



# THE ARCHANGEL

Church of St Michael Archangel • Harts Lane • Burghclere • RG20 9JW • [stmichaels@fsspx.uk](mailto:stmichaels@fsspx.uk)

No.81

January 2025

## God's Peace

Dear Parishioners,

When our Lord first came on Christmas night, He wished us peace through the ministry of His angels: "Peace on earth to men of good will".

There does not seem to be much peace in the world at the present time. There are too few men of good will. This year Christmas was all but cancelled. Without Christmas, without Christ, there will only ever be strife and turmoil.

How fortunate we are, therefore, to have been counted with the shepherds and to have received the invitation to come and adore our newborn Saviour. Every time a child is baptized, the angels assemble and hail Christ's advent to the soul in the form of sanctifying grace. They silently sing a new Gloria and reiterate the promise of peace.

If the soul be faithful, it will experience peace and contentment, however difficult life may become. The angels' prayer is God's promise: if we remain of good will, He will grant us peace.

In times of strife, our good will is put to the test. Difficult circumstances create a sense of urgency. Urgency stirs up feelings of insecurity and fear which cloud our reasoning and influence our judgement. We are then at risk of losing our peace of soul - and of mind too.

It is easy for us to associate peace with Christmas. The crib is a picture of calm and adoration. The long awaited Messiah is finally come. God has fulfilled His promise, our salvation is near. What more could we wish for?

And yet, a few hours before His agony in the garden, at the Last Supper, our Lord reiterated His gift of peace: "*Peace I leave with you, My peace I give you.*" But this time, He added: "*not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*" (Jn.14:27)

Our Lord knew that His own peace of soul was about to be sorely tried. His anguish in Gethsemani would draw from Him a sweat of blood. And yet, despite this sure knowledge, He spoke to His apostles of peace, and bid them not to be afraid.

The Passion is just as much a picture of peace as the crib and the manger but it can only be seen and deciphered with the eyes of faith. Despite the depth of her own sorrow, Mary alone understood what was happening on Calvary: her divine Son reconciling the world with God. Her heart was broken, but it was at peace. Calvary is the only place on earth where suffering and peace can coincide.

Present troubles might only be the beginning of greater trials ahead. Many of us find the unpredictability of current circumstances to be a heavy burden. Some search feverishly for knowledge of future events. Some try to interpret what is going on in order to decide a course of action "if it were to happen." Many are unsettled and look for answers to questions and possible scenarios.

We should, therefore, remember our Lord's promise and gift of peace. It is His gift to us each Christmas, and He would have us take it, accept it, keep it and believe in it. It is a peace "not as the world giveth." It might entail change of circumstance, hardship and poverty, but it brings to us a confidence and calm that the world is incapable of giving us.

Good will is the key to receiving Christ's peace and keeping it, come what may. As we brace for a difficult new year, one that will require much prudence in our attitude to events, we must be vigilant. Good will entails that we understand difference of opinion and judgement and that we lend others only the best intentions. Christ's peace is not the absence of conflict, but the tranquility of soul. We must lead ordered lives, centered around Christ, whether He lies in the manger or upon the Cross. In those desperate circumstances, our Lord remained in full control, carrying out His plan of redemption in a way He only could understand.

*"These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you shall have distress: but have confidence, I have overcome the world."* (Jn. 16:33)

The community wishes you all God's peace this New Year, and confidence in His mysterious but loving Providence.

**Fr John Brucciani, Prior**

## Light in the Darkness

With the words, “It was the best of times; it was the worst of times,” Charles Dickens opened his iconic novel, *A Tale of Two Cities*. Using the same imagery, we may say about the first Christmas, ‘It was the darkest of times; it was the lightest of times.’ The darkness of paganism and hedonism suffocated the world. Everyone felt the Roman, and therefore, pagan, influence, from the meanest peasant in the backwaters of Israel to the highest intellectuals in Greece. Roman ideals had all but overthrown every last resisting force, mostly by the might of arms. Yet, if this were not enough, the Israelite people themselves were enduring a period of decadence and corruption from the highest levels in an almost unprecedented fashion. For all intents and purposes, God had been forgotten by all those who mattered in the world’s eyes. He was remembered and honoured by the poor, the weak, but all others rejected Him for what they considered to be greater goods.

Into this dark and hostile world, the Light of Lights came.

The use of light in the Sacred Scriptures - and, therefore, the Sacred Liturgy - to attempt to touch the mysterious reality of the Incarnation is a constant theme. We find it mentioned in the prophecies of Isaias, “They that were seated in darkness have seen a great light” (Ch. 9). What is darkness, spiritually speaking, if not sin, death, suffering, and all the misery of the human condition? After the Original Sin, man is wounded: his intellect is darkened by the obstacle of ignorance; his will is clouded over by malice; his lower appetites are disordered by concupiscence. As a consequence, after the fall man sank deeper and deeper into the mire of sin, strayed further and further into the darkness and obscurity of ignorance.

Yet, God did not forget the misery of His creation. As St Paul said, God sent Our Lord Jesus Christ into the world to be the Light of the World and to bring all men to become the children of light. Our Lord Himself said, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life” (John 14:6). What is truth if not the light of the very Wisdom of God, Himself? St John the Evangelist would also take up the image in his prologue, calling Our Lord, “the

true Light that enlightens every man that comes into this world” (John 1:9).

So, if darkness may be understood of sin and the human condition after the fall of Adam, and light may be said of the presence of God Himself in human flesh on earth, why does the Church use this word specifically and why is it the special term of choice of nearly all the inspired writers of Sacred Scripture?

It seems to me that light is itself quite mysterious in its own right, which makes it fitting to apply to the Incarnation. For one thing, what exactly is light? How does it work? How does it travel so quickly? Even though modern science has made great strides in answering these questions, light remains an extremely complex field and, for the average person, pretty much a natural mystery - something that is impossible to fully understand. That being said, we can make several observations about light which may bring us somewhat closer to the truth.

1. Perhaps the most obvious to us is that light expels darkness. The two are mutually exclusive and cannot exist together. If we are in a dark room with all of the curtains closed but then we open those curtains, the room is no longer dark. The very presence of light in that room renders it, “not dark.”
2. We may also say that light must have a source, namely the sun, which possesses the quality of brightness eminently. This brightness does not spring up out of thin air. Everything that can be called “light/bright” only possesses that quality because it shares, in some limited way, in the light of the sun.
3. Finally, light enables us to see things. It is the medium through which our eyes are able to observe colour.

Now, if we apply these three observations to Our Lord Jesus Christ, and particularly to His Incarnation, we may begin to see why this word, “light” is so appropriately used in both Sacred Scripture and the Liturgy.

First, light expels darkness. Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Light of the World, came on earth for no other purpose than to expel the darkness of

sin and death. He conquered the forces of darkness by His satisfactory work of Redemption. What is more, Our Lord cannot abide sin. Where He is and, of course, where His grace is, no sin can be permitted to remain.

Second, light must have a source. Our Lord Jesus Christ is the Sun of Justice, the Lux Oriens. He is the Source of all grace and virtues and, as such, even as Man, He possesses them to a supereminent degree. Only on account of His grace and His virtues, can men be said to have grace or practise virtue. Yet our grace is only a share in His, and our virtues simply an imitation. He is the First, the Principle, and alone possesses the fullness of the light of divine grace.

Finally, light allows us to see. This application is, I think, the heart and soul of the issue at stake because, in fact, it reflects our human condition most closely. As men we come little by little to know something as more information comes to us. Then, as we grow in knowledge and understanding, we come to love more and more what we know. With Our Lord Jesus Christ as light it is the same. Little by little we receive light, that is grace and knowledge of Him - even though there are differing degrees according to the varying dispositions of the soul receiving the light. As more of this grace is poured into our soul, we begin to love Him more still. This makes us yearn for more light, more grace, a fuller participation in the life of God, always seeking to understand better Our Lord Jesus Christ so as to love Him more deeply.

This cycle is meant to continue, not only for our earthly life, but also in eternity. Yet it is only made possible through the Incarnation of Our Lord, for He is the Light; He is Grace; He is Truth. He is the Way to the Father and He is what guides us to Him, enabling us to see the road in front of us. He has made the Invisible visible by the power of His Incarnation out of the supreme charity that He has for our souls. Hence the Preface of Christmas explains the mystery of the Light of the World:

*“Through the mystery of the Incarnate Word, a new ray of Thy brightness has enlightened the eyes of our mind, such that, knowing God visibly, through Him we are snatched up to the love of things invisible.”*



## Memorial Poinsettias Christmastide

### Mass of the Circumcision

*On the Feast of the Circumcision Holy Mass was offered for and in memory of the following souls. Thank you for your kind offering*

James DeCastella, Val and Paul Gavin, Patricia and William Webber, Bernard and Winifred Kelly, Mary Carroll, Mark McFaddyn, Adrian Porval, Ben Webber | Joseph Peter Kamau, Shola Adaora Mbari Wilson Mbari Nguyai, Elijah & Joyce Kimani | James & Nancy Malliff, Robert & Kathleen Turner, Douglas Piper, Michelle Piper | Robert and Margaret Hansford, Catherine Beglin, Chantal Witchalls | Derek Turner, Nonna Pasqualina and Giovanni Mancone, Myra Richards Donato, Gabriel, Pinnucio | The Parkes, Patrick & Milligan-Manby Families | John O'Byrne, O'Byrne & Wilkinson Families, Terry Cross & Family, Dec'd Friends | Dear Mama and Papa, Grandpa Allan & Grandma Loretta | Grimer Family, Pazat de Lys Family, Rodriguez Family, Lopez Family | Blasio & Maria Lina Pereira | Susan Murray, Alec Murray, Christopher Delacombe, Mike Blatchford | Stephen Patrick & Agnes Mary Keating. Dorothy Chapman. Josephine Richardson, John Smallwood, Rudy Bernadine Mary LaChappelle | Ronald Warwick and all deceased Warwick family members, Margaret Brucciani and all deceased Brucciani family members | Alastair Lees, Sally Lees, Alastair J. Lees, The most abandoned soul, Fr Whittit, Fr Dooley, Fr McAuliffe, Fr Smalley, Fr Hull, John Scott, Mick George, Peter Hothersall, Sean O'Connor, Danny Glynn, George Goodwin, Arthur, Kieran McShane, Maura & Caroline Conlon, Nora Connelley, Mary Scamp, Elizabeth Rice, Hugh John Rice | Marianna Jedruszczak | Mireya-Maria Fletcher | Dr & Mrs Batten | Mr & Mrs Hector and Angela Straughair | Brenda & James Martin | John & Christina Kelly, Patrick & Frances O'Leary, Thomas & Mary McLoughlin, Michael & Nellie Kelly, Richard Kelly & John Patrick Kelly, Michael Keady & John Patrick Keady | Esme & Robin Morris, Marjorie & Hyasinth Morris, Edward & Elize Barton-Lister, Sarah & Percy Moore, Ronnie & Victor Blyth, Audrey van Rensberg, Bertie & Lynette Moore, Norma & John Morris, Anthony Morris, David Moore, Lawrence Coventry | Brian Boynes & Family, David Oxley & Family | Douglas and Marcia Arran, Gwen & Jim Neal



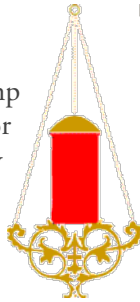


*On the 1st Sunday of the month, after each mass, fathers are invited to pray the **Fathers' Prayer for Vocations** at the communion rail.*

**Thank you** for all your prayers and Christmas gifts! The priests and brother Dominic assure you of all their grateful prayers and wish you all a very happy and holy New Year 2025! Deo gratias!

### Sanctuary Lamp in Memory

It is now possible to request that a sanctuary lamp burn in memory of loved one or in thanksgiving for graces received. **Each 1st. Wed. of the month, Holy Mass will be celebrated for those remembered and their donors.** The memorial will be published in this newsletter.



- £10 for one 7 day lamp (Sunday-Saturday)
- Checks to the order of SSPX, Burghclere Priory.
- Proceeds go towards church embellishment (vestments, statues, furnishings).

#### Sanctuary Lamp - High altar - In memory of:

- Jan. 05 - Mary Gaffney RIP
- Jan. 12 - Lady Kinnoull
- Jan. 19 -
- Jan. 26 -

#### Sanctuary Lamp - Lady altar - In memory of:

- Jan. 05 - John Phelan RIP
- Jan. 12 -
- Jan. 19 -
- Jan. 26 - Margaret Ann Brucciani RIP

#### Sanctuary Lamp - Sacred Heart - In memory of:

- Jan. 05 - John Desmond Brown RIP
- Jan. 12 - Godfrey Driscoll RIP
- Jan. 19 -
- Jan. 26 -

### MARRIAGE BANNES

**MR Alexander James Richards**

of Andover, Hants.,

and **Miss Daphney Audree Santos** of London, formerly of Hagonoy, Bulacan, Philippines

plan to be married on 1st March 2025

*Any persons knowing of any impediment to this union are obliged, under conscience, to notify a priest as soon as possible.*

### Liturgical Calendar - Jan. 2025 Confessions before Saturday and Sunday Masses & during 1st Friday Holy Hour.

1	<b>Circumcision of Our Lord - Holy Day</b>	7:30, 9:00
2	Feria in Christmastide	7:30
3	Feria in Christmastide 1st Fri. <b>Holy Hour 6pm</b>	7:30 / 19:00
4	Saturday of Our Lady 1st Sat.	7:30 / 12:00
5	<b>The Most Holy Name of Jesus</b>	7:30, 9:00
	<i>2nd Collection for Vocations</i>	18:00 Benediction
6	<b>The Epiphany of the Lord - Holy Day</b>	<b>07:15, 9:00, 19:00</b>
7	Feria	7:15
8	Feria	7:15
9	Feria	7:15
10	Feria	7:15
11	Saturday of Our Lady	7:30 / 12:00
12	<b>The Holy Family</b>	7:30, 9:00
		18:00 Benediction
13	Commemoration of the Baptism of the Lord	7:15
14	St. Hilary, Bishop, Confessor & Doctor	7:15
15	St. Paul, the First Hermit, Confessor	7:15
16	St. Marcellus I, Pope & Martyr	7:15
17	St. Anthony, Abbot	7:15
18	Saturday of Our Lady	7:30 / 12:00
19	<b>Second Sunday after Epiphany</b>	7:30, 9:00
		18:00 Benediction
20	Ss Fabian, Pope, and Sebastian, Martyrs	7:15
21	St. Agnes, Virgin & Martyr	7:15
22	Ss Vincent & Anastasius, Martyrs	7:15
23	Ss Vincent & Anastasius, Martyrs	7:15
24	St. Timothy, Bishop & Martyr	7:15
25	Conversion of St. Paul	7:30 / 12:00
26	<b>Third Sunday after Epiphany</b>	7:30, 9:00
27		18:00 Benediction
27	St. John Chrysostom, Bp, Conf. & Dr	7:15
28	St. Peter Nolasco, Confessor	7:15
29	St. Francis de Sales, Bp, Conf & Dr	7:15
30	St. Martina, Virgin & Martyr	7:15
31	St. John Bosco, Confessor	7:15

### Importance of Gift-Aid

- In 2022, **46%** of Sunday collection donations were gift-aided.
- In 2023, **60%** of Sunday collection donations have been gift-aided.
- In 2024, **63%** of Sunday collection donations have been gift-aided.

*Sunday collections and other donations to the priory serve for maintenance of church buildings and liturgical items, and the board, lodging and care of priests and religious. The District office provides the inevitable shortfall. Please continue to support your priest generously.*