



St. Joseph's Church Wilton

Telephone: 021- 4341362 Website: www.smawilton.ie email: stjosephschurchwilton@yahoo.com



CHRISTMAS GOSPEL READINGS

The birth of any child is always a source of wonder, when we feel nearer the mystery of life and closer to God. In the birth of Jesus, we see our God made visible and so are caught up in love of the God we cannot see. The thrilling reality of the Word made flesh is both gift and call. In the words of the first letter of John, Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another (1 John 4:11). We are challenged to love the God we cannot see in the neighbour we can see. There can be no separation of these two realities: to love God is to love your neighbour and to love your neighbour is to love God.

THE GOSPEL (Christmas Eve): Matthew 1:1-25

POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. Every family tree contains shadows, shadows which can overshadow later generations. What have you learned about yourself from your family history?
2. In the narrative, Joseph faces a very challenging situation with a combination of kindness and logic, only to have both set aside by the surprise of God. Have you had that experience too?
3. God-with-us is a powerful expression, inviting me to reflect on my own experience of God with me in my life. Can I name any important moments of God's presence?
4. Every birth is a blessing—even my own! Am I still a blessing to those around me?

Sharing the excitement is a very human response. We have all done it at some stage: some great news in the family, perhaps at a promotion or the discovery of a place of spectacular beauty or some situation has turned around. The desire to let others know tells us that sharing such experiences is itself part of the original delight. Something similar may be said of the sense of discovery and delight we find in the Good News of Jesus. Like, the prophets of old (Jeremiah 6:19) or like St Paul (1 Cor 9:16), we just can't keep it in! We want, we need to let others know to complete our delight and our sense of discovery.

THE GOSPEL (Christmas Day): Luke 2:15-20

POINTERS FOR PRAYER

1. This was no ordinary child. It is the birth of the Son of God. In order to take in the implications of that we can do well to recall Meister Eckhart's reflection and ask ourselves how the birth of Jesus takes place in us: ***What good is it to me if the eternal birth of the divine Son takes place unceasingly but does not take place within myself? And what good is it to me if Mary is full of grace and if I am not also full of grace?***
2. The shepherds were both frightened and thrilled. Good news can sometimes be terrifying. Pregnancy and the birth of a child can give rise to both feelings. Hopefully the joy and wonder at new life outweigh the fear and apprehension. What has been your experience?

Children from Gael Scoil Úi Riada Carol singing.

Proceeds raised €400 was presented to the Parish Christmas Charity.



Happy Christmas from Fr. Michael

and all the staff of the Parish Centre

Saturday 24th December: Mass 10 am,

Confessions 10.30am - 11.30 am, Vigil Mass of Christmas 8pm

Sunday 25th December: Mass 10.30 am and 12 noon

Monday 26th December: Mass at 12 noon only

Tuesday 27th December—Saturday 31st December: Mass 10am

"The great challenge left to us is to cut through all the glitz and glam of the season that has grown increasingly secular and commercial, and be reminded of the beauty of the One who is Christmas."

— BILL CROWDER



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MINCE PIES AND CHRISTMAS.

One name for these pies in the Middle Ages was "crib cakes". They were a sweet treat offered to visitors.

Originally, the recipe included chopped meat with the fruit and spices, but it became a purely sweet pie over time.

It was essential to stir clockwise to bring good luck to the household, and everyone made sure to take their turn.

You were assured good health and happiness if you ate a pie on each of the 12 days of Christmas. The spices in the recipe symbolised the gifts the Wise Men gave, and the shape was often oval, resembling the crib in which Christ slept.

The response to our Christmas candle has once again been very positive. The thought of so many homes joining in our gesture this Christmas is a great sign of our church reaching out to others.

Reflect for a while on the lighted Christmas candle:

Let this Christmas candle become our prayer; the flickering flame expressing our joys and sorrows; the warm glow lighting up our lives and those we love; and may it hold out the hope of peace in our families, in our communities and throughout the world.



PLUM PUDDING AT CHRISTMAS.

One of the pudding's origins is that 13 ingredients were used to represent Christ and the 12 apostles.

Stirring clockwise also represented east to west, the journey made by the Wise Men.

The pudding has no plums because it was the original word for raisins!

Putting holly on top represented the crown of thorns and setting it on fire represented Christ's passion.

Parish International Carol Service.

An International Christmas Carol Service consisting of some of the many Nationalities associated with our parish can be viewed on our Web Cam. To access go to www.smawilton.ie and click on "LIVE".

A special thank you to all groups who participated and Paul O 'Flynn who produced the program.

As long as we have **memories**,
yesterday remains.

As long as we have **hope**,
tomorrow waits.

As long as we have **love**,
today is beautiful.

As long as we have **God**,
anything and everything
is possible.

Amen!

Our SMA Calendar 2023 is now on sale in the Mass Office. €3 a copy.

PARISH CHRISTMAS CHARITY.

Our Christmas charity appeal is a project of the SMA Fathers in Tanzania. They are supporting a community of *Albino people*. The pictures we have on display give an indication of the need and the benefit of our support that we will give them. To date we have collected €1,120. Well done.

We are inviting people to support this project by:

Support our second-hand spiritual book sale at €2 a book. Plenty of books available to enrich a person at Christmas. Proceeds of the sale go towards our Christmas charity.

Just put a red ribbon on our Christmas tree and donate.

**The Parish Centre will close on Friday 23rd
December and reopen on Tuesday 3rd January.**

Bingo will take place on Monday

2nd January at 7.50 pm.

If you are paying tax and are a member of our parish you are eligible to join in our Tax Back program for 2023.

If during a Tax Year your total contributions to the church exceed €250 the church will benefit from your contributions by at least €100. This happens at no cost to yourself, nor will it influence your tax situation.

If you can join us, all you must do is take one of the numbered boxes at the back of the church, sign your name against the number of the box on the sheet and your phone number. You use the envelopes when making offerings during Mass.

It's not about having to return all the envelopes, it's all about the total contributions reaching €250 at the end of 2023.