

Dear All,

We enter into the final week before the Mass of Christ (Christmas) this weekend. The last week has been difficult, with a plethora of matters to clear before Dan takes his Christmas break from next Friday, 22nd December, therefore the Parish Office closes for Christmas & New Year on 21st December until 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2024. Like myself, he has had to take time out because of a bad cold, but has worked from home covering essential items including our Risk Assessment for the use of Saint Michael's church and grounds for the Living Nativity on Wednesday 20th of December. Thanks also to Ben Rowden for cooperating with us on this and other issues involving the event, especially during my ill health at the beginning of Advent. More on this below.

I am delighted to announce that after a detailed and time-consuming appraisal of his six-month probationary period, Dan has been appointed by the Diocese as permanent Part Time Administrator. The appraisal makes it clear that the present working hours do not give him enough time to cover effectively the increased workload, especially from the Diocese in relation to Parish policies & future direction. This is an area which will have to be addressed in the New Year.

After the Christmas Day Masses I shall be taking a badly needed break until 4th of January 2024 although I shall be celebrating the weekend Masses on the 30th & 31st December, together with The Solemnity of Mary Mother of God on Monday 1st of January 2024. However, no emails will be addressed during this period & I shall respond only to urgent telephone messages, according to my availability. THERE WILL BE NO FURTHER NEWSLETTERS UNTIL THE NEW YEAR.

An additional note for this coming week, the Parish Office is closed on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> December.

**Attached to this Newsletter is the Parish Financial Report to the Year ending 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023, together with a 5-year Financial Summary. Our thanks to Denis Murtagh, Chair of the Parish Finance Committee, for a most interesting & detailed consideration of the financial landscape of the Parish. It should be recommended reading for all parishioners.**

**REMINDER - Christmas Masses:**

• **Saturday, 23<sup>rd</sup> December**

6.00 PM Vigil Mass - Saint Michael's Church as normal.

• **Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> December (Christmas Eve)**

10.00 AM One Parish Mass - Saint Michael's Church for both our communities.

This is an opportunity for us all to gather together on Christmas Eve to celebrate The Day of Resurrection and to prepare as one Parish Family for Christmas (The Mass of Christ). I shall be asking our Parish musicians to come together for this special gathering.

7.30 PM Vigil & First Mass of Christmas - Saint Michael's Church.

PLEASE NOTE: There is no Midnight Mass in the Parish.

• **Monday 25<sup>th</sup> December (Christmas Day)**

9.00 AM Christmas Mass – St. Michael's Church

11.00 AM Christmas Mass – St. Oswald's Church

PLEASE NOTE: There are no other Masses for Christmas Day in our Parish.

### **This Weekend's Mass arrangements:**

Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> December: 6.00pm at St. Michael's Church  
Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December: 9.00am at St. Michael's Church  
Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December: 11.00am at St. Oswald's Church

### **Blessing of Saint Oswald's Crib**

This will take place during the 11:00 AM Mass this Sunday, and there will be a special coffee morning with mince pies at the end of Mass, enabling me to meet with parishioners before Christmas. Our thanks to Ellen Goodall for arranging this pre-Christmas get together. Also, congratulations to those who arranged the Crib at St. Oswald's church – it's first class! The Christmas Tree on the sanctuary is in place and will be lit up on Sunday.

### **Blessing of Saint Michael's Crib**

This will take place during our One Parish Mass at 10:00 AM on Sunday 24th December at St. Michael's church. Our thanks to Joe Mellor and Sonia Fox for putting up the Tadley Christmas Tree on Thursday, and to Eileen Smith, her sister Margaret & Sue Tull for arranging the Crib. Helen Warner would have been more than pleased if she were still with us!

### **REMINDER - Advent preparation**

#### **Saturday 16th December 10.00am – 11.00am at St. Michael's Church**

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament & reflections on the First Coming of Christ at Christmas.

Thanks to those who have booked for the Sacrament of Reconciliation after Adoration this Saturday, which concludes at 11:30 AM.

For those unable to attend on Saturday, there is a further opportunity for Advent Reconciliation on **Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December at St. Joseph's Church, Basingstoke, at 3:00 P.M.**

### **REMINDER - No Baptisms in until February 2024**

There will be no Baptisms, excepting emergencies, until February 2024.

### **Funeral Mass for Pat Rolt, RIP**

This is celebrated at 12:30 PM in St. Michael's Church on Thursday 21st of December, with a family only cremation at West Berkshire Crematorium at 2:30 PM. Father Patrick is not available that day.

### **CTAT (Churches Together Around Tadley) – Living Nativity**

On Wednesday 20th December, our local church communities gather to celebrate the return of the Living Nativity at 4:00 PM as advertised previously in the Parish Newsletter with posters in both our churches. Please note that there will be no parking in St. Michael's Church grounds that day to ensure that our Risk Assessment is in order, and that I have decided that our part of the service will be held in the church building rather than outside to comply with that Assessment.

Please meet at St. Mary's Church before 4:00 PM for the beginning of our Christmas Journey to Tadley Common Methodist Church, followed by St. Michael's Church and then back to St. Mary's church for mince pies, mulled wine and an opportunity to view the animals. Those taking part are advised to wear suitable clothing for the time of year and must follow the instructions of our stewards en-route & at all churches. Our thanks to Ben Rowden for taking the Lead Steward role at St. Michael's Church.

### **What a display!**

Congratulations to those who arranged the display of the Angels at Tadley Common Methodist Church on 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> December. "An outstanding religious witness by our local Christian community" as one visitor said.

### **LAST CHANCE!: Salvation Army – Christmas Present Appeal 2023**

As previously featured in our Newsletter - Donations accepted at Tadley Salvation Army up to 17<sup>th</sup> December:

Mullfords Hill, Tadley, RG26 3LJ - Phone: [0118 9815013](tel:01189815013)

### **REMINDER: CTAT Christmas Day free lunch**

Starting at 11:30 AM on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> of December at the Ambrose Allen Centre, Tadley. See attached flyer or the poster in Saint Michael's Church for full details.

### **NEW!: Polish Christmas Carol Event**

The Polish Catholic Community in Basingstoke invites you to the 3rd Annual Polish Christmas Carol Event, which will take place on January 6<sup>th</sup> 2024, 1:00 p.m. in St. Bedes's Church, Popley Way, Basingstoke RG24. Tea and coffee will be available after the performance and the organisers would be very grateful if people could bring some cakes to share. Please see posters in both churches. (Note from Dan: Polish Christmas Carols are distinct & unique to Poland - except for the Polish version of "Silent Night"! – heartily recommend going & experiencing the musical magic of a Polish Christmas!).

### **Christmas Clergy Collection**

As with previous years, a Christmas Collection has been set-up for me by the Diocese:

<https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/fundraising/tadley-st-michael-and-st-oswald-catholic-parish-christmas-collection-2023>

### **Right To Life**

The Right To Life charity have provided this important update regarding Abortion Legislation activity in Parliament:

Baroness O’Loan’s Abortion (Gestational Time Limit Reduction) Bill has received a First Reading in the House of Lords.

There have been huge advances in medical science in the 33 years since 1990 when the abortion time limit was lowered from 28 weeks to 24 weeks. The survival rate for extremely premature babies has doubled over the last decade alone, prompting new guidance from the British Association of Perinatal Medicine that enables doctors to intervene to save premature babies from 22 weeks gestation.

This leaves a real contradiction in British Law: in one room of a hospital, doctors could be working to save a baby born alive at 23 weeks, whilst, in another room of that same hospital, a doctor could perform an abortion that would end the life of a baby at the same age.

Our abortion time limit of 24 weeks is also unusually high compared to the majority of European Union countries. In fact, it is double that of the most common time limit for abortion on demand or social grounds among European Union countries, which is 12 weeks gestation. A number of MPs and

Peers we have spoken to have been amazed to hear how extreme our time limit is compared to many European Union countries.

While it is rare for Lords Private Members' Bills to become law, at a minimum, Baroness O'Loan's Bill will ensure that the humanity of the unborn child is put firmly on the radar and debated extensively in Parliament, the media and wider society. This will help raise the profile on this issue and build further momentum for changes to our abortion legislation that will save the lives of unborn children.  
[www.righttolife.org.uk](http://www.righttolife.org.uk)

### **Further reading**

Portsmouth Diocese news items:

<https://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/communications/news/enews/>

Catholic Bishops Conference of England & Wales news items:

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/home/news-and-media/>

Caritas Portsmouth Newsletter:

<https://caritasportsmouth.org.uk/news-events/>

### **Diocesan Vacancies**

Schools Estates Manager - There is currently no closing date on this role.

Health & Safety Officer, Portsmouth - There is currently no closing date on this role.

IT Technician, Portsmouth – Closing date 5<sup>th</sup> January 2024

For these & other vacancies visit: <https://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/about-us/other/jobs/>

Enjoy your weekend and a continued Happy Advent!

Father Patrick.

### **Fr. Patrick Tansey**

#### **Parish Priest**

St Michael's Church, Tadley

St Oswald's Church, Burghfield Common

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**Bringing people closer to Jesus Christ through his Church**

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