

The Catholic Parish of

ST. GEORGE and the English Martyrs

Twinned with Mpuluzi, South Africa



CHRISTMAS 2020

Dear friends,

I am sure for many of us, this is the strangest Christmas that we have ever experienced. 'Lockdowns' and 'Tier' levels were words that were not frequently used like they are in these times. And such words now have a negative connotation which is characterised by a restriction of our freedoms and *disconnection* from others, especially our loved ones.

Amidst all this, with its rollercoaster of emotions, we celebrate the great mystery of the *incarnation*, the mystery of God's own Son taking flesh and becoming one of us.

It is popularly understood that Jesus was born in the darkness of night. This year, Jesus enters the darkness of *disconnection*; a word which describes many levels of our human existence. To one degree or another, I think our state of being is one of disconnection; it is what the church calls 'Original Sin'. Sins are simply symptoms of that disconnection; disconnection from our true selves, from each other and from God.



I suppose we could say that the *incarnation* is about *reconnection*. Through His humanity and how He lived his life, Jesus shows us the way to reconnection through our humanity, so the divine life can emerge from within us, as it did with Mary, to touch the world and bless it with God's love; 'God becomes human that we might become divine'. (St Athanasius)

I believe that in Jesus, God is telling that the mystery of His being is very much intertwined with our mystery of being. The purpose of spirituality is to take us to that place, where we realise our true dignity and purpose. I do not mean purpose from the point of view as having a function but understanding our purpose from the perspective of seeing and appreciating our own giftedness and uniqueness as a beloved of God.

I would like to wish you and your loved ones a happy Christmas and may the Christ-child fill your hearts with awe and wonder in this Holy season.

God bless you all and keep safe,

Fr Brett

24th DECEMBER – 27th DECEMBER 2020

The Nativity of the Lord

Thursday 24th

The Nativity of the Lord

5.00pm **Stanley Smith RIP** (Marjorie and Family)

7.00pm **For All Parishioners**

9.00pm **Elishwa, Hanna, John, Suhaila and Zaidi Manna RIP**
(Manna Family)

Friday 25th

Christmas Day

9.00am **Intentions of Roger and Carol Higgins and Family**
(Joan and Tony McD)

10.45am **For Brigid Hogan on her 94th Birthday** (Pat Sach)

Saturday 26th

St. Stephen's Day

10.00am **Donald Everett RIP - Anniv.** (Margaret Everett)

Sunday 27th

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

9.00am **Frank and Eileen Glyde RIP** (The Glyde Family)

10.45am **Intentions of Jacquie Paterson, and in Memory of
Bernard Paterson RIP** (SVP Rayleigh)





Monday 28th

The Holy Innocents
Church Closed

Tuesday 29th

St. Thomas of Canterbury
Church Closed

Wednesday 30th

Sixth Day within the Octave of Christmas
Church Closed

Thursday 31st

Seventh Day within the Octave of Christmas
Church Closed

Friday 1st

10.00am *Mary, Mother of God*
Bert Mayo RIP - Anniv. (Wendy Stafford)

Saturday 2nd

6.00pm **For All Parishioners**

Sunday 3rd

9.00am *Second Sunday after the Nativity*
Suhaila Manna RIP (Ted and Anne Brown)

10.45am **Godfrey Wade RIP - 10th Anniv. and**
James McDonnell RIP (Marcelle Wade)





CHARITY CHRISTMAS SONG

A few weeks ago, my fiancé, Mark, decided that the world needed a Christmas song of hope. So he set about writing one. He then enlisted the help of my niece, Sarah, and between him humming it, and Sarah putting it to music, they managed to record a beautiful song with lyrics that are perfect for this time of year, and in particular, this year!

It is now available to listen to through YouTube, and if you wish to, you can donate to one of the three charities that they wanted to support: - UNICEF, Crisis, and Guide Dogs for the Blind. If you cannot donate, they ask that you just share the song in the hope that the message will get out there to everyone.

Enjoy ['Let's Unite the World this Christmas.'](#)

Much love and thanks, Sharon x



300 CLUB

Forms are now available with this newsletter for the 300 Club. £780 was raised for the parish in 2020. Each share bought, at a cost of £6, gives you a chance to win one of three cash prizes every month. A great way of raising money for the parish without leaving your armchair!

Please fill in the form as soon as possible and either post it to the address on the form, or pop it into the door of the Presbytery, with your method of payment.

Thanks so much to Malcolm Duncan who runs the 300 Club, and has done for many years.

SPECIAL THANKS

Grateful thanks go to David Andrew for all of the hard work he has put into making our church safe - it has been pretty much a full time job since March, with all of the H & S directives etc.

Also, thanks to Frank McEvoy for his assistance and for setting up the booking system.

We certainly could not have done it without you both.





BOOKING FOR MASS

Bookings open on Monday 28th December at 9am, until Friday 1st January at 12noon, for Masses on Saturday 2nd and Sunday 3rd January.

Please note that Sharon will still be sorting out bookings from home, but you may not get as swift a response as you would normally.

Thanks so much to everyone who has either acted as a Steward or as a Cleaner after all Masses since the first lockdown. Many of you also clean the Church on the normal weekly rota too. You have all done such an amazing job. and so willingly, given the varied and changing instructions. It really is much appreciated.

Let's hope that this time next year things will have gone back to the 'old normal.'

CHRISTMAS TREE THANKS

Again, we are very grateful to S. Stibbards and Sons, our local Funeral Directors, who have supplied us with the Christmas Tree in St. George's. It really is much appreciated.

Big thanks also go to Caroline and her Team, who have helped with the decorating of the tree and to all of the other Flower Arrangers who would normally have contributed during the year,



but sadly for much of this year have been 'furloughed' - a word that hardly anyone had heard of until March, and it is now part of every day language....

Let's hope and pray that 2021 will be a brighter year, and we can shake off the darkness of much of 2020.

THANK YOU!

Every year we are taken aback by the cards and gifts that we receive here in the Presbytery. We thank you all for your generosity, and kindness, and also your support throughout this rather strange and difficult year.

Wishing each and every one of you a happy and holy Christmas, and please stay safe and well as we begin the New Year.

Fr. Brett and Sharon





CHRISTMAS GREETINGS TO EVERYONE IN ST. GEORGE'S PARISH

Sonia Bignell - Wishing Father Brett, Sharon and all our community a safe, peaceful Christmas and a healthy 2021. With love xxx

Maralyn and Elijah Clancey - Christmas can never be cancelled, it lives in our hearts, like love. Have a peaceful and joy filled Christmas, With all best wishes ♥️

Monica Fitzgerald - Wishing you a very happy Christmas. Stay safe and well. x

Margaret and John Munson - Wishing all our Parishioners a joyful and peaceful Christmas, full of love and hope. May 2021 bring us all good health and prosperity. x

Louise Sullivan - Wishing all our Missio Red box holders and collectors a happy, peaceful and safe Christmas. God Bless and thank you.

Pat and Barry Robins - Sending warmest Christmas greetings ,and best wishes for 2021. Xxx

Ron and Connie Galiza -May the spirit of CHRISTMAS be always in our HEARTS.

Chris Coull and Mary Finch - Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.

Serena and Brian Fitzgerald - Dear parishioners, missing our normality, but also wishing you the very best this Holy Christmastide.

Joan and Tony McDonald - Christmas Blessings on dear Father Brett and all members of our extraordinary Parish Community.

Anna and Domenico Tullio - Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and A Happy New year. God bless you all. With love and best wishes XX

Jo and Conrad Britto - Wishing everyone a peaceful and joyful Christmas and let's hope and pray for better times in the New Year.

Anne and John Pither - Merry Christmas to everyone, and a Happy New Year. God bless you all.

Jacquie Paterson - Thanks to everyone for all of the love shown to me since the death of my beloved Bernard. God bless everyone at Christmas Time.

Cecilia Goodchild - To the Choir, keep singing in your heart!

Nili Avis and Family - Let our hearts be filled with joy because of a special baby boy. Merry Christmas to our lovely priest and our amazing parishioners. Lots of love.

Marianna, Stephen, Emily and Thomas Anstis - Wishing everyone Merry Christmas and good strong health for 2021.

Helen and Paul Hughes -Wishing all parishioners a very Happy and Holy Christmas. God bless you all.

Jacqui and Jim Graham - Best wishes to Fr. Brett and all parishioners.

Isabel and Andrew Simmonds - Happy Christmas, hope to see you all ASAP!! in 2021.



Yvonne Byford - Happy Christmas to anyone who remembers me!

Helen and Paul Hughes - Wishing everyone a Happy Christmas!

Sue and Tony Fitzpatrick - to those we haven't seen for a while we hope you are keeping safe and well and wish all parishioners every Christmas blessing and a happy and healthy New Year.

Olwen and Jeremy Shallis - would like to thank everyone for the cards and messages of support during Jeremy's illness and wish all their friends at St George's a Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

From the Piercy, Frampton, Cartlidge and Braybrook Families - Wishing you a peaceful Christmas and a healthy New Year x.

Family Mass Music Group wish everybody a happy and Holy Christmas x

Chris and Tom McPhillips - Merry Christmas and God bless everyone. Thanks to everyone for everything!

Pat Sach - Wishing everyone a safe and happy Christmas.

Robert Walliker - God bless you all this Christmas and eternally.

Jane Fitchew and Family - However you are celebrating Christmas this year, I wish you all a social-distanced happy and very healthy holiday. May your homes be filled with warmth and cheerful celebrations. A special THANK YOU to Fr. Brett for keeping us all going through prayer during these very strange times. :) xxx

Beau, Clare and Tiggy Merlini - Wishing Fr Brett, Sharon and all the parishioners a peaceful Christmas. All our love.

Shawn and Anne Clarke- Best Wishes to all for a peaceful Christmas. May 2021 be the key to our safer and more normal future!

Barbara McGurk - Wishing everyone in our beautiful `parish family a very Happy Holy Christmas. May we all experience in our homes the Love Peace and Joy of the Holy Family. Love and prayers to everyone.

From Trumpet Bex and Family - Wising Fr. Brett and all the parishioners a peaceful Christmas. Even though I don't see you at mass you are all in my prayers. Stay strong during these testing times and If anyone needs anything I am always here. xxxxx

Peter Reader - To all my fellow parishioners, I extend my heartiest seasons greetings and thanks to so many of you who have volunteered for all the additional usher, stewarding and cleaning duties that have enabled us all to continue our faith and devotions throughout the year. My thanks, love and best wishes.

Please turn over for the last one...



*In him we see our God made visible
and so are caught up in love of the God
we cannot see.*

Christmas Preface

The

Wonder, Mystery and Message of the Crib

Wonder

There is a special revelation of God's majesty in the helplessness of a child. It is a revelation of love, the same love that would leave Jesus no less helpless on the Cross. It is in part the depth of God's love, shown in his costly involvement with humanity that is a new and radiant vision of his glory. The verb used in the preface, '*caught up*', is not precise, nor should it be. Christmas is not a matter of cold reassuring but most profoundly a matter of wonder, amazement and awe.

Mystery

It is of course the crib that will help us to appreciate the mystery. But there are several ways of approaching a crib. In Rome there is the custom of visiting the cribs in the various churches; there we find an exuberance of imagination, a variety of ways of presenting the scene, often with dozens of figures and buildings which allow us to recapture the miracle that is taking place in the very ordinariness of daily life in Palestine, even if it is a Bethlehem often with strong Italian colouring. But any crib, even the simplest, can speak to us. '*Speak*' is somehow the right word. A crib is silent, nothing moves. But even as we allow ourselves to be drawn into its silence, it speaks to our hearts. It takes time for a crib to address us. We need to stay before it, not saying prayers, but allowing the sense of wonder and astonishment to take us over. To be 'caught up in the love of the God we cannot see' is to allow the crib to speak to our hearts rather than to our heads, its very stillness having a resonant eloquence.





Message

Clearly the crib speaks to us of that peace which the world cannot give, and which is at the heart of the Christmas message. The very stillness of the crib breathes a peace that can still the anxieties and cares of our hearts, and draw us upwards towards a new vision of ourselves enveloped by the love of the God who came to us as a baby. Human wisdom, personal ambitions, the selfish grasping of people and of things, are humbled and healed in the silence of the crib. In the presence of this new revelation of God's glory we can only remain in silence to allow his peace some greater entry into our lives, that peace which in the end is the only thing that will ever satisfy our restless hearts.

Fr Christopher O'Donnell O.Carm.

GREETINGS FROM PARISHIONERS CONTINUED...

Sandra Coimbra - This year has brought its many challenges and for some, more than others. This time of year is a time to reflect and share with our loved ones the joy and love Christmas brings. Whilst we may not be able to do this in person and this may be difficult for many, my wish for us all is that we do not lose hope and keep faith that things will eventually get better. We will once again spend special moments with our loved ones and not be afraid to share a handshake with a friend. I pray that everyone in our community remains safe over this festive period and that the joy that is Christmas shines into your hearts as we see the New Year in with renewed hope.





CHRISTMAS PRESENT - A REFLECTION

In recent weeks I've been reflecting on how Jesus' coming into the world teaches us about presence, and how Jesus is the presence of the Father, God -with-us.

One of the Hebrew words translated as 'presence' in the Old Testament is 'paniyim', which can also be translated as 'face'. I love this, because it reveals something of the nearness of God's presence and the close, personal encounter we can have with God face-to-face.

As Psalm 67:1 tells us, to experience God's presence is to experience the light in God's shining face.

I've also been thinking about how Jesus is the present of the Father; He is God's saving gift to us.

'Present' is one of those wonderfully rich words that can have all sorts of meanings. When we think of Christmas presents, we think of gifts; Jesus certainly is the self-gift of the Father to the world. But to be present also means to be: here, to be near, to turn up, to exist in this moment, now, to be accessible. Isn't it wonderful that Jesus' coming means all these things as well?

When I look at Jesus' life and ministry, I'm struck by how totally present he was to everyone and in everything.

Whether in prayer to the Father, in conversation with the people he encountered, in proclaiming the kingdom, in ministering to people's needs, in listening to their concerns, in suffering, in dying and in rising, Jesus was fully present in each particular moment.

I wonder if this Christmas we can practice being fully present in this particular moment, to these particular people in this particular place, without thinking of what comes next?

Can we accept this moment as a gift from God, to be lived to the full?

Annie O'Connor

21 December 2018





AUSTEN IVEREIGH LIVESTREAM EVENT

On Saturday 30th January from 11 am until 12.30 pm Dr Austen Iver-
eigh will speak about the book he
recently co-authored with Pope
Francis. 'Let us Dream' presents the
Pope's vision for the post-
pandemic future. How should we
move forward from the multiple
coronavirus crises? To access this
livestream event please go to
www.ssppilford.org.uk and click on
live stream remote services. The
event, which is sponsored by Gidea
Park parish in conjunction with
Brentwood Interfaith, will be avail-
able subsequently on
www.whatgoodnews.org Questions
for Austen may be emailed before-
hand to
adriangraffy@dioceseofbrentwood.org

OFFICE/CHURCH HOURS

Sharon will be back in the office on
Monday 4th January, from 8am.
Fr. Brett will also be taking a break ,
so there will be no Masses from
Monday 28th to Thursday 31st De-
cember. We will open again for
Mass on 1st January at 10am.

MARRIAGE MATTERS

(www.twoinoneflesh.org.uk)

Christmas Day Midnight Mass

(Isaiah 9:1-7 Titus 2:11-14

Luke 2:1-14)

Presents or Presence

The first Christmas Story is simple: it
reveals the real presence of Jesus,
Mary and Joseph to each other.
Maybe the lesson for us is to focus
more on being 'present' to one
another rather than on giving
'presents', so that Jesus can be born
again in our marriage and in all those
we love and care for.

The Holy Family

(Ecclesiastes 3:2-6, 12-14

Colossians 3:12-21 Luke 2:22-40)

Give way and love gently

When Mary and Joseph had done
everything that the Law required,
they went back home. Little is said
about them as a couple. Did Mary
'give way to her husband, as you
should in the Lord'? Did Joseph
'love his wife and treat her with
gentleness'? Did they choose daily
to love each other over and above
everything else? Do we?



ANNIVERSARIES IN DECEMBER

Please remember the following :

†Candido Amorim, Kathleen Barrett, Mary Bourne, Doreen Brown, Oliver Byrne, Ernie and Margaret Cooper, Stephen and Brian Downey, Don Everett, Eileen Fletcher, David Gravestock, Elizabeth Gravestock, Alan Green, Keiran Grixti, Herbert Jagelman, Kathleen Joseph, Filomena Kettlewell, Maureen Lawton, Mary Lloyd, Eileen Lynch, Peggy Malone, Kitty Martin, Thomas Mills, Paddy Moloney, Joseph O'Neill, Tony Parisio, Joan Lillian Pass, Bernard Paterson, Michael Pickford, Lynda Quinlivan, Maureen Radmall, John Rider, John Rooney, Kevin Sharland, Magdalena Staple, Maureen Swann, Joseph and Mary Kathleen Thompson, Maria Tullio, Roy Wallen †

CHRISTMAS CRIB COLLECTION

The proceeds of the Crib Collection are donated each year to the Brentwood Catholic Children's Society to support those children and families who need their help. We would like to ask you to take a moment to pray for those children and families for whom Christmas may be a difficult time. On behalf of the trustees, staff, and the children and families who we are privileged to help, we thank you for your support and wish you a very Happy Christmas.

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK

Please pray for all those who are sick or housebound in our parish, as well as our friends and family.

Father of goodness and love, hear our prayers for the sick members of our community and for all who are in need. Amid mental and physical suffering may they find consolation in your healing presence.

Show your mercy as you close wounds, cure illness, make broken bodies whole and free downcast spirits.

May these special people find lasting health and deliverance, and so join us in thanking you for all your gifts.

We ask this through the Lord Jesus who healed those who believed.

Amen.



Parish Priest: Fr. Brett Adams

96 Ness Road, Shoeburyness, SS3 9DH

Telephone: 01702 292726

Website: www.saintgeorgeschurch.co.uk

School: St. George's Catholic Primary

Eagle Way, Shoeburyness, SS3 9RN

Headteacher: Mrs A. Delgado

Telephone: 01702 293522

Website: www.sgcps.co.uk

Parish Administrator: Sharon Chambers

Office open: From 4th Jan - Mon , Tues,

Thurs, Fri 8am until 2pm

Closed : - Wednesday 7th January

Hall Bookings: 292726 in office hours

Gift Aid: Jim Filmer. Tel. 585839

Church Email: -

shoeburyness@dioceseofbrentwood.org

