

IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CATHOLIC CHURCH

22nd DECEMBER 2024 – 5th January 2025

4th Sunday of Advent – Christmas – Holy Family – Epiphany- Baptism of the Lord

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory.” John 1, 14

**Our Parish vision is to bring people closer to Christ
by inviting, welcoming, nurturing and nourishing everyone**

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Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth, (Reg Charity No: 1199568)
Bank details: CDP, Immaculate Conception Church
 Sort Code: 30-93-04
 Account No: 00887995

Parish Priest: Fr Anthony Chiatu
Parish Deacon: Dcn Gerard Dailly
Hospital Chaplaincy: (023 8120 8517)
University Chaplain: Sr Emelliana Silva (07426 000213)
Safeguarding Officer: Laura Sparmann
 (safeguarding@immaculateconception.church)
Parish Secretary: Cecilia Kovacs (023 8055 5470)
Confessions: After 10 am Mass on Saturdays
Hall Bookings: contact the parish secretary

MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM CECILIA! – THE PARISH OFFICE IS CLOSED BETWEEN 23 DECEMBER AND 6TH JANUARY.

READINGS	1 st Reading:	Psalm:	2 nd Reading:	Gospel:
SUNDAY 22/12	Micah 5:2-5a	Ps 80 (79): 2ac,3b,15-16. 18-19. R4	Hebrews 10:5 – 10	Luke 1:39 - 45
CHRISTMAS EVE 24/12	Isaiah 9:2-7	Ps 96 (95):1-2a. 2b-3. 11-12a. 12b-13b.13cd. R Luke 2:11	Titus 2:11-14	Luke 2:1-14
CHRISTMAS DAY 25/12	Isaiah 52:7-10	Ps 98(97):1. 2-3b. 3c-4. 5-6. R3cd	Hebrews 1:1-6	John 1:1-18
SUNDAY 29/12	1Samuel 1:20-22, 24-28	Ps 84(83):2-3. 5-6. 9-10. Rcf. 5a	1 John 3:1-2, 21-24	Luke 2:41-52
NEW YEAR'S EVE 31/12	Numbers 6:22-27	Psalm 67(66)	Galatians 4:4-7	Luke 2:16-21
SUNDAY 5/1	Isaiah 60:1-6	Ps 72(71):1-2. 7-8. 10-11. 12-13. Rcf. 11	Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6	Matthew 2:1-12



CRIB COLLECTION: Our Christmas Crib offerings will go to the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre (KHS). The need to help this year is hugely urgent, thanks to the war in the Holy Land.

NEXT THREE WEEKS IN THE PARISH

Tue 24th	Christmas Eve	There will be no Mass or tea and coffee on Tuesday morning. Special Birthday Mass 5:30 pm, Carol Service 10.00 pm, Midnight Mass 10:30 pm
Wed 25th	Christmas Day	Mass at 9.30 am
Sun 29th	Baptism after mass -	12.30pm Michelle Owolabi 4 months
Mon 30th	Children's Fun & Games Day	11.00 am – 3.00 pm (see separate notice)
Tue 31st	New Year's Eve Mass	11.00 pm
Sun 5th	Baptism after mass	12.30pm Juno Atobe 3 years
	Refreshments	Extended Tea and Coffee plus bring your own lunch!
Tue 7th	Tea & Coffee	after 10.00 am service – parish hall
	RCIA Course	7.30-9 pm in the parish hall
Wed 8th	Adoration	6.00 -7.00 pm in the Lady Chapel
Thu 9th	Caritas activity group	10.30am - Sticky rice cake, radish cake
Sat 11th	First Holy Communion	11am Session 8
Sun 12th	Refreshments	Extended Tea and Coffee plus bring your own lunch!
	Choir Practice	11.30 am in the church. Anyone welcome to join.

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM FR ANTHONY

Dear Beloved Parishioners,

As we gather to celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ, I pray that your hearts are filled with peace, hope, and boundless joy. Christmas reminds us that God's love is with us, a light shining in the darkness, a promise of grace and salvation.

May your homes be warmed by love, your burdens eased by faith, and your spirits renewed by the wonder of this holy season. As we look toward the New Year, let us carry the light of Christ with us, walking in love, compassion, and unity.

Thank you for being a cherished part of our parish family. May God bless you and your loved ones this Christmas and grant you health, hope, and happiness in the New Year.

**With every blessing,
Fr Anthony Parish Priest**

ALL MASSES ADVERTISED BELOW ARE AVAILABLE TO JOIN LIVE, ONLINE AT
www.churchservices.tv/portswoodchur

Date	Solemnities & Feast days	Times & Liturgies		Mass Intentions
Sun 22 December	Fourth Sunday Of Advent	8.30 am 10.30 am	Mass Mass	Babagbeto Anna Mahinou, Quenum Dossi RIP
Mon 23 December	Liturgy of the Day		NO MASS	
Tue 24 December	Liturgy of the Day (Christmas Eve) The Nativity of the Lord	9.00 am 5.30 pm 10.00pm 10.30pm	Eucharistic Adoration Family Mass Carol Service Midnight Mass	People of the parish
Wed 25 December	The Nativity of the Lord	9.30 am	Mass	People of the parish
Thu 26 December	St Stephen, the First Martyr		NO MASS	
Fri 27 December	St John, Apostle, Evangelist	9.00 am 9.30 am 10.00 am	Eucharistic adoration Rosary Mass	Aleck Palmer RIP
Sat 28 December	The Holy Innocents	10.00am	Mass	
Sun 29 December	The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph	8.30 am 10.30 am	Mass Mass	
Mon 30 December	6 th Day within the octave of Christmas		NO MASS	
Tues 31 December	7 th Day within the octave of Christmas	11.00 pm	Mass	
Wed 01 January	Mary, the Holy Mother of God	11.00 am	Mass	Audrey Campbell RIP
Thu 02 January	Ss Basil the Great & Gregory Nazianzen	10.00 am	Mass	
Fri 03 January	10 th Day within the octave of Christmas	9.00 am 9.30 am 10.00 am	Eucharistic adoration Rosary Mass	
Sat 04 January	11 th Day within the octave of Christmas	10.00am	Mass	Vales Inacinha Birthday
Sun 05 January	The Epiphany of the Lord	8.30 am 10.30 am	Mass Mass	Roland and Annabel Surlis RIP Sitaelle Soakoude and Emeryc Augustin RIP
Mon 06 January	Monday of Christmastide after Epiphany		NO MASS	
Tue 07 January	Tuesday of Christmastide after Epiphany	9.00 am 10.00 am	Eucharistic Adoration Mass	Lorance Perera RIP
Wed 08 January	Wednesday of Christmastide after Epiphany	10.00 am 6.00pm	Mass Eucharistic Adoration	Lawrence & Luigiana Clegg RIP
Thu 09 January	Thursday of Christmastide after Epiphany	10.00 am	Mass	
Fri 10 January	Friday of Christmastide after Epiphany	9.00 am 9.30 am 10.00 am	Eucharistic adoration Rosary Mass	
Sat 11 January	Saturday of Christmastide after Epiphany	10.00am	Mass	
Sun 12 January	The Baptism of the Lord	8.30 am 10.30 am	Mass Mass	Karenza Michels RIP Godfroy, Julienne, Francois Houedikin and all deceased of Houedikin family RIP

PONDERING THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

So they went in haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child. All who heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds. And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart. Luke 2:16-19

Merry Christmas! Once our Advent preparations are completed, we are invited by our Lord to enter into the glorious celebration of His birth!

How well do you understand the awe-inspiring mystery of Christmas? How fully do you comprehend the significance of God becoming a human, born of a virgin? Though many are quite familiar with the beautiful and humble story of the birth of the Savior of the World, that familiarity can have the surprising negative effect of keeping our intellect from deeply probing the depths of the meaning of what we celebrate.

Notice the last line of the Gospel passage quoted above: "And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart." What a beautiful line to ponder this Christmas day. Mother Mary was the one person who would have understood the mystery of the birth of her Son, the Son of God, the Savior of the World, far more deeply than anyone else. It was to her that the Archangel Gabriel appeared, announcing her pregnancy and His birth. It was her who carried her Son, the Son of God, in her Immaculate womb for nine months. It was to her that Elizabeth, her cousin, cried out, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb" (Luke 1:42). It was Mary who was the Immaculate Conception, the one who was preserved from all sin throughout her life. And it was her who gave birth to this Child, carried Him in her arms and nursed Him at her breast. Our Blessed Mother, more than any other, understood the incredible event that had taken place in her life.

But, again, the Gospel above says that "Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart." One thing this tells us is that even Mary, the Mother of Jesus and the Mother of God, needed time to ponder, reflect and savor this most holy mystery. She never doubted, but her faith continually deepened, and her heart pondered the unfathomable and incomprehensible mystery of the Incarnation.

Another thing this tells us is that there is no end to the depth of the "pondering" to which we must commit ourselves if we want to enter more deeply into the mystery of the birth of the Son of God. Reading the story, setting up a nativity scene, sharing Christmas cards, attending Mass and the like are central to a holy celebration of Christmas. But "pondering" and "reflecting," especially during prayer and especially at the Christmas Mass, will have the effect of drawing us ever deeper into this Mystery of our Faith.

Reflect, today, with our Blessed Mother. Ponder the Incarnation. Place yourself into the scene that first Christmas. Hear the sounds of the town. Smell the smells of the stable. Watch as the shepherds come forth in adoration. And enter the mystery more fully, acknowledging that the more you know about the mystery of Christmas, the more you know how little you actually know and understand. But that humble realization is the first step to a deeper understanding of what we celebrate this day.

A reflection for the Nativity of (Year C) www.mycatholic.life

CHRISTMAS OFFERINGS – 2025

Dear Parishioners,

I am incredibly grateful for the warm spiritual and pastoral support you have extended to me since my arrival in this parish. I would especially like to thank you for your generosity during the Christmas and Easter clergy collections, which provide vital support for me as your priest.

Your kindness has not only met my personal needs but has also made it possible for me to pursue further Education. This endeavor is preparing me to serve more effectively, particularly by ministering to children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in Cameroon, bringing hope and care to those who need it most.

Thank you for being such an integral part of this mission through your thoughtful contributions and prayers. May God bless you richly for your continued generosity and support.

With heartfelt gratitude,

Fr Anthony

To help with the Christmas Offering we would like to suggest that you can make your donation in one of the following ways:

- An Envelope Marked – Clergy Christmas Offering, which can be included as part of the Sunday and/or Christmas Masses
- Using the Contactless Terminal in the Porch Entrance
- Transfer directly into the Parish Bank Account:

Account Name CDP Immaculate Conception Church

Sortcode 30-93-04

Account 00887995

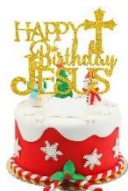
Reference Christmas Offering

On behalf of Fr. Anthony, please be assured of his prayers and thank you for your very generous gift.

JOIN US IN A SPECIAL BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION FOR JESUS

Tuesday 24th December, 5.30 pm
Immaculate Conception Church

There will be: Mass, singing & dancing
Dresscode: Party Clothes



Please bring a gift: something suitable to give to the poor or homeless, eg toiletries, biscuits chocolates, tinned food. Children please collect your invitation at the Sunday masses.

BLESSING OF THE BAMBINELLI

A Roman tradition, celebrated by the Pope each year. Children bring the Baby Jesus (Bambinelli, in Italian) from the family nativity scene for a blessing.

Do bring along your nativity crib baby Jesus for a special blessing at any of the Christmas Masses.



CHRISTMAS CARD POSTBOX

Would you like to post a card for a parish friend? You can post it in one of the Christmas Card Postboxes set up in the church porch.

CHILDREN'S FUN & GAMES DAY



Monday, December 30th
11am - 3pm in the Parish hall

Celebrate the end of Year 2024 with your friends in church!

Children aged between ages of 6yrs and 15yrs are welcome. Bring a packed lunch and water or soft drinks.

Parents will need to sign in with contact details.
Speak with Steve or Sue Deadman 07540229973.

EXTENDED SUNDAY REFRESHMENTS

From Sunday 5 January refreshments in the hall after 10.30 mass will be extended to 2pm. This is an opportunity to meet up with friends(old and new) in a safe, warm place. Lunch is NOT provided but if you wish to bring lunch for yourselves, you are welcome to do so.

ANN DUNKLEY (1931-2024)

Our respected and beloved parishioner, Ann Dunkley has passed away peacefully on 20th December 2024 at Southampton General Hospital. May she rest in peace.

The RCIA course will return after Christmas break on 7th January.

This is a course for anyone who is interested in learning more about the Catholic faith.

To join, just turn up at the next meeting on **7th January at 7.30 in the parish hall.** All welcome!



FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR REV MONSIGNOR CANON NICHOLAS FRANCE RIP



Monsignor Canon Nicholas France's funeral, a Requiem Mass, will be held at 11am on Monday 30th December 2024 at St Edmund's Catholic Church, Southampton.

WINTER NIGHT SHELTER



The project starts in January to take people off the streets who are sleeping rough. Help them to be safe and warm this winter.

For more information email Laura@citylife.org.uk

SCAN HERE!

We need volunteers for the Evening Meal shift 6-9 pm; the Night Shift 9pm to 6am; and the Breakfast Shift from 6am to 8am. There will be Group leaders and training and guidance provided.

ON THE ROTA, you can sign up for as little as ONE SHIFT over the whole month.

PLEASE CONTACT : paul woodman on :
paulw@citylife.org.uk

PLEASE JOIN OTHER CHRISTIANS ACROSS THE CITY PROVIDING WARMTH AND SUSTENANCE FOR THE HOMELESS.

Notice on our boards or chat to Steve at Mass or on 07540229973..... Please help our Christians in Southampton care for the Homeless and troubled.



PORTSMOUTH DIOCESE E NEWS & JOB VACANCIES

Activities, events, news and job vacancies from around the Diocese.

<https://mailchi.mp/portsmouthdiocese/issue471?e=34c55ac6ce>

SVP CHRISTMAS APPEAL

Bethany Moreland from SVP has confirmed the receipt of our donations of £599.34 and expressed her appreciation.