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**Church Hall/ Upper Room Bookings:** Contact Ewa on Thurs or Fri morning via [parish.stedwardkettering@northamptondiocese.org](mailto:parish.stedwardkettering@northamptondiocese.org) or 01536 512497

**Parish Priest:** Fr. Gregory Marchwiński

**Assistant Priest:** Fr. Elvis Jose

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**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent / Christmas Eve**

**24<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

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### **MASS TIMES AT ST. EDWARD'S, KETTERING**

- Tuesday - 10.00 am
- Wednesday - 10.00 am
- Thursday - 7.00 pm (*This evening Mass is with music on screen*)
- Friday - 7.00 pm
- Saturday Vigil Mass - 6.30 pm ***After Mass - confession on request***
- Sunday Early Mass - 8.30 am
- Sunday Family Mass - 10.30 am

### **MASS TIMES AT BURTON LATIMER**

The **1st** and **3rd** Sunday of every month - **9.00 am**

### **MASS TIMES AT DESBOROUGH**

The **2nd** and **4th** Sunday of every month - **9.00 am**

### **MASS TIMES AT ROTHWELL**

The **1st** and **3rd** Sunday of every month - **12.15 pm**

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*For the 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of the month, please check the newsletter*

## **CHRISTMAS 2023**



The wonder of Christmas is a wonder that is echoed in so many different ways: in the carols we might sing; in the decorations we might put up in our homes; to catch the joy that spreads through the world from the birth of Jesus Christ.

It is his coming into the world as the Word of God in our flesh that suddenly opens new horizons for us. It opens a horizon of what it means to be truly human, made in God's image and likeness. In the birth of Jesus, in his life, in his dying and in his rising again, there before us are the real deep truths of what it is to be a son and a daughter of God.

And what's asked of us? A bit of humility. In Bethlehem, the door into the Church of the Nativity is remarkably small and low. Tall people have to stoop to enter. Apparently, it was built like that to stop anyone entering the church riding a horse. We have to come down off every high horse that we possess, whether it's our opinions, our grudges or our pride, in order to meet the infant King. Only the humble of heart are ready to greet him, who alone can carry our burdens and share with us the fullness of life.

This coming into the world of our Saviour is this crucial moment from which flow the joy, the peace, the compassion, the forgiveness that we try to embody. Let us try to make Christmas a family festival of the birth of Jesus, a time when faith finds fresh expression in our homes. Let us wish each other a very happy Christmas.

**May God bless you this Christmas and give you the fullness of joy in the birth of our Saviour.**

**Fr Gregory, Fr Elvis and Canon John**

## THIS WEEK'S INTENTIONS



**Saturday**     **06.30 pm** - Nuala Hammond RIP / - for the release of Mazi Nnamdi Kano

**Sunday**        **08.30 am** - Nadia Swierzbinski RIP 1<sup>st</sup> anniversary

**10.30 am** - For the Parish / - Mgr Janusz Śniegocki RIP

## CHRISTMAS EVE

**Sunday**        **04.00 pm** - / **Liturgy for children** / - For the Parish

**06.00 pm** - / **Burton Latimer** / - Lynn Webster RIP

**06.00 pm** - / **Rothwell** / - For the Parish

*08.00 pm - Christmas Carols*

**08.30 pm** - Mgr Janusz Śniegocki RIP / - For the Parish

## CHRISTMAS DAY

**Monday**       **08.30 am** - Souls in Purgatory / - For the Parish

**09.00 am** - / **Desborough** / - Michael Dowler RIP

**10.30 am** - Lally, Fitzmaurice, Hunt and Horan

and deceased family members / - Marilyn Hinson RIP

**Tuesday**       **09.30 am** - ***Exposition and Adoration***

**10.00 am** - Mgr Janusz Śniegocki RIP

**Wednesday**   **10.00 am** - Maureen Davies RIP

**Thursday**       **07.00 pm** - Valentine Tay RIP

**Friday**          **06.30 pm** - ***Adoration and Benediction***

**07.00 pm** - George Nicholas RIP / - John Descelles RIP 5<sup>th</sup> anniv.

**Saturday**       **06.30 pm** - Packie Kiernan RIP /

- Irena and Tomasz Nalepa remembrance of wedding anniv.

**Sunday**        **08.30 am** - Teresa and John Antill, Saunders,  
Mannion and Blackman family RIP

**10.30 am** - Eileen and William McNulty RIP / - June Noone 80<sup>th</sup> birthday

## CONFESSIONS AT ST EDWARD'S



### Confessions at St Edward's are on Saturdays after Vigil Mass which is at 6.30 pm.

You can always request confession before or after any weekday Mass.

“The first step we must take to build the Kingdom of God on earth is to rediscover and appreciate the importance of the sacrament of confession, which will allow us to appreciate the sacrament of the Eucharist. *We cannot appreciate the Eucharist while removing the sacrament of Confession from our spiritual life*”. - Fr Gregory

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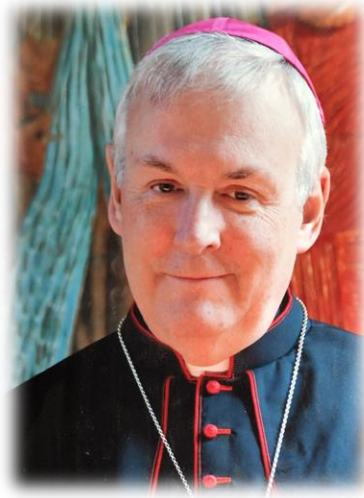
### PLEASE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO HAVE DIED



- + **Gordon Edwards** - His funeral will be held at the Crematorium on Thursday,  
**4<sup>th</sup> January at 1 pm.**
- + **Joan Murphy** - Her funeral will be held at the Crematorium on Friday,  
**5<sup>th</sup> January.**
- + **Mary Ellen Roberts** - Her funeral will be held at St Edward's on Monday,  
**8<sup>th</sup> January at 11.30 am.**

*In our prayers, let us remember our deceased parishioners, family members and friends. Let us especially remember those who have recently passed away.*

## **BISHOP DAVID'S MESSAGE FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**



***To my dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,***

On this Christmas Eve, our season of advent is nearly completed, now we are going to think about the theme of Love. We have reflected over the weeks on hope, joy and peace, and now we are going to think about love. That single English word has so many meanings and in the Greek Language, there are many words for love. As always, with our themes during this advent, we can only begin to comprehend the meaning of Love when we think about God's love for us. That is agape love, it is the complete and perfect love that is self-giving. 'Greater love has no one', Jesus tells us, 'than that they would lay down their lives for their friends' and we must be invited into that circle of the blessed Trinity's love for all people. I love the words that we will hear at the beginning of the reading in tonight's Mass during the night. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light and those who live in the land of deep shadow a light has shone. Love shines a light upon our world in its darkness and shadow, Love brings to birth the mystery of God's great sacrifice for us. God's word became flesh and dwelt amongst us and we saw that light in Jesus. We are invited to undertake our own personal journey of Love into the heart of Christ. Our Love is not to be something which is limited just to a few, those we get along with, those we feel obliged to care for, and our love for ourselves. All these things are important, but above all, there should be in our hearts that great deep love for what God has done for me, for us, and for our world. There's no doubt about it, that our world is crying out parched for Love, and these days of advent we have been preparing for the birth of Love in Bethlehem. We make our own pilgrimage in love to the King of Love, and my prayer for you and your families is that you will experience a renewed Love of what God has done for us and a renewed Love for each other. Life's too short. Let's put aside all those arguments and disagreements and resentments that we have. Let's do what we can to build a world that is built upon love.

***Bishop David Oakley  
Bishop of Northampton***



## GIFT VOUCHER FOR CHRISTMAS



Christmas is finally here! It is a time to relax, reflect and enjoy family and friends. It is a time to share gifts of love. It is the one day of the year when, at least in our part of the world, "peace on earth, good will to all people" can seem to be a reality. Let us not forget in our prayers those areas of the world where that reality is impossible.

But is this the reason the Son of God came to live among us? Is this the reason we celebrate the holiday? The gospel writer John had a grander picture than the warm feelings that mistletoe and tinsel evoke. The reality behind Christmas can be overwhelming. God was born as a poor Jewish peasant over two millennia ago and the effects of that history changing event are still with us. It is more than the birth of Jesus. It is a *celebration of God with us*. It is the realisation that God's love and faithfulness dwells among us. It is a sign that we are to carry that love and faithfulness to each other.

If there is one thing that takes the edge off that celebration, it's the pressure of the consumer culture (on TV ads, in shops & internet) to give better, more unique presents to an increasing number of people. No matter how much we criticise the materialistic values that dominate Christmas, every year we can get pulled in.

So, what about this idea for a way of not getting quite as sucked in this year? Instead of giving so many material presents, we might give gifts of service and affirmation. We might undertake to write a letter to family members telling them what we love and appreciate about them. We could include a 'gift voucher' which might be a pledge to do some babysitting, or to take an extra turn at the washing up, or to pray



every day for a week for a special need. As we rack our brains thinking about what to put in our gift vouchers, we may well appreciate what it is to be truly other-centred in our giving. Not giving the gift *we would most like to receive* but thinking about what the receiver would most appreciate.

We might substitute some of the hours we spend in the shops, or online at Amazon, with time instead in quiet reflection thinking about how much each person means in our lives. In this simple act we may come to feel a heightened awareness of the preciousness of each family member and friend, especially useful if we need to lay our pride aside and say sorry too.



## THE FIRST MARTYR



In celebrating the birth of our Saviour, we were full of joy and expectation. But suddenly on Boxing (St Stephen's) Day the atmosphere has turned sombre.

According to the Acts of the Apostles, St. Stephen was a deacon in the early Church at Jerusalem and was appointed by the Apostles to bring about the distribution of food to the poor. He performed many miracles but he also angered members of various synagogues by his teachings as a follower of Christ. Accused of blasphemy at his trial, he denounced the Jewish authorities and they had become enraged with him. They judged that St. Stephen should be stoned to death. Weakened from the stone bombardment and filled with the power and spirit of God, Stephen looked up intently to heaven and saw Jesus at the right hand of God. St Stephen, the first Martyr, even prayed for his persecutors as he lay dying. Saul of Tarsus was one of them, he was guarding the cloaks of the stone-throwers and fully approved of their actions. We know this man was later converted to the faith and became the great missionary St Paul. The writer of the Acts of the Apostles (St. Luke) spent some time journeying with St. Paul and so his account of these events can be taken as more or less how Paul had witnessed it.

But why does the Church commemorate the gruesome stoning to death of St Stephen so soon after the celebration of the Nativity of Christ? The intention here is not to demote Christmas, but to manifest more clearly an important meaning of the Christmas celebration - that Christmas should essentially renew us in becoming a true disciple of Christ...and a true disciple ought to tread the way of the cross – “If any want to be my disciple, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me” (Lk 9: 23). Christmas becomes a true reality when Jesus is born in our hearts... St Stephen experienced the joy of having Christ born in His life. We might reflect on whether we today experience Christmas in a similar way that transforms and makes us authentic disciples, discovering the true and genuine meaning of Christmas in our lives!



St Stephen is also patron saint of altar servers. He would have seen the warmth and compassion Jesus showed to those He healed and witnessed His desire to help others. It was these characteristics that inspired Stephen to reach out and help those in need. He would also have been aware of the time Jesus spent in prayer and how that prayer inspired him. This is why Altar Servers are important. They bring reverence and dignity to our prayer celebrations - most especially the Eucharist. Let us ask Jesus to open our hearts like St Stephen *to help the vulnerable, the sick, those unemployed, those suffering domestic violence or torture because of their faith.*

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### **SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION FOR CHILDREN ATTENDING NON-CATHOLIC SCHOOLS, AND FIRST HOLY COMMUNION**



Registration for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Holy Communion will take place on **Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 9 am**, in the Parish Hall. Children must be in year 3 or older.

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### **SEMINARIAN RENVER IN THE PARISH**



In January, we will be hosting a seminarian, who started his seminary formation this year at the Royal English College in Valladolid in Spain. His name is **Renver** and his family is originally from the Philippines, although they are now living in Luton. I am sure you will all make him feel welcome.

## COFFEE MORNINGS



The next **Wednesday Coffee Morning** will be run by **The Burton Latimer Community** after 10.00 am Mass on **3<sup>rd</sup> January**.

## COFFEE MORNINGS 2024

On **3<sup>rd</sup> January** - **The Burton Latimer Community**

On **7<sup>th</sup> February** - **The Desborough Community**

On **6<sup>th</sup> March** - **The Rothwell Community**

On **3<sup>rd</sup> April** - **Legion of Mary**

***Any funds raised will go to the communities for flowers and other necessities.***

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## A NEW CARD READER



Parishioners regularly ask me about the possibility of donating to the Parish via credit/debit cards. The reason for this is that we carry much less cash on us, and it would be more convenient for some parishioners to support the Parish in this way. To give people this opportunity, we will install a Donation Station with a card reader at St Edward's Church. This is initially on a 3 months trial, to see how helpful and successful it will be. This device will cost the Parish £15 per month to rent. As always, I thank you for your generosity and please feel free to speak to me if you have questions or concerns regarding the security and use of this reader. Once we have a sim card the 'dona' station can be activated and it will stand next to the statue of the Sacred Heart.

## AN INITIATIVE FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE PARISH



*Youth Group at St Edward's in 1990*

Our Parish is very blessed with a number of groups and societies. However, most of them are for adults. We are hoping to launch a specific group for our young people on Friday, **5<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 6.30 pm until 8.00 pm**. I want this to be a fun time with games, competitions, art work, and there will be always something delicious to eat. The main goal of these meetings would be to learn more about our Faith, to build a strong relationship with God and to make friendships with other young people, which could last a lifetime. Initially, these meetings will be held on the first Friday of the month in the parish hall. They will be open for those who are between 12 - 17 years. If these meetings are successful, we might organise days away. My long-term aim is that as these young people mature, we will be able to set up a group for young adults. I ask all parents to support this initiative and encourage their children to attend our Parish Youth Group.

## AN IMPORTANT UPDATE

If you would like your son or daughter to take part in youth group activities, please collect a registration form at the sacristy before or after any Mass. We can also email you a form if you wish, so you can print it off and fill it in.





## **A Lifeline for Marriage!**

**Do you feel lost, alone or bored in your marriage?**

**Has your marriage become stressed, unloving, cold?**

**Do you argue often?**

**Do you want to improve your communication?**

**Have you separated, divorced, or are you thinking about it?**

**Do you want to try again?**

The **Retrouvaille** programme may be just what you need!

**The next programme commences with a virtual weekend**

**8-11 February 2024**

**The following programme commences with a face to face weekend in Welwyn Garden City**

**14-16 June 2024**

**For more information phone or text: 07887 296983 or 07973 380443**

Email: [retrouvailleukinfo@gmail.com](mailto:retrouvailleukinfo@gmail.com)

Website: [www.retrouvaille.org.uk](http://www.retrouvaille.org.uk)

Complete confidentiality assured

## CONFLICT IN THE MIDDLE EAST - CAFOD



You will be aware of the terrible conflict in Israel and Gaza. It is easy to feel helpless from such a distance. CAFOD have produced three ways we can respond; prayer, donating and sending a message to our Foreign Secretary. Find out more here:

<https://cafod.org.uk/news/emergencies-news/israeli-palestinian-crisis-how-you-can-help>

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## BAPTISMAL PREPARATION



If you would like your child to be baptised, please contact Fr Gregory. Parents who would like their children to be baptised are invited to attend Baptismal Preparation on the first Monday of the month at **7 pm** at St Edward's Church. The next meeting will be on Monday, **8<sup>th</sup> January 2024**.

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## A PLACE OF CALM



**Dear Parents of our youngest children**, we realise how difficult it is for you when your children get 'lively' or 'upset'. Therefore, we invite you to take them upstairs to the organ loft, which is above the sacristy. It is a safe place with a triple sound-proof window overlooking the altar. There is a speaker up there, so you will be able to take an active part in the Mass and your children will become calm and comfortable. Please take care on the stone steps.

## PLANNING YOUR WEDDING



If you are planning to get married abroad or at St Edward's Church, you must give us at least six months' notice. This is to ensure that all the preparation that couples are required to do, and the pre-marriage courses are completed along with the necessary paperwork. You are always welcome to approach me after any Mass, so that you can begin making wedding plans.

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### ST EDWARD'S PARISH FACEBOOK GROUP



**The Parish of St. Edward, RC Church, Kettering.**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2762598427183322/>

**St. Nicholas Owen Catholic Church - Burton Latimer.**

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/809856073037388/>

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### PARISH CALL AND CARE



The Parish is continuing with its "Parish Call and Care scheme" to support isolated and elderly parishioners. If you are someone who would like to receive calls, from a fellow parishioner, or know of someone who you feel would appreciate such a call, please contact Fr Gregory in the first instance on 01536 512497 or email [parish.stedwardkettering@northamptondiocese.org](mailto:parish.stedwardkettering@northamptondiocese.org) with your name and phone number (and if you are recommending anybody else to receive such calls, their name and phone number) [parish.stedwardkettering@northamptondiocese.org](mailto:parish.stedwardkettering@northamptondiocese.org) with your name and phone number (and if you are recommending anybody else to receive such calls, their name and phone number)



## USEFUL LINKS

**National Domestic Abuse Helpline** 0808 2000 247

**Refuge website** <https://www.refuge.org.uk/>

**Kettering Foodbank** 1 Horse Market, Unit 1B, Kettering, NN16 0DG (side entrance at the top of Market Street) Tel. 07709 741353 <https://www.ketteringfoodbank.org/>

**A list of free food outlets in Kettering** (updated March, 2022):

<http://www.stedwardskettering.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Kettering-Food-Outlets-Virus-Update-no32.pdf>

**Mary's Meals** <https://youtu.be/llqBIXrVJzw> / **Right to Life**  
<https://righttolife.org.uk>

**Redundancy Coaching** <http://www.vitaeopus.co.uk> provides free online information and advice about Job Hunting, Self-Employment and Active Retirement for Parishioners adversely affected workwise by the pandemic. Please pass the link on to anyone who may find it useful.

**Safe Spaces** We welcome contact from anyone hurt by abuse, whether that be through your experience within the Church or elsewhere. **Safe Spaces** is a free and independent support service, providing a confidential, personal and safe space for anyone who has been abused through their relationship with either the Church of England or the Catholic Church in England and Wales.

[safeguarding@northamptondiocese.org](mailto:safeguarding@northamptondiocese.org)

Please have a look at this page from the Northampton Diocese website:  
[Northampton Diocese Resources](#) which gives further information and contact details.

**Safe Spaces** is an independent and confidential support service for adults who have been abused by someone in the Church. Please see parish noticeboards for further details.

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## UCM

The Union of Catholic Mothers AGM will be held on Monday, 8th January 2024 at 1.30pm in St Edwards Hall. All members are required to attend this important meeting. Anyone interested in joining the UCM is also very welcome.

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## FUNDRAISING

Trinity Singers Fundraising concert, held on November 25<sup>th</sup> 2023, raised a total of £451.22 for Kettering Foodbank. Sincere thanks to everyone who supported us on the evening.

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## WEEKLY/MONTHLY DONATIONS



If there are any Parishioners who would like to join the weekly box system / gift aid scheme, then please do let us know by completing a form, available from the porch table and putting it on the collection plate or through the Presbytery letterbox. To those who already donate through the Gift Aid Scheme, please be reminded that if your tax situation has changed or you have moved house, then please let us know.

There are several other ways of donating as follows;

- **Online** This can be done via the Diocesan website which can be found at <https://northamptondiocese.org/>. Scroll down to find the 'Donate' button and follow the instructions on the Catholic Diocese of Northampton Virgin money giving page. By indicating in the notes section of the donate page that the donation is for "**St. Edward's Kettering**" your donation will go into our parish account with the diocese, and will at the same time help our diocese as a whole. Please note that there is the facility to Gift Aid any donation to your parish if you are a taxpayer.
- **Standing Order** via your own bank. Alternatively, you can set up a standing order for donations to your parish using your online bank account. The information required to make the donation is as follows. Bank; NatWest Sort Code; 60-06-11 Account Name; 46898093 Account Name; Northampton Roman Catholic Diocesan Trust Payment Ref; St. Edward's, Kettering
- **Make a donation to your own parish over the phone** - Each 'Tuesday' between 10.00am and 4.00pm, a member of the finance team will be available at Bishop's House to take your calls to donate to your parish community over the telephone. To donate simply call 01604 712065 with your debit or credit card details. (If you get the answering machine just leave your name and number NOT bank details and you will be called back). You can make a one-off donation or regular weekly or monthly payments, on any Tuesday until further notice.
- You can also support the Parish by **making a donation through the letterbox** of the presbytery at any time.

**Thank you for any help you can give.**

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## **YOUR LEGACY**

Your Legacy - Invest in the future of your parish and our Diocese. Gifts in your Will are a memorable and lasting way you can continue to support the Church's ministry and mission and help meet the needs of future generations. Please consider gifts to the Church and Catholic charities next time you update your Will. For more information, pick up a bookmark; contact your parish office, alternatively, go to [www.northamptondiocese.org/your-legacy](http://www.northamptondiocese.org/your-legacy) or contact Brian Emmanuel on 01604 600337 or [brian.emmanuel@northamptondiocese.org](mailto:brian.emmanuel@northamptondiocese.org)

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## **DIOCESAN E-NEWSLETTER**

Our diocesan e-news is now published fortnightly.

Keep up to date with news and opportunities from across our diocese by signing up to receive updates straight into your inbox. Simply visit <https://northamptondiocese.org/#signup>

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