



# CATHOLIC CHAPLAINCY TO THE LIVERPOOL UNIVERSITIES

The University Church of St Philip Neri Church ~ "The Oratory Church"

30 Catharine Street L8 7NL Tel: 0151-709 3858

Chaplain: Fr Neil Ritchie

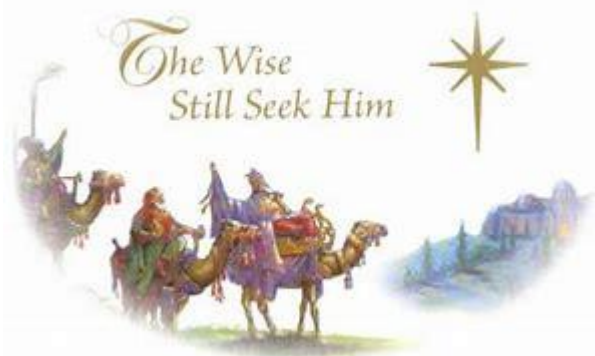
[www.cathchap.org.uk](http://www.cathchap.org.uk) [unichap@rcaol.org.uk](mailto:unichap@rcaol.org.uk)

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**7<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

**The Epiphany of the Lord**



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[h.koubkova@rcaol.org.uk](mailto:h.koubkova@rcaol.org.uk)

Events for Students and University Members:

## Masses & Services This Week:

**Monday: 8.15am** Mass at the MC Convent (55 Seel St)

**Tuesday: Morning prayer 8am, followed by or breakfast; Mass 6pm \***

**Wednesday : 12.30 Mass** @ Faith Express;

**Thursday:** Adoration 5.30pm

\*events in the chaplaincy; Blackburne Place entrance

**Welcome back!** We hope you had a refreshing vacation. Many of you have assessments at this time, and we'll be keeping you particularly in mind. Usually things are fairly quiet for the first few weeks of term, though the normal weekly schedule of events starts again this week, as you can see above

There are many things to look forward to in the coming term, not least our annual retreat weekend which this year will be taking place at Wistaston Hall, Crewe from 23<sup>rd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> February. Application forms will be available in the next couple of weeks, and places are limited, so don't delay!

We also have a couple of visiting speakers this term, including Liz Parsons, who came a couple of years ago when she worked for the pro-life charity 'Life'. She will be visiting us again on the 25<sup>th</sup> of this month to speak about Pro-Life issues. There will also be monthly gardening, starting on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup>, and hopefully another Saturday day trip later in the term.

**One room left in the student house** for 2024-25. House residents support the Chaplaincy events and the Catholic Society...we'd be particularly interested to hear from any girls who might consider staying...

**Weekly Collection & other donations, you can pay online at** [philipnerihouse.sumupstore.com](http://philipnerihouse.sumupstore.com)  
Thank you so much for your contributions



I am very happy that 2 of you have decided to train as volunteers for Mary's Meals. What can we do here to help raise money? Suggestions when we met a couple of weeks ago were: bake sale, ticketed social event, making the Thursday £1 supper a "£2

supper" with the extra donated to Mary's Meals...any others? It costs just £19.15 to feed a child for a whole school year, so a donation of any amount will go a long way!

**Staff & PhD Group:** Will be re-starting for the term on **Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> January at 6pm** at the chaplaincy. We meet every other Wednesday during university term time for a fellowship, prayer and faith-based discussion. Open to all university staff and doctoral students.

**Mary Grazulis R.I.P. :** you may recall that Mary tragically died in a road traffic accident while on her way to Mass here a few weeks ago: her funeral Mass will take place in the Cathedral (Blessed Sacrament Chapel) at 10am on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> January. Fr Neil will be the celebrant.

**Please note:** all chaplaincy events are open to university members who are **18 yrs of age or older**. If you are under 18 at the moment, please make yourself known to Fr Neil or to Hana

----- **Vegetarian, Vegan or special diets:** for events with catering, we are happy to provide suitable alternatives if you let us know in advance you are coming, and tell us what you can or can't have!

# The Feasts of the Christmas Season

The Feast of the Epiphany, which we celebrate today is one of five great feasts contained within the short season of Christmas.

We are used to thinking of Christmas as just one day, and one feast – December the 25<sup>th</sup>, but that is just one of the five great feasts of this season.

In the order in which they come, they are:

- **The Feast of the Nativity** (25<sup>th</sup> December), in which we celebrate the birth of the Saviour, at Bethlehem. God assumes a human nature. Our world is touched in a totally unique way, because God actually **comes into** our world.
- **The Feast of the Holy Family** (first Sunday after the 25<sup>th</sup> December) in which we celebrate the fact that Jesus was born in the context of a **human family**, and grew to adulthood in that context. Thus, *all* human families are blessed, because God has shared in family life.
- On the 1<sup>st</sup> of January we celebrate **the Feast of Mary, Mother of God**. We recall that Mary was invited to give birth to Jesus, and she agreed! She is our mother, too. And, **we too** are invited, by cooperating with God, to ‘give birth’ to Jesus in our world – not in a physical body, as Mary did, but spiritually: to give birth to Jesus in what we bring to birth in our relationships, our values; in what we do and say.
- On the 6<sup>th</sup> January, or, in this country, the nearest Sunday after, we celebrate today’s **Feast of the Epiphany** which means ‘manifestation’ or ‘revelation’. Jesus, the promised Messiah, is ‘revealed’ to the world: he is made visible, in human flesh. But, how do we *respond* to this revelation? Do we worship Him, and show him allegiance, like the ‘wise men’? Do we feel threatened by him – as Herod did, and try to ‘do away’ with Him. Or, as so many people today do, do we ignore him, or see him as irrelevant...not having anything to give us?
- Finally, the Christmas season ends with the **Feast of the Baptism of the Lord**. This year

the Feast will be kept tomorrow (Monday), but more often it is celebrated on the Sunday after Epiphany. We recall Jesus’s baptism by John in the River Jordan. It marks the transition from the Old to the New Testament. But it too, like Epiphany, has theme of ‘revelation’ about it, since Jesus, now about 30 years old, comes out into public view and begins his ministry of preaching and healing after the hidden years of his early adulthood.

After the Baptism of the Lord, we return to ‘Ordinary Time’. But we don’t forget Christmas completely – on February the 2<sup>nd</sup> we celebrate ‘Candlemas,’ or the Presentation of the Lord in the Temple – which reminds us again that Jesus is the ‘Light of the World,’ a light or revelation.

These different feasts are not completely separate. Each of these particular celebrations shows us a different aspect, or ‘angle’, of the one central mystery of the Incarnation: the ‘becoming man’ of God.

This mystery comes into particular focus at this time of the year. But, in a sense, we celebrate the Incarnation all year round – at every Mass – even in Lent and Holy Week - we recall that Jesus took flesh and was born of Mary. It is that same Jesus who will be crucified, die, and rise again on Easter Sunday. That is also why you will find, often, references to the the Passion and Cross in the traditional Christmas Carols.

We are challenged then not just to gaze with wonder on ‘Baby Jesus,’ but to ‘grow up’ with Him, to follow Him as the ‘Adult Jesus’ – to listen to Him when his message challenges us, and when following Him is hard. Plenty of people come to church at Christmas...but how many of them are still there 6 months later, prepared to listen to the message of the adult Jesus?

