

Prayer Focus – The Season of Christmas and Ordinary Time.

- The Season of Christmas starts from the vigil Mass on Christmas Eve and ends on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord.
- The Liturgical colour for this season of celebration is white and gold. These colours are used during the high points of the Church's year.
- Prayer areas should be adorned in white and gold cloths to celebrate the birth of Christ. The wise man can be placed into the crib scene on the Feast of the Epiphany. Prior to that they can continue their journey around the school/classroom. Flowers can also be placed within the prayer focus and the white candle on the Advent wreath can be lit. **(See Missio below for information on the blessings of the classrooms)**
- Ordinary time begins on the 9 January after the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord the day before. The Liturgical colour during this period of Ordinary Time is green. Images of Jesus' baptism and symbols of baptism (cross, white garment, oil, water, light) may also be included.
- The figures of Mary, Joseph and Jesus can remain until February 2, The Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord. New candles which may have been blessed at Mass on this Feast, can also be added.

- **The Baptism of the Lord:** Jesus' baptism is an important moment as his baptism fulfils the prophesy of Isaiah and the words of St. John the Baptist. Although not in need of baptism himself his event reveals his humanity and the importance of this sacrament to those present. The Baptism is also a moment which reveals his divinity through the present of the Holy Trinity embodied in the voice of God the Father, the presence of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove and Jesus the Son of God himself. This event also marks the start of Jesus' ministry.
<https://bustedhalo.com/video/baptism> - This short video explores Jesus' Baptism and makes links to the Sacrament of Baptism today. It covers the following questions; Why, exactly, do Catholics have the practice of baptising infants? What is the purpose of Baptism and who can celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism?
- **The Memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes** on Saturday 11 February is the World Day for the Sick. Lourdes where Our Lady appeared is a place of pilgrimage for the sick. Remember all those from the school and parish community who are unwell in mind or body in your prayers (you will find the sick list in the Parish Bulletin). Classes could make cards to be sent to those who are unwell to remind them that all of their parish family are praying for them.

Christian Unity Week 18 - 25 January

- This octave of prayer is shared by Christians throughout the world. Each year, the theme for the week is developed by people from different parts of the world and this year have been prepared by the churches in Minneapolis USA.
- The focus this year is on racial justice and equality for all and is titled: **'Be-Longing: Praying for Unity amidst Injustice'**.
- As this is the 30th anniversary of the death of Stephen Lawrence the resources for the UK centres upon "restoring hope through justice".
- This is also an opportunity to further embed Catholic Social Teaching:
 - The dignity of the human person
 - Rights and responsibilities
 - Solidarity common good
- The resources for the week can be found on the link below: you may wish to adapt them to match the age/phase of your pupils.
[Resources for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2023 \(ctbi.org.uk\)](https://www.ctbi.org.uk/resources-for-week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-2023)

**Prayer for Candlemas 2 February
The Feast of the Presentation of the Lord**

God our Father,
source of all light,
today you revealed to Simeon
your light of revelation to all nations.
Bless these candles and make them holy.
May we who carry them to praise your glory
walk in the path of goodness and come to the path
that shines forever.
Grant this though Christ our Lord.
Amen

Simeon is the first to declare that Jesus is the light for all nations.

Pope's Prayer Intentions

January: For educators:

We pray that educators may be credible witnesses, teaching fraternity rather than competition and helping the youngest and most vulnerable above all.

February: For parishes:

We pray that parishes, placing communion at the centre, may increasingly become communities of faith, fraternity and welcome towards those most in need.

Dates for the Diary

Christmas Season

January

- Wed 5 Memorial in Staffordshire of St. Charles of St Andrew
- Fri 6 Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord **(Holy Day of Obligation)**
- Sun 8 Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

Ordinary Time

- Thur 12 Memorial of St. Aelred of Rievaulx
- Fri 13 Memorial of St. Hilary
- Tue 17 Memorial of St. Anthony
- Wed 18 Octave of Christian Unity Peace Day (Octave ends Monday 25)
- Thur 19 Feast of St. Wulstan
- Fri 20 Memorial of St. Fabian and St. Sebastian
- Sun 22 Sunday of the Word of God
- Mon 23 Memorial of St Nicholas Owen
- Tue 24 Memorial of St. Francis de Sales
- Wed 25 Feast of the Conversion of St Paul
- Thur 26 Memorial of Ss Timothy and Titus
- Fri 27 Memorial in Worcestershire of Blessed Edward Oldcorne
- Sat 28 Memorial of St. Thomas Aquinas
- Tue 31 Feast of St. John Bosco

February

- Thur 2 Feast of the Presentation of the Lord **(Candlemas)**
- Fri 3 Memorial in Staffordshire of St Werburg
Memorial of St. Blaise
- Mon 6 Memorial of St. Paul Miki and Companions
- Tue 8 Memorial of St. Jerome Emiliani
Memorial of St. Josephine Bakhita
- Fri 10 Memorial of St. Scholastica, Virgin
- Sat 11 Memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes
World Day of Prayer for the Sick
- Tue 14 Feast of St. Cyril
Day of Prayer for Europe

For a complete list of dates, readings and colours please refer to the Archdiocese of Birmingham Ordo 2022-2023

CAFOD & Missio

CAFOD Catholic Social Teaching: CAFOD are offering workshops to children from Reception-Y6 exploring the themes of Catholic Social Teaching. To book, contact schools@cafod.org.uk.

CAFOD club: CAFOD clubs support children in taking the lead in putting CST into action and supporting the Catholic Life and Mission of the school. Information can be found: <https://cafod.org.uk/Education/For-teachers/CAFOD-clubs>

Missio Epiphany Information: Mission Together have revised their Liturgical Prayer and Blessing of the classroom. See <https://missiontogether.org.uk/calendar/epiphany/> for details.

St. Paul: January 25 marks the feast of the conversion of St. Paul, one of the Church's great missionaries. A five fact St. Paul assembly is available here: <https://missiontogether.org.uk/calendar/conversion-of-st-paul/>

Child Saints of Fatima: February 10 marks the feasts of St. Francisco and Jacinta Marto. A five fact assembly is available here: <https://missiontogether.org.uk/calendar/feast-of-saints-francisco-jacinta-marto/>

