



St. Margaret Clitherow's Catholic Church

The Presbytery, 4 Kingswood Drive, Dulwich Wood Park, London SE19 1UR
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0208 670 1639

Parish Priest: Fr Luke Marappillil

Parish Secretary: Steve Pearce (available Wednesday/Friday 1-5pm)

Confessions: Monday-Saturday 30 minutes before the Mass or at call.

Baptism, Marriages & Visits: please call.

25 December 2022: The Nativity of the Lord [A]

Mass Intentions/Service Times

Saturday	Dec 24	06.30pm:	Carol Service with Readings and Blessing the Crib followed by the First Mass of Christmas Wellbeing and thanksgiving of Jacklyn Sithanen families – Sabrina, Maleek, Sebastian, Cassie & Mathild	
Sunday	Dec 25	08.30am:	Brazilian Mass	Christmas Day Mass
		10.30am:	People of the parish	
Monday	Dec 26	10.00am:	Patrick Tuohy RIP (50 th Anniversary)	St Stephen
Tuesday	Dec 27	10.00am:	Christine Cunningham (Wellbeing)	St John the Evangelist
Wednesday	Dec 28	10.00am:	Michael McCarthy (Recovery & wellbeing) Mass followed by Exposition-Adoration-Holy Rosary-Benediction	The Holy Innocents
Thursday	Dec 29	10.00am:	Alice Murphy (Wellbeing)	St Thomas of Canterbury
Friday	Dec 30	10.00am:	Eileen McDonnell (Wellbeing) Mass followed by Exposition-Adoration-Divine Mercy-Benediction	The Holy Family
Saturday	Dec 31	06.30pm:	Rosaleen McGinn RIP	The first Mass of Sunday
Sunday	Jan 01	10.30am:	Sedney Chang-Pen-Tive RIP (25 th Anni) Francois Chang-Pen-Tive RIP (41 st Anni)	Year End Prayer 'Te Deum' Mary, the Mother of God New Year Prayer

Last Week... Mass Attendance:	SMC Parish Community	65	Brazilian Community	140
Offertory Collection:		£199.02		£250.80

- Repository:** Open after the weekend Masses.
- Christmas Eve/Day Collection:** It is your personal gift to your parish priest. Christmas Collection Envelopes are at the back of the church. Christmas Offering envelopes are kept at the back of the church. If you wish to donate via cheque please make them payable to "RCAS St Margaret Clitherow, Dulwich Wood Park". If you are on the GIFT AID scheme please use your Gift Aid Christmas Offering envelope and enter your Gift Aid number.
- Crib Offering:** As usual, this year also our Crib Offering will be for the Catholic Children's Society, which provides emergency food and essentials, as well as mental health services for children and their parents/carers.
- Churches Together, Crystal Palace, Annual Forum Meeting:** Sunday 22nd January 2023, 4.00-5:30pm at Salvation Army (next to Sainsburys Upper Norwood). All are welcome. Refreshments will be provided!
- Escorted Pilgrimage to Knock Shrine, Ireland, 15th March 2023:** Details on the noticeboard.
- Racial Justice Sunday:** 5th of February 2023. This event will begin with a Mass celebrated by Archbishop John Wilson in St George's Cathedral at 10.00am. All are invited! Details on the noticeboard.
- First Holy Communion 2023:** Register as soon as possible, latest by the end of December 2022. Candidates with parents (bring also the Baptism certificate) to meet Fr Luke with prior appointment.
- Confirmation 2023:** Register as soon as possible, latest by the end of December 2022. For details contact Fr Luke. Once the names and number are confirmed the Episcopal Vicar will be informed to finalize the date.
- Thank You:** To all who have helped giving their time and worked so hard in getting the church ready for this wonderful feast of the Nativity of the Lord – cleaning the church, preparing the crib, the Christmas Tree, the flowers and decorations, the Christmas Party, the music and what not!
- Church Noticeboard:** This now has contact information, the week's newsletter, and details of any events.

REFLECTIONS ON CHRISTMAS

I. The Symbols of Christmas

From a philosopher's or Theologian's perspective, the truth of Christmas could be put in a nutshell as: When Jesus was 'humanified' we were 'deified'. Herein is implied the central theme of Christmas. God, in the person of Jesus, became human so that we might share His divinity. Once we grasp this truth we will be able to celebrate Christmas meaningfully, understanding the true significance of its various symbols like crib, manger, Christmas Tree, lights and carols.

The Crib is an image of heaven. Everything about it radiates peace, love fulfilment, the end of longing and lack of tears. '*Silent Night*' beautifully sung combined with a crib, is a good and holy picture of heaven.

The Manger is a trough where cows, sheep, horses and so on come to eat. It is appropriate that Jesus, who is food for the life of the world, should be lying in trough, a wooden one too. The wood of the manger will later become the wood of the cross, where Jesus gives himself completely as food for the life of the world.

The Christmas Tree joins heaven and earth. It is a ladder for the incarnation, a vehicle for God to climb down from heaven to earth. That is why there is always either an angel or a star on top of it.

The Christmas lights represent the light and warmth of God, of course, in a special way. In the darkness and coldness of night God's light and warmth break into the world. Hence the celebration of the first Mass of Christmas (the Vigil/Midnight Mass) with the blessing followed by the illumination of the Tree and the Crib.

The Carols celebrate our joy at the birth of Jesus.

II. Christmas Celebration: Commemoration of the First Coming of Jesus & Preparation and Waiting for his Second Coming

Every Christmas celebration, besides the commemoration of the birth of Jesus (the Incarnation), is also a preparation and an eager waiting for his second coming.

We read in the gospel passage of Christmas Day Mass: 'He was in the world that had its being through him, and the world did not know him. He came to his own domain and his own people did not accept him.' Cardinal Newman sheds light on this truth. He saw that both the manner of the Incarnation and the world's response to it were the result of sin. He says: 'He once had meant to come on earth in heavenly glory, but we sinned; and then he could not safely visit us, except with a shrouded radiance and a bedimmed majesty, for he was God. So, he came himself in weakness, not in power.'

At the Incarnation Jesus came in such a way to attract us to himself by his humility, love and his touch of healing upon our lives, and most of all by his self-sacrifice, bearing in himself our sins and destroying their power over our lives. Now he can safely come to us in his power and glory and we will be ready to receive him, provided we live the life he has given us through the Incarnation; in short, it means living the gospel message. Every Christmas is a reminder of this great truth; it takes us a step further in our preparation to meet the Lord who comes in glory, provided we celebrate Christmas in that spirit, not merely in the externalities.

Today as we marvel at the Incarnation and its glory, let us meditate on its beauty and imitate its humility as well. Today as we celebrate the birth of Jesus, we also celebrate our own birth, for through the Incarnation we are reborn as the children of God. Yes, when Jesus was 'humanified' we were 'deified': that is the truth of Christmas.

A VERY HAPPY AND BLESSED CHRISTMAS & BEST WISHES FOR THE NEW YEAR

To all parishioners and visitors

Fr Luke