aided  
**Attendance:** 397

### 31st December

**Collection:** £878 of which £160 was gift-aided  
**Attendance:** 505

### Christmas collection

(25th to 29th): £1553

**Standing orders:** £722 @ 30/11, of which £650 was gift-aided

*Thank you*

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