

Priest-in-Charge: **Rev. Fr Matthew King**  
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**ST MARY'S & ST COLUMBA'S**  
 The Catholic Church in Gosport

**14 & 21 DECEMBER 2025 - THIRD AND FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (Year A)**

13	Sat	06:00pm	<i>Vigil</i>	Elizabeth Extance & Family RIP	<p><b>CONFESSION TIMES</b>                      Wed 6:15pm-6:45pm  <i>(if Mass is celebrated)</i>                      Sat - 12:00nn—1:00pm</p> <p><b>EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION</b>                      Thu—after the 7pm Mass  <i>Holy half hour with Night Prayer</i></p> <p>Fri 10:00am—12:00nn  <i>Rosary for the Unborn at 10am</i></p> <p><b>OUTREACH</b>                      Thu from 1:00pm</p> <p><b>TO MAKE DONATIONS:</b>                      For BACS Transfer:                      Account Name:  <b>CDP Gosport</b>                      Account No.: <b>00878538</b>                      Sort Code: <b>30-93-04</b> .                      Make all cheques payable to <b>CDP Gosport</b>, or scan the QR code.</p>  <p><i>Please Gift Aid your donations if possible.</i></p>
14	Sun	08:00am 11:15am	<b>Third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete)</b>	Susannah Bernadette Burrows RIP Parish Volunteers INT	
15	Mon	<b>No Service</b>			
16	Tue	12:00nn		David Edward Cashman RIP	
17	Wed	07:00pm		Harry Evans RIP	
18	Thu	07:00pm		Lawrence Halford INT	
19	Fri	<b>06:00pm</b>	Simbang Gabi	Filipino Community in the Pastoral Area	
20	Sat	06:00pm		Zied Solomon RIP	
21	Sun	08:00am 11:15am	<b>Fourth Sunday of Advent</b>	Rev Canon Thomas Doyle RIP Mariamma RIP	
22	Mon	<b>No Service</b>			
23	Tue	12:00nn		John Crowley RIP	
<b>CHRISTMAS SERVICES</b>					
24	Wed	05:00pm 09:00pm	<i>Children's Mass Night Mass</i>	Children of the Parish Private Intention PP	
25	Thu	08:00am 11:15am	<i>Dawn Mass Day Mass</i>	Private Intention PP Bishop Philip Egan INT	
26	Fri	12:00nn	St Stephen	Deceased Parishioners of St Columba Parish	
27	Sat	06:00pm		Ms Mary Anne Cornelius RIP	
28	Sun	08:00am 11:15am		People of the Parish Altar Servers INT	



As we celebrate the blessed season of Christmas, we give heartfelt thanks to God for the gift of this past year. We are truly grateful for each of you, and we extend our sincere appreciation to all our dedicated volunteers and generous benefactors whose faithfulness and service have strengthened our parish.

May the light of Christ fill your homes with peace, joy, and hope. Be assured of our prayers for you and your families, and may the coming New Year bring abundant blessings.

With gratitude and Christmas joy,  
 Fr Matthew and Dcn John



**Welcome to all visitors and parishioners!**

If you are new to the parish, please introduce yourself to Fr Matthew and/or Dcn John after Mass today. Please complete a registration form which can be found in the church foyer and take a copy of the newsletter as well to stay informed about current parish and diocesan news and updates.

**This Newsletter covers a two-week period. The next Newsletter will be issued on Sunday, 28 of December.**

**Please Note: The Parish Office will be closed from 25 December to 02 January.**

**Our regular Sunday tea and coffee in St Mary's Hall will be paused during the Christmas break, and will be back on 11 January.**

### Other Parish Notices:

- 19 Dec Fri - No 12nn Mass.** This will be replaced by the 6pm Filipino Mass (Simbang Gabi)
- 29 Dec to 02 Jan Mon to Fri - Church and Office Closure.** St Mary's Church and the parish office will be closed during this period. *There will be a 12nn Mass on the 1st of January.*
- 06 Jan Tue - The Epiphany of the Lord** (Holy Day of Obligation). There will be two services at St Mary's: 12nn and 7pm
- 11 Jan Sun - Senior's Christmas Meal** after the 11:15am Mass

### CHRISTMAS COLLECTION

Any additional donations given on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day will be used to support the priests of the diocese. Every penny specifically donated over this weekend (together with any Gift Aid on qualifying donations) will be used to support our local priest. There are three easy ways you can make your Christmas offerings:



- During the Mass collection on Christmas Day and/or using the Christmas Offering envelope that is available at the back of the church
- Using our electronic collection plate/Dona in the church foyer between now and the Feast of Epiphany
- By donating online, you may click on the Give As You Live link: <https://tinyurl.com/3vp55f99>.
- By scanning this QR Code. Thank you for your generosity.

### CHRISTMAS FLOWER APPEAL

The second collection on the 14th and 21st of December will be for the Christmas Flower Fund. Envelopes will be available from next week. There is also an opportunity to donate using our Dona Machine in the foyer. **We continue to thank our donors and our wonderful Flower Arrangers for giving their time for decorating our church.**

### HOUSE CALLS DURING ADVENT

Over the Advent and Christmas season, Fr Matthew & Deacon John will be visiting sick and housebound parishioners to offer the Sacraments in preparation for Christmas. If you know of someone who is housebound or in hospital, and is not currently on the parish sick list, please notify the parish office as soon as possible.

### PARISH VOLUNTEERS' CHRISTMAS GET TOGETHER!

14 DECEMBER - SUNDAY AFTER THE 11:15AM MASS. \

THIS INVITATION IS FOR PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE VOLUNTEERS! WE THANK ALL OUR CHURCH VOLUNTEERS FOR EVERYTHING THEY HAVE DONE AND CONTINUE TO DO FOR THE PARISH AND FOR SUPPORTING OUR MISSION OF BRINGING PEOPLE CLOSER TO CHRIST THROUGH HIS CHURCH. AFTER MASS, EVERYONE IS WELCOME IN THE HALL FOR A SMALL CELEBRATION.



### SCHOOL CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE

**18 December 5:00pm in St Mary's Church.** Please join us for a joyful and festive Christmas Carol Service performed by KS2 children from St Mary's Primary School. Everyone is welcome.  
**Note: 7:00pm Mass will take place after the Carol Service.**

### SIMBANG GABI (FILIPINO CHRISTMAS MASS)

**19 December 6:00pm in St Mary's Church**. We warmly invite everyone to join us for Simbang Gabi (Evening Mass). Come and celebrate this Filipino Catholic tradition as we prepare our hearts for the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. After Mass, we will gather in the hall for a shared meal, so if you are able, please bring a plate of food to share.

### CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PARTY

**20 December from 6pm**. We are inviting all children to join us for a Christmas Party in the hall on the 20th of December from 6pm. Parents are required to register their children by filling in a form available in the church foyer with a £3 donation per child to cover food and refreshments. Thank you.

### SANCTUARY LAMP

This week, the Sanctuary Lamp is being sponsored by Jim Burrows in memory of Sue Burrows ✠. May her soul rest in peace.



### NATIVITY PLAY IN ST MARY'S HALL

**21 December 5:00pm in the Parish Hall.** We invite everyone to our Christmas Nativity Play to be performed by the children of our parish. Children of all ages are welcome to take part. Come and celebrate the true meaning of Christmas with carols and plenty of festive cheer! Please speak to Elsie after the 11:15am Mass or contact the parish office for more information.

### CHRISTMAS RAFFLE!

**21 December after the 11:15am Mass in the hall.** We are happy to announce that we still have raffle tickets on sale. This fundraising initiative is to help raise funds for the much-needed building repair and maintenance for our church. This is a great opportunity to support our parish while also having the chance to win some great prizes! Tickets are still available after every Mass and we are still accepting raffle prizes - your generosity, big or small, makes a lot of difference in preserving our church for future generations. Thank you for your continued support. **Don't forget to return your tickets by the 20th!**

### ALTAR SERVERS' MASS

**28 December at the 11:15am Mass.** We invite all parishioners to join us as we celebrate Mass and enrolment of some of our altar servers to the Guild of St Stephen, the patron saint of altar servers. This Mass will also be for all our altar servers whose faithfulness, reverence and commitment enrich our liturgies throughout the year. After Mass, we invite all our altar servers and their families in the hall for some light refreshments.

### SENIORS' CHRISTMAS LUNCH

**11 January 1:00pm in St Mary's Hall.** This year's Christmas meal for senior parishioners require advance booking, so please call or email the parish office to secure your place. Also, a member of the hospitality team will be at every Mass to take names and reservations. **A £5 donation is requested for a three course meal.**

### NEW DONA MACHINE

We have installed a new Dona machine to replace the previous unit, which was aging and required significant software updates. We spent £390 for the new unit. All donors who have registered and signed up for Gift Aid under the previous declaration will need to re-register in Dona. Don't worry, this is a one off registration.



### CHOIR PRACTICE

The next Choir practice dates in St Mary's Church are:  
Saturday 20th December 2pm      Sunday 21st December 10am  
*Mass setting for December 21: Missa XVII, Credo III*  
*Mass setting for Christmas Eve: Missa de Angelis, Credo III*

### THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE, PETER!

Peter will be leaving his role as our parish church and hall caretaker to begin a new job. We are deeply thankful for his hard work, dedication, and the care he has shown for our church and parish hall. As he begins this new chapter, we offer him our prayers and best wishes. May God guide and bless him in all his future endeavours. Thank you, Peter!

**Teams of Our Lady** is a community of Christian married couples who get together to enrich their marriage and nourish their faith. Joining Teams help deepen our relationship with God as individuals and as couples through the support of the community. If you are interested and want to know more, you may contact Pat and Jim at 0742 531 4714. Young married couples are very welcome.



Teams of Our Lady - Solent Pastoral Area

### MASS INTENTIONS

To have a Mass offered for your intentions, kindly use the envelopes at the back of the church. Please book in advance. The earliest available dates are now in January 2026.

### STELLA MARIS CHRISTMAS CHOCOLATE APPEAL

**We are still accepting donations.** Did you know that there will be about 400,000 Seafarers working over Christmas, separated from their families and friends? Stella Maris meets and supports these seafarers. Your chocolate donations will be for seafarers visiting Southampton ports in the days before Christmas. Thank you.

### SECOND COLLECTION

We are happy to report that the parish have raised the following amount. Thank you for your generosity!

14 Sep	£ 71.34 - Catholic Education Service
21 Sep	£178.44 - Home Missions
05 Oct	£283.41 - CAFOD
19 Oct	£118.55 - Missio (World Mission)
02 Nov	£169.39 - Bamenda

### TURN EVERYDAY SHOPPING INTO EVERYDAY GIVING

**Give as You Live (GAYL)** . With Give as You Live Online, every purchase you make helps support St Mary's without any extra cost to you. It is quick, easy and completely free. Shop as normal and raise vital funds for St Mary's. Use this link: <https://tinyurl.com/222ae5s5> to access our parish's online shopping/giving page.

### COME PRAY THE ROSARY WITH US

The Rosary group meets every night at 8pm on WhatsApp. If you would like to join in praying the Rosary as part of the group please contact Antonia 07773185812 or Clare 07774664409 . Thank you.

### OUR BEAUTIFUL NATIVITY SCENE—THANK YOU, ELSIE!

We would like to thank Elsie for creating the beautiful nativity scene for St Mary's. Her creativity, patience, and craftsmanship shine through every detail. It brings warmth, reverence, and joy to the congregation this season. Elsie, we are very grateful for the love and care you put into this work. Thank you for sharing your gift with us and helping make our church feel even more special.

### BAPTISM

The dates for the next Baptism Preparation Programme are:  
 Meet & Greet - in person Saturday 14th Feb, 10am  
 Online Session 1 Tuesday 17th Feb, from 8pm  
 Online Session 2 Tuesday 24th Feb, from 8pm  
 Welcome & Anointing Sunday 1st March  
 Closing date for this Preparation Pathway - Fri. 30th January  
 Please contact the parish office for more information or visit <https://tinyurl.com/2vctjens>.

### PASTORAL AREA CAROL SERVICE

**14 Dec . Sun - Pastoral Area Carol Service** at St Philip Howard - Fareham at 3pm. Everyone is invited to come and enjoy traditional carols led by singers from the Solent Pastoral Area. There will be refreshments afterwards.

### VOCATIONS

"Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." The Church needs those who are willing to dedicate their lives to nurturing the Body of Christ. Are you being called to help build up the Church as a priest or religious brother or sister? Talk to Fr Matthew, Dcn John, or contact Cn. John Cooke at 01329 318 869 / [vocations@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:vocations@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)

### MEETING WITH BISHOP PHILIP ABOUT THE PRIESTHOOD

**Sunday 4 January 3pm at St John's Cathedral.**

Bishop Philip is inviting any man in our Diocese, aged 17 or older, who is not married and who would like to know more about being a diocesan priest, to contact him and to come to a short meeting at the Cathedral. Please scan the QR code to register. (QR Code is attached)



### DIACONATE ORDINATION—JACK RYAN

**Saturday 20th December 3pm at St John's Cathedral, Bishop Crispian Way, Portsmouth.** All are invited to the ordination of Jack, one of our "sons" from the Solent Pastoral Area - St Margaret Mary's Parish, Park Gate. Through the solemn Laying on of Hands he will be ordained a Deacon for us and, God willing, a Priest next year. Do come and support, and pray for Jack.

### *Prayer to St Joseph in Advent*

*Glorious Patriarch Saint Joseph,  
 whose power makes the impossible possible,  
 come to my aid in these times of anguish and difficulty.  
 Take under your protection the serious and troubling situations that I commend you,  
 that they may have a happy outcome.  
 My beloved Father, all my trust is in you.  
 Let it not be said that I invoked you in vain, and since you can do everything with Jesus and Mary,  
 show me that your goodness is as great as your power. Amen*

### CHURCH WEDDINGS

Marriage is a sacred vow. Getting married in church is a traditional, meaningful, and a beautiful ceremony to which every Catholic couple aspires. If you wish to get married at St Mary's Church, please contact the parish office. We will be more than happy to guide you in preparing for this Sacrament.

### WHY YOU SHOULD GIFT AID

Gift Aid allows the church to claim back the basic rate tax already paid on donations by the donor. This means we can claim back from the government on your behalf 25p for every £1 donated so please make sure that your offertory donations are made using the Gift Aid envelopes that can be found at the back of the church.

## Reflection on the Readings for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent 2025

(Isa.35:1-6, 10; Jas.5:7-10; Mt.11:2-11)

Today as we light the rose candle in our Advent wreath, we recall that the name *Gaudete Sunday* comes from St Paul who says, 'Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. The Lord is near' (Phil.4:4-5).

The joy he speaks of isn't shallow cheerfulness, or pretending that everything is fine. It's a joy that glows like a hidden flame, even in times of struggle. And it comes from understanding that God is always working and always close by.

Few people understood this better than Anne Frank. She was the Jewish teenager who spent two years hiding from the Nazis in a secret attic in Amsterdam during the Second World War.

Her world was filled with anxiety and fear, and yet in her diary she wrote: 'In spite of everything, I still believe that people are really good at heart.'

Her words aren't just naïve optimism. They are hope grounded in something greater than the visible world. Anne Frank's light shone because her heart was full. She could see goodness and beauty even in the midst of terror and cruelty.

This is the essence of Christian joy. It's not a denial of suffering, but recognising that love and goodness will always endure because God is close to us.

In today's Gospel, John the Baptist is in Herod's prison. He's feeling anxious, so he sends someone to ask Jesus: 'Are you the one who is to come, or must we wait for another?'

In his answer, Jesus describes signs of joy: 'The blind see, the lame walk and the poor have good news preached to them.' In other words, he reassures John that the world is changing because the kingdom of God is coming and bringing with it mercy, healing and new life.

Joy is the quiet evidence that God is behind all this work.

There's a similar message in Jean-Pierre Jeunet's film *Amélie* (2001). It's the story of a shy young woman in Paris who learns that selfish living does not make her happy. Instead, she finds that her deepest joy comes from the small, secret acts of love she performs for others.

She starts noticing the people around her, and then does kind things for them. She returns a lost treasure, she helps a blind man and she brightens lonely lives. And along the way she finds that joy isn't something you need to chase, but something that simply flows when you lighten someone else's darkness.

This is Advent joy. It's the joy of those who prepare the way of the Lord through small acts of love.

Both Anne Frank and Amélie demonstrate what Isaiah talks about in our first reading today: 'The desert shall rejoice and blossom... the eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf unstopped.'

Joy doesn't wait for perfection. It blooms right there in the desert, in the hidden attic, in the lonely streets of the city, and in the ordinary corners of life where love quietly labours.

St Elizabeth of the Trinity (1880-1906) was a French Carmelite nun who lived a hidden, simple and very short life. Her wisdom, however, was profound. She once wrote, 'My joy is so deep because it is in God, and God is joy within me.'

Like Amélie, Elizabeth discovered that joy was not something to achieve, but something to receive. She came to realise that God is never far away, and once wrote: 'It seems to me that I have found my Heaven on earth, since Heaven is God, and God is in my soul.'

At another time she wrote: 'I can't find words to express my happiness. Here there is no longer anything but God. He is All; he suffices and we live by him alone.'

When she was 23, Elizabeth contracted Addison's Disease, a painful and incurable illness. But she never stopped radiating interior peace and joy. She was convinced that when you truly trust in God's constant presence, nothing external can ever steal your inner harmony – your sense of peace and joy.

Today, St Elizabeth of the Trinity reminds us that joy doesn't depend on our circumstances or our outward success. True joy comes from our inward nearness to Jesus – Emmanuel, *God-with-us* – who is already here, quietly transforming the world from within.

As St Paul tells us, 'The Lord is near.'

This is why Anne Frank could believe in goodness, despite our messy world.

This is why Amélie could make joy visible through her small acts of kindness.

And this is why, like John the Baptist, we can always point to Jesus and confidently say 'He is coming.'



Anne Frank



St Elizabeth of the Trinity