



ST FRANCIS XAVIER'S CATHOLIC CHURCH HEREFORD

Parish Priest Dom James Hood. Assistant Priest Dom John George.
19 Broad St. Hereford, HR4 9AP Tel: 01432 273485: www.sfxhereford.org.uk
Hospital Chaplain: Fr Patrick Lobo 07922323603



Parish Administrator: John Cook
Email: hereford2@rcadc.org
Office hours: 9am –1pm (not Tuesday)

SFX Parish School Headteacher:
Mrs Elizabeth Christopherson
Tel: 01432 273941

Parish Safeguarding Officer:
Mrs Margaret Daron
Email: safeguardingsfx01@gmail.com

Dear Friends, On Monday 6th January Fr John and I will have been here at Saint Francis Xavier's for six weeks. I thank you for the welcome you have given us. We arrived just before the start of Advent, a beautiful season when we open our hearts to the coming of God at the end of time. As the season moves on, we prepare ourselves for Christ's first coming- the Incarnation: God coming into our world as a man like us in all things except sin. The baby Jesus was born in a cold, damp and draughty stable in Bethlehem. As we moved closer to Christmas the Church sang in its evening prayer an antiphon with the Magnificat that began with the letter O. All the antiphons express a desire that God will come and free all those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. Christ has come and we celebrated his coming joyfully and prayerfully. It was wonderful to see so many taking part in the four Christmas masses. The Light of Christ shone in the hearts of all of you. St Bernard in one of his homilies expresses this beautifully: And behold, to you the price of our salvation is offered. If you consent, straightway shall we be freed. In the eternal Word of God were we all made, and lo! we die; by one little word of yours in answer shall we all be made alive. Today we celebrate the Epiphany of the Lord – the manifestation of God's glory. We think of the three kings bringing their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The psalmist writes: The Lord has made his salvation known; in the sight of the nations he has revealed his justice. On Christmas Eve Pope Francis opened the Holy Door in St Peter's marking the start of the Holy Year. May this year be a time of renewal and growth in the love of God. May the star of brightness shine in our hearts and may we bring that light of God's peace and beauty to others. **Fr James**

Liturgical Calendar January 2025 Yr C Psalter Wk 2

| | | | |
|----------|--|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Sat 4th | 10.30am | Weekday before the Epiphany | Holy Souls |
| Sat 4th | 11.00am | Confessions and Adoration | |
| Sat 4th | 6.00pm | THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD | Dwarka Prasad RIP |
| Sun 5th | 8.00am | THE EPIPHANY | Sue Young RIP |
| Sun 5th | 10.00am | THE EPIPHANY | Catherine Warr RIP |
| Mon 6th | 9.30am | Monday after the Epiphany | John, James, Thomas, (McSherry) |
| Tue 7th | No Mass here. Mass at Our Lady's at 9.30am | | |
| Wed 8th | 1pm | Wednesday after the Epiphany | Supple Family |
| Thu 9th | 9.30am | Thursday after the Epiphany | Paul Meakin RIP |
| Fri 10th | 1.00pm | Friday after the Epiphany | Theresa Thomas RIP |
| Sat 11th | 10.30am | Saturday after the Epiphany | Private Intention |
| Sat 11th | 11.00am | Confessions and Adoration | |
| Sat 11th | 6.00pm | The Baptism of The Lord (Feast) | The Parish |
| Sun 12th | 8.00am | The Baptism of The Lord | Kingston Family |
| Sun 12th | 10.00am | The Baptism of The Lord | Holy Souls |

Pope's Prayer Intention – January 2025

In January, with pray with Pope Francis for migrants, refugees and those affected by war, that their right to an education, which is necessary to build a better world, will always be respected. *May the Christian community always be prepared to defend the rights of those who are vulnerable, opening wide its doors to welcome them, lest anyone ever be robbed of the hope of a better future. Pope Francis, Jubilee 2025 letter (Bull of Indiction),*

On Wednesday the 8th January we welcome a visit from Chile of a group of lay Benedictine women called the Manquehue Apostolic community. After visiting Belmont they will be joining us for the 1.00pm Mass and then after a shared lunch will be giving a short talk and explanation on the work they do. It would be lovely if any parishioner wanted to come and meet the community and join in the lunch.



We remember all who have died and those whose anniversaries occur about this time: Wiktor Daron, Kenneth Foulkes, Michael Flynn, Elizabeth Kerr, Tadeusz Sapiecha, Joseph Greene, Lydia Cone, Pat Franklin.



Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen

Pray for the Sick: Fr Keith, Ania Kuzba, Jan Beavan, Robbie Bell, Brian Symonds, Meg Furber, Ann Currie, Midad Jasari, David Madgen, Lynne Howells, Sarah, Katherine Melia, Christina James, Ana Rudnicki, Nicola Merrick, Martin O'Connor, Patricia Moroney, Margaret Skelding, James Spradbery, Teresa Bord Kathleen Spradbery, Ann Marie Hughson, Paul Kingston, John Moroney, Eddie Gallagher, Pauline and David Day.

Epiphany House Blessing

During Epiphany it is traditional to bless homes. In the home, Christ is met in family and friends, in visitors and strangers. In the home, faith is shared, nurtured, and put into action. In the home, Christ is welcome. The letters that make up the Epiphany inscription have two meanings. Firstly, C, M, and B represent the traditional names of the magi (the kings) – Caspar, Melchior, and Balthazar – who came to visit Jesus. The letters also abbreviate the Latin phrase *Christus mansionem benedicat*, meaning "may Christ bless this house." The "+" signs represent the cross and the "20" at the beginning and "25" at the end mark the year.

The Epiphany blessing is a great opportunity to bring the family together in a moment of prayer. It is an easy tradition to adopt, and a great practice whereby we dedicate our year to God from its very outset, asking His blessing on our homes and families and visitors. The following is a very brief ceremony of blessing that can be used:

Inscription

The following is traditionally written in chalk on the lintel, or the side, of the front door. However, it can also be written on a piece of paper and attached to the inside of the front door. If nothing else, it makes a good talking point when visitors notice!
20 + C + M + B + 25

Prayer

Once the inscription is complete, the following prayer is said: God of heaven and earth, you revealed your only-begotten One to every nation by the guidance of a star. Bless this house and all who inhabit it. Fill us with the light of Christ, that our concern for others may reflect your love. We ask this through Christ our Saviour. Amen.



It's also good Catholic practice to keep some holy water in your home to bless yourselves and your family as you come and go. There's plenty kept in sacristy – just bring a little container along and ask for some. I look forward to seeing some pictures of your Epiphany inscriptions! **Fr John**

| Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist | Ministers of the Word |
|---|--|
| 6pm Sarah Williams Ancy Shajan Kathy Weston | 6pm Philip Dixon Stuart Fox |
| 8am Cecilia Balestra Vera McHale | 8am Tracy Buckley Lorraine L Williams |
| 10am Mary Cook, Noel Elegado Gerald Okafur | 10am Gwenfair Gillick Valerie V Williams |



Thursday Social Club

The next meeting will be on Thursday 9th January 1.30-3.00 in the Parish Hall. Come and enjoy a cup of tea and a chat with old friends and new. All are very welcome

Poetry for Pleasure

The next meeting will be on Thursday 16th January 1030-1200 in the Parish Hall. The theme is "A moment in time: Poems about occasions" If you ever struggle to find poems on the given theme, just bring a few of your favourite poems to share. Thank you and Happy New Year! Dorothy



Card giving Update

Although our lovely Church incurs many expenses like the heating and lighting costs, we are very fortunate to have generous giving from parishioners and visitors. The traditional plate collection on a Sunday is our mainstay but also people increasingly donate via our card machine at the back of Church. In December we received £654.00. Many Thanks

The 3 year Synod on Synodality ended in October. One of the experts at the assembly Austen Ivereigh will lead a day at Belmont Abbey on 18th January from 10am to 4pm, to consider how to implement the synod in parishes. All welcome. Bring a packed lunch. Tea and coffee available.



We have a box of articles left in the church which have been classed as lost property. These can be found in the Annex in a red box. Please take a look to see if they might belong to you. The box will be kept in the Annex for the month of January, anything that remains will be taken to the charity shop or thrown away. Thanks



Welcome to any new or visiting parishioners. Do come and introduce yourselves to the welcomers and **come along to the hall after the 10.00am Mass for coffee and cake.**



Collections 28th/29th Dec
1st £ 208.30The Parish
2nd £ 362.41Renovation
Dona card Giving-Dec £654



Parish Calendar– January 2025

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| Mon 6th | 7.00pm | SVP in Parish Hall New members welcome. |
| Wed 8th | 6.30pm | ABC Scripture group. All welcome |
| Thurs 9th | 1.30pm | Thursday Social Club |
| Thurs 16th | 10.30am | Poetry for Pleasure |
| Sat 18th | 10.00am 4.00pm | Implementing the Synod Belmont Abbey |