



ST FRANCIS XAVIER'S CATHOLIC CHURCH HEREFORD

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Dear All, A beautiful Catholic devotion, experiencing something of a revival in recent years, is the celebration of a Rorate Caeli Mass. It gets its name from the opening words of the Introit, which comes from Isaiah 45:8, "drop down, ye heavens." The Mass is traditionally celebrated before dawn in Advent as a devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. The Rorate Mass is lit only by candlelight. The interplay of light and darkness speak to the meaning of Advent and the coming of the Light of the world. In the dimly lit setting, priests and faithful prepare to honour the Light of the world, Who is soon to be born, and offer praise to God for the gift of Our Lady. As the Mass proceeds and sunrise approaches, the church becomes progressively brighter, illumined by the sun as our Faith is illumined by Christ.

We capture something of this mood in this Sunday's Mass. The prayers focus upon the place of Mary in the Incarnation and her openness to the message of the Angel. Pope Benedict XVI reminds us that "Mary is the mother and model of the Church, who receives the divine Word in faith and offers herself to God as the "good soil" in which he can continue to accomplish his mystery of salvation." We continue this work when we actively respond to God's call. The second reading highlights Jesus' obedience to God's will. In Hebrews, Jesus declares that He came to do what God wanted, not what He wanted.

This teaches us the importance of putting God's will above our own desires. Obeying God can be challenging, especially when it goes against our own plans. However, this Sunday reminds us that true fulfilment comes from aligning our lives with God's purposes. This obedience leads to a deeper relationship with God and a more meaningful life. **Fr John**

Liturgical Calendar December 2024 Yr C Psalter Wk 4

Sat 21st	10.30am	3rd Week of Advent	Christopher
Sat 21st	11.00am	Confessions and Adoration	
Sat 21st	6.00pm	4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (VIGIL)	Malcolm Wilson RIP
Sun 22nd	8.00am	4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT	The parish
Sun 22nd	10.00am	4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT	Leigh & Caron
Mon 23rd	9.30am	4th Week of Advent	Fr Gregory Int.
Mon 23rd	12.30pm	Carols on the Steps –All Welcome	
Tue 24th	5.00pm	FIRST MASS OF CHRISTMAS	Peace in the Holy Land
Tue 24th	9.30pm & 10.00pm	CHRISTMAS CAROLS & MASS OF THE NIGHT (MIDNIGHT)	Persecuted Christians
Wed 25th	8.00am	CHRISTMAS MASS AT DAWN	Bill & Nora Mills
Wed 25th	10.00am	CHRISTMAS MASS IN THE DAY	For peace in the world
Thu 26th	10.00am	ST STEPHEN	Liji Varghese
Fri 27th	1.00pm	ST JOHN APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST	Alena RIP
Sat 28th	10.30am	THE HOLY INNOCENTS	The unborn
Sat 28th	11.00am	NB: NO Confessions and Adoration	
Sat 28th	6.00pm	THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS	For family
Sun 29th	8.00am	THE HOLY FAMILY	Vocations
Sun 29th	10.00am	THE HOLY FAMILY	The parish

We welcome into God's family **Teo Kirilov** who will be baptised this Sunday at 12 noon. We warmly welcome Teo and all his family to our parish.



On Wednesday the 8th January we welcome a visit from Chile of a group of lay Benedictine women called the Manquehue Apostolic community. After visiting Belmont they will be joining us for the 1.00pm Mass and then after a shared lunch will be giving a short talk and explanation on the work they do. It would be lovely if any parishioner wanted to come and meet the community and join in the lunch and the talk.



Sign up sheets for Welcomers, Readers and ministers of the Eucharistic are now in the sacristy. Please sign up as soon as possible. Thank you

We remember all who have died and those whose anniversaries occur about this time: Christopher Ford, Rozalia Mazur, Mary Oakley, Tina Wilding, Anthony Colley, Gerald Fussell, Jadwiza Angell, David Lyons, Francis Trevor, Timothy O'Connor, Winifred Setterfield, Thomas Morgan, Francis Dullehan, Bill Mills, Anna Stevens



Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen

Pray for the Sick: Fr Keith, Ania Kuzba, Jan Beavan, Robbie Bell, Brian Symonds, Meg Furber, Ann Currie, Midad Jasari, David Madgen, Lynne Howells, Sarah, Katherine Melia, Christina James, Ana Rudnicki, Nicola Merrick, Martin O'Connor, Patricia Moroney, Margaret Skelding, James Spradbery, Teresa Bord Kathleen Spradbery, Ann Marie Hughson, John Moroney, Eddie Gallagher.

THE HOLY YEAR

On Christmas Eve Pope Francis will open the Holy Door of St Peter's Basilica in the Vatican. This heralds the start of the Holy Year that will conclude on 6th January 2026. It is only during a Jubilee Year that these doors are opened. What is a Jubilee Year? A Jubilee year is an event of great spiritual, ecclesial and social significance in the life of the year; it is celebrated every twenty-five years. In St Luke's Gospel, Jesus makes clear his own mission is to bring Jubilee. In the synagogue at Nazareth he reads from the scroll of the prophet Isaiah, proclaiming the year of the Lord's favour.

The theme of the Jubilee Year is Pilgrims of Hope. Pope Francis has invited us to renew our hope and discover a vision that can 'restore access to the fruits of the earth to everyone.' Pope Francis writes that we must fan the flame of hope that has been given us, and help everyone to gain new strength and certainty by looking to the future with an open spirit, a trusting heart and farsighted vision. This will be the case if we are capable of recovering a sense of universal fraternity and refuse to turn a blind eye to the tragedy of rampant poverty that prevents millions of men, women, young people and children from living in a manner worthy of human dignity.

What should we be doing during the Jubilee Year? This is an opportunity to turn to the Lord in prayer and to pursue justice. Again, Pope Francis writes, through prayer, may we arrive at the Holy Door with our hearts ready to welcome the gifts of grace and forgiveness that the Jubilee offers as a vivid expression of our relationship with God. Let us immerse ourselves in prayer, discover the joy of silence and the peace of abandonment and the power of intercession in the communion of saints. **Saint Francis Xavier Church.** We are privileged that our Church is a designated church in the diocese for the Holy Year. **Pope Francis opening the Holy Door for the Year of Mercy.**



Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist

6pm Kathy Weston
Wendy Winterburn
Sarah Slancauskas

8am Cecilia Balestra
Frances Hetterley

10am Mary Cook,
Lorena de Lima Auer
Gerald Okafur

Ministers of the Word

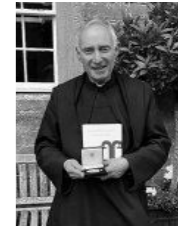
6pm Fiona Stokes

8am Lorraine Lloyd Williams

10am Audrey Fussell

The collection at Christmas Masses is your gift to Fr James and Fr John.

Thank You



Parish 200 Club. Winners November Draw 2024 1st Bernadette Crowley £30; 2nd Sylvia Cockroft £20; 3rd Carola Morton £10. **Winners December Draw 2024** 1st Vera McHale £30; 2nd Brigid Fresle £20; 3rd Paul Puthen £10. Finally, **the Christmas £100 STAR DRAW PRIZE** goes to Monica Zakowicz.. **That's all for 2024. See notice for details of re-newals for 2025, due NOW!** Congratulations to the Winners who can collect their letters from the Sacristy.

Parish 200 Club. Renewals for 2025 due now. Thanks to all who have supported the 200 club. We hope you will continue your subscription for 2025. Please send a cheque for £12 per number (payable to St Francis Xavier's 200 Club) to the church in an envelope with your name & 200 Club on it. If you pay by standing order you do'nt need to do anything. The easiest way to pay is to make a direct transfer: **Sort Code:09-06-66. A/c No: 42516221. A/c Name: St Francis Xavier's Church.** To enable us to keep track of payments, **please let us know if you make a direct transfer** email pejwilliams@gmail.com for details. Profits go to pay for extras in the Church.

Volunteers to prepare the church for Christmas

If you can spare an hour please come along on Tuesday 24th December from 9am onwards to help clean and decorate the church for Christmas. **All are welcome!** The more the merrier! We also need holly and greenery which can be left in the Narthex from Monday morning.



Welcome to any new or visiting parishioners. Do come and introduce yourselves to the welcomers and **come along to the hall after the 10.00am Mass for coffee and cake.**



Collections 14th/15th Dec
1st £502.98 The Parish
2nd £430.00 Renovation
Many Thanks



Parish Calendar– December 2024

Mon 23rd	12.30pm	Carols on the Steps We need lots of volunteers please, not just the choir.
Tues 24th	9.00am	Volunteers to prepare the church for Christmas. Please, can parishioners bring holly and greenery from Monday.