



St John Southworth's RC Parish
at Holy Saviour's Church, Vulcan St, BB9 8HE
and Christ Church, Carr Road, BB9 7JS
Nelson

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newsletter electronically, then
please email the parish.**

Christmas Day



25th December 2024



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A VERY HAPPY & HOLY CHRISTMAS TO ALL OUR PARISHIONERS AND FRIENDS

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

The Feast of Christmas is all about the excitement of a new birth! The birth of the Son of God is the ultimate and definitive new birth; there could not be a more wonderful gift and surprise than that of God coming, as a newborn child, to share in the life of the human race. Here we are, beset by the tyranny of darkness which constantly erupts into our world, and into our lives, from the mysterious root of sin, and now... God himself has arrived, in Jesus, as a mighty Saviour. He comes to bring a peace that the world, even through our well-intentioned actions, cannot give.

The Christmas feast teaches us something about God's way of relating to the human race. He offers us new beginnings, new opportunities, new life, new hope. There is always a light that can be perceived in the darkest of situations; there is always a prayer of thanksgiving that can be made in the face of the deepest regrets and disappointments. We have a God who makes promises to look after our welfare, and God is faithful to His promises whatever the cost to Himself.

As we come to the end of another year in the life of St John Southworth parish, we can be filled with excitement as we look forward to the coming New Year. What marvels the Lord will work for us if we can maintain our commitment to allowing Jesus to grow up and come to maturity in our parish community. If only we can recognise God's visitation to us in the baby lying in the manger, then we will surely believe that all things are possible for us when this child is invited to become the one who gives identity to our parish family.

May I wish you all a most blessed and happy Christmas.

Fr Gerard



Christmas Week Masses

**Thursday, 26th December, Boxing day, the Feast of St Stephen
Christ Church, 12.00 noon**

St Stephen is the first Christian martyr who shed his blood rather than renounce his faith. He died with words of forgiveness on his lips as did Jesus on the Cross. The Light of Christ shines at its brightest in situations of rejection and persecution. It is in this Light that we can see that the most simple of loving actions has power to eradicate darkness, encouraging us to allow the Light of Christ to shine out through our lives.

Christmas Week Masses

**Friday 27th December, Feast of St John—apostle and evangelist.
Christ Church, 12.00 noon**

St John refers to himself in his Gospel as ‘the beloved disciple’. John’s Gospel expresses the surprise and astonishment he experienced as he gradually came to realise that his best friend, Jesus, was the Son of God! This mind-boggling realisation is evident in conversations between Jesus with Nicodemus, the woman at the well, and others—conversations that are marked by misunderstanding and confusion until the light of faith eventually breaks through and reveals the divine identity of Jesus.

Christmas Week Masses

**Sunday, 29th December, Feast of the Holy Family
Christ Church, 9.30am.
Holy Saviour’s, 11.15am**

The Church continues to reflect on the birth of Jesus, and how he took on our human nature which needs to be nurtured by human love and affection if it is to develop to a healthy maturity. Mary and Joseph were entrusted with this responsibility until the day that Jesus, under the influence of the Holy Spirit would take up his mission from God.

Looking ahead to the New Year 2025 The Jubilee Year—Pilgrims of Hope

A Jubilee Year, also known as a “Holy Year,” is a special year in the life of the Church currently celebrated every 25 years. Jubilee Years have been held on regular intervals in the Catholic Church since 1300, but they trace their roots to the Jewish tradition of marking a Jubilee Year every 50 years. According to the Vatican website for the Jubilee, these years in Jewish history were “intended to be marked as a time to re-establish a proper relationship with God, with one another, and with all of creation, and involved the forgiveness of debts, the return of misappropriated land, and a fallow period for the fields.”

Jubilee 2025 opens Christmas Eve, December 24th, at 7.00 pm, with the rite of the opening of the Holy Door at St. Peter’s Basilica in the Vatican immediately before Pope Francis celebrates Midnight Mass.

This Jubilee will be a year of prayer and of grace during which there will be many opportunities provided for us to grow in our relationship with God. We will be hearing more about the Jubilee Year as the New Year gets underway!