



THE CATHOLIC CHURCH OF CHRIST THE KING

THE PRESBYTERY, 4 LORDS CROFT, AMESBURY, WILTS., SP47EP

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WELCOME TO CHRIST THE KING

We welcome visitors, family and friends to our Mass today.
We are glad you are joining us today.

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH (YEAR-B)-2023

FROM THE DESK OF FATHER SAJI-FAMILY LIFE IN 2024 This weekend the Church celebrates the Feast of the Holy Family which always occurs on the Sunday after Christmas unless Christmas falls on a Sunday. Jesus lived as a member of a family who was nurtured with people skills and love by Mary and Joseph. The Feast of the Holy Family came into the church during the 17th century; it was added to the liturgical calendar in 1921 in hope of nurturing family life by upholding Mary and Joseph as models for all families. Most theologians suspect that many of the human qualities that Jesus exhibited must have been passed down from Mary and Joseph who guided him throughout his formative years, and taught him survival skills. This celebration awakens all that parents are the primary teachers of their children in ways of faith; parents also maintain the responsibility of passing down the traditions of the faith to their offspring that steers a child to pray, attend church, and live a value centred life. The Church, Catholic Schools and Faith Formation are supplements to teachings that come from the home. Since the Christmas Season brings an assortment of relatives, friends, and acquaintances together, this frequently creates a passageway for discussion upon family concerns. One honourable quality at family gatherings is the ability to actively listen to others since most people have so much to say; especially if members of a family have not been together for an extended period of time. It takes skill, patience, self control and sensitivity to generate quality time in conversations that engages wholesome communication. I imagine Jesus was taught to be a good listener as he was always ready to hear the story of another without interruption. Like Jesus, we should strive to be solid listeners to family, friends, and distant relatives whom we may even be in disagreement with pertaining to issues that surface in conversation so that respect is generated to the feelings, needs and wants of all rather than insisting on getting across our personal agenda or attempts to prove ourselves to be right. I have often witnessed circumstances whereby everyone in a room has something to communicate, but the message is chopped off by those impatient to tell their own story. The Feast of the Holy Family also reminds us that it is essential never to downgrade family life, ridicule the importance of family, criticise the makeup of a family, or make light of struggles in sustaining viable relationships within the family. Like today, during the days of Jesus there were many threats to family life but some very different. Throughout biblical times infant mortality and maternal mortality was high since there were poor medical standards and hygiene. There was also food insecurity as well as political instability which gets illustrated in Matthew's Gospel whereby the Holy Family flees to Egypt; therefore, surviving birth was not to be taken for granted. Today's Gospel from Luke brings forth the importance of Jewish faith in the life of the Holy Family as Jesus is presented in the temple. In both Matthew and Luke's Gospel it comes to view that somehow the Holy Family stuck together within the internal tension and external threats that plagued their life. In today's society the make-up of a family is changing in ways that include re-marriage, interracial families, single parent families, infertility which leads many couples to adopt out of love for abandoned children, and the prevalence of divorce. As the Feast of the Holy Family puts closure on 2023, know that all four gospel writers illustrate situations that required attention in the ministry of Jesus as he chose to do some of the harder things in life aware that it was the right thing for family, acquaintances, disciples, and strangers. He listened to those who needed healing or forgiveness, yet was unaccepted by religious leaders of his time. Ponder your ability to bring the Christmas message into your New Year. Perhaps it is time with a child struggling with academics, time with a teenager confused about his/her sexuality, time with an unemployed person seeking assistance, time with an unhappy coworker or an aging parent in need of purpose or attention. In this way you are blessed as a member of a family to greater holiness. BE BLESSED AND BE A BLESSING

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON: The shepherds went in haste, and found Mary and Joseph and the Infant lying in a manger.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: He, the Lord, is our God. He remembers his covenant for ever.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Alleluia, alleluia! At various times in the past and in various different ways, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets; but in our own time, the last days, he has spoken to us through his Son. Alleluia!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON: Our God has appeared on the earth, and lived among us.

HAPPY NEW YEAR May this year bring you countless moments of joy, opportunities for growth, and an abundance of love. Embrace each day as a precious gift, an opportunity to spread kindness, to cherish loved ones, and to make a positive impact in the world. Let's fill this year with meaningful connections, acts of compassion, and a deep sense of gratitude for all the blessings we receive. Wishing you a truly splendid and blessed New Year!

QUESTION OF THE WEEK How does my faith affect the way that I treat the members of my family? How can my faith help me grow to be a better parent/sibling/daughter/son?

no mark behind, nothing that someone could come across and know that something significant occurred. So we mark the event with monuments, holidays, gold watches or plaques, making a meaningful event tangible and memorable. Gifts at Christmas do the same thing. They mark the occasion of the birth of Jesus, communicating a bit of the joy of the day by allowing us to be both giver and receiver. Gift-giving sets aside the day as special and different. The special foods, customs, decorations, and gifts all help focus our attention on the importance and meaning of the day and at the same time allow us to share personally in its joy and happiness. In giving gifts, though, we can share in the meaning of Christmas in a significant way. We imitate God in sharing with others. We give a bit of ourselves to others in the gifts we give, just as God gives us the gift of His Son. No wonder we often say that the best gifts are those that come from the heart. Given in love, these presents are wrapped in the best covering of all.

IN THE SPIRIT OF GRATITUDE Many thanks to all those who have sent Christmas cards, prayers, and gifts to me for Christmas. Your generosity embodies the joy and spirit of giving that our Newborn King wants to instil in our hearts! I pray you all have a happy and holy Christmas and a grace-filled New Year.

REMEMBER OUR HOMEBOUND MEMBERS- FRIENDLY VISITORS If you are a parishioner who has empathy for our older population, please consider visiting a homebound member of our parish. The days can be long for them and many of their family members and friends have passed. Probably, more often than not, many have constant pain and suffer from chronic illnesses. However, they still have the need for love, compassion, and knowing someone cares about them. Just asking them a few questions can help start a friendly conversation, such as, "What world events had the most impact on you when you were growing up?" "What chores were you expected to do as a child?" "What food or drink was a special treat when you were a teenager?" The list is endless! We usually ask the visitor to be in contact with their "new friend" every two weeks and visits should be about an hour. Please contact me at the email address above, if you have the name of any parishioner who is homebound or in a care home and would like to have one of our Friendly Visitors stop by to share conversation and prayer.

MASS SCHEDULE STARTING FROM 30TH DECEMBER 2023

SATURDAY 30TH DECEMBER MASS AT 6.00PM FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE PARISH

SUNDAY 31ST DECEMBER MASS AT 11.00AM JO CHAMBERS FAMILY'S INTENTIONS

SUNDAY 31ST DECEMBER 11.00PM MASS AND CONSECRATION FOR ALL OUR FAMILIES

MONDAY 1ST JANUARY NEW YEARS DAY ADORATION AT 10.00AM AND MASS AT 11.00AM FOR ALL OUR FAMILIES

TUESDAY 2ND JANUARY ADORATION AT 10.00AM AND MASS AT 11.00AM IN THANKSGIVING TO GOD

WEDNESDAY 3RD JANUARY ADORATION AT 9.00AM AND MASS AT 10.00AM JIM EYRE, RIP

THURSDAY 4TH JANUARY ADORATION AT 9.00AM AND MASS AT 10.00AM DOMINIC FITZPATRICK, RIP (FIRST DEATH ANNIVERSARY)

FRIDAY 5TH JANUARY ADORATION AT 9.00AM AND MASS AT 10.00AM IRENE PIKE (HEALING)

SATURDAY 6TH JANUARY MASS AT 6.00PM FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE PARISH

SUNDAY 7TH JANUARY MASS AT 11.00AM THE ABBOTT FAMILY

WELCOME TO CHRIST THE KING! We would like to extend a warm welcome to all our parishioners and visitors attending public Mass. Whether you are just passing through or looking for a spiritual home, we pray you find Christ the King inviting and spiritually uplifting. If you are attending Mass on a regular basis, we encourage you to register with the parish. Please call our parish office and start the conversation! To our visitors, we hope you enjoy your stay here in Amesbury. Our church is always open to you, your family, and friends. pax et bonum (peace and all good)

PARISH CONTRIBUTIONS AND GENEROSITY A big thank you for all your generous donations, which are greatly appreciated. If anyone would like to transfer to standing order or bank transfer, this would help to simplify our banking procedure. The Parish bank details are: Name: Christ the King Church, Amesbury, Bank: NatWest Account number 66286638 and Sort code-52-10-03. If you wish to remember the Parish in your Will, further information is available from the Parish Office.

CONFIRMATION - If you have a child that has just completed Year 8 (going into Yr 9 or above in September) and you wish to enrol them in the next programme, the deadline is February 2024.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY at Christ the King is at 11am Mass. The liturgy is for children in Year 3 and below, please note children younger than school age need to be accompanied by an adult.

PRAY FOR VOCATIONS Please do all you can to encourage priestly and religious vocations. Your prayers and support make a difference.

IN MEMORIAM Please remember in your prayers those who recently died and for all the deceased members of our family and parish, the souls in purgatory and those who died in service of our country. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord. Amen.

Please pray for God's grace for those who are ill: Please also pray for an increase in vocations, especially in our diocese and our country.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION - If you have a Child that has just completed Year 2 (going into Yr 3 or above in September) and you wish to enrol them in the next programme, the deadline is November 2023.

CONFESSIONS/SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION In the Sacrament of Penance, the love and mercy of the Lord Jesus is made manifest in the forgiveness of sins, thereby reconciling the penitent with God and with his Church. Confession is every Saturday from 5.00pm-5.40pm or by appointment.

REST IN PEACE May those who have died enter into the mercy of God and the joy of the Kingdom.

COMMUNITY, WE NEED YOU! DECEMBER PRAYER INTENTION We pray for families who will enjoy this holiday season together, and for those families who struggle or are less than ideal. We pray for safe gatherings and spaces for kinship to and flourish, and we pray for those who feel alone or have lost someone that they will find love and peace.

VISITS TO THE SICK If you cannot come to church because of illness, please be sure that we are notified so that we might minister to you either at home, hospital, or nursing home or in any care facility. Because of confidentiality issues, we cannot come to you unless requested to do so by you or your family.

POPE'S INTENTION FOR JANUARY: For the gift of diversity in the Church. We pray that the Holy Spirit may help us to recognize the gift of different charisms within the Christian community and to discover the richness of different traditions and rituals in the Catholic Church.

WHY DO WE GIVE GIFTS AT CHRISTMAS? Great events in and of themselves are not tangible. They occur in life but leave

A BLESSED NEW YEAR! As we stand on the brink of a new year, it is a sacred time for reflection, gratitude, and hope. The journey through the past year, with its unique trials and triumphs, has been a testament to the enduring strength of our faith and the unbreakable bonds of our parish community. As your parish priest, witnessing the steadfastness of your belief and the depth of your compassion has been a profound source of inspiration and humility. In this New Year, I invite each of us to embrace resolutions that not only nurture our personal spiritual growth but also strengthen the fabric of our wider faith community. Let us commit to deepening our relationship with God through more fervent prayer, regular participation in the sacraments, and a dedicated study of the Holy Scriptures. These practices are the bedrock of our faith, offering guidance, solace, and connection with the Divine in our daily lives. Our parish is a holy community, a family bound together by our shared belief and love for God. This year, let's reinforce these sacred ties by actively engaging in our church's life. Whether it's through joining ministry groups, contributing to parish events, or offering a listening ear and a helping hand to those among us who are struggling, every act of fellowship echoes the teachings of Jesus Christ and strengthens our communal bond in Him. Following the example of Christ, let us be ever more committed to serving others. This could take the form of organised charity initiatives, volunteer work, or even small, everyday acts of kindness. In doing so, we not only aid those in need but also embody the love and mercy that are central to our Christian faith. In a world that can sometimes seem divided and uncertain, let us be ambassadors of God's peace and love. This means practising patience, showing forgiveness, engaging in dialogue with kindness and respect, and always seeking to understand before being understood. Let's remember that every person is a child of God and treat them with the dignity and love that this recognition demands. Finally, let us remember our sacred duty to care for God's creation. This year, may we be more mindful of our stewardship of the earth, engaging in practices that preserve and honour the natural world as a reflection of God's majesty and generosity. As we embark on this journey through the New Year, let us do so with hearts full of faith, eyes open to the needs of others, and hands ready to serve in God's name. As I reflect on the kindness and warmth shown to me this Christmas, I am deeply touched by your beautiful cards, thoughtful gifts, heartfelt messages, and warm phone calls. Each of these gestures has brought a special joy to my heart. Your generosity and thoughtfulness humble me. It's a true blessing to be part of such a caring and loving community. These expressions of kindness are a reminder of the strong spirit of fellowship and love that we share in our parish family. Thank you for remembering me and for all the ways you contribute to our parish community. Your actions embody the true spirit of Christmas, and I am grateful for each one of you. May the peace, love, and joy of Christ be with you all throughout the year. Many Blessings and Peace in the New Year!

WITH DEEP GRATITUDE Many thanks to all who helped make our Christmas worship and liturgical services so beautiful and holy. Each and every way that you decorated, sang, played an instrument, served at the altar, cleaned the church and fed and cared for the poor, assisted in the Advent Giving, assisted in the distribution of the Eucharist, brought Jesus to the homebound or assisted in any other way helped the Word become Flesh among us. To all who came to worship God, we are glad to have the privilege to pray together. Come again and become a part of this fantastic and welcoming community of faith. Thank you to all who prepared for and participated in the Christmas Masses. Many people gave of their time, effort, and inspiration. In particular, I want to thank the following: Liturgical Ministries—Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, Adult and Youth Lectors, Altar Servers, Ushers; Liturgical environment—Sacristan and Mass Coordinators, Art

and Environment Committee (including the Nativity crèche and set-up, altar linens, church cleaning, and flower ladies and those watering the flowers, along with those who carry out other services. Also, thank you to our money-counters. A special thank you to all of the music department, along with our choirs, organists and pianists, and other musicians. The liturgical music and environment helped to raise our hearts and minds to God to reflect upon this great mystery of Christ's birth. Thank you, also, to the parish helpers and church cleaners, deacons for their tremendous effort in so many ways in the days before Christmas. I am immensely grateful to you for the cards, notes, gifts, Christmas collection and goodies that you gave during the Christmas season. May God bless you in this New Year. May God bless and keep you today and always! Let's continue to pray for each other this week. I wish you all a blessed and healthy New Year.

WATCHFUL IN PRAYER If you are a person of faith, then, probably somewhere in your history is a person who is similar to Simeon and Anna, whom we hear about in the gospel today. These two characters were present in the temple when Jesus was presented by Mary and Joseph. They had been living on a promise from God, that they would experience the fulfilment of the promise of the coming of the Messiah before they would die. Imagine the sense of fulfilment, peace, and awe that filled them as they experienced this newborn babe with his parents. Let's take a moment this week to give thanks to God for those holy ones who were so faithful and who were a witness within our own families. It might be fun to pick out someone to share the story with. I know for me it is the elders on both sides my family, who were the rocks of faith that sustained us and our entire family, especially during very difficult times. It has made me so grateful for not just family members, but community members as well, who continue to remind us that we live on a promise from God and the God is always faithful to his promises. Can you imagine becoming that person of faith for your family? Can you be that faithful one who prays in the temple constantly, and always is attentive and aware for the coming of Jesus in the current day. In Simeon and Anna we see no use of spirituality or religion as an escape from real life. They lived each day in expectation of the coming of the Messiah. They lived on that promise and on their trust in God, and waited for God, in God's time. There seem to be two aspects of the story of Simeon and Ana one is a willingness to pray and the second are the virtues patience and trust. I know the prayer is often times the thing we do when we run out of all the other options that we have in life. We start with our own willpower and our own resources. Eventually, when they all fail us we look around for what are the only options left and we know that it is turning to God. What would it be like if we decided each day as we begin our day, to offer the whole day to God. I remember growing up in a household where the morning offering prayer was on the mirror in the bathroom, so that we would see it every single time we brushed our teeth, or washed our hands. Is there any reminder in your household for your family that prayer is the first and last thing we should be thinking of and not an escape route from reality?

The virtues of patience and trust are developed by choosing. Every day we have a choice about whether or not to rush God's timetable to fit ours or to wait for God to reveal the truth to us and the promise to us. Patience is developed by our waiting and are giving over control to God moment by moment. Trust is developed by remembering God's faithfulness to his promise, and not letting the apparent movements of each day overshadow the experiences of God's faithfulness. Even when we don't see God's promise revealed in the everyday experiences of our life, we choose to trust that the promise is being revealed, even though we don't see it. How many times has your life taken a crooked road and you thought you were lost and abandoned by God and you later understand that God was with you every step of the way? Let us pray with and for our families and be a Simeon and Anna for them as someone was for us.

NEW TO THE AREA. We look forward to personally meeting you. Please take time after Mass or whenever you may be present for parish activities to introduce yourself to the members of the parish and the parish priest.

NOT BEEN ACTIVE. If you are inactive in the practice of your Catholic faith, we encourage you to return. If you would like to speak with someone on the parish priest, please do not hesitate to contact the parish priest or any one of the parish team members

RECEIVING THE SACRAMENTS. If a previous marriage has kept you from receiving the Sacraments, we invite you to contact one of the priests or deacons. In most cases we can work with you toward a favourable solution so that you can again receive the Sacraments of the Church.

HAPPY NEW YEAR As the dawn breaks on a New Year, let us give thanks for all we hold dear: our health, our family, and our friends. Let us release our grudges, our anger, and our pains, for these are nothing but binding chains. Let us live each day in the most loving ways, the God-conscious way. Let us serve all who are in need, regardless of race, colour, or creed. Let us keep God of our own understanding in our hearts and to chant God's name each day. Let us lead the world from darkness to light, from falsehood to truth and from wrong to right. Let us remember that we are all one, embracing all, discriminating against none. May your 2024 be filled with peace, prosperity, and love. May God's blessings shower upon you and bestow upon each of you a bright, healthy, and peaceful New Year.

HELP NEEDED COME AT WEEKEND MASSES Have you ever considered assisting at weekend Masses by serving as a Lector, Eucharistic Minister, Sacristan, Usher, or Altar Server? We need more volunteers serving in all these positions. Please consider lending your talents! Training for all these ministries is available, and there is always a priest or our Liturgical or parish team leaders, present on the weekends for questions or concerns. Requirements (with the exception of Altar Servers) are that you are a fully initiated Catholic and have completed your training and background check through the Diocese. If you are interested in volunteering, or would like to learn more about each of these ministries, please contact Father Saji.

ORGANIST/PIANIST NEEDED Christ The King Church is in need of an organist and/or pianist who could fill-in as needed. If you would like to contribute to this most important ministry, please contact Father Saji Mathew.

DEAR PARISHIONERS, Happy New Year! Or more correctly this weekend I should say Happy New Year's Eve. Either way it is a blessing for us to remember the year past and look forward to the year to come. Remembering is so important for us as God's people, especially at this time of year when we remember all the events surrounding the Incarnation of the Lord. A prayerful remembrance of how Jesus first came among us teaches us to recognise His coming into our lives in the future. As we begin the New Year of 2024 we are called to prayerfully look back upon 2023. Where was God with us this past year? Where were we with Him? Where did we forget His Presence this past year and go astray? Prayerful consideration of where God was in our lives, how He worked in our lives in the past year will help us follow Him more closely in the coming year. Remember, so we can look forward to a blessed New Year. Speaking of New Year's Day, I should mention that January 1st is the Solemnity of Mary Mother of God. There is a beautiful history and meaning to this feast but suffice it to say that it is, generally speaking, a holy day of obligation in some countries. However, this year, since the feast falls on a Monday, it is not a day of obligation in a number of countries. Therefore, we will be celebrating the feast day with Mass at 10:00 am. Even though there is no obligation attached to January 1st this year, it is a great way to start off the New Year with the Lord, so join us in celebrating the motherhood of Mary. Happy New Year!

DEAR PARISHIONERS, God invented time so that everything would not happen at once. The quote has been variously ascribed – a Japanese proverb, some say; others, Albert Einstein; still others, still other sources. This weekend we see time move on as what happened in the past year passes into the history books and we turn to a new year, like a page that has not yet been written on, to see what we still wait to happen. We live in the present, between what has been and cannot be changed, and what has yet to come, which we know not and anticipate with either eagerness or dread. For 2024 we bring expectations and hopes, and we wonder which of them will be fulfilled and which will be frustrated. In the face of the relentless march of time and history we can sometimes feel powerless, as if a plate is put on the table in front of us, not having ourselves selected it from the menu, and presented as our fare for dinner, like it or not. Que sera, sera! True, there is much about the future that seems beyond our control. But are we only pawns in the game of history, the playthings of time or fate in a fatalistic re-cycle of events? I hope not. So, then, how do we face the times we live in? Perhaps we can profit from the advice of a wizard to a hobbit: "I wish it need not have happened in my time," said Frodo. "So do I," said Gandalf, "and so do all who live to see such times. But that is not for them to decide. All we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given us." Wise words. We cannot dictate the world or choose the circumstances in which we live; that omnipotence is not ours to command. But we can choose how we will greet the times, how we will engage the events. That freedom, limited as it might be, is indeed within our power. The choice that is set before us is confidence and commitment on one hand and cynicism and despair on the other. In dark or anxious times we need to focus on what lies within the realm of possibility and make choices within that scope, with that hope. How we choose to use our time and energies will give value and dignity to the year ahead. As the fox said to the Little Prince, "It is the time you have wasted for your rose that makes your rose so important." Time and effort are not wasted if we decide that the object is worthy of them. We, then, are the givers of meaning – not the judgement of society, or popular acclaim, or a price tag.

We will begin the year 2024 celebrating the Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God. What better way to greet a New Year than under the patronage of the one who brought the Eternal Word of God into our world, into history, by offering her own humanity to the Incarnation. What began in Nazareth, what was fulfilled in Bethlehem, that Incarnation, needs to continue to happen; it needs to be renewed and reborn again and again through time. That is what our humanity should be about – that we en flesh the grace and compassion of God in our lives. The hands with which Christ ministers to the suffering must be our hands. His words of consolation and forgiveness to the sorrowing or frightened – those words must be on our lips. The path that searches for the lost, that carries His light into squalor or loneliness, must be the path we tread. That is the mission entrusted to us in this New Year. We should look with keen eyes, ready to recognise the opportunities to make that Incarnation a reality in the months that lie before us. There is no human emotion as bitter as regret. To let time and its promises slip by unfulfilled will earn us little more than useless remorse. The rueful words of Richard II, dethroned, imprisoned, and awaiting his sure assassination, as he looks back over a reign that began with great hope and enthusiasm but was lost in arrogance and indolence, are some of the saddest in all of Shakespeare: I have wasted time, and now time doth waste me. The start of a new year is traditionally the time to make resolutions for the months ahead. Let us resolve not to waste the opportunities of this new year. Not only to carry hope in our hearts, but to fulfil those hopes with our hands. Not only to speak words of consolation, but to extend that consolation to the sorrowing with our time and attention. One last quote, St. Teresa of Calcutta: Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today. Let us begin.