

**ST DOMINIC'S, DURSLEY**  
**&**  
**ST JOSEPH'S, NYMPSFIELD**

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**SUNDAY 10 JANUARY 2021**  
**FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD, YEAR B**



**Collect**

Almighty ever-living God, who, when Christ had been baptised in the River Jordan and as the Holy Spirit descended upon him, solemnly declared him your beloved Son, grant that your children by adoption, reborn of water and the Holy Spirit, may always be well pleasing to you.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

Amen

## **Gospel (Mark 1: 7 - 11)**

In the course of his preaching John the Baptist said, 'Someone is following me, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptised you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.'

It was at this time that Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised in the Jordan by John. No sooner had he come up out of the water than he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit, like a dove, descending on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you.'

## **Reflection**

In the story of Jesus' baptism, we hear the report of a significant moment in Jesus' life. By accepting baptism from John the Baptist, Jesus shows himself to accept solidarity with sinners. In the voice from heaven and the descent of the Holy Spirit, we know that God received this offering from Jesus and found it pleasing.

Although many of us may have already taken down our Christmas decorations, liturgically speaking, the Christmas season hasn't ended yet; today is the last day. Holidays like Christmas are highlights of our year, moments of great grace. This grace renews us and prepares us for our return to the season of Ordinary Time, to the continuing work of discipleship.

What will we take from this Christmas season to carry us forward into Ordinary Time, to renew and strengthen our life of Christian discipleship?

### **CELEBRATION OF MASS DURING LOCKDOWN**

During this lockdown we are still able to celebrate Mass with a congregation, so our services this week will be as follows:

Saturday 9 January: Mass at St Joseph's at 5.30pm

Sunday 10 January: Mass at St Dominic's at 10.30am

Wednesday 13 January: Mass at St Dominic's at 9.00am

However the bishops have made it clear that the Sunday obligation remains suspended, so it is not necessary to attend Sunday Mass. The elderly and those at special risk are asked to give careful thought about whether to attend

If you do wish to attend, please contact the Church Office on 01453 542039 or at [dursley.stdominic@cliftondiocese.com](mailto:dursley.stdominic@cliftondiocese.com) to book a place. To keep everyone safe, please observe the guidelines: 'Those attending mass must not mix with people, even family members and friends, from outside of their household or support bubble while inside or outside the church building.' Thank you

## **New Year Messages for the Feast of the Holy Family**

### ***From Bishop Declan:***

It is within the Christian family that the child first comes to know and live Christian faith. The family is indeed the domestic Church. Parents are the first teachers of their children. What is important to parents becomes important to the child even though later as a teenager he or she may question or challenge the ways of the parents. Within the family we should know how to say thank you, not taking one another for granted. We should have a profound respect for each other and learn to say 'forgive me' when we have hurt another family member.

Over the year's families change. The family of the Church also changes adapting to new circumstances into which to proclaim the Gospel and at the same time being faithful to the person of Christ. Change is not easy, and it can mean sacrifice. In a period of change knowing one's identity can provide firm foundations on which to build the future. Next June on the Diocesan Family Day we will be celebrating the life of our Diocese and planning for the future. One of the circumstances to take into account is the fact that in three years' time it is estimated there will be only 44 Diocesan Priests under the age of 75. We need to look at the consequences of this in a positive way.

In preparation for the Diocesan day, I would suggest that each parish community looks at its history and has a parish exhibition telling the story of the community. These parish stories can be brought to the Diocesan day to enrich the wider family of the Diocese.

### ***From Cardinal Vincent Nichols:***

These days we hear a great deal about ecology, and rightly so. We must take care of the created world in its beauty and resources.

Interestingly, the word 'ecology' comes from a Greek word meaning 'home' or 'place to live'. So, it is a word that can be applied not only to the natural world but also to our homes and to the Church. It is a good word to have in mind as we celebrate this Feast of the Holy Family.

This year has been so difficult for many families. Home life has been tested, and financial worries burden many. Separation from loved ones has been painful and many have lost loved ones in death, with little chance to grieve them fully. We seek God's blessing on our families and homes, that they may be places of kindness and joy. St Paul spells out in Colossians what that means in practice: compassion, gentleness, patience, and forgiveness. He adds, 'Over these clothes, to keep them together and complete them, put on love.'

We think and pray not only about our own families but also about the family of the Church. We can ask for God's blessing on this family, this 'ecology' in which we live, the 'ecology' of the Church.

Over these last months, the life of the Church has been under strain. We have been unable to come together to express our faith as a full community. Often, we have not been able to enter

into the mystery of Christ celebrated in the sacraments. We pray that slowly this will return as the threat of the COVID-19 virus is overcome.

Over these last months, the life of the Church has been stained by the emergence of the picture of the abuse inflicted on children and vulnerable people in the Church over the last fifty years. We know, with the benefit of hindsight, that bishops and leaders, including myself, have made mistakes. I deeply regret them. We are continually learning from them.

In this moment of strain and stain, we take our lead from the Gospel. Like Anna and Simeon, we fix our eyes on the Lord, on the child Jesus. With them, we say: 'My eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared for all the nations to see' (Luke 2:30). We know that the Lord never forsakes the Church, his own Body. He remains with us always. Our strength, our renewal, comes from him.

### **Parish Charity**

Thank you all for your votes. The chosen charity is **Stella Maris** (Apostleship of the Sea). Suggestions for fundraising events (during lockdown) are welcome!

### **White Flower Appeal 2021**

This weekend we hold our annual appeal in support of the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children. Respect for all human life is at the heart of our faith. SPUC needs our support to help and protect unborn babies and their mothers. Please also consider signing and sending one of the postcards to as the Prime Minister to stop rule changes that permit home abortions. More information: [www.spuc.org.uk](http://www.spuc.org.uk).

### **Christmas Cards**

Local churches are collecting Christmas cards to send to the Cobalt Unit. Richard Gwyer will be collecting cards from St Dominic's – there is a box in the porch

#### **Our Parish**

PLEASE PRAY for those who have died recently

John Norman

**Diocesan Prayer Link:**

St Mary, Bath

**Churches Together Prayer Rota:**

St Joseph, Nympsfield

**Parish Prayer Rota:**

The sick of our parishes