

Dear All,

Happy Epiphany!, celebrated this weekend, and God's blessings for 2024. The Christmas Season ends on Monday 8th January, with the Feast of The Baptism of The Lord, when Jesus leaves behind the quiet years to begin his public mission, and liturgically we enter into Ordinary Time until Ash Wednesday on 14th February.

A sincere thank you on behalf of Deacon Tony Darroch and his wife Pam and myself for your cards, gifts and greetings during the Christmas season. Tony will be assisting me at our Sunday morning Masses this weekend and I express my personal thanks to him for bringing Holy Communion to some of our elderly or unwell parishioners at the end of this last week. He also assists the Hospital Chaplaincy in Basingstoke with Communion, which includes at times parishioners from our Parish Area.

This Weekend's Mass arrangements:

Saturday 6 th January:	6.00pm at St. Michael's Church
Sunday 7 th January:	9.00am at St. Michael's Church
Sunday 7 th December:	11.00am at St. Oswald's Church

We have two important celebrations in January - Peace Sunday & Prayer for Christian Unity

Please note the following arrangements to mark these events:

- **Peace Sunday - 14th January:**
 - Sunday 14th of January: The 9:00 AM Mass at Tadley will be a Votive Mass for Peace.
- **Time of Prayer for Christian Unity - Begins on Thursday 18th Jan & concludes Thursday 25th Jan:**
 - Sunday 21st January: The 11:00 AM Burghfield Common Mass will be a Mass for Christian Unity, as allowed by our Bishops.

Also on 21st January, the Churches Together Around Tadley (CTAT) Unity Service will be at 3:00 PM in Saint Mary's Church, Silchester, which is being organised by the Reverend Karen West of Silchester and myself. So please make a note in your diary.

- Thursday 25th January: There will be an 11:00 AM Mass in Saint Michael's Church for The Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul.

More about this important time of prayer, which all Catholics are called to engage in, in our next newsletter. This week let us prepare for Peace Sunday.

Artificial Intelligence and Peace

This is the theme chosen by Pope Francis for the World Day of Peace 2024. It will also be a theme on World Communications Day 2024. Our present Pope shows a deep interest in the risks embodied in the development of technology, whilst also recognising the good it can do. The area of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is also causing concern to governments. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, whilst recognising the benefits of AI, recently stated that if we get this wrong, AI could make it easier to

build chemical or biological weapons. In November 2023 he called a Summit for experts and world leaders to consider AI and safety. Earlier that year experts had warned: "Mitigating the risk of extinction from AI should be a global priority alongside other social scale risks such as pandemics and nuclear war" (Just Peace (Pax Christi) December 2023).

So what is AI? The definition of the UK Information Commissioner may be of help:

"AI is an umbrella term for a range of technologies and approaches that often attempt to mimic human thought to solve complex tasks. Things that humans have traditionally done by thinking and reasoning are increasingly being done by, or with the help of, AI".

There are also sermons being generated by AI, but I'm not impressed by those I have heard on BBC Radio 4 in its Sunday religious programme. However, technology can be improved, so you may have Father Patrick's voice speaking something he has neither written nor prepared, even with an image of him on a screen which is not a real depiction of himself, in the future! Frightening!

What are the concerns for governments and peacemakers? The human can be taken out of the use of weaponry developed and controlled by AI, and Pope Francis has expressed his concern that a "logic of violence and discrimination" does not develop. Also, here AI needs to be developed so that it serves humanity, not control it.

This is a debate we need to engage with, to ensure that human beings maintain a moral and humanitarian oversight over technology, serving good rather than evil, imbued with the truly spiritual insight which is God-given and concerned with service rather than power.

(Acknowledgements to Pax Christi - The International Catholic Movement for Peace).

Thank you, Sister Monica!

Sister Monica of the Missionary Sisters of the Poor has thanked Father Patrick and the Parish for the support given to their work in Ghana. This support has been facilitated by Gerry Penfold, resulting from Sister Monica being with us in Tadley as part of The Sion Community Mission some years ago. We thank her for her work amongst the suffering & keep that work in prayer.

CAFOD School Volunteers needed

Do you enjoy working with children and young people? Could you help to inspire and empower children and young people in your local Catholic schools by delivering an assembly or a workshop? Supported by CAFOD with training and all resources provided please consider the role of CAFOD school volunteer. For information contact Jo Lewry jlewry@cafod.org.uk or phone 07710 094447 Also note that CAFOD has now published its Annual Report which can be found on <https://cafod.org.uk/about-us/how-we-work/annual-reviews>. It contains features on CAFOD's core values; hope, dignity, compassion and solidarity, along with a summary of income and expenditure, an update of key commitments and stories from its work around the world and here in England and Wales.

Great Story of Jesus Retreat – Winchester, Saturday 13th January

St. Peter's Pastoral Centre, Winchester SO23 9SR from 10am-4pm.

Start the new year with this retreat delivered by Sr Margarida Mondral of the Verbum Dei Community. Refresh and reboot with a renewed appreciation of the core of our faith: the gift of the life death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit to animate our lived faith. This retreat may appeal to all who want to reflect more deeply on Jesus and how his life relates to our lives. Please apply to Liza Nahajski for a place and more details:

lnahajski@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

The Diocese is hosting a Symposium “What does it mean to be Human? Medical Ethics and Social Care Today” in Winchester on Saturday 16th March 2024.

The Symposium will take place from 10.00am – 4.15pm at The Arc (formerly The Discovery Centre) in Winchester (opposite St. Peter’s Catholic Church) & features presentations from well-known experts & will be led by David Wells, the popular motivational speaker. It is open to people of all faiths and none, specialist and lay, to students and to anyone with an interest in medical and social care.

There will be two keynote presentations: “What does it mean to be a Human Being?” (Mgr. Michael Nazir Ali) and “How significant is the Sexual Revolution?” (Ryan Christopher of ADF International). Participants can also choose two of six workshops on issues to do with the start of life and the end of life, spirituality and mental health, gender dysphoria, respect in healthcare and the value-systems in contemporary healthcare provision.

Tickets cost £20, including sandwiches and refreshments, and are available on-line via Eventbrite [here](#).

Good Counsel Network – Anniversary & Appeal

The Good Counsel Network writes:

On Friday 12th January, the eve of the 27th anniversary of the founding of The Good Counsel Network, please pray and fast for the end of abortion in this Country. Through God’s grace we have seen thousands of Mothers in our counselling centre continue their pregnancies in very difficult circumstances. Please help us to help save lives with your prayers, fasting and support.

www.GoodCounselNetwork.com

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/>

Enjoy your weekend!

Father Patrick.

Fr. Patrick Tansey

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Bringing people closer to Jesus Christ through his Church

Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth

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