

*St Michael  
and All Angels  
Belmont*

**PARISH NEWSLETTER**

**25<sup>th</sup> December 2016  
The Nativity of the Lord**

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**Fr Abbot, the Monastic Community and the  
Belmont Parish**

**extend a special and warm welcome  
to our visitors and guests  
who join us for this wonderful feast.**

**We wish all our parishioners a very Happy, Holy  
& Peaceful Christmas**

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The celebration of Holy Mass is at the very heart of our Christmas festivities because we pause, we are still, and we acknowledge the very great gift that God has given us through the birth of His Son at Bethlehem. This gift, the Word made flesh, God becoming man, is the beginning of a wonderful new relationship between our heavenly Father and ourselves. Through the Incarnation, the process of our redemption is begun.

The image of the infant Christ, together with Mary and Joseph, is a powerful image. It touches our hearts. It is a sign of hope. Christmas is special because it helps to renew our sense of hope in the love of God. His love, manifested in the coming of his Son in a stable in Bethlehem, brought us salvation and hope in a new life. This season of celebration reminds us to restore that sense of love within our own lives. However, we are not just celebrating some distant historical event of two thousand years ago. No, we are also very importantly celebrating the presence of Christ among us today, here and now. Emmanuel means "God is with us". This should be the absolute focus of our minds. This is the Christmas message. **God is with us.**

May Christ come into our lives and renew in our hearts that love that gave us the Incarnation.

*Fr Nicholas*

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## CHRISTUS NATUS EST

A seasonal anthology of Gregorian Chant and Organ Music with the Monastic Choir and Stasio Sliwka. At 3pm on Sunday, 1st January 2017, in the Abbey Church, followed by refreshments. Donations at the door on leaving.

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## Diamond Diners

Resumes on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> January.

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Last Sunday's	1 <sup>st</sup> Collection	<b>£330.63</b>
	Standing Orders	<b>£412.50</b>
The 1 <sup>st</sup> collection goes towards the maintenance of our Abbey church and parish, diocesan levies and other related costs.		
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Collection	<b>£581.07</b>
The 2 <sup>nd</sup> collection is reserved for specific charitable causes or appeals and our own Outreach projects as detailed in the Newsletter. Last week was for <b>Parish Outreach. Syria. Thank you!</b>		



### Second Collections

This month our Parish Outreach collections went towards helping the refugees and children made homeless in Syria: total raised is £767.96.



### Christmas Mass times

Vigil 'Midnight' Mass at **10.30 pm**

Parish sung Family Mass at 9 am

Pontifical High Mass at 11 am

Please note there are only two Masses on Christmas morning



The Abbey Shop will be closed from 22<sup>nd</sup> December till 9<sup>th</sup> January.



### Christmas Envelopes

For those who use Gift Aid Standing Orders, please remember to use the numbered envelopes for Christmas (and Easter) sent earlier in the year. Please check that you still have yours! Please use these for the Christmas Offering.

Will those who use boxes of envelopes please check you have a numbered Christmas envelope in your box. If you cannot find your envelope please let us know a.s.a.p. so that we have time to replace it. Please remember there is NO Second collection on Christmas Day.



### Christmas Trivia

The traditional flaming Christmas pudding dates back to 1670 in England, and was derived from an earlier form of stiffened plum porridge.

The tradition of Christmas lights dates back to when Christians were persecuted for saying Mass. A simple candle in the window meant that Mass would be celebrated there that night.

The modern Christmas custom of displaying a wreath on the front door of one's house, is borrowed from ancient Rome's New Year's celebrations. Romans wished each other "good health" by exchanging branches of evergreens. They called these gifts *strenae* after Strenia, the goddess of health. It became the custom to bend these branches into a ring and display them on doorways.

Santa's Reindeers are Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner and Blitzen.

Silent Night was written in 1818, by an Austrian priest Joseph Mohr. He was told the day before Christmas that the church organ was broken and would not be prepared in time for Christmas Eve. He was saddened by this and could not think of Christmas without music, so he wanted to write a carol that could be sung by choir to guitar music. He sat down and wrote three stanzas. Later that night the people in the little Austrian Church sang "*Stille Nacht*" for the first time.

Our Lord, was born in a cave, not in a wooden stable. Caves were used to keep animals in because of the intense heat. A large church is now built over the cave, and people can go down inside the cave. The carpenters of Jesus' day were really stone cutters. Wood was not used as widely as it is today. So whenever you see a

Christmas nativity scene with a wooden stable -- that's the "modern" version, not the Biblical one.

In France, Christmas is called Noel. This is derived from the French phrase "*les bonnes nouvelles*," which means literally "the good news" and refers to the gospel.



The Christmas edition of The Angel is now available. I'm afraid it's a rather limited edition as we were very short of articles! My thanks to those who did contribute and to the editors who put the magazine together this week.



### Homily

*"Grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ."*

### Illustration

Last thing at night many people in Britain tune in to the Shipping Forecast. Late at night and early in the morning the radio broadcasts up-to-

date information about the sea areas all around the British coast. These areas have romantic-sounding names – Fair Isle, Cromarty, Viking... Malin, Hebrides, Bailey. The British Isles are surrounded by these areas of sea with their almost mystical names. Listening to these names each night is like being lulled to sleep, knowing that someone is on the lookout, keeping people informed and safe amidst the wild oceans all around.

Equally reassuring is the knowledge the island people have about their coastline and the many lighthouses that dot its shores, with lights flashing intermittently out to sea, keeping sailors safe, warning of the danger of rocks, casting a bright beam of light into a dark and dangerous world. The lights around the coast and the Shipping Forecast for those at sea are comforting sights and sounds, and the thought of them keeps islanders content, wrapped safe and sound in bed, dreaming dreams while the roar of the waves and the darkness of the night settles on the shores.

There is something special about living on an island. Island people know the edges of their existence. They mark the edge with lights and gather information about the waters that surround them, out there, in the dark.

## **Gospel Teaching**

Yet life itself is a mystery and we journey through our days hoping to grow in our ability to understand life and to live it well. We welcome any light that can be shed upon human existence so that we can live our days in the light and the joy that life itself seems to promise. For this reason Christmas Day is a day of great importance. St John, writing his Gospel account in the final years of his life, leaves the story of Bethlehem to one side. Others have already described the events of Christmas night, with angels and shepherds and the child in the manger. John has other things on his mind. John wants to tell us what these things all mean. He chooses the image of light.

John's prologue, opening his Gospel, tells us that Jesus is the light that enlightens all people. It is a powerful statement. In our time the word "enlightenment" is most often used to refer to the great growth of scientific knowledge and enquiry during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which sought to understand the world by the sole means of human reasoning and intelligence. The Enlightenment has done away with foolish superstitions, including the ancient tales of religion. So they say.

John tells us to think again. It is true that no one has ever seen God. But

that is not the end of the affair. God has taken steps to make himself known to us and in a way that is at once humbling and magnificent. To become one of us, to take our flesh, to live our life in this troubling world, this is what God has done. Look at this man, Jesus of Nazareth, and study him well. He is the perfect image of God's nature, the radiant light of God's glory, in a human being.

### Application

In order to know Jesus we are called to listen to him and speak with him. This is what the disciples did in their lifetime, coming to know this special person very well. When the Lord was crucified it looked like a disaster, but the resurrection opened their eyes to the dawning truth. This Jesus is the Son of God. He is the living Lord.

It is for this reason that we in our turn are called to do as the first disciples did. Listen and learn. Speak to the Lord and see what the Lord will say to you. See also what the Lord will do for you. He will give us power to become children of God ourselves. This is the amazing gift of Christmas. Not only that God became a child for us, but that by God's grace now we may become children of God in this broken world. In our family celebrations at Christmas time we concentrate our attention on children and rightly so. We can also contemplate the child

inside each one of us, that simple loving person who first came into the world, and we can pray for God's grace at Christmas time to be a child again.



A noble flow'r of Juda from tender roots has sprung, rose from stem of Jesse, as prophets long had sung, a blossom fair and bright, that in the midst of winter will change to dawn our night.

The rose of grace and beauty of which Isaiah sings is Mary, virgin mother and Christ the Flow'r she brings. By God's divine decree she bore our loving Saviour, who died to set us free.

To Mary, dearest Mother, with fervent hearts we pray: grant that your tender infant will cast our sins away, and guide us with his love that we shall ever serve him and live with him above.



**Ministers, etc. For next Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> January - Mary the Mother of God - Year A - Cycle 1**

	<b>8:30</b>	<b>9:30</b>	<b>11:00</b>
Celebrant	Fr Nicholas		Fr Nicholas
Welcomers	Hayes Family	Nickerson Family	Monica Russell & Maureen Stacey
Sacristan			Jeremy Hogan
1 <sup>st</sup> Reading	Fran Grant	Patrick Walesby	Pat Draper
2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading	Jacqui Ramage-S		Lucy Reed
Bidding Prayers	Adrian Eyre		Marje Hayes
Offertory	Ramage-H Family	Paul Nickhold & Lucy Zammit	
Extraordinary Ministers	Seamus Hayes & Julia Davey		Gabrielle Stanley & Jan Wyman

***Next Sunday -Parish Outreach***

<p><b>Anniversaries</b></p> <p>These are noted below. Our week starts on Sunday- the anniversaries include all those which occurred on the Sunday date to the following Saturday.</p>	<b>CHILDREN'S LITURGY</b>	
	<b>8.30 Children's Liturgy - temporarily cancelled</b>	
	<b>25-Dec</b>	No Children's Liturgy
	<b>01-Jan</b>	No Children's Liturgy

Please pray for all who have died: **May they rest in peace.** (W/C 25 Dec)

**Deaths:** Wendy Lyle Cameron, Brian Holbery, John McComish and John Pimblett

**Anniversaries:** Margaret Gellow, Abbot Romuald Leonard OSB, John Sheeran, Ruth de Ropp, May Meekel, Christopher Tilley, Cecil Gethen, Eileen O'Malley, Gerald Hill and Hilda Rosser.

**The Sick:** Please pray for: Rachel George, Norma Naudain, Marnie Archer, Ann Thomas, Mary Smith, Fr Michael Cronin, Sheila Langford, Dominique Wetz, Marie Williams, Sally Hayward, Stephen Fisher, Gordon Wilson, Denise Ellis, Lillian Allsopp, Kenny Hanna, Shirley Brymer, Edward Medicott, Sr Philipa, Elaine White, Sue Rogers, Joanne Savory, Sr Catherine, Vincent Hanna and Sadie Bowyer.



<b>Principal Celebrants, Extraordinary Ministers, Readers, etc.</b>			
	<b>10:30 pm Vigil</b>	<b>09:00 am</b>	<b>11:00 am</b>
Celebrant	Fr Abbot	Fr Nicholas	Fr Abbot
Welcomer	Kath Parry	Cooper Family	Brenda Warde
Sacristan		Rob Corrigan	
1 <sup>st</sup> Reading	Anthea Morton-S	Jacqui Corrigan	Frances Wood
2 <sup>nd</sup> Reading	A Monk	Monica Tomlin	A Monk
Bidding Prayer	Deacon	Adrian Eyre	Deacon
Offertory		Children of the Parish	
Extra-Ordinary Minister(s)		Kath Parry & Jane Davies	
Mass Intention		<i>Parry &amp; Hayes Intention</i>	<i>Benefactors &amp; Parishioners</i>
<b>No Second Collection - No Coffee after Mass</b>			
<b>Food Bank Delivery: Chris Moore</b>			

<b>What's On for the week</b>	
Mon	<b>St Stephen: Mass at 9:00 am</b>
Tue	<b>St John: Mass at 8:00 am</b>
Wed	<b>Holy Innocents: Mass at 8:00 am: NO Midday Mass in Oratory:</b>
Thu	<b>St Thomas Becket: Mass at 8:00 am</b>
Fri	<b>Holy Family: Mass at 8:00 am: Midday Mass in the Oratory.</b>
Sat	<b>Seventh Day of Octave: Mass at 8:00 am: Reconciliation at 10:00 am</b>