



# Catholic Parish of St Edmund, King and Martyr, Godalming with St Joseph's, Milford

## Christmas 2023



*Oh, and love shone down over the hills and over the valleys*

Since coming to Godalming four years ago these words (and the catchy tune that goes with them) have been very much part of my Christmas. This year, with Christmas clouded by war in the Holy Land and in Ukraine and continuing economic grind at home, they have a particular resonance. Into the darkness of the night *love shone down*, bringing delight to Mary and Joseph, joy to the shepherds and wonder to the magi. The breaking-through of the child Jesus in the manger filled them with hope, and his coming can bring hope to our weary hearts and world too.

This Christmas is the 800th anniversary of the first crib at Greccio. On that occasion there were no statues or figures, and I think St Francis intended that those who gathered round would understand that *they* were the shepherds, Mary and Joseph and that, as Mass was celebrated on the altar built over the crib, they would understand that Jesus was with them in the sacred host. In our day, the crib (with the traditional figures) and the consecrated host, the Blessed Sacrament, provide an opportunity for awe and wonder: times and places where we can be caught up in silent adoration and discover in ourselves God's love for us and just how He is not who we imagine Him to be, but beyond even our wildest dreams, hopes and expectations.

The crib arouses wonder and moves us because "it shows God's tender love: the Creator of the universe lowered himself to take up our littleness. The gift of life, in all its mystery, becomes all the more wondrous as we realize that the Son of Mary is the source and sustenance of all life. In Jesus, the Father has given us a brother who comes to seek us out whenever we are confused or lost, a loyal friend ever at our side. He gave us his Son who forgives us and frees us from our sins."

The sacred host arouses wonder and moves us because it is in the Eucharist that Jesus, the one who died and lives again, is really and truly present, giving himself to save us and heal us in love.

This Christmas, and indeed throughout the coming year as we prepare for the Jubilee of Hope, I encourage us to make room in our lives to experience the love of God which is revealed to the human heart in the act of adoration and worship. This is the only sure source of hope in our world, and in turn it drives us to serve others in love.

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St Edmund's Parish is part of the Arundel and Brighton Diocesan Trust, Registered Charity No.25287

**Welcome to all** who are visiting our parish over Christmas and wishing a peaceful Christmas and New Year to everyone.

**Christmas Vigil Mass at 5pm** is the one most popular with younger children. They are very welcome to wear nativity-themed fancy dress!

**A word of thanks** to all those who have helped prepare our churches and liturgies for Christmas.

**Christmas Offering** The offertory at the Christmas Masses goes to support the priests of our parish and can be Gift Aided (see below for details). If you would like to contribute at another time please place your donation in the offertory basket in an envelope marked "Christmas".

**Crib Offerings** this year will go to the Catholic Children's Society's Crisis Fund, which supports families in need in Surrey and Sussex.

**Feast of the Epiphany** is transferred this year to Sunday 7th January. Mass at the usual times.

**The Parish Office** is closed until 2nd January. Fr Jonathan will be away for a few days between Christmas and the New Year.

### Looking to 2024 and beyond

#### **The Word Who is Life: The Call to Mission**

As the world changes, our parishes must be ever-clearer beacons of light guiding people to Christ. Bishop Richard has updated the Pastoral Plan for the Diocese, which highlights how we can embrace this important time of renewal, forging our parishes into communities of saints and strong, lively, and welcoming schools of discipleship. The Pastoral Plan will be released on the diocesan website on 2nd January.

Bishop Richard will be hosting a Webinar for people across our diocesan community on Wednesday 10 January at 7.30pm. Please use the following link to join the webinar:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86457734895>

The coming year will provide an important time for our parish to plan its mission for the years ahead. Bishop Richard has asked each parish to have an hour of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament each month to support this work and times for this will be added to the parish calendar in the New Year.

#### **Our Churches**

The publication of the pastoral plan will enable us to further our discernment on the future of our churches in Godalming. We will be seeking to hear the voice of parishioners on the options before us after the Building Review Group reports to the parish late January / early February.

**Baptism Preparation** Please get in touch with Fr Jonathan or Sarah if you would like to attend the next preparation sessions in mid-January.

**Confirmation** preparation begins in the New Year for young people in Year 10. Sign up at: <https://stedsgod.churchsuite.com/events/j9jyjbzl>

**St Edmund's School Admissions 2024** Please contact the parish office if you need Fr Jonathan to sign a supplementary information form for applications to St Edmund's School in Sept 2024. The proposed admissions arrangements for 2025 can be viewed under "Admissions" at <https://www.stedmundsschool.co.uk/>

### Christmas in the shadow of War

There will be no Christmas tree or traditional festivities this year in Bethlehem in response to war in the Holy Land.

The Peacelight from Bethlehem burns at St Edmund's Church where our tree would usually be. This flame has come from the Church of the Nativity and been carried across Europe and further afield by Scouts and Guides. Please feel free to take a light home with you if you can do so safely.

#### **Latin Patriarch's Appeal**

Cardinal Pizzaballa, who leads the Latin Catholic Church in the Holy Land, has appealed for help with their relief work and, following our Bishop's invitation, a second collection will be taken on the Feast of the Epiphany to support the work of our brothers and sisters who keep the faith of Jesus in the place of his birth.

Thank you for your recent donations to CAFOD to support the Holy Land Crisis Appeal. In addition to any monies contributed directly we have paid over £1,000 from funds collected in the parish.

**Thank you** to all those who supported our Day of Prayer for Peace on 9 December. May we continue our prayer effort for peace and reconciliation and may our prayers bear fruit.

**Supporting our local foodbanks** During the Christmas season we tend to treat ourselves to goodies - but perhaps we can also take a moment to think of those in our community who are struggling with the cost-of-living crisis?

Our parish **Live Simply group** meets at 7.30pm, 11th January, please join us! [jolewry@aol.com](mailto:jolewry@aol.com)

**Faith as Turning Point in prison** Marie Norbury from Prison Advice and Care Trust (PACT) is speaking at St Dunstan's Church in Woking, GU22 7DT, on 17 January at 7pm. To register: [guildfordknightsofstcolumba@gmail.com](mailto:guildfordknightsofstcolumba@gmail.com)

## Some Diocesan Events in 2024

### Day of Reflection for Ministers of the Word

with Bishop Richard in Cobham on Saturday 21 January 11am-4pm. For more details/to book: <https://abdiocese.churchsuite.com/events/9vii0inm>

**Annual Justice & Peace Assembly** Saturday 27 January, 10-1.30pm at St Philip Howard Centre, Crawley. The assembly will address violence and abuse in our homes, families and wider community, with speakers from Restored, Lifecentre and Pax Christi. For more info contact Tessa Ricketts: [Tessa.Ricketts@abdiocese.org.uk](mailto:Tessa.Ricketts@abdiocese.org.uk)

**Day of Reflection for Ministers of the Eucharist** with Bishop Richard in Worthing on Saturday 10 February. For more info/to book: <https://abdiocese.churchsuite.com/events/digacwqg>

**Wintershall Stations of the Cross** Friday 5 January at 7am; all welcome. Meet at Stable Cottage and stay for refreshments afterwards.

**If you are struggling in your marriage Retrouvaille** offers help and hope to couples - of any faith or none - wanting to heal the difficulties they are experiencing. For a confidential chat phone: 07887 296983 and for info on 2024: <https://www.marriagecare.org.uk/>

**Overwhelmed - Finding balance in a fast-paced world** Saturday 27 January at Godalming Baptist Church. This life issue session is led by Andy Peck and covers issues such as: What makes us overwhelmed and how do we respond? Learn from what Jesus modelled and taught His followers. Come for yourself and those who need our ministry. [www.godalmingbaptistchurch.org.uk](http://www.godalmingbaptistchurch.org.uk)

**Christmas Offering** Gift Aid allows us to claim 25% of the value of your donation and there are envelopes at the back of church that can be used to do this: if you have a current Gift Aid declaration just fill in your name, and if not please complete all the details on the envelope. If you have a box of numbered Gift Aid envelopes these also include one that can be used at Christmas. If using the contactless device, select 'Christmas Offering' and please enter your details to sign up for Gift Aid (if you haven't already done so on the device). Or donate cash in a named envelope via the offertory collection; these contributions are also currently tax rebated. If you are donating at Farncombe, please use a St Edmund's envelope, not a St John's one!

**CTGD December Newsletter** is available on our website under 'Newsletters'.

**Used stamps** from Christmas Cards. Leave them in an envelope at church marked 'RNIB' charity.

## Receive the parish newsletter by email

Please let us know if you'd like a digital copy by emailing [godalming@abdiocese.org.uk](mailto:godalming@abdiocese.org.uk)

**Parish Finance** Thank you to those who support the parish by their regular giving. Donations to the parish by bank transfer can be made to 'RCD AB Godalming', sort code 40-05-20, account number 41077481. To arrange a standing order or to sign up for Gift Aid, please contact Eileen: [ga.godalming@abdiocese.org.uk](mailto:ga.godalming@abdiocese.org.uk)

## Some sources of practical support

**Bereavement support** The parish team can be contacted via: [bereavementatsteds@gmail.com](mailto:bereavementatsteds@gmail.com)

**SVP** members offer regular visits, friendship and practical support to those in need. 07379 108009.

**Godalming Foodbanks** Please contact the SVP or Fr Jonathan if you need a referral for St Marks Foodbank or Godalming Community Food Store.

**Good Neighbour schemes** with volunteer drivers to help with transport to appointments, shopping, befriending etc: **Farncombe & Binscombe:** 07531 888398; **Godalming:** 07943 274461; **Witley & Milford:** 07871 570160; **Elstead:** 01252 702702.

**Mental Health support** Local mental health crisis helpline is 0800 915 4644, open 24/7 for support for adults and CYP. If you're worried about yourself/young person, there's face-to-face support and assessment at Guildford Safe Haven.

**Please remember in your prayers** The people of Israel, Gaza and Ukraine; for peace in our world.

**The Holy Father's Intention for December** We pray that people living with disabilities may be at the centre of attention in society, and that institutions may offer inclusive programmes which value their active participation.

**The sick and those who care for them** Yvonne Cova, Penny Blackett, David Coombs, Liliane Hills, John McCarthy, Rosaria Manto, Gabrielle Dumble, Malcolm Baldwin, Alfonso Mora, Margaret & Terry Punter, Freda Apark, Philip Doyle, Alex Jolliffe, David Kennealy, Mona, Pam & John Lennox, Nigel Ambrose, Tony McDonald, Sylvia Reilly, Valentina Masella, Danny O'Sullivan, Catherine Goodridge, Alan Berry, Rudolf Dorrepaal, Nicolle Ernould, Nuala Gallagher, George Gelder, Audrey Hockey, Cliff Hutchinson, Ann Lloyd, Betty Matthews, Gerry Newell, Jean Rejniak, Maria Rogers, Margaret Silvester, Anne Stephens, Anita van Rheenan & Josie Whittle; those in our hospitals & care homes; and those who carry their illnesses privately.

**The faithful departed** in particular for Veneta Wells, Roisin Chowney, Tim Barraud, May Larby, Jean Martin, Bernard Laverty, Mary Brister, Kas Kuhlan, Edward Jazwinski, Joan Etsell, Margaret Beagley, May Real, Michael Dolan, Nora Denyer, Anna Clark, Harry Pullen, Anthony Sweatman, Danny Furlong, Catherine Breen, Leonard Green, Robert Wilson, Andrew Barnard, Lilian Legg and Jane Kelly whose anniversaries occur at this time.

## Schedule of Masses & Liturgies Christmas 2023

<b>Saturday 23rd December</b>	<b>6.00pm Mass (St Edmund's)</b> – <i>Guy Wright RIP</i>
<b>Sunday 24th December</b> FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT	<b>8.45am Mass (St John's)</b> – <i>People of the Parish</i> <b>Please note – no 10.30am Mass at St Joseph's this Sunday</b> <i>11.00am Mass at Our Lady of Lourdes, Haslemere</i>
<b>THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD</b>	
<b>Sunday 24th December</b>	<b>5.00pm Vigil Mass (St Joseph's)</b> – <i>Frank &amp; Matthew Brown RIP</i> <b>7.00pm Vigil Mass (St Edmund's)</b> - <i>For Christians in the Holy Land</i> <b>10.00pm Mass in the Night (St Edmund's)</b> - <i>People of the Parish</i>
<b>Monday 25th December</b>	<b>8.45am Dawn Mass (St John's)</b> – <i>Deceased family &amp; friends</i> <b>10.30am Mass of Christmas Day (St Joseph's)</b> – <i>Celebrant's Intention</i>
<b>Thursday 26th December</b> St Stephen	<i>10.00am Mass at St Joseph's, Guildford</i>
<b>Wednesday 27th December</b> St John	<b>9.30am Mass (St Joseph's)</b> – <i>Len &amp; Pat Marsh RIP</i>
<b>Thursday 28th December</b> The Holy Innocents	<i>10.00am Mass at St Joseph's, Guildford</i>
<b>Friday 29th December</b> St Thomas Becket	<i>10.00am Mass at St Joseph's, Guildford</i>
<b>Saturday 30th December</b>	<b>6.00pm Mass (St Edmund's)</b> –
<b>Sunday 31st December</b> THE HOLY FAMILY	<b>8.45am Mass (St John's)</b> – <i>People of the Parish</i> <b>10.30am Mass (St Joseph's)</b> – <i>Luisa Pilotti RIP</i> <i>12.00am Midnight Mass in Polish (St Joseph's)</i>
<b>Monday 1st January</b>	<b>11.30am Mass at Ladywell Convent</b>
<b>Tuesday 2nd January</b> SS Basil & Gregory	<b>9.30am Mass (St Joseph's)</b>
<b>Wednesday 3rd January</b> The Most Holy Name of Jesus	<b>5.00pm Elstead Mass</b> (Bilbrook, 1 Burford Lea, GU8 6HU)
<b>Thursday 4th January</b>	<b>9.30am Mass (St Edmund's)</b>
<b>Friday 5th January</b>	<b>9.30am Mass (St Edmund's)</b>
<b>Saturday 6th January</b>	<b>6.00pm Vigil Mass of the Epiphany (St Edmund's)</b> – <i>Tim Green RIP</i>
<b>Sunday 7th January</b> THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD	<b>8.45am Mass (St John's)</b> – <i>People of the parish</i> <b>10.30am Mass (St Joseph's)</b> – <i>Jesus Lopez RIP</i> <i>12.00pm Baptism (St Joseph's) - Jemima</i>

**St Edmund's Church is open each day, usually from 10am to 4pm**

[www.stedsgod.com](http://www.stedsgod.com)