

All correspondence to:

The Parish Office,
Angel House, 6 Langdown Lawn,
Hythe SO45 5GR
Tel: 023 8084 3479
e-mail: watersidecp@btinternet.com
website: watersidecatholics.org.uk

For St Bernard &
St Michael's churches

6th December 2009
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St Michael's Church
Langdown Lawn
Hythe SO45 5GR

St Bernard's Church
Southbourne Avenue,
Holbury, SO45 2NT

PASTORAL TEAM

Priest: Fr David Adams**Deacons:** Steve Bowler (8020 7449)

Ian Tobin (8089 7354)

Parish Administrator: Helen Hughson**To contact The Parish Administrator based at St Michael's**
call between 9am - 2pm (Mon & Tue only)

For the Ideal Gift visit

Faith, Hope & Charity8 ST JOHN'S STREET, HYTHE
SOUTHAMPTON, SO45 6DA

Tel: 023 8020 7882



PARISH SERVICES

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Sun	6	9 am	SB	Mass: Second Sunday of Advent
		11 am	SM	Mass: Second Sunday of Advent
Tue	8	10 am	SM	Mass: Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Wed	9	7.30 pm	SM	Evening Prayer & Mass: 2nd Week of Advent
Thur	10	10 am	LT	Mass at Lyndhurst: St Swithun Wells
Sat	12	10 am	SM	Mass: of the 2nd Week of Advent (followed by Sacrament of Reconciliation (until 11.30 am))

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Sun	13	9 am	SB	Mass: Third Sunday of Advent
		11 am	SM	Mass: Third Sunday of Advent



This week we will be offering Masses for:

People of the Parish, Parishioners who are unwell, All the Departed, Those who have suffered abuse, Andy Anderson RIP (First Anniversary), Dave Donoghoe RIP, Charles Duffy RIP, Desmond Stratton RIP, Edna Tisdale RIP, Golden Wedding Anniversary of Frank & Gwen Val De Marca

Next week (13th December) we will be offering Masses for: People of the Parish, Parishioners who are unwell, All the Departed, Andy Anderson RIP (First Anniversary), Ruth Adams RIP

Total Roof Fund collected to date

£7,632.27

(Target - £13,500)

Thank you all, for your continued generosity

MAKING A STRAIGHT MOTORWAY TO GOD

What was John doing in the wilderness? He was not a priest, he wasn't in the temple or the local church. He, a layman, was there declaring the forgiveness of sins. He shouldn't have been doing that! He was making it easy for people to get to God! They were supposed to go to the temple (church) and jump through all sorts of hoops, and pay so much money and slaughter this or that animal. Of course the temple priests made a nice living from all this. In fact the whole economy of Jerusalem was doing very well on it.

So when someone comes along offering free and easy forgiveness everyone flocks to them. Jesus would later criticise the religious controllers for putting heavy burdens on people's shoulders and doing nothing to alleviate the suffering. This is a perennial temptation of religion. It is always dividing the world into the holy and the unholy, the saved and unsaved. It creates more and more laws and conditions and practices which end up being steep hills, twisting, winding and difficult roads, and deep valleys of anxiety, fear and guilt. So instead of making it easy for people to get to God and for God to get to people it becomes one big obstacle course.

All the prophets up to John the Baptist challenge the institutional religion to come back to God in faith, humility, justice and compassion. Most of them were killed because we prefer our securities and vested interests to a living relationship with God which we cannot control.

The church always has the same problem. But it is no good just blaming the Church. We need to see where the root of the problem lies. That root is within ourselves and within our society. The Church is tempted to stray not because it is inherently bad but because it accepts all too easily the ways of the world. These ways are our ways too. They are usually the things we take for granted – the value judgments, the prejudices, the self-interested point of view, the dependence on everything outside (money, pleasure, addictions, status, popularity) to make up for the emptiness within. The emptiness is within not because God is not with us or in us but because we are living spiritually in a place that has no room for God. Our idols demand absolute subservience and will not tolerate rivals.

So this is the rub - the way to God is made straight, level, clear, fast, multi-laned, safe and easy so that we can journey to God in the here and now. (And in actual fact, it is God who makes the journey to us.) The temptation of the world is to say – Oh well it's all very easy. It can't be worth much so I don't have to bother. I can get on with my life and do my own thing and build my little tower. This complacency is fatal. All our suffering comes from our alienation from the ground of our being which is God. All our problems arise from the neglect, exploitation and manipulation of forces of fear, hatred, greed and power. We cannot sit back complacently, take God's love for granted and do nothing. The forces of the world are inherently destructive, divisive and despotic. In this messy, far from ideal world we have to let the light of the Good News shine and begin to change things. As someone said: *O you Christians – sing your hymns, say your prayers and have your churches – just don't try to change anything!* (DMA)

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK: Please keep in your prayers: Nigel Bolton, Anne Candri, Mary Crisp, Petra Daniels, Anne Donoghoe, Margaret Flynn, Pat Gallanagh, Amanda Gudge, Jane McClatchey, Joan Olden, Leslie Palmer, Bridget Reeves, Bill Topple. (If you wish someone to be included for prayers here please give their name to Fr David.)

TIMES OF CHRISTMAS SERVICES: 24th Dec, (Christmas Eve) Christmas Night Mass at St Michael's beginning with carols at 8.30pm, Mass begins at 9pm; Christmas Day: 9am Mass at St Bernard's & 11am Mass at St Michael's.

BLUE CHRISTMAS: A candlelit service for those who find the approaching Christmas season difficult to cope with. Come and pray for inner peace for yourself and others close to you. Everyone is welcome. **Friday, 11th December 7.30pm, St Michael's Catholic Church, Hythe.**

WATERSIDE FOOD BANK - Many thanks to all those who have donated food to this worthy cause, though we could do better, come on everybody! Any donations can be left in the plastic box in the church porches.

ANNUAL SENIOR CITIZEN'S CHRISTMAS LUNCH - Lists are at the back of both St Michael's and St Bernard's churches for senior citizen's of the parish who would like to attend the annual Christmas lunch this year. Thurs, 17th December, 12 noon until 2pm at St Bernard's Hall.

THE LATE MARIE EDWARDS: Last week we buried the ashes of Marie at Blackfield. This week the parish received a legacy of £10,000 from the settlement of her estate. Marie was not only generous in her will to the parish but also to other charities that she supported. One condition we were asked to fulfil is to provide a bench at Blackfield cemetery in memory of Stan & Marie Edwards and to pay for a new memorial stone where the ashes are buried. We are very grateful to Marie for her kindness and we will remember her in our prayers. Please do consider your parish when you are making or amending your will.



*...On a lighter note,Mmm chocolates, wine, Christmas cake, chocolate chip and cherry biscuits, blackberry and apple preserve, fruit marmalade, and Whitaker's Plain & Milk chocolate mints....we have a lovely Christmas Hamper to be raffled for your delectation and delight! Tickets available at £1 per strip at Faith Hope and Charity during the week, and after mass on Sundays **from this weekend**. £1 per strip. The draw date is to be advised., meanwhile, any donations of Christmas goodies to put in it would be welcome too! All proceeds to go towards the Roof Fund.*

ST BERNARD'S CHURCH LAY-OUT: Those who regularly attend St Bernard's Church are invited to consider whether they want to keep the present lay-out of altar in the middle or revert to having the altar near the far wall and all the pews facing one direction. A vote will be taken on Sunday, 13th Dec at the 9am Mass. Options will be:

- 1) Leave it as it is;
- 2) Change the pews to face one direction;
- 3) I don't mind either way.

A majority vote from option 1 or 2 will decide. In the event of a draw, Fr David will have the casting vote. Children old enough to understand will be eligible to vote.

Average Income & Expenditure for September & October 2009

Income: Average per Month

SOs & Envelopes:	£2512
Loose	£852
Rent	£703
FHC Shop	£500
Other incl Fund Raising	£1160
Total Av Mnthly Income	£5727

Expenditure: Average per Month

(figures based on 2008/2009 with a provision for exceptional costs)

Ordinary Expenditure	£5800
Exceptional Cost Provsn	£600
Total Av Monthly Exp.	£6400

Giving to Other Charities Through the Parish:

Average per Month:	£975
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Does anybody have a spare coat/umbrella stand they don't want which we could use for St Michael's. If so do please let Helen know at the Parish office.

THE CHRISTMAS OFFERING

As is traditional the collection at Christmas is for your parish priest and forms a part of his ordinary income for the year.

Fr David will be very grateful for whatever you want to give at this time.

A leaflet explaining how priests are financially supported is available at the back of church for your information.