

# The Messenger

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For St Bernard &  
St Michael's Churches

21st December 2008  
Year B divine office Week 1v



St Michael's Church  
Langdown Lawn  
Hythe SO45 5GR

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

## Waterside Catholic Parish

### PASTORAL TEAM

Priest: Fr David Adams  
Deacons: Steve Bowler (8020 7449)  
Ian Tobin (8089 7354)

To contact The Parish Administrator based at St Michael's

call

Inspiration and last-minute gifts available at The Parish Shop!

"You'll be sure to leave with something you hadn't intended"



Faith, Hope & Charity  
8 ST JOHN'S STREET  
HYTHE  
SOUTHAMPTON  
SO45 6DA  
Tel: 023 8020 7882



Church Cleaning - many thanks to the jolly crew who have cleaned and prepared the churches



### Meat Draw Winner!

Peggy Kirwan - drawn on 14.12.08  
Peggy wins a £30 Sargeant's Meat Voucher!

You've got to be in it to win it!!  
Get your tickets after Mass on Sundays

### Chickens - £20!

### Goats - £25!



Buy a CAFOD World Gift for Christmas that can make a world of difference to families in the aftermath of disasters and conflict.

See catalogue in the Church Porch or go to



### WATERSIDE YOUTH GROUP

Why not start the New Year with

## Hythe Youth Club

Wednesdays 6.30-8.30pm

For transport and more details Call Steve Smith -

## Children's Liturgy

Rising 4 years to Year 2

(but younger welcome if accompanied)

9am Mass term-time.

Ring Joy O'Brien Tel 80848995



### PARISH SERVICES

#### 4th Sunday of Advent

Sun	21	9 am	SB	Mass: Fourth Sunday of Advent (Andy Anderson RIP)
		11 am	SM	Mass: Fourth Sunday of Advent (Douglas & Gloria Lorimer RIP)
Tue	23	10 am	SM	Morning Prayer & Mass (Mr & Mrs Roberts RIP)
		7.30 pm	SM	(opportunity for Individual Reconciliation until 8.30pm)
Wed	24	8.30 pm	SM	<b>Christmas Eve - Carol Singing</b> (People of the Parish)
		9.00 pm		<b>Christmas Night Mass</b>
Thur	25	9.00 am	SB	<b>Christmas Day Mass</b> (People of the Parish)
		11 am	SM	<b>Christmas Day Mass</b> (People of the Parish)
Sat	27	10 am	SM	No Mass today
<b>The Holy Family</b>				
Sun	28	9 am	SB	Mass: The Holy Family (Gabor Marek & John Murphy RIP)
		11 am	SM	Mass: The Holy Family (Carlos Netto & Louis Netto RIP)



By God's graciousness may we all help to make this a blessed, peace-filled and loving Christmas time.

Fr David & Linda (& the doggies of course!) would like to wish everyone in the parish & their families a very happy and joyful Christmas time. A warm welcome to any visitors we may have with us at this time and safe journeys for all those who are travelling to stay with family or friends.

We would also like to thank everyone for the many assurances of prayer, for the expressions of good will and seasons greetings and for kind and thoughtful gifts.

**Crib Collections:** There will be a basket available by the cribs in our churches and donations will be forwarded via the Diocese to the Catholic Children's Society as usual.

The **Christmas Collection** is traditionally given for your parish priest and forms a part of his ordinary income for the year. Thank you in advance for your generosity.



## LET IT BE DONE ACCORDING TO YOUR WORD

### (4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent B)

At the beginning of his gospel Luke presents the stories of the birth of John the Baptist and the birth of Jesus. Zechariah and Elizabeth, the parents of John, are blameless and upright keepers of the Law. Yet they are barren, they have no children. We can see them as symbolic of the sterility of the Law. No matter how good the rules they cannot ignite one spark of divine love or conceive any divine life. In fact the Law becomes an instrument, not of holiness, but of division and hostility, cfr Ephesians 2:14.

Mary, in contrast, has no qualifications with respect to the law, or at least they are ignored, she is rather “so highly favoured”, or as the Latin Bible translated *gratia plena*, “full of grace”. Mary is the one who must receive the Divine initiative. This free gift of God’s love is promised in the gratuity of creation. And it has been promised in history most clearly through Abraham and the prophets of Israel, including King David who is mentioned in the first reading today. This promise is unconditional and independent of the Law. The two-sided covenant based on the keeping of the Law ended in failure. History has proved we cannot keep the Law and that self-righteousness is achieved only at the cost of self-deception.

God abandoned that covenant and promised a new one. This is the one-sided Covenant based solely on God’s love and forgiveness, cfr Jeremiah 31:31 – *for they shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more*. This new Covenant is realised in Jesus – he will save his people from their sins (Matt 1:21).

Mary is the first one to be invited to the wedding feast of God. Her consent is requested because love can only be freely given and freely received. Mary’s freedom from the negativity of sin is demonstrated above all in her joyful acceptance of grace. She does not offer any protestations of unworthiness. These only witness to our estrangement from God and to the fact that we are trapped in our own categories of deserving/undeserving, worthy/unworthy. Mary’s disturbance arises because she knows her nothingness and could not presume. Her question arises not from doubt but from simple inquiry. Mary’s “Yes” to God arises from her joyful willingness to let God’s work of love be fulfilled through her. Similarly God invites all of us to let God love us and transform us. (DMA)