



St. Michael's Bulletin



Saint Michael's is part of the Archdiocese of Birmingham. Registered Charity N. 234216

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FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY JANUARY 4th 2009

Vigil 5.30 pm May & Brendan McCarthy

9.00 am Our Parish Family

1030 am Holy Souls

Monday 9.00 am Morning prayer & Mass
Wednesday 9.00 am Morning prayer & Mass
Friday 9.00 am Morning prayer & Mass

Tuesday 9.00 am Eucharistic Service
Thursday 9.00 am Morning prayer & Mass
Saturday 5.30 pm Holy Souls

Also this week.

Monday at 1.30pm, Funeral Service for Nora Gallagher
Thursday 1200 noon. Burial of the ashes of Paul Snapes
Friday 1100 am Burial of the ashes of David Rimmer

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FOR OUR SICK PARISHIONERS.

Lord, send Your Healing Spirit on all who are in any way sick or distressed: we pray for Claudina Rodrigues, Eugenie Micotti, Alison & Betty Gosling, Ena Wilson, Marguerite Brosnan, Pat Sullivan, Joseph Bradley, Mike Coulehan, Harry Littlefair, Peter Gibson, Nancy Keogh, Michael Boyle, Jack Edwards, Donald Garland and Mary Comfry.

Bring them Your healing and peace.

FOR THE DECEASED MEMBERS OF OUR PARISH FAMILY.

We pray for John Halter and all who died recently, for all killed in wars, disasters and accidents: victims of terrorism and oppression; and for those who die of starvation or neglect. We now remember Grace Rehor, James Rideout Belletty, Peter Raynard, Kitty Cottrell, Richard Cannings, Roberto Roman Arrieta, Henry Clay and Lucy Emma D'Souza whose anniversaries fall at this time.

Grant them the joy of Your Presence.

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TODAY IS THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY.

The word "Epiphany" means "appearance" or "manifestation". It celebrates the appearance/manifestation of Jesus to the gentiles; ie those who are not Jewish. Christmas celebrates Jesus appearing to His own Jewish people. They are represented by the shepherds, reminding us that the great King David was a shepherd; and this little child will fulfill the prophecies made in the past that it would be a shepherd who would once again lead the people of Israel to greatness. Jesus will be the fulfilment of that prophecy. But by a great paradox he will also be the sacrificial lamb who will be slain for the redeeming of all the people of the earth.

Today we celebrate His manifestation to the pagan, gentile world, represented by the Magi, (a Magus was a wise man) who by their study of the heavens come to the realisation that something important is happening in world affairs. They leave their home in the east and travel, following their star, to the place where the One who is the centre of human history has been born as a helpless infant.

We have traditionally (but without any basis from the Bible story) seen them as being black, yellow and white – representing the races and colours of the human race. We have also given them names; - Balthasar, Caspar and Melchior. But all this is popular addition to the basic story of wise Men from the East coming to a realisation of the importance of Jesus' birth through their studies of the Heavens. This contrasts greatly with the Jewish leaders who have all the evidence they need from their Scriptures to find their Messiah, but are unable to do so through a stubbornness of heart. A theme which persists throughout St Matthew's Gospel.

UNITED SERVICE FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY.

We are the hosts this year for this Church Service, which will take place on Sunday 18th at 6.30 pm.

This annual united church service is important in the strengthening and improving of our relations with the other Christian communities in our neighbouring villages. The Holy Father reminds us that it is important to share together in these services because of the great wealth of history, devotion and theology which we have as our Catholic treasury. It is also the case that the media seems hostile to Christianity (but dares not attack Islam in the same way) and we need to present a united front which will add strength to us all. Relations with the other denominations are very good; this friendly atmosphere is important in giving witness within our local communities, who so often look to us for a lead in those moral and ethical issues which affect the quality of our every-day lives.

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The Wise Men found God through their study of the natural world. May we continue to see the hand of God at work within the whole of Creation, and promise that we will care for our world and its future.

May God bless us all and keep us safe throughout this New Year Fr Chris