

Prayer Focus - The Christmas Season and Ordinary Time.

Christmas: During the season of Christmas, prayer areas should be adorned in white and gold cloths to celebrate the birth of Christ. Flowers may also be placed in the prayer space (a Poinsettia has significant symbolism). The Nativity includes a star, the figures of the Holy family, the Shepherds and then finally the Wise Men on the feast of the Epiphany (6th January). The Nativity should remain up until the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord.

Ordinary Time 1: During this period of Ordinary Time, prayer cloths will be changed to a green cloth. Symbols of Baptism may also be included from the Feast of Our Lord such as a cross, white garment, oil, water and candles. You could also include traditional and contemporary images of Jesus' Baptism. The figures of the Holy Family can remain until February 2nd. This is the feast of the Presentation of Our Lord, also known as Candlemas where new candles to be used in Church are blessed. You may wish to replace all prayer area candles on this day.

Many people make New Year resolutions. Why not hold a prayer service in the new year that focuses on how to be a better follower of Christ? Children could write down their promises which could be displayed in the prayer area. This could link to the half termly CSPP virtue pair 'Curious and Active'. On the World Day of the Sick and the Memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes, images of St. Bernadette Soubirous, Our Lady of Lourdes could be displayed. The names of those who are sick in the Parish could be displayed. These can usually be found in the Parish newsletter.

Epiphany

The Epiphany is the solemnity which celebrates the visit of the Wise Men to the stable to honour Jesus. The word epiphany means a 'sudden realisation' and in this event the Wise Men have a sudden realisation that Jesus is God in human form. Note that this is first revealed to the shepherds who represent the people of God and then later revealed to the three wise men who represent the whole world. The gifts brought by the wise men are symbolic: gold = Jesus' royalty, he is our king; frankincense = Jesus' divinity, he is God; myrrh = Jesus' passion and death (myrrh being incense used for the dead).

It is tradition for homes to be blessed on this day. See the Missio website link for an example classroom blessing.

Our Lady of Lourdes

The feast of this is Friday 11th February which is the World Day of Prayer for the Sick. The church prays for all who are sick. You will find a list of names in the Parish Bulletin who you can pray for. Each class could make cards for those who are unwell to remind them that all of their parish family are praying for them. They can also be included in times of prayer.

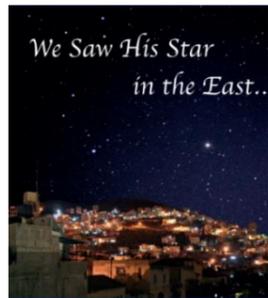
Christian Unity Week 18th - 25th January

This octave of prayer is shared by Christians throughout the world. Each year the theme for the week is developed by people from a different part of the world. This year the theme is 'We saw His Star in the East.' The resources for 2022, which are suitable for adults, were prepared for worldwide use by churches in the middle east. They include a pamphlet which includes daily reflections and prayers.

For more information, check out <https://ctbi.org.uk/week-of-prayer-for-christian-unity-2022/>

Creator of light,
illumine our path by the light of Christ
who moves before us and leads us.
May he be a beacon for our pilgrimage.
Enlighten us and dwell within us.
Guide us to discover a manger in our hearts
where a great light still shines.
We thank you for the gift of that unfading Star,
Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.
Heal our divisions and draw us closer to the Light
that we may find our unity in him.

Amen.



2nd February

Nunc Dimittis – Canticle of Simeon

Now, Lord, you have kept your word:
let your servant go in peace.

With my own eyes I have seen the salvation
which you have prepared in the sight of every people:

a light to reveal you to the nations
and the glory of your people Israel.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son
and to the Holy Spirit,

as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world
without end.

Amen.

Pope's Prayer Intentions

January: for true human fraternity

We pray for all those suffering from religious discrimination
and persecution; may their own rights and dignity be
recognised, which originate from being brothers and sisters
in the human family.

February: for religious sisters and consecrated women

We pray for religious sisters and consecrated women;
thanking them for their mission and their courage; may they
continue to find new responses to the challenges of our
times.

Dates for the Diary

Christmas Season

January

- Wed 5 Memorial in Staffordshire of St. Charles of St Andrew
- Thur 6 Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord
- Fri 7 Memorial of St. Raymond of Penyafort
- Sun 9 Feast of the Baptism of the Lord

Ordinary Time

- Wed 12 Memorial of St. Aelred of Rievaulx
- Thur 13 Memorial of St. Hilary
- Mon 17 Memorial of St. Anthony
- Tue 18 Octave of Christian Unity Peace Day (Octave ends Monday 25)
- Wed 19 Feast of St. Wulstan
- Thur 20 Memorial of St. Fabian and St. Sebastian
- Fri 21 Memorial of St. Agnes
- Sun 23 Sunday of the Word of God
- Mon 24 Memorial of St. Francis de Sales
- Tue 25 Feast of the Conversion of St Paul
- Wed 26 Memorial of Ss Timothy and Titus
- Thur 27 Memorial in Worcestershire of Blessed Edward Oldcorne
- Fri 28 Memorial of St. Thomas Aquinas
- Mon 31 Feast of St. John Bosco

February

- Wed 2 Feast of the Presentation of the Lord
- Thur 3 Memorial in Staffordshire of St Werburg
- Memorial of St. Blaise
- Tue 8 Memorial of St. Jerome Emiliani
- Memorial of St. Josephine Bakhita
- Thur 10 Memorial of St. Scholastica, Virgin
- Fri 11 Memorial of Our Lady of Lourdes
- World Day of Prayer for the Sick

For a complete list of dates, readings and colours please refer to the Archdiocese of Birmingham Ordo 2021-2022

CAFOD & Missio – Resources

Catholic Social Teaching: CAFOD are available to deliver interactive workshops to children. To book, follow <https://cafod.org.uk/Education/Primary-teaching-resources/CST-resources-for-children>

Epiphany: CAFOD have produced some child led collective worship resources which can be here: <https://cafod.org.uk/Education/Primary-teaching-resources/Collective-worship-primary/Epiphany-resources>

Classroom Blessing: Mission Together have produced a Classroom Blessing linked to the Epiphany. This can be found here: <https://missiontogether.org.uk/calendar/epiphany/>

Feast of St. Paul (25 Jan): Mission Together are supporting schools to mark the feast of St. Paul through a Five Fact Assembly, Liturgical Prayer and accompanying literacy activity. This can be found here: <https://missiontogether.org.uk/calendar/conversion-of-st-paul/>

Missio Interactive Map: Students can navigate the map to discover how they are part of the Universal Church – God's family and how children everywhere pray and share their time, gifts and talents to be missionaries of God's love. <https://missiontogether.org.uk/mission-together-map/>