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Christmas Double Issue

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 *The collection at all Christmas Masses is your personal gift to our priests* 

The Christmas Crib

Most of us think, probably accurately, that popes tend to write letters or special messages about important theological topics or world events. But this Advent Pope Francis has written a special message about something very simple and straightforward – the Christmas Crib. This letter, known by its Latin title *Admirabile Signum* ('The admirable sign') is easy to download (http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_letters/documents/papa-francesco-lettera-ap_20191201_admirabile-signum.html) and we have also put it on the notice board in the porch.

In Italy and many other countries with a strong Catholic heritage Christmas cribs are rather bigger and more impressive than they are in England. The picture here shows the life-size crib in St Peter's Square. The reason it's a very good thing that the Holy Father has written about the crib is that we can easily take it for granted and not think about its meaning; but its appeal is constant, as the pope points out at the beginning of the document: **'The enchanting image of the Christmas crèche, so dear to the Christian people, never ceases to arouse amazement and wonder. The depiction of Jesus' birth is itself a simple and joyful proclamation of the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God. The nativity scene is like a living Gospel rising up from the pages of sacred Scripture. As we contemplate the Christmas story, we are invited to set out on a spiritual journey, drawn by the humility of the God who became man in order to encounter every man and woman. We come to realize that so great is his love for us that he became one of us, so that we in turn might become one with him'.**

So Pope Francis helps us understand that the crib is not a sentimental or pretty scene – but a picture which is profoundly theological and full of real meaning. We're drawn into an encounter with God who humbles himself to be born as a baby in the stable – and through this we are enabled to become one with him. The pope's letter is also practical: he wants to encourage the practice of setting up cribs, not only in homes and churches, but also **in the workplace, in schools, hospitals, prisons and town squares**. And he points out that a lot of imagination goes into the preparation of cribs. There is also another level of symbolism: as a manger is a place where animals eat, so it is fitting that the Son of God who becomes our food is born there. The pope also describes how St Francis of Assisi, from whom he took his name when he became pope, invented the practice in the Middle Ages. He also refers to the practice, common in Italy but less so here, of adding more figures to those with whom we are familiar (that is, the Holy Family, the animals, the shepherds and the Magi):

'It is customary to add many symbolic figures to our nativity



scenes. First, there are the beggars and the others who know only the wealth of the heart. They too have every right to draw near to the Infant Jesus; no one can evict them or send them away from a crib so makeshift that the poor seem entirely at home. Indeed, the poor are a privileged part of this mystery; often they are the first to recognize God's presence in our midst. The presence of

the poor and the lowly in the nativity scene remind us that God became man for the sake of those who feel most in need of his love and who ask him to draw near to them. Jesus, "gentle and humble in heart", was born in poverty and led a simple life in order to teach us to recognize what is essential and to act accordingly. The nativity scene clearly teaches that we cannot let ourselves be fooled by wealth and fleeting promises of happiness. We see Herod's palace in the background, closed and deaf to the tidings of joy. By being born in a manger, God himself launches the only true revolution that can give hope and dignity to the disinherited and the outcast: the revolution of love, the revolution of tenderness. From the manger, Jesus proclaims, in a meek yet powerful way, the need for sharing with the poor as the path to a more human and fraternal world in which no one is excluded or marginalized. Children – but adults too! – often love to add to the nativity scene other figures that have no apparent connection with the Gospel accounts. Yet, each in its own way, these fanciful additions show that in the new world inaugurated by Jesus there is room for whatever is truly human and for all God's creatures. From the shepherd to the blacksmith, from the baker to the musicians, from the women carrying jugs of water to the children at play: all this speaks of the everyday holiness, the joy of doing ordinary things in an extraordinary way, born whenever Jesus shares his divine life with us'.

The whole of the pope's letter is worth reading. We have a very fine crib in this church – as we pray before it in the next few weeks, give thanks for the talents of those who construct it every year, and their counterparts all over the world; and ask God into your lives in a new way this Advent and Christmas.



A WORD FROM FR STEVE

You probably have a Christmas tree at home but do you have a crib? In his recent Apostolic letter *Admirabile Signum* about which Fr Ashley writes on the front page, Pope Francis draws our attention to the meaning and importance of the nativity scene and urges us to reclaim the awe and wonder children experience as they gaze upon the Christ Child in the manger, every Christmas. May the Christmas crèche resonate in the hearts and minds of adults also and be a lasting inspiration that nurtures their faith.

I wish you all a very joyful and peaceful Christmas.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who gave up their time in helping prepare for Fr Tom Creagh-Fuller's funeral Mass and who ensured that it was the most fitting celebration of his life.

I have received a number of very favourable comments and expressions of thanks from clergy and lay people who came to pay their respects to a priest who in his lifetime gave so much of himself using all his considerable talents for the Church and for others. Thank you for going the extra mile.

May Fr Tom rest in peace

CHRISTMAS OFFERINGS TO OUR PRIESTS

Your offering given on Christmas Day is by tradition for the priests of our parish. Many of you have responded to our request to set up Standing Orders for your donations to the church and we are so grateful for this, but for any payment to reach our priests it has to be marked for the priests' collection specifically. So, unless you make a specific payment at Christmas (and Easter) I am afraid that the priests will not benefit.

Please would all parishioners who give by Standing Order and wish to give a Christmas gift to the priests consider either making an online payment marked Christmas Gift or simply put their gift in an envelope marked with their name and address and/or their GiftAid number so it can be allocated to the priests' collection and so that the parish can also benefit from the considerable tax refund.

Christmas gifts can also be made via our website [www.saintedmunds.net](http://saintedmunds.net) - click on *donate* or use the following link <http://saintedmunds.net/index.php/donations/>

CRIB OFFERING

The Christmas Crib Offering will be donated to the Catholic Children's Society's Southwark **Crisis Fund**.

There are envelope at the crib for those who are able to Gift Aid their donations



8.00 AM MASS ROTA

Please will all Readers and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion at the 8.00 am Mass on Sundays please collect their new rota from the sacristy.

A number of new readers are needed for the 11:00 am Sunday Mass. If you would like to join the rota, please contact Andrew Bailey (Andrew.Bailey@fca.org.uk, or 0208 658 5718)

BEREAVEMENT OPEN DOOR

The Open Door, for people who are mourning a deceased relative or friend, will in the future be on a Thursday morning. The first one in January will be on the second Thursday, 9th January and not the first Thursday.

BAPTISM PREPARATION

Sunday 26 January at 3.00 pm in the Hall

For all parents wishing to have their first child baptised.

No need to register, just come along.



Thanks for all the offers of transport for the Salesian sister who needed to get herself and her luggage to Oxford. She now has a lift.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION

If you are one of the many who get engaged over Christmas please read the following so you know what to do if you are planning a church wedding.

In the Southwark Diocese it is necessary for couples wanting to get married to contact their priest **six months** ahead of their intended wedding date. This is to allow sufficient time for them to attend the obligatory Marriage Preparation Course and also for the clergy to complete the necessary paperwork. Our clergy would prefer to be given a year to complete the paperwork and suggest that couples do not set a date for their wedding until they have spoken to a priest or deacon

Once you have decided to get married please email the Parish Office with your names and an address and we will send you a preliminary marriage application form plus an enrolment form for the Marriage Preparation Course.

If you intend to get married at a church other than St Edmund's our clergy are still responsible for all the paperwork. As a growing number of our parishioners were born outside the UK we will need to obtain documentation from their previous parishes. This can take some considerable time. There is also extra work to be completed for those who are having their ceremony abroad or for those who have had a previous marriage. So, in short, as soon as you decide to get married, please start the ball rolling by contacting the Parish Office.



PLEASE DO NOT PARK ON THE FORECOURT - LEAVE IT FREE FOR THE PRIESTS

EMERGENCY CONTACT OVER THE HOLIDAYS

As our priests take a little time to relax after the Christmas services they may not be so easy to contact. Routine messages can still be left on their phones or sent by email but if there is a genuine emergency and you need to contact a priest immediately, please phone 0774 097 0749.

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY 18-25 JANUARY

To celebrate the week, there will be a series of services in local churches, including our own. More details will be published early in the New Year. Angela Dowling CTiB.

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT

It was decided at the November meeting that we would not meet on the last Friday of December but instead have the meeting on **Friday 3 January - 7.30pm to 9.00pm in no 11, Village Way.**

CHANGES TO EARLY MORNING MASS TIMES

As already explained by Fr Steve, the times and locations of early morning Masses will change from Monday 6 January. Please make sure you keep a copy of each week's newsletter until you become familiar with the changes.

300 CLUB

The winners of the December draw are:
£500 - no 296 - Miss Kathleen Hayes
£250 - no 172 - Robin Hoyles
Winners will receive their cheques in the post.

HAPPY CHRISTMAS FROM THE SALESIANS

To all the wonderful St. Edmund's Parishioners a prayerful wish for the Lord's blessing on each and everyone this Christmastide. May our reflections on the Incarnation move us to make space for those the Lord came to help: the needy and poor. Thank you all for your support of our mission here with our Asylum Seeker guests from the Congo. We will remember you all in our prayers over this Christmas season.



PRAY FOR ETHAN

Some of you will have heard of the accident that happened in the church in Addiscombe last week during the St Thomas Becket school carol concert. The school PTA has set up a JustGiving page to support the family of the boy who was hurt, Ethan, during this very tough time and the link is below: https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/friendsofethan?utm_id=106&utm_term=9YMWbMGj9 Please pray for him, his family, the school and the parish



DIARY DATES

Meditation every Monday in no11 from 5.30 - 6.15 pm - except on Bank Holidays and **not on December 23.**

Open door for the bereaved on the first Thursday of every month from 10.30 am to 12 noon.

Law Surgery every second Monday of the month in no11 at 7pm

Prayer Meeting last Friday of the month in no11 at 7.30pm except for December (see below).

JANUARY 2020

Fri 3 Life in the Spirit - 7.30 pm in no11

Thurs 9 Bereavement Drop In - 10.30 in no11

18-25 Christian Unity Week

ALTAR FLOWERS

Our Christmas flowers have been given In Loving Memory of Canon Jack Madden and Christina Carroll by the Carroll family
May they Rest in Peace



*A very happy
Christmas to all
St Edmund's parishioners
from Rosemary and
Barbara in the
Parish Office.*



The times of our Christmas Masses are on the back page of this newsletter. When you lose this, you can find them on the website www.saintedmunds.net or displayed on the Parish Office door.
The Office will be shut from Friday 20th



BBC RADIO 4 BROADCAST OF MIDNIGHT MASS

Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve will be broadcast this year from St George's Cathedral. The broadcast will begin at 11.30 pm with carols and the Mass, at midnight, will be celebrated by Archbishop John Wilson and sung by the combined choirs of St George's Cathedral and the Cathedral Consort.



Masses this week**Monday 23 Dec**

8.15 am Church
10.00 am Church

Feria

All dec'd babies of the Dennis family
Patricia J Murray RIP

Tuesday 24 Dec

10.00 am Church

Feria

Mai & Desmond Fitzgerald

Christmas Eve

6.00 pm Church
6.00 pm St Mary's
7.30 pm Church
11.30 pm Church

John Keogh RIP
Paul Stephens RIP
The Ruddy family
Carols & readings followed by
midnight Mass

12.00 am Church

John & Ellen McCarthy RIP
Ekong & Edet families-in thanksgiving

11.30 am St Mary's

*Carols & readings followed by
midnight Mass
Veronica Daubney - wellbeing*

Wednesday 25 Dec

8.00 am Church
9.30 am Church

The Nativity of Our Lord

William & Nora Spillane RIP
John Murnane, the orphans and their
benefactors, living and dec'd
Patrick Chambers RIP

11.00 am Church

Thursday 26 Dec

8.15 am Claver
10.00 am Church

St Stephen, the first Martyr

Fr Tom Creagh-Fuller RIP
Ints of Fr Steve

Friday 27 Dec

8.15 Claver
10.00 am Church

St John, Apostle & Evangelist

Fr Brian Sandeman RIP
P J Murray RIP

Saturday 28 Dec

8.15 am Claver
10.00 am Church

The Holy Innocents, Martyrs

Ann O'Shea - wellbeing
Chris Gunapala RIP

Confessions are heard from

10.30 - 11.00am and from 5.30pm - 5.55pm

6.00 pm Church

For the people

Sunday 29 Dec

8.00 am Church
9.30 am Church
11.00 am Church
5.30 pm Church
7.00 pm Church

The Holy Family

Andrew Bready
In thanksgiving -the Misquitta family
John Henegan RIP
Brenda Burkinshaw RIP & Sean
Murphy RIP
Michael, Bridie & Monica Howard
RIP

*The Rosary is prayed from 9.40 every Monday - Saturday
and following these Masses there is exposition of the
Blessed Sacrament.*

Masses this week**Monday 30 Dec**

8.15 am Church
10.00 am Church

Sixth Day within the Octave of the Nativity

Sr Teresa Shannon FMA RIP
Fr Michael Power RIP

Tuesday 31 Dec

8.15 am Claver
10.00 am Church

Seventh Day within the Octave of the Nativity

Tess Keane RIP
John Murnane, the orphans &
benefactors, living and dead

Wednesday 1 Jan

10.00 am Church
7.30 pm Church

Mary, the Holy Mother of God

Daniel Rumbol RIP (1st anniv)
In thanksgiving - Miriam, Andrew &
Mark

Thursday 2 Jan

8.15 am Claver
10.00 am Church
8.00 pm Claver

St Basil the Great & Gregory Nazianzen

Wellbeing of Patricia Murray
Pinkett Family
Adoration

Friday 3 Jan

8.15 am Claver
10.00 am Church

Feria

Wellbeing of Mary Foley
Geoffrey & Frances Sisley & their
dec'd relatives & friends.

Mass followed by Adoration and Benediction

Saturday 4 Jan

8.15 am Claver
10.00 am Church
6.00 pm Church

Feria

Eily Robins - wellbeing
Terence Forrest RIP (2nd anniv)
Anne Jasper RIP

Sunday 5 Jan

8.00 am Church
9.30 am Church
11.00 am Church
5.30 pm Church

The Epiphany

For the people
Special ints of Emily Abonie
Richard Graves RIP
Brenda Burkinshaw RIP & Sean
Murphy RIP

Readings for 4th Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 7:10-14
Psalm 23
Paul to the Roman s 1:1-7
Matthew 1:18-24

Readings for the Feast of the Holy Family

Ecclesiasticus 3:2-6.12-14
Psalm 127
Paul to the Colossians
3:12-21
Matthew 2:13-15.19-23

COLLECTION

The collection last weekend came to £1843.26 with a further
£2022.91 through ChurchSuite and standing orders.

We pray for those who have died recently: Arthur Cromwell, Johnny Greenan, Brenda Caley and Mary O'Connor.

We pray for those whose anniversaries are about this time: Aldo Signorelli, Merle Whittle, Glenys Warren, Gabriela Krakowska, Wally Nisbet, John Keogh, Cicely Welsh, John Flood, Sybil Brocklehurst, Leo Tindemans, Terence Cullen, Joan Guiseppi, Agnes Fahy, Elvire Foster, Felix De Souza, Marion Skelly, William O'Neill, Ralph Lilly, Janusz Kopozyński, Iolene Durham, John Kelsall, Alycia Sannard, Genna Eilers, Larry Brady, Dorothy Pask, Nora Macdonald, Emer Bracken, Evelyn Dias, Richard Graves, Brian Miller, Patrick Flaherty.

We pray for the sick: Angela, Bernice, Emma-Jane, Carmel Cardiff, Chant, Christine, John Crouch, Niamh Dawson, Giacomo Dillon, Joshua Dunford, Nicholas Dunford, Cecil Dutton, Ann Elmer, Felicity, Erika Geddes, Chris Grant, Tony Hallett, Hans Halpin, Eileen Hayes, Kathleen Hayes, Jerry Jacob, John, Ellie Jones, Bernadette McGilloway, Mary McGrath, Eddie Mitchell, Barbara Moyce, Lindsay Pollard, John Quaipe, Brian Russell, Brigitte Savreux-O'Driscoll, Mary Shipsey, Coleen Shroeder, Siobhan, Angela Stolle, Patricia Weal and Charlie Wynn.