

**Midleton Parish Newsletter**  
**24<sup>th</sup> December 2023 - Fourth Sunday of Advent**

**Clergy in the Parish:**

**Priests:** Rt. Rev. Msgr. Jim Killeen, P.P., V.G. 021-4631750  
V. Rev. John Ryan, P.E., C.C. 086-2697503  
Rev. Mark Hehir, C.C. 021-4621670  
Rt. Rev. Msgr. Eamon Goold, P.E. 021-4633659  
**Deacon:** Rev. Edward Mulhare.

**Priest on Duty:** 087-246 8234 (For emergencies and also arranging wedding bookings)

**Parish Office:** Closed until Tuesday January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024.

**Parish website:** [midletonparish.ie](http://midletonparish.ie) **Parish e-mail:** [midletonparishoffice@gmail.com](mailto:midletonparishoffice@gmail.com) and to access the webcam for Masses, log on to the parish website.

**Masses for Christmas:** Christmas Eve, 6.10pm and 9pm in Holy Rosary and 8pm in Ballintotis.

**Christmas Morning:** 8am, 10am and Noon in Holy Rosary and 10.30am in Ballintotis.  
Tuesday, December 26<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 30<sup>th</sup>, Mass at 10am only.

**Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament:** 9am to 10pm Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup> to Friday 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Confessions:** No Confessions next weekend.

**Anniversaries:** Ann Barry, Johannah Wilshin, Molly Cronin, Peg Fouhy, Pattie Walsh, Daniel O'Reardon, Dan Hickey, Ellen (Nell) Walsh (nee) Heaphy, John & Marie Fuller, Fritz Schafer, Gretta & Michael Cuddigan, Margaret & Patrick O'Connor.

**Closing Time of the Church:** Holy Rosary is closed at 5pm.

**Blessing of the Baby Jesus figures**

Baby Jesus figures from home cribs are being blessed at all the Masses today (Fourth Sunday of Advent). On your return home after the blessing, the children are invited to wrap the blessed figurines in Christmas wrapping, place them under the tree, or other suitable location, to be opened as the first gift of Christmas, thus encouraging the children to make the connection between the gifts they receive on Christmas Day and the greatest gift that any of us can receive, Jesus.

**Family Prayer for placing the figurine in the crib:** *God our Father, You loved us so much you sent us your only Son, Jesus, born of the Virgin Mary, to save us and lead us back to you. We pray that, with your blessing, these images of Jesus might be a sign of your presence and love in our homes. Good Father, give your blessing to all who gather with us this Christmas, our family and friends. Open our hearts, that we might receive Jesus in joy, do always what he asks of us, and see him in those who need our love. We ask this in the name of Jesus, your beloved Son, who came to give peace to the world. You, who live and reign forever and ever. Amen.*

**The Pope's Intentions for December 2023:** For Persons with Disabilities- *"We pray that people living with disabilities may be at the centre of attention in society, and that institutions may offer inclusive programmes which value their active participation."*



**Feast Days:** Monday, 25<sup>th</sup> December, *The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, the Virgin will conceive and bear a son and they shall call him Emmanuel.

Tuesday, 26<sup>th</sup> December, *St. Stephen*, the first Christian martyr, was one of those in charge of the poor and needy. He is outstanding for his forgiveness of his enemies. Patron of deacons, stonemasons and bricklayers.

Wednesday, 27<sup>th</sup> December, *St. John*, Apostle and Evangelist, brother of James, son of Zebedee, the disciple whom Jesus loved, is traditionally said to have died in Ephesus. He is considered to be the author of the Fourth Gospel, the Book of Revelation and three Letters. The Letters especially teach us the law of love; John is said in his old age to have preached only one message: love one another.

Thursday, 28<sup>th</sup> December, *The Holy Innocents*, Martyrs. *'The flight into Egypt and the massacre of the Holy Innocents make manifest the opposition of darkness to the light: "He came to his own home, and his own people received him not." Christ's whole life was lived under the sign of persecution. His own share it with him. Jesus' departure from Egypt recalls the exodus and presents him as the definitive liberator of God's people.'*

Friday, 29<sup>th</sup> December, *St. Thomas Becket*, 1118-1170, as Archbishop of Canterbury, came into conflict with King Henry II over Church rights. He was killed in his cathedral on this date.

Since their feasts fall on the three days after Christmas, St. Stephen, St John the Apostle and Evangelist, and the Holy Innocents, were given the name of 'Comites Christi', Companions of Christ, in the Middle Ages. They were seen as a cortege or court of honour accompanying the Christ-child. It was also said that three forms of martyrdom are represented: voluntary and executed (St. Stephen), voluntary but not executed (St John) and executed but not voluntary (The Holy Innocents).

**New Parish Pastoral Centre:** The parish is looking for Painting Contractors who are interested in quoting for the complete painting internally of the new Parish Pastoral Centre. For further details and specification, contact Pdraig Foley (Clerk of Works) 086-8060868

This Christmas sees war in the Holy Land and in many other places of the world. The violence and suffering unleashed in all wars is never good and inevitably it is the innocent who end up dying and losing everything. Rarely do the leaders of war lose all they have, end up starving or injured or dead.

The number of children who lose their lives is shocking and like the Holy Innocents they do not understand what is going on and why. The greedy, selfish, power hungry leaders of war do not have any regard for the innocent lives being taken.

Let us pray this Christmas time for all who have lost their lives in war, those who have been injured, those who suffer from famine, especially the children. May the Lord welcome those who have died into his presence, bring comfort to those who suffer and may those who bring violence, suffering and death to others have their hearts of stone changed to hearts of flesh and end the needless actions of violence and war.

God bless all who are trying to help those who are in great need at this time in our troubled world.

**Quote for the Week:** *"As they were stoning Stephen, he called out, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit'. Then he fell to his knees and cried out in a loud voice, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them'; and when he said this, he fell asleep."*

Acts of the Apostles