



OUR LADY & ST DOMINIC

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Sunday 1st January 2012 – Mary, Mother of God

A Happy New Year to all the members of this parish community and to your families. May God bestow on you his peace and love in 2012.

Thank you to all who sent me Christmas Cards, Greetings and Gifts and show me so much support and kindness throughout the year.

Thank you to all who have helped with the preparations for the Liturgical and Social Celebrations for Advent and Christmas.

A special thank you to the Choristers and Musicians; Readers and Eucharistic Ministers; Welcomers and Altar-Servers; Young Church Leaders; Children's Christmas Mass Leaders; Flower arrangers, and Church & Hall decorators and Church Cleaners. And if I have omitted anyone please accept my apologies and thanks.

Fr Tony

Sunday 1st – New Year's Day

+ **Mass Times** – Today at 8.30 and 10.00am. No Evening Mass

+ **Baptism** – We welcome James Lovett, son of Robert and Caroline, as he is baptised into Christ's family

Wednesday 4th

+ **Funeral Mass** – at 10.00am for Mary Travers, followed by burial at Holy Trinity Cemetery, Hawley

Sunday 8th – The Epiphany

+ **Young Church** – at the 10.00am Mass

+ **Baptism** – we welcome Daniel Davies, son of William and Emma, as he is baptised into Christ's family

+ **Society for the Protection of Unborn Children** – appeal and special collection at all Masses

Mass Times & Intentions – 31st December to 8th January

Saturday 31 st		17.30	[Vergen Anthony RIP]
Sunday 1 st	Mary, Mother of God	08.30	[Spooner Family RIP]
		10.00	[Neil Watts RIP]

Tuesday 3 rd		09.15	[Mary Mulligan RIP]
Wednesday 4 th	Funeral Mass	10.00	[Mary Travers RIP]
Thursday 5 th		09.15	[Senior Parishioners Club]
Friday 6 th		09.15	[Diaz/Pereira Family RIP]
Saturday 7 th		17.30	[Eileen Cleere RIP]
Sunday 8 th	Epiphany of the Lord	08.30	[Grace Family RIP]
		10.00	[Celia/Tina Halliwell RIP]
		17.30	[Teresa Clarke]

BETHLEHEM CHRISTMAS GIFT – in aid of Bethlehem University and the Salesian School and Bakery, which provides needy families with daily bread. Contributions placed in the collection box at the back of church until the Feast of the Epiphany will be our gift to the Christian and Moslem Palestinians of Bethlehem. The sum raised at present is £965.00

Children's Party – Sunday 14th January from 12.00 to 2.00 pm. Meet Fez the jester and have tea with us. All children welcome at £5.00 per head. Booking necessary. Fill in forms found in the Church Entrance

SAFEGUARDING – a Child protection and Vulnerable Adults Training Session will be held on Saturday 21st January at Our Lady & St Dominic Hall. Child Protection from 10.00am to 12.30pm - Vulnerable Adults from 1.30 to 4.00pm. It is important that all who have not done a training session book a place

ST BERNADETTE PRIMARY SCHOOL - Children born between 1st September 2007 and 31st August 2008 need to apply for a school place by Sunday 15th January 2012. You should apply online, at www.hants.gov.uk/admissions. Also contact the school for a "Supplementary Form". School Telephone Number is 01252 548123

RED BOX HOLDERS –Your Missio Calendar for 2012 can be collected from the box in the church entrance

CHRISTMAS CARDS – Please check the tray provided in the church entrance, and take your cards home with you. Any cards left in the tray on the 8th of January will be recycled



PARISH LUCKY CLUB -

Results of the December & Grand Christmas Draws were respectively:
1: £73.00 - Mrs. C. Knight / 2: £29.20 - Mrs. A. McGeown / 3: £14.60 - Mr. B. Hayes // 1: £216.00 - Mrs. A. Gaynor / 2: £86.45 - Mrs. C. Mulligan / 3: £43.25 - Mr. R. Halliwell

Congratulations to our prize-winners and thank you to all members for your support. A cheque for £438.00 was presented to the parish towards the building fund which makes a grand total of £1726.50 for the whole year. We are still keen to recruit new members to our monthly Draw as during the last year we have lost several of our faithful members.

If you are interested please place your money (£1/no.) in one of the special envelopes along with your name and contact details on one of the application forms located in the Church Entrance Hall under the Lucky Club box. January Draw will take place on Sunday, January 18th after the 10.00 Mass. If you have any queries please phone Ray Harden (545742) or Peter Attridge (655653)

SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION – Young people, who are at least 13 years of age by the 31st of August 2011, are invited to take part in the parish preparation. Please fill in the form found in the church entrance hall

PARISH DIARIES 2012 – The new Parish Diaries are in the Church Entrance. These Diaries are a gift from the parish priest. However if you would like to leave a donation in the Bethlehem Box it will be appreciated. Thank you

Sunday Mass Readings

01.01.12 – Mary, Mother of God

Numbers 6:22-27 / Psalm 66 / Galatians 4:4-7 / Luke 2:16-21

08.01.12 – Epiphany of the Lord

Isaiah 60:1-6 / Psalm 71 / Ephesians 3:2-3.5-6 / Matthew 2:1-12

Sunday, 1 January 2012 - Luke 2:16-21

1: The story tells us that the shepherds helped Mary to realise the significance of the child born to her. She treasured their words and pondered their meaning. Who have been the people who have helped you to understand the meaning of significant events in your life? Remember them gratefully.

Meaning and Happiness by Ronald Rolheiser

Am I happy? Is my life a happy one? Am I happy inside my marriage? Am I happy with my family? Am I happy in my job? Am I happy with my church? Am I happy inside my own skin?

Are these good questions to ask ourselves? No. They're questions with which to torture ourselves. When we face our lives honestly this kind of question about happiness is more likely to bring tears to our eyes than solace to our souls because, no matter how well our lives are going, none of us live perfectly fulfilled lives. Always there are unfulfilled dreams. Always there are areas of frustration. Always there are tensions. Always there are deeper hungers that are being stifled. And always, as Karl Rahner so poignantly puts it, we are suffering the torment of the insufficiency of everything attainable as we are learning that here in this life there is no finished symphony. Are lives always lived in quiet desperation. A lot of times it is not easy to feel happy.

But we are asking the wrong questions. The question should not be: Am I happy? Rather the questions should be: Is my life meaningful? Is there meaning in my life? Is there meaning in my marriage? Is there meaning in my family? Is there meaning in my job? Is there meaning inside my church? We need to ask the deep questions about our lives in terms of meaning rather than in terms of happiness because, for the most part, we have a false, over-idealized, and unrealistic concept of happiness.

We tend to equate happiness with two things, pleasure and lack of tension. Hence we fantasize that for us to be happy we would need to be in a situation within which we would be free of all the tensions that normally flood into our lives from: pressure, tiredness, interpersonal friction, physical pain, financial worry, disappointment in our jobs, frustration with our churches, frustration with our favourite sports teams, and every other headache and heartache that can appear. Happiness, as it is superficially conceived of, means perfect health, perfectly fulfilled relationships, a perfect job, no anxiety or tension in life, no disappointments, and the time and money to enjoy the good life.

But that isn't what constitutes happiness. Meaning is what constitutes happiness and meaning isn't contingent upon pain and tension being absent from our lives: Imagine if someone had come up to Jesus as he was dying on the cross and asked him the question: Are you happy up there? His answer, I am sure, would have been unequivocal: "No! And today in particular I am not happy!" However, the perspective is quite different if, while on the cross, Jesus would have been asked this question: "Is there meaning in what you are doing up there?" There can be deep meaning in something even if there isn't happiness in the way we superficially conceive of that.

We more easily grasp this when we reflect back on various periods of our lives. Looking back, from the perspective of where we are today, we see that sometimes certain periods of our lives that were fraught with all kinds of struggles and within which had to make do with very little were indeed very happy times. We look back on them now with fondness and warmth. They were meaningful times and our present perspective washes back through time and purges the pain and highlights the joy. Conversely, we can also look back on certain periods of our lives when there may have been pleasure in our lives but that phase of our lives now appears clearly as an unhappy time. We look back at it with a certain heaviness and regret. What seemed like light then seems like a time of darkness now.

C.S. Lewis taught that happiness and unhappiness colour backwards: If our lives end up happy, we realize that we have always been happy even through the trying times, just as if our lives end up unhappy we realize that we have always been unhappy, even during the pleasurable periods of our lives. Where we end up ultimately in terms of meaning will determine whether our lives have been happy or unhappy. Many people, including Jesus, suffered great pain but lived happy lives. Sadly, the reverse is also true. Happiness has a lot more to do with meaning than with pleasure.

In his autobiography, *Surprised by Joy*, C. S. Lewis tells his readers that his journey to Christianity was not an easy one. By his own admission, he was "the most reluctant convert in the history of Christendom." But one of the things that ultimately brought him around to the Christianity was precisely the realization that meaning trumps our normal conception of happiness. He came to understand, he writes, that the harshness of God is kinder than the softness of man and God's compulsion is our liberation.

Money can't buy happiness. It can buy pleasure, but, as life itself eventually teaches us, pleasure is not necessarily happiness.

