

The Parish of St. Edward the Confessor

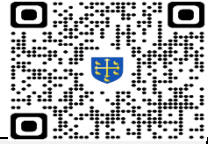
Registered Charity no. 234025

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Newsletter for the week of 29th December 2024

Sunday Readings Cycle C

Weekday Readings Cycle I

Readings for Holy Family Sunday: *Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) 3:2-6, 12-14; Psalm 128 (127); Colossians 3:12-21; Luke 2:41-52*

Saturday 28th Dec 5.30pm 1st MASS of the FEAST of the HOLY FAMILY

Sunday 29th Dec 10.30am MASS of the FEAST of the HOLY FAMILY

Monday 30th Dec 9.15am Mass

Tuesday 31st Dec *Optional: St. Sylvester I, pope*

Wednesday 1st Jan 11.30am Mass *Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God*

Thursday 2nd Jan *SS. Basil the Great & Gregory Nazianzen,*

Friday 3rd Jan 1.00pm Mass (in Hospital Chapel) *Friday of Christmas Season*

Saturday 4th Jan 10.00am Mass *Saturday of the Christmas Season*
10.30-11am Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday 4th Jan 5.30pm 1st Mass of the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord

Sunday 5th Jan 10.30am Mass of the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord

Readings for the Epiphany *Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 70(71); Ephesians 3:2-3, 5-6; Matthew 2:1-12*



Jubilee 2025 started on Christmas Eve by opening of the Holy Door in St. Peter's Basilica. Jubilee '25 has the theme of "Pilgrims of Hope". It's a year of hope & trust for a world suffering from the impacts of war, the ongoing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic & the increased threats to the climate. It's intended as a time of conversion and emphasis on God's mercy & forgiveness of sins. Each Holy Door at the 4 papal basilicas in Rome are destination points for pilgrims, to pass through seeking special graces.

FOOD BANK

The Food Bank is closed until Thursday 2nd January. Collection of Food Bank Items starts again next Sat 4th January.

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

Tues 21st Jan 7.00pm Meeting in the Community Room

DIOCESAN YEAR BOOK

There are a few copies of the 2025 Diocesan Year Book are on sale in the sacristy at the discounted price of £2.00

THANK YOU for YOUR GREAT GENEROSITY

Last Sunday's Collection £288.80

Christmas Clergy Collection £825.16

GET IN TOUCH QUICKLY –IF YOU ARE SICK If you or your relative enters Macclesfield Hospital or East Cheshire Hospice let Fr. Peter C. know as soon as possible tel: 01625 423576 or by e-mail st.edmacc@gmail.com

SCRIPTURE NOTE

The numbering of the Psalms is slightly different because the new lectionary uses the *Hebrew* numbering rather than that of the previous *Greek Septuagint*. Hence for the 4th Advent Sunday C it is Psalm 80 [*Hebrew*] and then in brackets (79) [*Greek Septuagint*]. Similarly, some of the titles of the books of the O.T. are changed e.g. Holy Family Sunday O.T. reading *Sirach* [*Hebrew*] instead of *Ecclesiasticus* [*Greek Septuagint*]

DIARY OF EVENTS

Mon 6th Jan Christ the King Primary School & All Hallows reopen

Tues 7th Jan Start of 1st Sacraments Programme

Ash Wednesday 5th March

Easter Sunday 20th April

The Peace & Blessings for the New Year Fr. Peter

A Pastoral Letter for Sunday 29th December, Feast of the Holy Family On the Opening of the Holy Year 2025



My dear brothers and sisters,

On Christmas Eve, Pope Francis opened the Holy Door of Saint Peter's in Rome for the Jubilee Year 2025. The Church celebrates a jubilee every 25 years, drawing on the Biblical tradition of a year celebrated to manifest

God's mercy by freeing the imprisoned, writing off debts and re-setting relationships by a universal pardonⁱ. The Church now commends such a moment of grace to us so that we might be moved to seek forgiveness for our sins; conversion of life; and reconciliation with our neighbour. Pope Francis writes: "*Now the time has come for a new Jubilee, when once more the Holy Door is flung open to invite everyone to an intense experience of the love of God*"ⁱⁱ.

Tens of millions will travel to Rome as pilgrims and in this Shrewsbury Diocese, I have established the Cathedral and Saint Joseph's Eucharistic Shrine in Stockport as places for local pilgrimage. The Gospel tells of the pilgrimage made by Our Lady and Saint Joseph which became the joyful mystery of finding Jesus in the Templeⁱⁱⁱ. Today we reflect how our pilgrimage to Mass each Sunday - invites us 'to seek and find anew' the same Jesus present in the Mystery of the Eucharist. The Holy Father prays this year will be such a renewed encounter for us all "*a moment of genuine personal encounter with the Lord Jesus, the door of our salvation ...*"^{iv}.

Pope Francis has placed hope at the heart of this Jubilee celebration. He writes, may this be "*A Holy Year marked by the hope that does not fade hope in God. May it help us to recover the confident trust that we require, in the Church and in society, in our interpersonal relations, in our task of promoting the dignity of all persons and respect for God's gift of creation*"^v. Christian hope is ultimately the hope of Heaven, for nothing less corresponds to the longing placed in the human heart. The Catechism explains: "*Hope is the theological virtue by which we desire the kingdom of heaven and eternal life as our happiness, placing our trust in Christ's promises ...*"^{vi}. As Saint Augustine so memorably wrote of this hope: "*you have made us for yourself, O Lord, our hearts are restless till they rest in you*"^{vii}.

This hope does not lead us to care less about our present lives or this passing world, rather it leads us to care more, much more! The fact that this world is the way to another, "the life of the world to come," charges the whole of our lives with new purpose. Pope Francis gives practical examples of how this supernatural hope opens the door to see our lives and our world anew. This, he writes, enables us to untiringly seek peace in a world threatened by war and conflict; to be open to the gift of life in countries witnessing an alarming decline in the birthrate, since the desire of young people to give birth to new sons and daughters is born of hope; this same hope brings us closer to the sick and the elderly and helps us see in a new light the plight of the poor and most vulnerable, of prisoners, exiles and refugees. The hope we have received, insists Pope Francis, leads us to forgive others, for while forgiveness cannot change what happened in the past "*it can allow us to change the future and live different lives, free of anger ...*"^{viii}.

In inviting us to seek the Jubilee Indulgence for ourselves and for our loved ones departed, Pope Francis reminds us that we are never alone in our struggle to reach the goal of Heaven. We are united in the Mystical Body of Christ with all those striving on earth, with those being purified in purgatory and with all the saints who have reached everlasting happiness. With the help of their prayers and the indulgence of the whole Church, the Holy Father points to the hope of final purification which we call 'purgatory'. For - in the face of the sins and repeated failures that you and I confess - we dare hope for that holiness which is necessary to share the joy of Heaven. As Pope Benedict beautifully wrote, before Christ's gaze all falsehood will melt away as "the holy power of his love sears through us like a flame, enabling us to become totally ourselves and thus totally of God"^{ix}.

Together in this pilgrimage, in the company of Our Lady, Saint Joseph and all the saints may we be such 'pilgrims of hope.' In time and for eternity, may we find His love and mercy.

+ **Mark**

Bishop of Shrewsbury

i Cf. Leviticus 25:8-55

ii Spes non Confundit No. 6 iii Cf. Lk.2: 41-52

iv Spes non Confundit No. 1 v Spes non Confundit No. 24

vi Catechism of the Catholic Church No. 1817 vii The Confessions of Saint Augustine' 1,1

viii Spes non Confundit No. 23 ix Spe Salvi No. 47

THE *Wednesday* WORD



Encountering Christ The Wednesday Prayer Custom for Homes, Schools & Parishes

Prayerfully preparing for Sunday Mass with special prayers for our school families



Set aside 10-15 minutes and create a suitable environment by removing any distractions. Make sure that you are comfortable. Perhaps light a candle. Make the sign of the cross and remain still for a minute of settling silence.



Remember that through this scripture our Lord is truly present. Read the Gospel, aloud and slowly, and pay attention to any words that stand out. If any do, meditate on them for a few minutes and be invited into a dialogue with God.

1

Read

The Gospel for Sunday 29th December 2024

THE CHILD JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

Every year the parents of Jesus used to go to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up for the feast as usual. When they were on their way home after the feast, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem without his parents knowing it. They assumed he was with the caravan and it was only after a day's journey that they went to look for him among their relations and acquaintances. When they failed to find him they went back to Jerusalem looking for him everywhere. Three days later, they found him in the Temple, sitting among the doctors, listening to them, and asking them questions; and all those who heard him were astounded at his intelligence and his replies. They were overcome when they saw him, and his mother said to him, "My child, why have you done this to us? See how worried your father and I have been, looking for you." "Why were you looking for me?" he replied. "Did you not know that I must be busy with my Father's affairs." But they did not understand what he meant. He then went down with them and came to Nazareth and lived under their authority. His mother stored up all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom, in stature, and in favour with God and men.

Taken from Luke 2:41-52 The Feast of the Holy Family, Year C

2

Reflect

After reading the Gospel, did any words stand out? If they did, ponder or discuss them before proceeding with the reflection.

After spending a few minutes considering this Gospel, continue by reading Fr Henry Wansbrough's reflection.

This little incident, the only one told of Jesus' youth, has two attractive lessons for us. Firstly, it is a joy to see Jesus behaving just like any other twelve-year-old. He was a real child, and a child of that age goes off exploring, adventuring, unhesitatingly sure that the all-powerful, all-knowing parents will know where he or she has gone; parents, meanwhile, worry themselves sick at the unexplained disappearance of their child. Mary, the young mother, knows her son and the ways of the twelve-year-old. She does not scold or expostulate, but just accepts what he says with love and relief. Secondly, Jesus' reply gives us a glimpse of his relationship to the Father. The phrase 'with my Father's affairs' may equally well be translated 'in my Father's house', but either translation indicates Jesus' total absorption with his Father. What does it mean to be "busy with my Father's affairs"? What changes would this make in your life?

Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB

3

Respond & Request

Now slowly and prayerfully read the Gospel once again but this time in silence. Consider how this Gospel could apply to your life in general. Thank God for any insight you may have received.

Then ask God to bless you with a spiritual gift to help you act on any resolution you have made. Perhaps: love, hope, understanding, wisdom, faithfulness, peace, patience, humility, joy, forgiveness, self-control, courage, generosity, faith or something else.

4

Pray for Families

This Wednesday's word for our school families is WISDOM !

After praying for your loved ones, please remember to pray for our present and future Church, particularly for the families connected to our schools. You may want to conclude this special weekly time with a simple prayer such as:

St Joseph, Patron Saint of Families and Protector of the Church, pray for us. Mary, Star of Evangelisation, pray for us. 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.

WEDNESDAY WORD PLUS †

Fr Henry's reflections on the first and second readings of **Sunday 29th December 2024**



1st Reading: Ecclesiasticus 3:2-6. 12-14

Honour Your Father & Your Mother

The Lord honours the father in his children, and upholds the rights of a mother over her sons. Whoever respects his father is atoning for his sins; he who honours his mother is like someone amassing a fortune. Whoever respects his father will be happy with children of his own; he shall be heard on the day when he prays. Long life comes to him who honours his father; he who sets his mother at ease is showing obedience to the Lord. My son, support your father in his old age; do not grieve him during his life. Even if his mind should fail, show him sympathy; do not despise him in your health and strength; for kindness to a father shall not be forgotten but will serve as reparation for your sins.



The Book of Ecclesiasticus is a collection of wise instructions on how to behave in accordance with the Law. The author must have been an expert in the Law, living in Jerusalem. He sees the Law not as a tiresome set of rules to be obeyed but as God's loving gift to his People, to show them how they should act to keep close to God. The Law is therefore to be treasured, a guide of inestimable value. The reading for today is a meditation and expansion on the commandment, 'Honour your father and your mother', explaining just how this should be put into practice. And what was Jesus' relationship like with his parents? What was he like as a baby? Did he cry? He must have done, to make his baby feelings known. Did he bawl and howl? Did he cry when he scraped the skin off his knees? Did he fall out of trees and break his arm? Did he make mistakes? Did he play pranks? He must have made jokes. He must have been a wonderful joy to his parents – loving, delightful company, full of the devastatingly simple wisdom of children. And they must have been loving, *wonderful company for him too, an anchor of affection and security.*

What would it mean in our society today to truly "honour" our parents and those who are elderly?

**This is the challenge:
that we really act as
God's people.**



2nd Reading: Colossians 3:12-21

The Overcoat of Love

You are God's chosen race, his saints; he loves you and you should be clothed in sincere compassion, in kindness and humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with one another; forgive each other as soon as a quarrel begins. The Lord has forgiven you; now you must do the same. Over all these clothes, to keep them together and complete them, put on love. And may the peace of Christ reign in your hearts, because it is for this that you were called together as parts of one body. Always be thankful. Let the message of Christ, in all its richness, find a home with you. Teach each other, and advise each other, in all wisdom. With gratitude in your hearts sing psalms and hymns and inspired songs to God; and never say or do anything except in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Wives, give way to your husbands, as you should in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and treat them with gentleness. Children, be obedient to your parents always, because that is what will please the Lord. Parents, never drive your children to resentment or you will make them feel frustrated.



In an incredibly short space the Letter to the Colossians gives a whole series of instructions on living in community: compassion, forgiveness, love and peace – not to mention gratitude. Love is a sort of overcoat, holding all the other qualities together. If we reflect on these qualities and put them into practice there can be no rivalry or hostility in the Christian community – even within a family, where the strains of Christmas may at times make love grow thin! However, a loving family is the model for the different relationships of a loving Christian community. God's loving parenting is the model for human parentage, and Christ's devotion to his body, the Church, is the model for the devotion of spouses to one another. Today's reading begins with an inspiring reminder that we form the chosen people of God; God's choice of us leaves us little alternative other than to behave as God's people. The Letter also counsels us to do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus; Christians are those over whom the name of the Lord Jesus has been called, making us members of his company and putting us under his power. This is the challenge: that we really act as God's people.

How are we to live fully as a Christian community?

The Wednesday Word Connecting Home, School & Parish through the Word of God

**The Wednesday Word is under the patronage of St Joseph, Patron Saint of Families and Protector of the Church
Within the tradition of the Catholic Church, each Wednesday is dedicated to St Joseph**