

SENIOR SCHOOL

St Mary's Fortnightly Newsletter for teenagers

**Then Jesus declared,
"I am the bread of
life. Whoever comes
to me will never go
hungry, and whoever
believes in me will
never be thirsty."**

St John 6:35



WHAT'S GOING ON @ ST MARYS

As well as all the big Christmas and New Year Masses which hopefully you'll be coming to, this season is an excellent opportunity to attend some of the quieter weekday Masses, on most days at 10am at St Mary's

A SAINT TO KNOW

On 28th December the Church celebrates the Holy Innocents, who are the children King Herod ordered to be killed when he tried to attack Jesus (St Matthew 2:16-18). They're an often forgotten part of the Christmas stories but the Church is always remembering those whom society forgets.

DID YOU KNOW?

Every year between the 16th and 24th of December in Caracas, Venezuela, roads are closed to traffic to let people roller skate to the early morning Christmas mass!

What an amazing tradition! What family traditions do you celebrate?

LET'S PARTY!

This Christmas despite everything that's going on in our ever changing world there is one thing I'm going to be looking forward to and that's all the lovely food we get to eat at this time of the year. Whether you're having Turkey and potatoes or jollof rice and peanut stew we know Christmas is a special time where we have permission to really enjoy ourselves.

God loves a good party, a reason to celebrate and put our daily worries aside just for a moment.

"So I commend the enjoyment of life, because there is nothing better for a person under the sun than to eat and drink and be glad. Then joy will accompany them in their toil all the days of the life God has given them under the sun."
Ecclesiastes 8:15

The passage tells us to be glad, God wants us to remember all the wonderful blessing he's given us in our lives, praise him through all our circumstances and always find a reason to rejoice. This is the true joy behind 'fun times' a thankfulness towards God. Remembering all truly good things come from God.

In our over-enjoyment, Christmas can be a time of excess too. Too much food and drinks, too many sweets, too much online shopping. After chasing earthly desires those initial feelings of excitement we can be left unfulfilled, empty, overstretched and not entirely sure if it was all worth it.

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." Galatians 5:16

True and everlasting joy comes from our growing relationship with God, a never ending source of love that never sours in the morning or leaves us with regret. Have a truly joyful christmas!



TOASTING THE BRIDE AND THE GROOM

by *Father Morris*

I've heard some pretty dreadful speeches at wedding receptions and so I was determined not to do one when we got married. Jesus attended a wedding party at Cana in Galilee (St John 2) and this was the occasion for his first miracle. It was all brought to his attention by Mary and he ensured the party could continue by producing the best wine ever. God is generous and Jesus says elsewhere He came that we may abundant living.

But can we keep up with the pace of it all? A key Biblical image for Advent, which we've just finished celebrating, is that of the bridesmaids waiting for the bridegroom, five of whom didn't have enough oil in their lamp. Because they didn't have enough they had to go to the shops and so they missed him when he came (St Matthew 25).

Marriage is a reminder of the relationship between Jesus and His Church (Ephesians 5:25-32). Jesus is the bridegroom coming in to the world, whose birth we celebrate at Christmas. We are the Church, the bride, waiting for Him, called to love Him. Love within a marriage should be equal and when Jesus dies on the Cross He shows us the high levels our love should reach. The words of Song of Solomon 2:10 are words Jesus speaks to us as we celebrate His birth: "Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away." We respond, "My beloved is mine and I am His," (2:16).

The love of marriage is never about two people gazing lovingly at each other and feeling self-satisfied. Love can only be expansive and inclusive. Christian partying therefore is different to the world: anyone can come and everyone is invited for the basis of the party is God's love. Even in the pandemic with pressure to have restricted numbers in Church I have refused to have people turned away from Mass for this would be a poor reflection of God's love.

So, whether you're going to kiss someone under the mistletoe or not, know God's love for you in sending His dearly Beloved Son in to the world and ponder how God invites you to feast with Him on earth and for ever in Heaven.

My thanks to Tayo Leigh for producing this newsletter every fortnight.

Merry Christmas from Fr Morris.

TAKING ACTION

In the spirit of this wonderful time think about.

Charity

This is a tough time for many people. Being in 'need' can come in many different forms. A bed, a meal, a safe place to go, healing. Look to where God is calling you to be charitable, it could be donating money, time or just noticing that something isn't right with a friend.

Everyday we're given opportunities to live out His word, Christmas time is no different.

Sing out loud!

You might not know a lot of hymns but I bet most of them are Christmas carols.

Put those hymns on repeat and take advantage of being allowed to sing loudly, out of tune and with most of the words missing. No one's going to look at you it's Christmas!

Hope and Miracles

The celebration of the Birth of Christ is full of hope, promises fulfilled and miracles.

Use this time to grow closer to God. Share your hopes, fears and desires and deepen your faith to know that all things are possible through Him.

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

If you need someone to talk to about not feeling safe please

contact the

NSPCC :

0808 800 5000 / 88858

Keep in touch with us at St Marys

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