

I am available for any parishioner who needs me. My mobile number is 07554427063. Please feel free to contact me to have a chat or to have prayers or a mass said for someone.

5th Dec—12th Dec

Sat: 5th Cole Family

Sat: 5th Pro Pop

Sun: 6th

Sun: 6th

Mon: 7th John French RIP

Tue: 8th

Wed: 9th

Thur: 10th Miss Rabb

Fri: 11th Mary Roche RIP

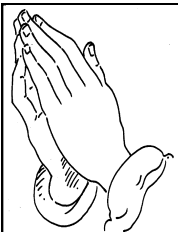
Sat: 5th

Find us at:

www.wantagecatholicparish.org

www.sacredheartlambourn.org

Public Worship begins again this weekend. Mass at Wantage on Saturday evening at 6pm and 9am Sunday morning, 11am Lambourn. Mass will still be broadcast on Zoom. Remember Mass on Sunday morning on Zoom is at 9am. Remember booking is essential. Booking for Christmas not available yet.



In your prayers, please remember all who have recently died especially Wally Flannagan. Also pray for all who are sick, in hospital or housebound especially Pete Gray, Sybil Murphy, Margaret Joyce, Peter Shaw, Cathy Longworth, Mary Derbyshire, Wendy Purslow, Sue Maher, Cedric Andrews, and all those suffering during this pandemic. Please contact the office if you would like

Zoom Mass every weekday 10am. Sat eve 6pm and Sunday 9am

Society of Saint Vincent de Paul (SVP) - provides practical help to the vulnerable and isolated. Our volunteers will phone or write to the elderly and housebound who are unable to visit their families at this time. Please phone 07842271596 or ask one of our members.

Collections Thank You

If you would like to continue supporting the Church through the period of close-down your monthly offering can be made online using this name and account number: **PRCDT Wantage St John Vianney Sort Code: 30-93-04 Account Number: 01720016 Account Name: PRCDTR Wantage St. John Vianney.** Please remember that you can always drop your donation into the Presbytery letterbox. Same Account for Wantage and Lambourn

Roman Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth Registered Charity No. 246871



St John Vianney Wantage Sacred Heart Lambourn



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2020 Second Sunday in Advent—Year B



Prioritising Our Priorities.

With Covid and the ensuing problems for all of us we have had to decide what is important and what isn't. A year of Covid has probably taught us all something about the priorities that govern our lives. Now in Advent we are asked to stop and examine those priorities, and more importantly to ask whether our priorities are what they really ought to be in God's eyes.

Today we read how John the Baptist appeared in the desert proclaiming a baptism of repentance. Today we might easily dismiss the rantings of a strange man who dressed in camel hair and fed on locusts, but interestingly, people travelled miles into the desert to be baptised by him, so charismatic a man was he, and so important his message. Two thousand years later, his message is just as relevant to those of us who want greater meaning in our lives. The repentance that John teaches means so much more than being sorry for our sins. Repentance means changing the direction of our lives away from poor choices. Was the direction of our life decided by what exams we did or didn't pass at the age of seventeen? Has the direction of our life been determined by arbitrary decisions and random circumstances? Is that the way we want to continue? Advent is a time to decide what sort of a person we would really like to be, and in what direction we would really like to be heading. That's an exciting thought! "Prepare the way of the Lord," John tells us, "make straight his paths." To allow God into our lives, we are asked to remove any obstacles in God's path. How can we open our minds to God's will if our time is consumed in fixing fairy lights and making Christmas puddings? Advent is an opportunity for us to make some quiet time to contemplate and prioritise. What is it exactly that is preventing God's work in our lives? "One mightier than I is coming after me," John tells us, "I have baptised you with water, he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit." In the desert of commercialism, we are encouraged to sit down for a moment and prioritise our priorities.

Sunday Mass this week is at 9am Wantage and 11am Lambourn



For a life of prayer

Pope Francis tells us that the heart of the Church's mission is prayer. Prayer is the key for us to be able to enter into dialogue with the Father. Every time we read a short passage from the Gospel we hear Jesus speaking to us; we have a conversation with Jesus; we listen to Jesus and we reply. This is prayer. By praying, we change reality, and we change our hearts. Our heart changes when we pray. We can do many things, but without prayer, it does not work. This month we are invited to join in Pope Francis's prayer intention. **"....We pray that our personal relationship with Jesus Christ be nourished by the Word of God and a life of prayer."**

Christmas Reading.

I have just begun a lovely new book entitled Let us Dream. It is a wonderful collaboration between Pope Francis and my friend Austen Ivereigh. Definitely worth a stocking filler.

The Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary

December 8th

Today is the day on which we celebrate the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary. Note that it is she, Mary herself, who is the Immaculate Conception; the day does not refer to Mary's conceiving Jesus by the Holy Ghost, but to the conception of Mary in the womb of her mother, St. Anne, by Mary's father, St. Joachim. What makes her conception immaculate is not that she was conceived by the Holy Ghost of a virgin, as was Christ Our Lord, but that from the very moment of her conception, she was filled with grace by God. The doctrine asserts that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was preserved by God from the stain of original sin at the time of her own conception. The dogma of Mary being conceived without sin was defined by Pope Pius IX in 1854.

Carol Concert .

Keep the date. We are having a Virtual Carol Service on **December 20th at 6pm** on Zoom. Join us to begin our Christmas celebrations together. Hymn sheets will be sent out so you can join in to your hearts content at home. You can even have mulled wine and mince pies!

Remember to keep Christ in Christmas. Buy religious Christmas cards and ask for the special Christmas stamps



Two fat men on a rower!

I knew it was a bad idea when Br.M suggested it, but I was willing to give him the benefit of the doubt. Foolish I know but hindsight is 20/20 vision. His hair brained ideas so far had got us into so much trouble that I was worried. I wasn't keen on being volunteered for manual labour, shed building, floor mopping, Christmas Tree cutting or decorating but this seemed like a reasonable idea. He suggested that we go on a Port tasting afternoon as a break from the rowing. I think he was getting a little bit fed up with the high culture. Churches, monasteries, galleries were not his thing as they reminded him of home he said. We were after all in the home of the ancient delicious beverage and Br.M suggested that his time at top table while at Cambridge gave him the edge with an appreciation of the finer points of Port and we needed to "do research". He even had a contact. One of his old college polo playing friends(the image of BrM on a poor polo pony even brought tears to my eyes. He's no Frankie Dettori if you get my drift) was part of a Port dynasty and he was willing to host us. As you can imagine it was a very bad idea. I had forgotten the dangers of too much port. We both suffered the next day and rowing was not easy. I did most of the rowing as Br.M was suffering. Several Ports and a small mountain of Pasteis de Nata were playing havoc! Onwards we must go however it we are to get to Lisbon in time for Christmas. Thankfully Portugal is a wonderfully religious country and I've been delighted to see so many beautiful Nativity scenes adorning the window sills as we rowed passed. The Nativity Scene (or Presépio) is the traditional Christmas decoration in Portugal, and most families will have a small one with just the holy family and the animals; but often the scenes have dozens of characters including the holy family, animals, the wise men, shepherds, farmers, folk characters, etc. Children like to make the nativity scene, fetching moss to make the grass and arranging the figures. I might start that tradition on my return. Of course, another great local tradition is post dinner when dessert comes. The most famous is "Bolo Rei" (King Cake). The Bolo Rei can be seen on a table anywhere from mid-November until Epiphany. It is a kind of sweet bread and cake with a round shape with crystallized fruits on top. Inside you will find almonds, raisins, nuts, and a fava bean. Whoever gets the fava bean must buy or bake the Bolo Rei for the next year. Br.M pleaded ignorance when I told him that it also meant buying the Port. Thankfully we have reached the lovely city of Coimbra, a little off the beaten track but accessible by river. I have always wanted to visit. It is home to one of the oldest universities in Europe opening in 1290. Bishop Doyle of Kildare did his doctorate there so there is hope for me yet. We should be in Lisbon next week if we keep off the Port and Pasteis. God Bless and Happy Advent