

**The Catholic Churches of  
Saint John the Baptist, Trowbridge  
Saint Bernadette, Westbury  
& Saint Thomas More, Bradford-on-Avon**



**St John the Baptist**  
2 Wingfield Rd  
Trowbridge  
BA14 9EA



**St Bernadette**  
100 West End  
Westbury  
BA13 3JQ



**St Thomas More**  
Market Street  
Bradford-on-Avon  
BA15 1LH

**Fourth Sunday of Advent – 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2024**

**Parish Priest:** Father Richard Elson [richard.elson@cliftondiocese.com](mailto:richard.elson@cliftondiocese.com) 01225 752152

**Parish websites:** [www.stjohnthebaptisttrowbridge.co.uk](http://www.stjohnthebaptisttrowbridge.co.uk)  
[www.together.ourchurchweb.org.uk/bradfordonavon/churches/stthomasmore/](http://www.together.ourchurchweb.org.uk/bradfordonavon/churches/stthomasmore/)

**This Week's Mass Times**

Sat 21 <sup>st</sup> Dec	4pm	St Thomas More's	Fourth Sunday of Advent	<i>People of the Parish Mary Barlow (RIP)</i>
	6pm	St John's		
Sun 22 <sup>nd</sup> Dec	9am	St Bernadette's		<i>Sarah Moffit and family Willy McGinley (RIP)</i>
	10.30am	St John's		
Mon 23 <sup>rd</sup> Dec	<b>No Mass</b>		Weekday of Advent (O Emmanuel)	
Tues 24 <sup>th</sup> Dec	6pm	St John's	Christmas Vigil Mass	<i>Winifred - John David - Marshall Special Intention</i>
	9pm	St Thomas More's	Christmas Mass during the Night	
	11pm	St John's	Christmas Mass during the Night	<i>Thanksgiving People of the Parish Nora and Patrick Matthews (RIP)</i>
Wed 25 <sup>th</sup> Dec	9am	St Bernadette's	Christmas Mass at Dawn	
	10.30am	St John's	Christmas Mass during the Day	
Thurs 26 <sup>th</sup> Dec	12noon	St John's	Feast of Saint Stephen	<i>Special Intention Holy Souls</i>
Fri 27 <sup>th</sup> Dec	9am	St John's	Feast of Saint John the Evangelist	
Sat 28 <sup>th</sup> Dec	4pm	St Thomas More's	The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph	<i>Thomas Lannon (RIP) Thanksgiving</i>
	6pm	St John's		

**Please note that the readings for the Christmas Masses will be for the Vigil, Night, Dawn or Day Mass as indicated above**

Psalm Responses	Vigil	<i>I will sing for ever of your mercies, O Lord.</i>
	Night	<i>Today a Saviour has been born to us; who is Christ the Lord.</i>
	Dawn	<i>Today a light will shine upon us; for the Lord is born for us.</i>
	Day	<i>All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.</i>



**A very Happy and Holy Christmas to all parishioners, family and friends**

**Confessions**

Sat	3.30-3.50pm	St Thomas More's
Sat	5.30-5.50pm	St John's

## **CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM BISHOP BOSCO**

In his first message as Bishop of Clifton, Bishop Bosco talks about the challenges we have all faced both locally and globally this year, but lets us know that the message of Christmas shines brightly; and this message is Hope. As we celebrate this Holy Season, he asks that we also remember our call to be Christ's hands and feet in the world. Whether it's by a small act of love or something bigger, every act of kindness brings us closer to building a community where no one feels forgotten or alone. You can watch the full video message at <https://cliftondio-cese.com/news/bishop-bosco-christmas-message/> Copies of Bishop Bosco's message are available in all of the churches.

## **CHRISTMAS OFFERINGS**

The collection at the Christmas Masses is traditionally given as a personal gift to the priests of the parish. Envelopes for the Christmas Offerings are available from the Church Porches. You can also use the card machines at St John's or the donations page on the Parish Website.

## **CRIB OFFERINGS**

Crib Offerings this year will be for the Friends of the Holy Land. Though Christmas celebrations may be cancelled in Bethlehem, our brothers and sisters there share our hope in Christ, which is very much alive. With your help, we can ensure that hope shines brightly through the remarkable Christians who continue to serve so bravely. Right now, our brothers and sisters are suffering, and they are scared. But we are not powerless, despite the enormity of the devastation we see in our TV news. By supporting this Christmas appeal, you can help our local team to respond quickly and effectively to the unfolding catastrophe.

## **FIRST HOLY COMMUNION PROGRAMME 2025**

Application forms are now available for the First Holy Communion Programme for 2025. Sessions will take place at St John's Parish Centre on Thursday evenings beginning with the first meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> January at 6pm. Parents are asked to attend the first meeting with the children. Full details of the programme will be provided at this meeting. The programme is open to anyone in Year 3 or above. Please return completed application forms to Fr Richard by 6<sup>th</sup> January.

## **MASS INTENTIONS**

The diary for Mass Intentions in 2025 is now open. If you would like a Mass said on a particular date (e.g. a birthday or anniversary), please book this as early as possible. When completing the envelopes for Mass Intentions, please indicate which church, Mass time, and/or date that you would prefer. If these details are not specified, the Mass may be celebrated at another time or in one of the other churches. If a particular date is especially required, please check availability with me. Many thanks. Fr Richard

## **OFFERTORY ENVELOPES FOR 2025 – ST JOHN'S & ST BERNADETTE'S**

These are now available in the church porch for collection. Any parishioner not on the current envelope list, but would like a box of envelopes to donate on a regular basis, please ask Mike Heather 01225 762966 or email [mike284305@btinternet.com](mailto:mike284305@btinternet.com) - your local Gift Aid Secretary!

## **TROWBRIDGE FOOD BANK**

Thank you to all who contribute to the Trowbridge Foodbank Collection each month. The next collection will take place next weekend, 28<sup>th</sup>/29<sup>th</sup> December. Please leave your donated goods in the Church Porch at St. John's and St. Bernadette's.

## **CAR PARKING 10.30 MASS**

Please note, overflow car-park at St. Augustine's is available.

## **CELEBRATING THE JUBILEE YEAR 2025**

Following two years of preparation, which have focused on Vatican II and Prayer we are now invited to embark on a Jubilee Year as Pilgrims of Hope. This Jubilee Year reminds us of the 'jubilee' of Israel when the land was rested, and debts were to be cancelled, and God called people to be reconciled with one another and importantly with God's self. We, too, are called to be reconciled with one another, to proclaim God's abundant mercy and the Good News of Jesus Christ. Bishop Bosco will formally open the Jubilee Year in the diocese at the 11.15am Mass at Clifton Cathedral on 29<sup>th</sup> December. The Cathedral will be open every day for Pilgrims to come and experience the 'Pilgrims' Way, within the Cathedral itself. This prayerful journey around the Cathedral will invite us to pray for hope in our lives and in our world. On 5<sup>th</sup> April, 'Embracing the Mercy of God' will be an opportunity for the diocese to come together to celebrate the great Sacrament of Hope which we have been given in the form of Reconciliation. Our diocesan day on 19<sup>th</sup> July will be a further opportunity for us to gather as a community to consider how we take this message of Hope to the world with activities for children and young people, we hope that many people will make the pilgrimage to Bristol for this joyful gathering.

## **EPIPHANY BLESSING OF HOMES**

It is traditional for parish priests to bless chalk on the Feast of the Epiphany for parish families, so that they may mark the names of the three Magi over their doors, in blessing the home as a witness of their faith and protection against evil. With chalk, you write an inscription on the inside lintel above the front door. The series of numbers, letters, and crosses changes only slightly from year to year. For example, at the start of the year 2025, the line read as follows: 20+C+M+B+25. The four digits designating the New Year appear at the beginning and end of the line. Because Epiphany comes so near the beginning of the New Year, the numbers represent an annual renewal of God's blessing. The letters have two meanings. They are the initials of the traditional names of the Magi: Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar. They also abbreviate the Latin words *Christus mansionem benedicat*, "May Christ bless the house." The letters recall the day on which the inscription is made, as well as the purpose of blessing. The crosses represent Christ, whom we invoke, and the saintliness of the Magi. The inscription is made above the front door, so that all who enter and depart this year may enjoy God's blessing. The month of January still bears the name of the Roman god Janus, the doorkeeper of heaven and patron of the beginning and end of things. This blessing adds a Christian dimension to the traditional observance of the first month. The inscription is made of chalk, a product of clay, which recalls the human nature taken by God's eternal Word in this holy season. If you want to bless your home this Epiphany, there will be a copy of a prayer of blessing available, along with blessed chalk, in all churches.

## **DIOCESAN DIRECTORIES AND LITURGICAL DIARIES**

The Diocesan Directories (£6) and Liturgical Diaries (£6.50) for 2025 are now available from all of the churches.

## **PARISH GIVING**

There are many ways you can give a donation to Parish Funds: with a monthly standing order (Ask Father Richard for a form), by using the Dona Card Reader in the Church Porch at St. John's, by a cash donation during the collections, or by using this QR Code. Thank you for your generosity.

