

MASS TIMES & INTENTIONS FOR WEEK COMMENCING 28th DECEMBER

Sunday, 28 December – Feast of The Holy Family – White

5.30 pm (Saturday) ALBERT RUSSELL, R.I.P. Paul Murray
10 am inc. Children's Liturgy JOAN GRIEVE Christine

Monday, 29 December – St. Thomas of Canterbury – Red

Thomas of Canterbury, known as Thomas Becket, (1118 – 1170) He was born in Cheapside, London and educated at Merton Priory, Paris and Bologna. On his return to England he became Archdeacon of Canterbury and Provost of Beverley. Soon he was chosen by King Henry II to be Lord Chancellor. After Thomas became Archbishop of Canterbury, in 1162, there ensued a conflict with King Henry over the rights and privileges of the Church and was assassinated by followers of the king in Canterbury Cathedral on this day in 1170.

MASS TIME CHANGE

10 am Wefare of RON ALDRIDGE Joan Grieve

Tuesday, 30 December – Sixth day of Christmas Octave – White

9 am EXPOSITION
9.30 am Victoria, Sammy & Darcy Dad

Wednesday, 31 December – Seventh day of Christmas Octave – White

10 am SISTER MOYA – Diamond Jubilee

Thursday, 1 January, 2009 – The Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God – White

9.30 am EXPOSITION
10 am FRANCES HOUCHIN, R.I.P. Judi

Friday, 2 January, 2009 – SS Basil & Gregory Nazianzen – White

Two great teachers of the Eastern Church both came from the Cappadocian region of inland Turkey and are called theologians of the 'Cappadocian School'. They were friends as university students in Athens and later as monks. Basil was born in 330. He became Bishop of Caesarea in 370, and died in 379. Gregory, was the son of a bishop, and ordained comparatively late in life. Later consecrated by Basil as bishop of Sasima. He died in 389.

10 am JAMES DOLAN, R.I.P. Teresa & John McCarthy

Saturday, 3 January, 2009 – The Most Holy Name of Jesus – White

This feast commemorates the circumcision of the child Jesus; as recounted in the Gospel read on that day, "at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb" (Luke 2:21).

10 am LESLEY GOLDSMITH – New Catholic Frances Tunney
10.45 am & 4.45 pm Confession

Sunday, 4 January, 2009 – Feast of The Epiphany of the Lord – White

This feast celebrates the epiphany (manifestation) of Christ to the Gentiles, symbolized by Christ's manifestation to the Magi (Wise Men). The word Magi comes from the Latin word meaning "sage." These particular sages were possibly Zoroastrian astrologers from Persia.

5.30 pm (Saturday) BERYL LIND, R.I.P. Ray Lind
10 am Children's Liturgy FRANCIS CARNEY, R.I.P. Teresa Jones

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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Feast of the Holy Family (B) – 28th December, 2008

In today's first reading from Genesis we have the scene set for some of the future events which would prove important in our understanding of the scripture message. There is some little ambiguity in the way the reading has taken verses from this part of Genesis. We have the Lord speaking to Abram in a vision. He tells Abram that he will have children, and so he does. Scripture tells us that his wife, Sarai, who is barren, allows him to 'marry' her Egyptian slave girl, Hagar, who duly produces a son, Ishmael – bear in mind that Abram is 86 years old at this stage. Thirteen years later the Lord again speaks to Abram and makes a Covenant with him: *you shall become the father of a multitude of nations*. The Lord also changes his name to Abraham. It is in this covenant that the Jewish ritual of circumcision is established. In all 135 verses are skipped between the passages of this reading. During this section again we have a name change, for Sarai becomes Sarah as part of the covenant, also God tells Abraham that she will conceive a child, a son for him, even though she is well past child-bearing age. This son was born and called Isaac – Abraham was now one hundred years old! That's the scene set: leader, heirs, specially conceived son. St. Paul moves us on another 30 verses in the Genesis story. In his letter to the Hebrews, to the Jewish followers of Christ, most probably the Jewish priestly class who were listening to the words of the New Testament – the revised covenant, a covenant made by God's Son on our behalf – Paul recounts that part of Genesis when there is a sacrificial challenge laid down by God to Abraham; a challenge to ritually slaughter his true heir, his son Isaac, kill him on an altar, an altar built by Abraham. God said: *Take your son, your only child Isaac, whom you love . . . offer him as a burnt offering*. This text



reminds the readers of the part their Old Testament predecessors played in fulfilling the journey which the Lord our God made them take. And the whole of chapter eleven is about faith. The last verse of chapter ten concludes: *. . . we are the sort who keep faithful until our souls are saved*. Then for the first thirty verses of eleven, within the first few words of each paragraph, the word 'faith' appears. Starting with: *Only faith can guarantee . . .* just take a look at the second reading, the fourth word in the first (v8) and third (v19) paragraphs is 'faith', and so is the fifth word in the second (v12) paragraph. We see from the part of Genesis Paul is referring to that God is testing Abraham. It is quite a dramatic picture painted by the writer of Genesis as Abraham, now alone with his son Isaac, sets off up the mountain chosen by God as the place of sacrifice. Isaac even carries the wood needed for the sacrifice on his own back, placed there by his father, who carries the fire and knife needed to perform the sacrificial act. To heighten the drama Isaac asks his father: *but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?* Abraham answers: *My son, God will provide the lamb*. All these elements are to be found in the

CONTINUED INSIDE

Fr. John Writes:-

On this Sunday, just after the excitement of Christmas Night, we celebrate the Holy Family of Nazareth, which is the model for all who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.

Thursday of this week marks the beginning of the Civil Year, and we mark this by celebrating the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God. So let us ask Mary to be with us on our journey into 2009.

Last Saturday night I was struck with a virulent bug which put me to bed and only through the help of Antibiotics I am beginning to make a recovery. Thank you for your prayers, good wishes and practical help.

■ THANK YOU HERNE BAY

Fr. John, together with all the parishioners, wish to give their sincere thanks to both Fr. Malachy and Fr. Charles, who are Passionists from Herne Bay, for kindly covering the Sunday Mass last weekend and the Christmas Eve and Day services this past week.

■ FR. JOSEPH DIES

Last week we had the sad news that Fr. Joe Levins had died. He was a former Parish Priest at Minster. May he rest in peace.

■ CHRISTMAS CAKE SALE

Last Sunday there was a special fund raising Cake Sale by the SVP after the Sunday Mass in the Hall. Thank you to all those who took time to visit the cake stall and buy some products. The event raised £72 for the SVP funds which will have been spent on goodies for the less fortunate this Christmas time. If you didn't make the

Cake Sale remember the SVP are always willing to take your donations, any time – just see Sr. Helen.

■ YOUR CHRISTMAS OFFERINGS

Last week you should have taken an envelope in which to make your Christmas Offertory gift to Fr. John. Judging by the envelopes left over it seems that some may have forgotten. But don't worry. It's not too late. Just pick up another envelope – or any envelope and mark it Christmas Offerings – and place it in the offertory collection along with your normal weekly collection.

■ IF YOU HAVEN'T DONE SO . . .

Please remember to collect your Red Box from the sacristy this week ready to start the New Year filling them again.

■ TEA & COFFEE MONEY

This weekend Beryl will present Fr. John with £60 for the Church Funds. This money raised through the sale of Tea and Coffee after the 10 am Mass each week.

■ A HEARTY THANKS

Fr. John took a few minutes to peek into the church late on Christmas Eve afternoon. Having seen the beautifully adorned church he wishes to thank all the people who have worked so hard in getting it ready for this festive celebration. "There was a hive of activity this afternoon (Christmas Eve) with flower arrangers in every quarter, I hear".

■ CONFIRMATION 2009 ST. PETER'S ON 10th MAY

Any young person 13 years and over, or any adult not yet Confirmed please contact Fr. John soon.

**TEA & COFFEE IN THE HALL
AFTER 10 am MASS ~ 20p**

■ DOUBLE GOOD NEWS

Christmas Eve Fr. John took a phone call from some friends in Herne Bay. It was to announce the birth of identical TWIN girls to Amy and Christopher Wright, a sister for Jasmin . . . a lovely Christmas present for Christopher's parents who called Fr. John.

■ PARISH CENSUS

Prompted by the sudden illness of Fr. John, and the need to make last minute changes to the weekly schedule, it would be handy if there was some record of parishioners email addresses and mobile numbers for text messages. So during the first couple of weeks of January please pick-up and complete a Parish Census form.

■ MASS ATTENDANCES

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Saturday (20 December) 5.30 pm 46
Sunday (21 December) 10 am 78

FROM THE FRONT

Way of the Cross as Christ Jesus became the sacrificial victim, the carrier of wood on his back, and through that sacrifice he also became the Lamb of God – perhaps in this context that the nice fluffy lamb depicted by artists throughout the ages ought to be the blood-splattered carcass of a slaughtered lamb! But back to Abraham and the offering of his son. Maybe the scripture writer should have added a line which said: how would you feel about that? For if I consider what was asked of this 'giant' of our Jewish ancestry there is no way, no way at all, that I would for even one nanosecond have considered sacrificing a child of mine. We all, in moments where we hear about children who have died through illness or in tragic circumstances, have imagine how their parents must be feeling. No doubt there are some of us here today who will have experienced the loss of a child and, what I can only guess, is the tremendous heartache that will have caused, probably still causes. But to agree to sacrifice your own flesh and blood, to make the type of preparations which Abraham had to make is beyond the pail, beyond parental comprehension. What great faith that man must have had. But faith prevailed – the part of faith which is trust – a trust that the message of God, the direct message of God as spoken to Abraham should be not just heard but acted upon as well. For whatever we do for God, really do for God and not our own pleasure and engrandisement, will be rewarded, possibly not in the way we expect or hope for but in God our Father's way. The ritual sacrifice continues in the Gospel of Luke as he relates the story of Christ's presentation at the temple in Jerusalem. Simeon, thought to be one of the translators of the Book of Isaiah, takes hold of the Christ Child, blesses him and utters his words of faith, faith *that he would not see death until he had set eyes on the Christ of the Lord*. He also foretells of the suffering which will pierce the heart of Mary, our Blessed Lady, for rejection of his people, the fall and the rising of Israel – does that hint at resurrection? From here on in we leave Jesus to the love and care of the Holy Family, the Christ, the chosen one disappears from public life with one brief exception when, at the age of twelve, he is found in the Temple both listening to and reflecting on the Laws of Moses. But Christ's journey to the Cross, his journey to our salvation had already begun for as he said in the temple to Mary and Joseph: *Did you not know I must be busy with my Father's affairs?*

Your Prayers are asked for:

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

Anniversaries this week:

Ivy McLoughlin (1990), Brigid Monks (1990), Anne Cuskelly (1993), Tarcisio Sanguigni (1994), Joseph Sweeney (1994), Jessie Hurt (1995), Patrick Rooney (1997), Mary de Lloyd (2004), Kathleen Burton (2206).

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.

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

From the letter of St. Paul to the Hebrews (ch 10: v 23)

Let us keep firm in the faith we profess, because the one who made the promise is faithful.