



The Catholic Parish
of Bishop's Stortford

the CARPENTER

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📍 3 Windhill, Bishop's Stortford, Herts CM23 2ND

Parish Office: Monday to Friday 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

Administrator/ Safeguarding: Mrs Debbie Jackson | **Catechetical Co-ordinator:** Mrs Sophie Sullivan

www.rcstortford.org.uk

The Epiphany of the Lord

7 January 2024

Our priests are:

Fr Peter Harris (*Parish Priest*)
Fr Marco Lazzaron (*Asst Priest*)



ADORATION AND CONFESSION

Come and join us at St Joseph and the English Martyrs Church for Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation each Saturday, 3:00 to 4:00 pm.

SUNDAY 14 JANUARY 6PM MASS

will celebrate the Rite of Acceptance/Welcome for our new RCIA enquirers when they will be introduced to the wider parish. We are blessed to have 14 individuals seeking to join the Catholic church at the Easter Vigil. They will be attending, supported by their sponsors, to mark their formal acceptance into the catechumenate. Please keep them in your prayers as they continue their faith journey.

ADULT CONFIRMATION CLASSES

2024—If you are an adult who is a baptised catholic, but have never been confirmed and would like to be, please contact Sophie ASAP email: bstortford-catchist@rcdow.org.uk

YOUTH CONFIRMATION— The next confirmation session for our young people will be Sunday 14 January at 3.30pm

CONTACTLESS QR code
↓ PARISH OFFERINGS ↓



The opposition in the theme between darkness and light continues to be presented in today's liturgy of the Word. This contrast involves the whole world and the lives of all of us, implying the need for each of us to make the free choice of placing our lives either at the service of darkness or at the service of light.

It is striking to imagine that all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, from Herod onwards, are all enveloped in the darkness of "turmoil" when they are informed by the Wise Men of the birth of the King of the Jews (cfr. Mt 2:3). This fear triggers the stress of a competitive lifestyle, to want to keep oneself in first place at all costs by aggressively proving to be stronger than others; it is the fear of the other, seen as a potential enemy to be eliminated; it is the disturbance in wanting to show outwardly interest and respect for the child when instead his heart was like a wild beast ready to seize and devour its prey. In other words, it is the disturbance of human selfishness, when one decides to invest one's life only to save oneself and one's interests.

Today we are invited not to fix our gaze on the darkness and turmoil that feed our discouragement, resignation, depression, despair, and pessimism. But, rather, we are invited to contemplate the light that comes to overcome the darkness of the world and has the power to dominate our selfishness, because the root of evil resides in the heart of every human being.

Kneeling and adoring the Child Jesus today means taking on in our daily lives the luminous relationship between Mary and Jesus. Our worship today takes the form of choosing to live, like Mary, for Christ, with Christ, and in Christ.

To live for Christ, like Mary, means to make the choice to come out of the defensive attitude of our selfishness, entrusting ourselves only to our human strength and our abilities, leaving attachment to material goods and money, allowing Christ, to become the center of our lives, the Lord of our lives. The offering of incense, made by the Magi of the East, can signify the divine perfume that envelops us, that is, the perfume of the Holy Spirit capable of overturning all situations of darkness, also caused by our selfishness.

To live with Christ, like Mary, means to care for our communion with Christ, who is present in the gift of the Word, of the Eucharist, and in the flesh of the poorest and most suffering. The offering of myrrh, made by the Magi of the East, can signify the dignity of caring for one another, the beauty of remaining united, and our courage to live reconciliation after every conflict, at the cost of the sacrifice of our self-giving.

To live in Christ, like Mary, means to make Christ live in us to such an extent that makes us available to serve joyfully in our community so that the Father's kingdom of peace and justice may take place in history, going against the dominant culture of the exaltation of selfishness, hedonism, and materialism. The offering of gold, made by the Magi of the East, can signify the beauty and value of those who put themselves at the service of others with humility. *Fr Marco Lazzaron*

ENCOUNTER— meet Fri 12 January in the Windhill Churches Centre. A talk on DVD led by Fr Denis McBride CSSr: 'In the House of Simon the Pharisee' 10.00 coffee 10.30 Talk begins 12.30 shared lunch 2.00pm meeting ends. All invited. Enquiries: 01279 652060/656482



PEACE SUNDAY 14 JANUARY 2024—

The work of Pax Christi is based on the gospel and inspired by faith. Pope Francis' theme for Peace Sunday is 'Artificial Intelligence and Peace'. Collection envelopes are available at each church for donations.