

The Link

- Y Ddolen -

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Newsletter of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Wrexham – serving the parishes of North and Mid Wales

Christmas Greetings

Wishing you the blessed Peace and Joy of Christ at Christmas

Families come together at Christmas and many visit the local parish church. Therefore "The Link", the Diocesan newsletter is pleased to welcome visitors, and to wish everyone a very happy and holy Christmas. Each month, The Link brings news and comment to the parishes of the Diocese, details of forthcoming events, and news of parish activities. It acts as a 'link' between parishes and communities, offers ideas and suggestions, and many parishes have followed an idea planted by another parish activity. Links between us, as Catholic Christian communities are essential to build the Church of God.

At this time, let us make special prayers for Bishop Edwin. On New Year's Eve, he celebrates his birthday, one year on from the canonical age of resignation. As Bishop Edwin celebrates his birthday, let us pray that news of the appointment of his successor will not be too long delayed, so that he may enjoy a fulfilling and long retirement, freed from the daily pastoral responsibility. The Diocese will be saddened at his departure, but we all pray for a much loved, and very caring diocesan bishop.

Bethlehem Light

We gladly receive the light as a sign of our willingness to be channels of peace, by our words and actions.

On Tuesday 13th December the Diocese again received the Peace Light in the Cathedral where it will burn until the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord – 9th January. The light had been brought from the grotto in Bethlehem where Jesus was born to Linz in Austria, from where it had been distributed to over 23 European countries and then by Scouts and Guides to cities, towns and communities – to any place that appreciates the significance of the "gift".

Bishop Edwin's Column

I do not wish you a 'Merry Christmas', but a 'Happy Christmas'! For many people today, Christmas is far from merry, unless it has a fatalistic mode of 'eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die!' Problems besiege people from every side 'Can I pay my debts, where's the money coming from?' Or, 'Why do some of the family no longer walk the ways of Faith?' Or, 'What of my health in 2012?'

You may add your own reasons why Christmas is not always merry.

But Christmas can ALWAYS be happy! That is the astounding truth! The love of a passionate God has pierced through a cruel and selfish world in the person of a little child, destined to become the Saviour of the world.

This is Good News for all people. in spite of the ravages of sin and human frailty, the Catholic Church speaks of God's living presence in this troubled and anxious world. As some young people said during World Youth Day in Madrid, being a Catholic is not belonging to a movement, - it is who we are, the People of God, living in hope of future glory beyond the grave.

Christmas is Good News for all, and yet challenges us to respond in the way we live. At Midnight Mass we hear the inspired words of St. Paul to his friend Titus – 'God's grace has been revealed ...and has taught us that what we have to do is to give up everything that does not lead to God, and all our worldly ambitions.'

I wish you the best Christmas present of all – that you may draw closer to God, who is crazy about you.

I wish you a Happy Christmas, and hope that it is also merry!

Nadolig Llawen!

'O hollalluog Dduw, wrth i ti ein llenwi â goleuni newydd dyfodiad dy Air yn y cnawd, gad i lewyd y ffydd a gynheuaist yn ein calonnau ddisgleirio hefyd yn ein gweithredoedd. Trwy Grist Ein Harglwydd.' (Collect from Dawn Mass, Christmas Day).

+Edwin

Come Home for Christmas

'I am the Light of the World' John 8:12

We welcome to our parishes all those, who with their families have "Come Home for Christmas."

We welcome warmly those who for whatever reason have not been able to take part in the Church and the Mass during the year. We hope that the celebration of Christmas will give you strength and courage to renew the sense of being "At home".

Also, a very warm welcome if you are a visitor who may wish to explore becoming a more active member of the Catholic community. Free leaflets, or help and support are available in every parish, or please look at www.catholicchurch.org.uk/homemission.

Diocese of Wrexham - 25th Anniversary

On 12th February 1987 Pope John Paul II created the totally new Diocese of Wrexham for the northern half of Wales out of the existing Diocese of Menevia, which itself was re-defined with changed borders. On Saturday 11th February (Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes) Bishop Edwin will lead the celebrations in S.Mary's Cathedral for this anniversary and significant date in the history of the Catholic Church in Wales. More details will follow in the New Year, in the meantime put this date in your diary for the celebration of Mass at 12 noon. The Mass for the Sick that was scheduled for that day will be incorporated into this jubilee.

Light Refreshments will be available afterwards in S.Mary's Cathedral Hall.

Bishop Edwin invites the Diocese, especially the sick, all who care for them, and past pilgrims to Lourdes to join him in this celebration which will include the celebration of the Sacrament of the Sick.

Visit the Diocesan website: www.wrexhamdiocese.org.uk

St Mary's Cathedral, Wrexham

SVP - On the third Sunday of Advent gifts were brought in and placed around the symbolic tree for some children in great need in different ways in Wrexham. What a wonderful response!

A Penitential Service in preparation for Christmas was held on the 14th. Afterwards individual confessions were available.

One lucky family won a home baked Christmas cake and a locally reared turkey, which we raffled and in the process made £245 for parish funds.

A Celebration of Christmas in Reading & Carols will take place on Sunday 1st January at 3.00 pm.

St. Tudwal's and St. David's, Barmouth

The refurbishment of our Church at Harlech has been completed, a corporate enterprise, thanks to donations, benefactors, fund-raising and hard work. Many thanks!

36 parishioners attended the annual Christmas lunch at Shell Island - a truly festive occasion.

Children and readers from our parish participated in an ecumenical Evening of Carols at St. Tanwgys (Harlech).

Loose change collected in the 'copper pot' over the last eight years and sent to CAFOD has amounted to several goats, chickens, fresh water and ovens

The Sick and Housebound of our parish family support and sustain us by their prayer and pain and form the Prayer Cell of the parish.

We have had six on-going catecheses at Sunday mass on the revised texts of the Roman Missal and an evening recollection for Extraordinary Ministers for the distribution of Holy Communion

Every quarter we have had a regular Instruction for Church Readers with printed handouts for their guidance and ministry.

Our Lady & St James, Bangor

There was an opportunity for Eucharistic Adoration on Saturdays during Advent. A time to experience some peace and tranquility during the busy Christmas period.

The Tree of Life was a central feature of our November Bereavement Service. It was decorated with names of people to be prayerfully remembered over Christmastime.

Our Lady's School Advent Fayre was a splendid enjoyable well-supported occasion. Gaelic coffee and mince pies were served.

Christmas Flower envelopes were available for donations for decorating the church at Christmas. Donations could be made in memory of a loved one, to be placed in a booklet containing all the names.

Once again parishioners were exceptionally generous in filling 'The Help the Homeless Trunk' of food and bedding; much appreciated during the cold weather.

A warm welcome was extended to Bishop Edwin at the Parish Celebration of The Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, celebrated at Our Lady's School.

Fr. Stanislaw celebrated a well-attended Polish Mass.

Our Lady's School presented their school play in church to a grand audience of relatives, friends and parishioners.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation was celebrated with and for children. They were accompanied by parents as part of their family's preparation in Advent.

Children, parents and friends enjoyed the Christingle Service which is an old custom originating from the Czech lands.

Mulled wine and Gaelic coffees were served with mince pies during the Grand Christmas Raffle, which included a Hamper, Christmas cake, Whisky, Wines, Chocolates and many other prizes.

St Gerard's School End of Term

Carol Service was held in St Deiniol's Bangor Cathedral.

Our participation in the Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity will be on Friday, 20th January at 7.30pm in Our Lady & St James. All are welcome.

A parish group will see the Rock'n'Roll Panto - Sleeping Beauty on Friday 13th January.

The Wednesday Parish Prayer Group will hold an 'After Christmas' lunch in Coleg Menai Restaurant in January.

St David's, Mold

On Fridays in Advent there has been Holy Hour in the convent.

Two more girls have now joined the group of altar servers. A recent visitor remarked on the high standard of serving in the parish.

The SVP organised a Christmas toy collection for children of different ages, in conjunction with local Social Services.

Very generous boxes of provisions were collected for the Poor Clares in Hawarden.

The Knights of St Columba have sold calendars to fund the Fun Day for handicapped young people and adults in 2012.

A social evening was held to support an orphanage in Bethlehem. Sr Ann Farr of the Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel spoke with first-hand knowledge of conditions in Bethlehem and surrounding areas. She pointed out that because of checkpoints, rigorous documentation, and the 8-metre high 'Peace Wall' which cuts through Bethlehem, Mary and Joseph would be unable to make their journey today.

St Francis of Assisi, Llay

An Advent penitential service was held with opportunities for Reconciliation, with several priests available.

A Soup Supper raised £989, which allowed £1100 to be sent to Sumy, Ethiopia.

The parish will visit the Poor Clares at Hawarden on Friday 30th December.

The New Beatitudes:

Blessed are those who can laugh at themselves: - *they will have no end of fun.*

Blessed are those who can tell a mountain from a molehill: - *they will be saved a lot of bother.*

Blessed are those who know how to relax without looking for excuses: - *they are on the way to becoming wise.*

Blessed are those who know when to be quiet and listen; - *they will learn a lot of new things.*

Blessed are those who are sane enough not to take themselves too seriously: - *they will be valued by those about them.*

Happy are you if you can take small things seriously and face serious things calmly: - *you will go far in life.*

Happy are you if you can appreciate a smile and forget a frown: - *you will walk on the sunny side of the street.*

Happy are you if you can be kind in understanding the attitudes of others: - *you may be taken for a fool, but this is the price of charity.*

Happy are you if you know when to hold your tongue and smile: - *the Gospel has begun to seep into your heart.*

Blessed are those who think before acting and pray before thinking: - *they will avoid many blunders.*

Above all:

Blessed are those who recognise the Lord in all whom they meet: the light of truth shines in their lives.

They have found true wisdom.

The Four Ages of Man

- When he believes in Father Christmas
- When he no longer believes in Father Christmas
- When he IS Father Christmas,
- When he looks like Father Christmas.

How to lose pounds after Christmas

Someone walked into a Chemist's shop and bought all the slimming aids on the shelf and paid £500.

"How much will I lose?" asked the slimmer.

"Five hundred pounds" said the Chemist.

And some exam howlers!

Q: Use the word 'judicious' in a sentence to show you understand its meaning

A: Hands that judicious can be soft as your face.

Q: What does the word 'benign' mean?

A: Benign is what you will be after you be eight.

Q: What is a turbine?

A: Something an Arab or Sheik wears on his head

Q: What is the Fibula?

A: A small lie.

Q: What does 'varicose' mean?

A: Nearby.

Justice and Peace News

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Peace Sunday - 15th January – All parishes have received information, see Parish Priest or visit Pax Christi website. Message from Benedict XIV is about 'Educating Young People in Justice and Peace'. www.paxchristi.org.uk

Holocaust Memorial Day - Friday 27th January An ecumenical service organised by the Human Trafficking group at the Rivertown Church, High Street (*opp Boots*), Shotton. 7.30pm Prayers, stories, film and refreshments.

28 January to 5 February - Poverty & Homelessness Action Week. The theme is 'Breaking Barriers' - and one of the key barriers we want to break is the growing gap between rich and poor. Visit www.church-poverty.org.uk Have a service and follow the prayer calendar. Also Housing Justice – www.housingjustice.org.uk

16th February - Live Simply Day at Noddfa, Penmaenmawr. How can we live simply in our families and our parishes? 10.30am- 4pm. Films, talk by Ellen Teague, discussions, children's activities. Something for all ages. Ring 01492 623473

Bethlehem, Yesterday and Today

This was the title of one of the talks given by Ann Farr across the Diocese in the last few weeks. Ann is a member of Pax Christi, the Catholic peace organisation, and was an Ecumenical Accompanier, earlier this year. The APPIE programme was created by the World Council of Churches as a response to a cry for help from the Christians in the Holy Land. Her role was to provide support to a small village in the West Bank – the Occupied Territories of Palestine. Having spent two Christmases in Bethlehem, Ann was able to tell us what it is like today. The town is very different from the Christmas card image we have. It has many churches and mosques, and modern buildings such as you would see anywhere. The most shocking aspect is the Separation/Security Wall that surrounds the town and makes any movement in or out, for the residents, very difficult. Israel has built this to protect each side but many people feel that it has put an end to communication. Foreign visitors will have no problem at the checkpoints but locals need special papers to travel out of Bethlehem. Many Muslims and Christians in Bethlehem have not been able to visit Jerusalem, only 6 miles away, for many years. The wall is 8 metres/ 25 feet high, twice the height of the Berlin Wall, and whilst oppressive on the Palestinian side it is almost invisible on the Israeli side due to banking and the planting of trees.

The people feel isolated and forgotten by the International community. Any greeting or message of solidarity and/or stories of peace, especially at this time, would be gratefully received by them. Please e-mail your messages and stories before the 25th of December 2011 (Western Christmas) and/or the 7th of January 2012 (Eastern Christmas) to Pax Christi's partner the Arab Educational Institute at the following address: info@aeicenter.org. The stories will be used in Bethlehem, Palestine and elsewhere in educational and religious settings and published here www.aeicenter.org Visit Pax Christi website for a power point presentation about Bethlehem for children and info about the Advent project (maybe for next year?)

Diocesan Advent Family Day - Great Success

This years Advent Family Day, organised by the Marriage and Family Life Commission took place on Sunday 27th November at Pantasaph. It was attended by over 100 people representing 12 parishes. Adults and children alike enjoyed themselves making an advent wreath, lanterns, decorating biscuits, making tree decorations and making 'sock baby' Jesus in the manger. Stations of the Cross were led by Fr Louis. Bishop Edwin celebrated a joyful family mass and everyone went home warmed by hot dogs and vegetarian hotpot and full of mince pies and cake! To see a report and pictures of the day please visit our website www.celebratingfamilywrexhamdiocese.btck.co.uk and go to the news page.

The Commission would like to thank everyone who helped them to make this day successful.

If you came and enjoyed the day – tell someone!

If you didn't come and wished you had - same time next year!

Are you HARassed, or harASSed?

A quick guide to English pronunciation

A test of your reading skills!

- 1) The bandage was wound around the wound.
- 2) The farm was used to produce produce .
- 3) The dump was so full that it had to refuse more refuse.
- 4) We must polish the Polish furniture.
- 5) He could lead if he would get the lead out.
- 6) The soldier decided to desert his dessert in the desert.
- 7) Since there is no time like the present, he thought it was time to present the present
- 8) A bass was painted on the head of the bass drum.
- 9) When shot at, the dove dove into the bushes.
- 10) I did not object to the object.
- 11) The insurance was invalid for the invalid.
- 12) There was a row among the oarsmen about how to row .
- 13) They were too close to the door to close it.
- 14) The buck does funny things when the does are present.
- 15) A seamstress and a sewer fell down into a sewer pipe.
- 16) To help with planting, the farmer taught his sow to sow.
- 17) The wind was too strong to wind the sail.
- 18) Upon seeing the tear in the painting I shed a tear.
- 19) I had to subject the subject to a series of tests.
- 20) How can I intimate this to my most intimate friend?

And grammatically:

Time flies like an arrow, but fruit flies like bananas!

And if you managed all those, you definitely should volunteer to be a Reader, at Mass!

Attitudes of Prayer

At Christmas the star is a common motif. Often it is displayed as a 'comet' shape, with a tail. But do we realise the significance of the Five-Point Star? It represents Christ, descending into matter, and Man as the Son of God. It therefore became the correct attitude for prayer, rather like Leonardi Da Vinci's 'Vitruvian Man'. One was expected to stand, feet slightly apart, with hands raised, and head erect. That makes the five points.

In the Middle Ages, Mystics taught that only the feet should be upon the earth.

In the Nativity scene, therefore, it is more correct to place a five-point star, rather than a many-pointed star. The five-point star is used in the flag of many nations.

So, from where did the habit of kneeling to pray during Mass come? Is it an English speaking habit or more universal? On the continent, in Europe, kneeling is less common, and congregations stand for the Consecration, and at other times when we in the UK kneel.

In Cathedrals, even in the UK, it is also not always true. At the Papal Mass in Westminster, the Congregation was specifically asked not to kneel. In St Peter's, Rome, kneeling is possible at daily Mass beneath the Cathedra, but not in Pontifical Masses.

Christ is usually portrayed kneeling in the Garden of Gethsemane, and yet the Gospel says 'He went away to pray.'

Which attitude is more conducive to prayer and meditation? Standing, kneeling, or can one pray equally well, seated?

Vacancy

Administrative Assistant to the Diocesan Secretary

An Administrative Assistant is required from January 2012, to provide clerical and administrative support to the Diocesan Secretary. The post is offered initially for one day a week, hours to be agreed with the Diocesan Secretary, on a short-term contract to 31 May 2012.

For an Application Form and Job Description please contact
Cathy Coppack at the Curial Offices,
Bishop's House, Sontley Road, Wrexham LL13 7EW,
Tel: 01978 262726
email diowxm@globalnet.co.uk
(after 4th January 2012)

A little arithmetic puzzle:

Multiply by 2 the number of brothers you have.

Add 3

Multiply the total by 5

Add the number of sisters you have.

Multiply by 10.

Add the number of grand parents still living

Subtract 150

The result will give you:

in the position of hundreds, the number of brothers

in the position of tens, the number of sisters

in the position of units, the number of living grandparents

(eg 432 = 4 brothers, three sisters, and two grandparents living)

(Found in a museum in Toronto)

Dates for Your Diary

Feasts and Celebrations of Christmastide

Saturday 24th December	Christmas Eve, 'Midnight' Mass of the Nativity
Sunday December 25th	The Nativity of the Lord. (Christmas Day)
Monday 26th December	Feast of St Stephen (Boxing Day)
Tuesday 27th December	Feast of St John the Evangelist
Wednesday 28th December	Feast of the Holy Innocents
Friday 29th December	Feast of the Holy Family
Sunday 1st January	Feast of Mary, Mother of God
Friday	6th January (Twelfth Night)
Sunday 8th January	Feast of the Epiphany
Monday 9th January	Feast of the Baptism of the Lord
Sunday 15th January	2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time
18th -25th January	Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity
Wednesday 25th January	Feast of the Conversion of St Paul
Thursday 2nd February	Feast of the Presentation of the Lord (Candlemas)

Bishop Edwin's Engagements

January 2012

11	Marriage & Family Life Commission Meeting, 7.00pm
14/15	Celebrating Masses in Pwllheli Parish
17	Vocations Team meeting, 4.00pm Holywell
21-27	Holiday
28	CAFOD Golden Jubilee Mass, Westminster Cathedral

A Celebration of the Twelve Days of Christmas

in Words and Music

You are invited to S.Mary's Cathedral on Sunday 1st January for a celebration of Christ in Words and Music, Carols and Readings, at 3.00 pm, followed by mulled wine and seasonal sweetmeats.

Dates to Note:

December

Saturday 31st Guild of S.Stephen Diocesan Mass for Altar Servers 12 noon
S.Mary's Cathedral Wrexham

January 2012

18th- 25th Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity

We will all be changed. The Theme for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2012 comes to us from the churches in Poland, who have reflected upon their own experience as a nation, and in particular how, as a nation, they have been changed and transformed by the many upheavals of their history, and sustained by faith. Change is at the heart of our Christian faith, change is at the heart of the ecumenical movement.
www.ctbi.org.uk/weekofprayer

Sunday 15th Peace Day. The theme of this year's Peace Day Message from the Holy Father is "Educating young people in justice and peace." Working for peace and justice is an essential part of the calling of all Christians, young or old, but this year young people especially are asked to consider the opportunities they have to learn about the Gospel call to peace-making and to become more involved in that activity.

Thursday 27th Holocaust Memorial Day.

The Theme this year is 'Speak up Speak out'.

Holocaust Memorial Day provides an opportunity for everyone to learn lessons from the Holocaust, Nazi persecution and subsequent genocides and apply them to the present day to create a safer, better future. On HMD we share the memory of the millions who have been murdered in the Holocaust and subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur in order to challenge hatred and persecution in the UK today.
www.hmd.org.uk

February

Sunday 5th Education Day

7th - 14th Marriage Week 'Three Point Challenge'

Marriage Week UK celebrates the diversity and vibrancy of marriage as the basis for family life in the UK. www.marriage-week.org.uk

Saturday 11th World Day for the Sick

Cycle of Prayer

During Ordinary Time, that is from after Christmas time until Lent we are asked to prayer for these intentions: Peace on Earth; Christian Unity; the Sick and those who Care for them; Students and Teachers; the Unemployed.

The Link

Deadline

The next edition of The Link will appear on the 4th/5th of February. Deadline for contributions is 24th January.

To our contributors -Happy Christmas, and have a good rest.

Thank you for your constant support. Mark