



St John Fisher Roman Catholic Church

80 Imperial Close, North Harrow, HA2 7LW, 020 8868 7531

www.stjohnfisheronline.org.uk

Parish Priest: Fr. Shaun Middleton, 020 8429 5684, shaunmiddleton@rcdow.org.uk

Parish Catechist: Kay O'Connor, 020 8429 5682, kayoconnor@rcdow.org.uk

Parish Administrator: Claudia McHugh, 020 8429 5681, claudiamchugh@rcdow.org.uk (Mon-Wed-Fri 9.30am-1.30pm)

8th January 2017 ~ Feast of the Epiphany

We Welcome...

People of All Faiths and Cultures
 Divorced or Separated Persons
 Families with Children
 Those in Loving Relationships
 Those in Difficulty
 Married Couples
 Single Persons
 Those in Recovery
 Travellers from Far and Near
 Widows and Widowers
 Visitors

We Seek...

To live the Gospel of Jesus Christ
 To Gather the Community and Tell the Story
 To Sing and Make Music to the Lord
 To Break the Bread and Share the Cup

We Celebrate...

Diversity
 A spirit of hospitality
 The unity that God wills
 Enlightening those who seek God
 Forming small faith communities
 Reaching out to alienated Catholics
 Reverencing the dignity of each person
 Caring for the needs of the less fortunate
 Empowering Christians to realise their call
 Providing a spiritual Oasis
 Honouring an understanding among all faiths
 Nurturing our gifts and sharing them

Today we celebrate the Feast of the Epiphany. Astronomers and commentators have endlessly debated the star of Bethlehem. Was it a supernova, a comet, a triple conjunction of the planets or the memory of all three jumbled together, or something else? We don't know. What Matthew does tell us is that some arcane astrologers recognised the birth of a child of great significance. Their stellar wisdom points to Jesus as being born as the king of the Jews. That same title which will later be hammered into the throne of Jesus, the cross at Calvary.



The Magi were non-Jewish astrologers, in an ancient world where astrology was taken very seriously, they were thought to have special knowledge, including medical skills. They were perceived as "wise men" and were valued by kings. At least some were magicians and cast spells. Magi inspired awe and respect. For faithful Jews and Christians, then and now, magi ranked along with necromancers, mediums, magicians card-readers and fortune-tellers, they were absolutely never to be trusted or consulted by the faithful. Yet despite this total and consistent rejection, these magi recorded by Matthew were indeed wise men. These pagan, yet wise and learned seers come from the mysterious east to worship the new-born king. All knowledge leads to the incarnation. It is later Christian imagination that has turned the magi into kings, helped by Matthew's allusions to Psalm 72, just as allusions to Isaiah helped later convention specify that the magi used camels rather than horses, to the delight of renaissance painters.

Matthew tells us of the Magis' three gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh, so we naturally think of three gift-bearers. From at least the time of St. Irenaeus in the late second century, Christian interpretation of the gifts has been clear. Gold symbolising that Jesus is a king; frankincense that he is to be worshipped as God; and myrrh showing that Jesus will die. All this astrology and astronomy shows Jesus truly is born a king.

Death though is not far away. Herod's anxious enquiries amongst the wise men of Jerusalem about where Jesus was born, is motivated by the same Herod's desire to kill baby Jesus off as a potential political rival. The myrrh will come in handy, but not yet. When Jesus does mount his throne at Calvary, reconciling heaven and earth, the myrrh will soon be needed to anoint his dead body. That reconciling throne of grace which is Calvary reveals Jesus is God, as symbolised by the frankincense, frankincense being an upmarket form of incense.

As a final aside, St. Irenaeus also tells us that one magi was old with white hair, full of the wisdom of years. Another was handsome and beardless, with the enthusiasm of youth. The third magi was middle aged, a resolute man of action. Christian artists have frequently followed this age differentiation in their work. These days we might expect the story to include a wise woman or two, until we realise that Mary, the Mother of God, who pondered all these things in heart, was that wise woman.

Fr Shaun

Mass Times & Intentions

Saturday 7th January 2017 (First Mass of Sunday)

18.00 Maureen Wilson RIP

Sunday 8th – **THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD**

08.30 Elena Molino & Family RIP

10.00 People of the Parish

11.30 Patrick Bowles (Anniv)

Monday 9th – **THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD**

09.30 Kieran Doyle RIP

Tuesday 10th – Feria, First week of Year 1

09.30 Ellie Curley RIP

Wednesday 11th – Feria

19.00 Requiem Mass for Christopher McDyre RIP

Thursday 12th – Feria

09.30 Sonny Connolly RIP

11.00 Requiem Mass for Maisie Browne RIP

Friday 13th – Feria

09.30 Sister de Lourdes

Sacrament of Reconciliation: Sat 17.15-17.45

Please keep the sick in your prayers. A list of sick parishioners is displayed on the notice board at the back of the Church.

(SVP If you or your sick relative could benefit from a visit from the St Vincent de Paul Society, please ring either Katherine on 020 8868 8512 or Tony on 020 8868 3205.)

Recently Deceased, James Campbell, Jim Tracey, John Armstrong.

Pray Also For Patrick Bowles, Paul Harot, Veronica Joiner, Elsie Ball, Jeanne Le Forestier, William English, Joan Thrower, Hannah O'Leary, Timothy O'Sullivan, John & Mary Grogan, Frances Rowlands, June Haskell, James Fogarty, Gladys Bennett, Maria Porrello, Anna Chenley, James Murray, Marie Bayross, Elsie Yim, Nora Duffy, Myra Mahendra, Susan Gibbs, John Murphy, Bill Kennedy, Millicent Mabin, Ratnadurai Thayaparan, Allen Morgan, John Slavina, George Rolt, Marguerite Dalgliesh, Jane Hubert, Jesuthasan Daniel, Clement Onwuachu, Hilda Sacchett, Ian Scott and Loretta Souza whose anniversaries occur at this time.

Please Remember Christopher "Christy" McDyre who has died. Requiem Mass on Wednesday, 11th January at 7.00pm at St John Fisher. We offer our deepest sympathy and prayers to his family and friends. May he rest in peace.

Please Remember Maisie Browne who has died. Requiem Mass on Thursday, 12th January at 11.00am at St John Fisher followed by burial at Pinner New Cemetery. We offer our deepest sympathy and prayers to her family and friends. May she rest in peace.

Our Weekly Newsletter We are now sending out the parish newsletter by email. If you have not given us your email details then please subscribe by following this link <http://eepurl.com/coXHxD>.

Bishop's Visitation Our area bishop John Sherrington will make a visitation to the parish on the weekend of 25th/26th February 2017. More details to follow.

Theology on Tap - Holy Mother! What is the Church? On Wednesday, 18th January 2017 at 7.30pm in the Social Club. We all think about the Church in different ways, Mother, Institution, Herald of the Gospel. But what has informed our thinking and how do we understand the Church?

Mary's Meals Save all your old clothes because on 4th/5th February 2017 representatives from Mary's Meals will be here for

their annual collection. Please do not bring clothes before this date as we have nowhere to store them.

St John Fisher Social Club Membership subscriptions for 2017 are now due and can be renewed during club opening hours. Our AGM is on Sunday, 5th February at 7.30pm in the small hall.

SJF Ladies Club – Film Night On Wednesday, 11th January 2017 after 7pm Mass in the Fisher Room. The film will be Bakhita, the story of the first saint of Sudan, and is in keeping with the knitting team helping Bakhita House. It is in Italian with English subtitles. £1 towards refreshments - everyone welcome.

Knitting Team will meet on Friday, 13th January at 2pm in the Fisher Room. Tea and panettone will be served to welcome in the New Year. All donations of wool will be very welcome which can be dropped off in the presbytery.

The Fairtrade Food stall will be open in the porch after all masses next weekend. If you are avoiding chocolate this month, we have a good range of other products, including a range of tea, coffee & dried fruit, to buy.

Christmas card and gift stall Thank you to everyone who bought Christmas cards or placed an order with Traidcraft through the stall. A profit of £267 was made which will be donated to CAFOD. Christian Aid, CAFOD & Traidcraft also benefit from a share of the price of each pack of cards. The Fairtrade food & gifts bought from Traidcraft directly help producers in some of the poorest countries of the world & small individual purchases added together can make a real difference.

Prayers for Christian Unity A short service with prayers for Christian Unity take place in our churches at noon followed by a light lunch, starting here at St John Fisher on Monday 16th January at noon; Tues 17th North Harrow Methodist church; Wed no meeting; Thurs 19th St George's; Fri 20th Elmfield; Sat 21st St Alban's. Please try and make some of these venues, you will be warmly welcomed and enjoy lunch with other Christians.

Harrow Support Group for separated and divorced Catholics Next meeting is on Monday, 9th January 2017 at 8pm in the hall at St Bernard's Church, Northolt Road. All welcome. For more info, please ring Jull 020 8204 3714 or Eileen 020 8756 1284.

Parnells Minor Gaelic Football Club Winter Training starts Friday, 20th January 2017 @ Cedars Community Centre. Boys and Girls of all ages and abilities welcome. Training takes place every Friday 6pm - 7pm. Indoor facilities for those under 8 with a 4G Astro Turf Pitch for those up to Year 6. Turn up on the night for a FREE taster session or for further info contact Alan Carolan 07971 611764 or Tony Griffin 07966 160999. See poster in porch.

Senior Citizens Christmas Lunch Please sign up if you would like to come. It is a great chance to get together over a good meal and to meet some of our young people who will be delighted to help out on that day. On **Sunday, 29th January 2017 at 12.30pm** in the Parish Hall. All replies to be returned to the presbytery by Sunday, 15th January.

NAME..... TEL NO.....

ADDRESS.....

Please state clearly if you require transport.

TRANSPORT REQUIRED YES/NO