



Today is the Feast of the Holy Family

“The Holy Family of Nazareth is truly the ‘prototype’ of every Christian family, which ... is called to carry out the wonderful vocation and mission of being the living cell not only of society, but also of the Church, a sign and instrument of unity for the entire human race.”

Pope Benedict XVI

2019 DIOCESAN DIRECTORY

The new Diocesan Directory is now available on the newspaper table in the porch, priced at £2.75 – please put your payment in the newspaper wall safe.

“THE NEW NOISY NEIGHBOUR”

This weekend and over the Christmas period copies of “The New Noisy Neighbour” published by The Bible Society, will be available. The Nativity booklet is suitable for approximately 4-9 year olds and contains details of links to the internet so you can view an animated version of this Nativity story. Do please take and keep a copy of this charming tale.

VISION DOCUMENT – Shaping Our Future

This important document has been published recently and outlines the way forward for our diocese in the coming months and years. We have very few printed copies left, however, it is available on the diocesan website and can also be accessed via a link from our own parish website (click on Parish Partnership and go to the link). The document has two main parts: Renewal and Restructuring.

The **Renewal** section contains themes which should be at the heart of Catholic Life anyway and have been identified by contributors throughout the diocese as being of essential importance to us all.

The **Restructuring** section outlines parish partnerships; in our case, the five parishes of Collier Row, Gidea Park, Harold Hill St Dominic, Harold Hill Most Holy Redeemer and Romford. Nothing is set in stone; we are being asked to explore ways in which we could collaborate and share together. This process will be led by the Stewards of the Gospel and the priests of the parishes. It is likely that each Partnership will develop differently from others; we are asked to decide what would work best for us. Our long-term plan needs to be finalised during the coming year, with Easter 2020 being the absolute deadline for these plans to be submitted to the Bishop.

APPLICATIONS TO CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Parents who wish to apply for places in Catholic schools will need to obtain a “Certificate of Catholic Practice” from the parish priest of the place at which they attend Sunday Mass. The Certificate is evidence that a family practises the Catholic Faith – which includes **attendance at Sunday Mass for the past five years** (on Saturday evening or Sunday). This is a requirement throughout England & Wales. You will need an appointment with Father Philip to discuss whether such a Certificate can be issued. To arrange this, please telephone the Parish Office.

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

On Wednesdays 23rd and 30th January at 7 pm Fr Adrian Graffy will lead an exploration of the Gospel of Luke, the gospel being read on Sundays in 2019. These ‘Gidea Park Faith Evenings’ will take place in the hall at Gidea Park Catholic Church (410 Brentwood Road, Gidea Park, RM2 6DH). Please book by email

to GPstudydays@gmail.com Refreshments provided. Admission free.

BRENTWOOD CATHOLIC CHILDREN’S SOCIETY

Children and families are now able to access direct therapeutic support in one of our clinics. Sessions take place after school or at an evening clinic at our counselling suites in Rayleigh. Our highly experienced counsellors provide support directly to the whole family or to children and adolescents on a 1:1 basis. If you are concerned that your child may need someone to talk to, please contact Catherine on cmunns@bccs.org.uk. There is a sessional charge, so please enquire.

BURSARIES FOR YOUNG ADULTS

Do you have children, grandchildren, nieces or nephews aged between 16 and 24 who are planning to do some good works to help others? Perhaps spending time in their holidays in a third world country helping others or accompanying a HCPT Pilgrimage to Lourdes. If so, the Catenian Association Bursary Fund may be able to give a grant. Details at www.thecatenians.com/bursary

VACANCIES AT THE PALMER CATHOLIC ACADEMY

Student Learning Mentor ~ Network Manager ~ Finance & Resources Assistant ~ HR Officer
Full details of all posts and application forms are available on the academy’s website: www.tpc.academy

THE LITURGICAL CALENDAR . . .

Tuesday is the **Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God** – divine maternity of Mary was proclaimed as a belief and teaching of the Church at the Council of Ephesus in 431; in more recent times, the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) made the meaning explicit: “that Christ should be recognised, in the truest sense, as the Son of God and the Son of Man”. Before this feast was inserted into the revised Roman calendar, the first day of the year had been dedicated to the remembrance of the circumcision of the Lord, which took place eight days after his birth, as prescribed by Jewish law.

Wednesday is the **Memorial of SS Basil the Great & Gregory Nazianzen** - bishops and doctors of the Church. Basil the Great, father of the Greek Church, struggled against the Arian heresy and was the principal monastic legislator of the East. He lived in Cappadocia (in modern Turkey) from 328 to 379. His cult was brought to the West by Greek monks as well as by St Benedict, who was profoundly inspired by ‘our holy father Basil’.

Gregory grew up in a family of pious Christians, son of the bishop of Nazianzus (also in Cappadocia). A lifelong friend of St Basil, he joined him in the struggle against Arianism. One of the fathers of the Greek Church, he was already bishop of Nazianzus when the Emperor Theodosius sent him to Constantinople to bring that city back to orthodoxy. Greeted with stones, he eventually succeeded.

On this first Sunday after Christmas, we are celebrating the Holy Family of Nazareth, and the Gospel invites us to reflect on the experience lived by Mary, Joseph and Jesus, as they grow together as a family in mutual love and in trust in God. The rite performed by Mary and Joseph, in offering their son Jesus to God, is an expression of this trust. The Gospel states: “they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord” (Lk 2:22) as Mosaic Law required. Jesus’ parents go to the Temple to attest that their son belongs to God and that they are the guardians of his life, and not the owners. And this leads us to reflect. All parents are guardians of their children’s lives, not the owners, and they must help them to grow, to mature.

This gesture emphasizes that God alone is the Lord of individual and family history; everything comes to us from him. Each family is called to acknowledge this primacy, by protecting and educating children to open themselves to God who is the very source of life. From here passes the secret of inner youth, paradoxically witnessed to in the Gospel by an elderly couple, Simeon and Anna. The elderly Simeon, in particular, inspired by the Holy Spirit, says in regard to the Child Jesus: “this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against [...] that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed” (vv. 34-35).

These prophetic words reveal that Jesus has come to tear down the false images that we make of God and also of ourselves; to “speak against” the worldly certainties on which we insistently rely; to make ourselves “rise” to a true human and Christian journey, founded on the values of the Gospel. There is no family situation that is precluded from this new journey of rebirth and resurrection. Each time that families — even those that are wounded and marked by frailty, failures and difficulties — return to the source of the Christian experience, new roads and unexpected opportunities open.

Pope Francis, Angelus Address, St Peter’s Square, 31 December 2017

WEEKLY EVENTS

COFFEE AFTER MASS

Sundays in the Church Porch after the 9.00 am Mass

CHILDREN’S

LITURGY OF THE WORD

Sundays in term-time during the 11.30 am Mass

SOCIETY OF

ST VINCENT DE PAUL

Tuesdays : 7.00 pm in the Church Sacristy

CHURCH CLEANING TEAM

Wednesdays at 9.30 am inside the church

CHURCH GARDENING TEAM

Meets Wednesdays at 9.30 am outside the church

4TH COLLIER ROW

SCOUT GROUP

Beaver Scouts

Wednesdays at 4.45 pm in the Parish Centre Hall

Cub Scouts

Wednesdays at 6.00 pm in the Parish Centre Hall

Scouts

Wednesdays at 7.45 pm in the Parish Centre Hall

THURSDAY CLUB

1.15 - 3.15 pm

in the Parish Centre Hall
(for senior members of the community)

OUR LADY’S

PRAYER GROUP

Thursdays : 7.30 – 9.00 pm at 10 Norman Close

BABY & TODDLER GROUP

(for parents and toddlers)
Fridays : 1.00 – 2.30 pm in the Parish Centre Hall