



# Parish Newsletter

St Fillan's, King St, Newport-on-Tay  
Our Lady Star of the Sea, Queen St, Tayport



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## The Nativity of the Lord 25<sup>th</sup> December 2022

**Christ has been born for us: come, let us adore.** Year: A(I). Psalm week: 1. Liturgical Colour: White or Gold.

First reading: *Vigil: Isaiah 62:1-5. The bridegroom rejoices in his bride. Christmas Day: Isaiah 52:7-10 Rejoice, for the Lord is consoling his people.*  
Responsorial Psalm: *Vigil: Ps 88. I will sing forever of your love, O Lord. Christmas Day: Ps 97 All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God*  
Second reading: *Vigil: Acts 13: 16-17. 22-25. Paul's witness to Christ, the Son of David. Christmas Day: Hebrews 1:1-6 God has spoken to us through his Son*  
Gospel: *Vigil: Matthew 1:1-25. The ancestry and birth of Jesus Christ, the son of David. Christmas Day: John 1:1-18 The Word was made flesh and lived with us*

### HOLY MASS TIMES

**Our Lady Star of the Sea: Saturday Vigil 5pm,  
Monday and Friday 10am.**

**St Fillan's: Sunday 10:15am,  
Wednesday and Thursday 10am.**

### Christmas Mass Times

Vigil Mass of the Nativity, Our Lady Star of the Sea  
**Saturday 24 December, 7pm (Carols from 6.30pm)**

Christmas Morning Mass, St Fillan's  
**Christmas Day, 10.15am**

### Mgr. Pat's Corner

I didn't know until recently that the silver tinsel on a Christmas tree represents a spider's web. In some countries a tinsel spider is also added to the tree decorations as a symbol of hope and prosperity for the future.

According to a Polish legend, popular throughout Eastern Europe, an old spider who knew her life was coming to an end spent her final days in the stable in Bethlehem creating her greatest masterpiece of web-making - which then became a blanket for the Baby Jesus on Christmas Day.

So many threads in the web of our lives have been damaged or even destroyed in recent years, for many reasons: the pandemic, the cost-of-living crisis, the death of a loved one, the war in Ukraine and the wider threat to world peace. But Christmas Day with its message of new life, and its declaration that God-is-with-us always, is a time to renew our hope and to rebuild the web of courage and trust with the help of the stories of our faith which have strengthened and upheld generations of Christians for over 2000 years.

As we reach out to those suffering at this time of the year; as we work together to restore the web of God's creation, and to renew the earth, our common home, let us pray to God who is the Lord of all hopefulness, peace and joy.

May we never forget St. Paul's words to the Christians at Corinth: 'There are 3 things that last: faith, hope and love - and the greatest of these is love'!

May our faith in the Birth of the Christ Child renew our hope and strengthen us in that web of love in which God seeks to draw us ever closer to him.

Wishing you all a very Happy and Peaceful Christmas, and good health in 2023!

**Mgr Pat**

**CHRISTMAS GREETINGS WITH DONATIONS TO SHELTER SCOTLAND** Every 18 minutes a household becomes homeless in Scotland; 14,372 children were made homeless in Scotland last year. **Shelter Scotland** gives people struggling with bad housing or homelessness the help they need, through advice, support and legal services [<https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/>].

The invitation to send a greeting via the newsletter, WhatsApp pages and the parish website, making a donation to Shelter Scotland rather than sending cards, ran over the last couple of weeks. The collected greetings will be posted on WhatsApp and the website, and will also appear on the notice boards at the back of the churches.

The sum raised will appear in the New Year newsletter. **Please remember that you can donate to Shelter at any time.**

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/NewportTayportCatholic/](http://www.facebook.com/NewportTayportCatholic/) **Parish WhatsApp:** 07484 170812.

**Hospital Chaplaincy:** Ninewells, Victoria and Roxburghe House. Please call the duty chaplain on 07821 624124

**Special Prayers:** We pray for those who have died recently; for those who are sick and for those whose anniversaries fall at this time, especially Thomas Fransen McMahon. We pray for those struggling to cope with difficulties in their lives. We pray especially for peace, for the victims of war or natural disasters and for persecuted Christians throughout the world.

**To request prayers in the Newsletter please contact Mgr. Pat or Fr Jude.**

### Saints and Feastsdays

**Monday 26 December: St Stephen, Martyr.** His name first appears in the Acts of the Apostles when the appointment of the first deacons is recorded (Acts 6:5). Dissatisfaction concerning the distribution of alms from the community's fund having arisen in the Church, seven men were selected and specially ordained by the Apostles to take care of the temporal relief of the poorer members. Of these seven, Stephen, is the first mentioned and the best known, although we know little enough of him. His name is Greek, suggesting that he was a Hellenist, a Jew born abroad and speaking Greek as his native tongue. His ministry as deacon appears to have been mostly among the Hellenist converts with whom the Apostles were at first less familiar; and the fact that the opposition he met with sprang up in the synagogues of the "Libertines" (probably the children of Jews taken captive to Rome by Pompey in 63 B.C. and freed hence the name *Libertini*), and "of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of them that were of Cilicia and Asia" shows that he usually preached among the Hellenist Jews. He appears to have been eminently suited for this work - the Church had, by selecting him for a deacon, publicly acknowledged him as a man "of good reputation, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom" (Acts 6:3). He is said to have possessed uncommon oratorical powers and unimpeachable logic, so much so that to his arguments replete with the Divine energy of the Scriptural authorities God added the weight of "great wonders and signs" (vi, 8). Great as was the efficacy of "the wisdom and the spirit that spoke" (vi, 10), still it could not bend the minds of the unwilling; to these the forceful preacher was considered an enemy. Falling foul of the "Libertine" grouping, he was eventually brought before the Jewish religious authorities. His eloquent defence (almost the whole of Acts 7 is taken up with his speech) is said to have so confounded his enemies that they arranged for false testimony, to the effect that he had blasphemed against God and the prophets to be presented. This sufficed to enrage the council and Stephen was dragged out of Jerusalem and stoned near the Damascus Gate, thus becoming Christianity's first martyr. Those involved in his killing laid their cloaks at the feet of a young man named Saul of Tarsus – but that is another story!

**Tuesday 27 December: St John, Apostle, Evangelist.** James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were nicknamed by Jesus "the sons of thunder." John is involved in many of the central events of Jesus' life, including the Transfiguration, the Crucifixion, and the discovery of the Resurrection. He is "the disciple whom Jesus loved" and the one to whom he confided the care of his mother Mary. He is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles; later he was exiled to the island of Patmos. He is said to have died at Ephesus. He is the author of a Gospel, three Epistles, and the Apocalypse (Revelation).

**Wednesday 28 December: The Holy Innocents, Martyrs.** These are the children who were slaughtered at the orders of King Herod, who hoped that by killing every boy born in Bethlehem at the same time as Jesus, he would succeed in killing the new-born King of the Jews. There was nothing about those baby boys that made them deserve death – indeed, so passive are they that some people find it hard to understand how they can share the title of "martyr" with people like St Stephen, who insisted on preaching the truth until his hearers stoned him for it, or St Thomas Becket (commemorated on 29 December), who insisted on living the truth until his king had him killed because of it. Unlike Stephen and Thomas, there was no voluntary act of theirs that we can see as making the difference between being martyred and not being martyred. In our rational human terms these children are a puzzle, and that is one reason why God has inspired the Church to celebrate this very feast – to show us how inadequate our seemingly rational, worldly-wise thoughts are. As he reminds us again and again throughout salvation history, his thoughts are *not* our thoughts. Babies may not rank high on the scale as far as our human calculus is concerned; but then neither do sparrows, and yet God has told us that God sees and counts every one of those. The Holy Innocents can stand, therefore, for the "unimportant" and "unnecessary" pawns, child and adult alike, that permeate the whole of human history, the ones who can be sacrificed for some greater cause because they "don't really matter"; the eggs that were broken to make an omelette... or even broken to make nothing at all. There are plenty of them, one way or another. The feast of the Holy Innocents reminds us that in God's eyes (that is, according to the true value of things), *no-one* is unimportant, *no-one* is unnecessary, *no-one* "doesn't really matter." However meaningless their lives and deaths may seem to us, they shine glorious in heaven.

### **Solemn Midnight Mass of Christmas**

Preceded by a carol service, the Midnight Mass will be celebrated in **St Andrew's Cathedral** from **11.30pm** on Saturday, 24 December.

### Excerpt from a Papal interview

Among the many questions posed to him during an interview for the Spanish daily ABC, the Holy Father was asked what gift he would like for Christmas. He responded "*Peace in the world. How many wars there are in the world! The war in Ukraine touches us more closely, but we also think of Myanmar, Yemen, Syria, where fighting has continued for thirteen years...*" Let us join Pope Francis in praying that the gifts of common sense and the spirit of reconciliation be showered upon the world this Christmas

**Please remember THE FOOD BANK.** Non-perishable foods and toiletries can be left at the back of the churches or at local collection points: the Co-op in Tayport, Scotmid in Newport and Spar in Wormit. Financial donations also welcome.

The Taybridgehead Foodbank is in need of volunteers, particularly in the Tayport area. If you are willing and able to volunteer some of your time to help the Foodbank, please get in touch by calling 07840 957039 or through the 'Contact Us' link on their website. <https://www.taybridgeheadfoodbank.org.uk/>

**THE SUNDAY CAFÉ.** All welcome to stay after Sunday Mass for coffee/tea and a chance to chat with fellow parishioners. DONATIONS TO COVER COSTS ARE APPRECIATED. If you would like to help occasionally, please let us know at the Sunday Cafe.