

MASS TIMES & INTENTIONS FOR WEEK COMMENCING 21st DECEMBER

Sunday, 21 December – Fourth Sunday of Advent – Purple

5.30 pm (Saturday) GEORGE MARTIN, R.I.P. Ann Martin
 – ☉ Daystar
10 am inc. Children's LAURENCE LYNCH, R.I.P. Martha Quick
 Liturgy
 A SPECIAL CHRISTINGLE SERVICE IN THE CHILDREN'S LITURGY

Monday, 22 December – Feria – Purple – ☉ King of the nations

8 am BILL & DORIS TAPSTER, R.I.P.

Tuesday, 23 December – Feria – Purple – ☉ Emmanuel

9 am EXPOSITION

9.30 am THOMAS MURRAY, R.I.P. Teresa Jones
 (Teresa's brother)

Wednesday, 24 December, Christmas Eve – Feria – Purple (Mass of the Day)

10 am TESS LIVERSEY, R.I.P.

☿ ☿ ☿ **THE CHRISTMAS VIGIL** – White ☿ ☿ ☿

8.30 pm CAROLS AND READINGS

9 pm FIRST MASS OF THE NATIVITY and BLESSING OF THE CRIB
 THE PARISHIONERS

Thursday, 25 December – THE NATIVITY OF JESUS (CHRISTMAS DAY)

8.30 am (with Carols) FR. JOHN'S INTENTION

10.30 am (with Carols) EILEEN DAVIS Christine



Friday, 26 December – St. Stephen – Red

Stephen was Christianity's first martyr. Tried by the Sanhedrin for blasphemy against Moses and God and speaking against the Temple and the Law, he was stoned to death (c. A.D. 34–35) by an infuriated mob encouraged by Saul of Tarsus, the future Saint Paul.

10 am (with Carols) FR. DENIS FINBAR BARRY

Saturday, 27 December – St. John the Evangelist – Red

John the Evangelist was one of Christ's original twelve apostles; the only one to live into old age; and not martyred for his faith. Author of the Gospel of John, three Epistles, and the Book of Revelations. Originally a fisherman with his brother James, both were called by Christ. John identifies himself in his Gospel as "the disciple whom Jesus loved".

10 am (with Carols) SHIRLEY & ADRIAN – Diamond Wedding Colleen

10.45 am & 4.45 pm Confession

Sunday, 26 December – Feast of The Holy Family – White

5.30 pm (Saturday) ALBERT RUSSELL, R.I.P. Paul Murray

10 am Children's Liturgy JOAN GRIEVE Christine

IF YOU WANT TO CONTACT THE NEWSLETTER CALL 835630 or EMAIL: office@stpeterswestgate.co.uk

PETRINEWS

St. Peter's Church, Westgate-on-Sea

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Fourth Sunday of Advent (B) – 21st December, 2008

Christmas is just days away when we can celebrate the birth of our Saviour; an event the Israelites had looked forward to for hundreds of years. But most of them missed it! They were anticipating some great regal birth; a birth highlighted, as those of our Royal family would be today, with all the pomp, all the special attention of the media; a total focus by the citizens – high and low – on this new prince. In fact what our Jewish ancestors really wanted, so desired was a warrior prince, a prince to lead them yet again out of bondage, out of Roman subjugation. Instead they got The Prince of Peace, a prince who wasn't to be the champion of their kingdom but the child who was to be the King of Kings. It only goes to show what can happen when we build up our expectations, when we mould them to our desires and dreams so they bear no relationship to either our needs or our worth. The common theme of the readings today is about doing the will of the Lord, being obedient to his wishes, and trusting in the path he guides us down. The first reading is from the Book of Samuel. It is the beginning of the settled Kingdom of Israel. Prior to this the Israelites had been a nomadic people and a warrior people. David takes on the mantle of the King, builds himself a house to live in. It is in the word 'house' that the Lord focuses



our attention through the writings of Samuel. In Hebrew the word used was 'bayit' and like in English this has a dual meaning: house as in bricks and mortar, but also house as in dynasty – in the same way as we talk about the 'House of Windsor' when we refer to our own royal family. So it is that we have Samuel prophesying the Dynasty which leads to the birth of the Saviour, Jesus Christ. God commissioned David to take on this role as leader, as the first king of a unified monarchy, someone who no longer followed the sheep, as they wandered about the land, he began to lead them to a settled home – the Lord says: *and your throne be established for ever*. If this meant the physical throne of the Kingdom of Israel then that wasn't achieved, for Israel was still to suffer under various dominations by their more powerful neighbours, even until comparatively recent times this has been so. The 'for ever' surely must relate to the 'for ever' of the Kingdom of God, whose Prince was born out of the Line, and from the royal Dynasty created by David. St. Paul too, in his letter to the Romans, encourages those new Christians to be obedient to the faith. Those outside the natural family of the Jewish founding fathers have through the teachings of Paul and his fellow Apostles received the Word in scripture. It is through scripture that the foundations of the wider kingdom of God is established. What greater example of obedience do we have than that of the Virgin Mary. In the reading we hear today the Angel Gabriel announcing to Mary that she is to bear a son. I imagine that the news of any first pregnancy is greeted with equal amounts of joy and trepidation by most young mothers-to-be; for along with the happiness comes the 'what-ifs'. It is the life change which launches a young woman, and in Mary's case most probably a young fifteen year old girl, into a nine month journey of maturity. So we can, perhaps, relate

CONTINUED INSIDE

PLEASE REMEMBER TO TAKE AN ENVELOPE IN WHICH YOU CAN MAKE YOUR SPECIAL CHRISTMAS COLLECTION OFFERING TO FR. JOHN, ON EITHER CHRISTMAS EVE OR CHRISTMAS DAY, FOR HIS DEDICATED SERVICE TO US ALL DURING THE PAST YEAR, SO PLEASE BE GENEROUS

Fr. John Writes:-

Today's Mass is a great song to the everlasting love of God revealed in his covenant (love-pact) with his people. We praise the mystery of his love kept secret for endless ages, but now revealed through a new ark of the covenant, Mary of Nazareth.

On Wednesday night we come together to celebrate the birth of a Child who was to bring the joy of God's saving love to the whole world. And we make our own jubilant cry of the angels: "Glory to God in the Highest".

Today at the Gospel Acclamation we sing "O Daystar" the ancient title today of the Messiah.

■ CHRISTMAS CAKE SALE TODAY, SUNDAY, 21 DECEMBER

A special fund raising Cake Sale by the SVP takes place after the Sunday Mass. They wish to provide "goodie bags" for the poor and 'shut-ins' this Christmas. **PLEASE SUPPORT THE VALUABLE WORK UNDERTAKEN BY OUR WESTGATE S.V.P.**

■ CHRISTMAS DRAW

Last weekend, on Saturday, 13 December, we had the Grand Christmas Draw. The two main cash prizes were won by Kate Doohan (£150) and Mary Lane (£50). Fr. John wishes to thank everyone who purchased tickets and also those who stayed behind after Mass for the draw, particularly Pat and May who provided the refreshments. The Draw raised an excellent £418.35p. A full list of winners is on the porch noticeboard.

**YEAR OF ST. PAUL
2008 - 2009**

From the second letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians (ch 5: v 1)

There is a house built by God for us, an everlasting home not made by human hands, in the heavens.

STOP PRESS: CHRISTMAS CAROL CONCERT RAISED OVER £407 FOR ED-AID AND WILL GO TOWARDS PROVIDING LIVING ACCOMMODATION FOR TEACHERS AT A CATHOLIC SCHOOL IN GAMBIA –WELL DONE EVERYONE

■ PICK UP RED BOXES

Please remember to collect your Red Box from the sacristy in the next two weeks ready to start the New Year filling them again.

■ CHRISTINGLE TODAY

Today, Sunday at the 10 am Mass, we will have our Christingle Celebration, an addition to the liturgy which expresses to our children the love that Jesus has for them and showing them that he is the light of the world.

■ CONFIRMATION 2009

ST. PETER'S ON 10th MAY

St. Peter's will host the Deanery Confirmation Celebration this coming year. It will be at 3 pm in the afternoon. Any young person 13 years and over, or any adult not yet Confirmed please contact Fr. John soon.

■ CHRISTMAS POSTERS

The Knights of St. Columba provide us with Christmas Posters each year. Please take one and display in your prominent window, that we are celebrating CHRIST'S BIRTHDAY.

■ REMINDER

If you have a child born between 1/9/04 and 31/8/05 that they need to apply for a place in a Primary School NOW. See poster in porch or apply online: www.kent.gov.uk/ola

■ EVENTS COMMITTEE

To coordinate events such as the Christmas Fair, Summer Fete, etc. Members of the Parish are encouraged to join the organising committee. The first meeting will take place on Monday, 9 February. Please let Fr. John or Phil know that you wish to join.

■ CAROL CONCERT

Last Thursday evening we had our annual Christmas Carol Service in the Church, with over 140 attending. Once again the magnificent Whitstable Brass provided the music, both their own pieces and as accompaniment to the audience as they sung some well known carols as well as a modern selection of seasonal tunes. As well as thanking the band we also thank Colleen for getting the church prepared for the evening, and Frances, Christine, Margaret and Eunice who provided the refreshments.

■ 100 CLUB WINNERS

The December 100 Club draw took place last Saturday. This traditionally is the biggest prize draw of the 100 Club. The winners were: £200 (19) Pat Briggs, £50 (28) Kate Doohan and £30 (12) Ann Martin

■ MASS ATTENDANCES

Third Sunday of Advent

Saturday (13 December)	5.30 pm	38
Sunday (14 December)	10 am	110

FROM THE FRONT

to the news of her forthcoming pregnancy, but hold on this wasn't just an ordinary matter of conception and discovering the fact. First of all the woman was a virgin! Then the giver of the news was an angel. No wonder Luke records Mary's initial reaction as: *She was deeply disturbed by these words.* Given the situation that seems a slight understatement. OK, Mary having digested the first bombshell, then this angel goes on to tell her that *the Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David . . . and his rule will have no end.* What more exalted position could any Jewish mother wish for her son – to be King of the Israelites, *rule over the House of Jacob* – the unbelievable just got preposterous! Can you imagine the torrent of thought which must have been passing through that young girl's head? For those of us who have experienced the joy of parenthood, especially that first occasion when, mixed in with the feelings of euphoria, there is the nagging doubts of "how will we cope" or worse still the selfish worries about how it would affect me, am I capable, do I know what to do, where's the money coming from, and so on. In these days of state help and assistance we know that young people can be cushioned from the effects of a sudden, maybe unplanned pregnancy. However, place yourself in first century Palestine. Just be a spectator for a moment; let your thoughts be those of the village pump crowd. What gossip was Mary going to face; just out of the seclusion of the Temple, forced out by the Rabbi and told to get married, despite her vow of virginity. So a suitable male, Joseph, is found to whom she can be betrothed without the immediate prospect – if ever – of a marriage taking place. Remember the Angel wasn't saying to Mary "you are pregnant". No, conception was still to happen by the Holy Spirit; never-the-less Mary agreed to the call of the Lord, the duty of God's wish, obedient to his will: *I am the handmaid of the Lord, let what you have said be done to me.* If only we could have just a fraction of the unquestioning faith which Mary shows us. If only we too could be prepared to face the calumny for our witnesses and beliefs which almost certainly would have been the prospect for Mary as she moved about her home village. A young, simple girl from the back-waters of northern Palestine propelled by God, chosen by God, to bear a son *who will be great and will be called Son of the Most High.*

Your Prayers are asked for:

Those who are sick: Fr. Barry who remains seriously ill, Teresa Rowan, Archbishop Kevin, Sister Anna, Eva Brewer, Pat Whaley, Len Lane, Peg Bunnage, Sister Stephen, Myra Taylor and Canon William Clements.

Hope Sloly working in the Congo/Rwandan region of Africa and Sean McNiff in Afghanistan.

Anniversaries this week:

Sarah Harington (1994), Albert Roberson (2000), Christopher Murray (2004), Winifred Livesey (2004).

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Confessions on Saturdays from approx. 10.30am until 11am and 4.45pm until 5.15pm. Other times by appointment.

HOLY COMMUNION

We warmly welcome all non-Catholic to our services. It is not permitted, however, to receive Holy Communion until a person is received into full membership of the Catholic Church. If you would like to know more about this, please contact Fr. John.