

Cycle of Prayer

- Openness to the Word of God - (21 January is Sunday of the Word of God)
- Migrants and Refugees
- Peace on Earth - especially on the Day of Prayer for Peace (Sunday 14 January) and Racial Justice Day (Sunday 28 January)
- Christian Unity - especially during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (18–25 January)
- Pope Francis' intention for January: For the gift of diversity in the Church. That the Spirit helps us to recognise the gift of different charisms within the Christian community, and to discover the richness of different ritual traditions in the heart of the Catholic Church.

Prayer for our Diocese

- Bishop Richard, and all the lay faithful, religious, deacons and priests in our communities – parishes, schools, monasteries, convents, prisons – as we strive to build our communities into strong, lively schools of discipleship.
- Use the Scriptures this month to reflect on your Baptismal calling and anointing for mission: to preach the Gospel and to “go, make disciples of all the nations” (Matt. 28:19).
- For all who proclaim the Word, and for all who listen as the Scriptures are proclaimed: that God's word may land on rich soil and bear fruit.
For those who have not yet heard the message of Christ:
that we may be willing to bring them the good news of salvation.

Lord, the Word who is Life.

May all the people of our Diocese
grow in openness to the power of the Holy Spirit,
so that through a growth in understanding and courage,
and truly open to your call,
we may bear powerful witness to all around us,
for you are Lord for ever and ever. Amen.

SCRIPTURE FOR REFLECTION AND INTENTIONS FOR PRAYER



January 2024

Christmas Season & Ordinary Time

Liturgical Calendar – Christmas Season and Ordinary Time

The solemnity of the Lord's birth (Christmas), celebrates the mystery of the Incarnation, by which the Word of God humbled himself to share in our humanity, in order that he might enable us to become sharers in his divinity.

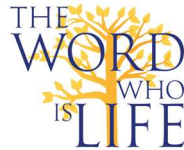
During the Christmas season we also celebrate the first manifestations of Christ: the Epiphany, his Baptism in the Jordan, and the wedding feast at Cana (on the 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time Year C).

The Epiphany celebrates in the child born of Mary the manifestation of the one who is the Son of God, the Messiah of the Jewish people, and a light to the nations.

At the beginning of Ordinary Time, the story of Jesus' life and preaching unfolds in the Gospels, including the first events in which he manifests himself.

Scripture

Something which has existed since the beginning,
that we have heard, that we have seen with our own eyes;
that we have watched and touched with our hands:
the Word, Who is Life – this is our subject.



1 John 1:1

Thus says the Lord: As the rain and the snow come down from the heavens and do not return without watering the earth, making it yield and giving growth to provide seed for the sower and bread for the eating, so the word that goes from my mouth does not return to me empty, without carrying out my will and succeeding in what it was sent to do.

Isaiah 55:10-11

In the course of his preaching John the Baptist said: 'Someone is following me, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptised you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.' It was at this time that Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptised in the Jordan by John. No sooner had he come up out of the water than he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit, like a dove, descending on him. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you.'

Mark 1:7-11

Samuel was lying in the sanctuary of the Lord, where the ark of God was, when the Lord called, 'Samuel! Samuel!' He answered, 'Here I am.' Then he ran to Eli and said, 'Here I am, since you called me.' Eli said, 'I did not call. Go back and lie down.' So he went and lay down. Once again the Lord called, 'Samuel! Samuel!' Samuel got up and went to Eli and said, 'Here I am, since you called me.' He replied, 'I did not call you, my son; go back and lie down.' Samuel had as yet no knowledge of the Lord and the word of the Lord had not yet been revealed to him. Once again the Lord called, the third time. He got up and went to Eli and said, 'Here I am, since you called me.' Eli then understood that it was the Lord who was calling the boy, and he said to Samuel, 'Go and lie down, and if someone calls say, "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening."' So Samuel went and lay down in his place. The Lord then came and stood by, calling as he had done before, 'Samuel! Samuel!' Samuel answered, 'Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.' Samuel grew up and the Lord was with him and let no word of his fall to the ground.

1 Samuel 3:3-10. 19

As John stood with two of his disciples, Jesus passed, and John stared hard at him and said, 'Look, there is the lamb of God.' Hearing this, the two disciples followed Jesus. Jesus turned round, saw them following and said, 'What do you want?' They answered, 'Rabbi,' – which means Teacher – 'where do you live?' 'Come and see' he replied; so they went and saw where he lived, and stayed with him the rest of that day. One of these two who became followers of Jesus after hearing what John had said was Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter. Early next morning, Andrew met his brother and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' – which means the Christ – and he took Simon to Jesus. Jesus looked hard at him and said, 'You are Simon son of John; you are to be called Cephas' – meaning Rock.

John 1:35-42

After John had been arrested, Jesus went into Galilee. There he proclaimed the Good News from God. 'The time has come' he said 'and the kingdom of God is close at hand. Repent, and believe the Good News.' As he was walking along by the Sea of Galilee he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net in the lake – for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you into fishers of men.' And at once they left their nets and followed him. Going on a little further, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John; they too were in their boat, mending their nets. He called them at once and, leaving their father Zebedee in the boat with the men he employed, they went after him.

Mark 1:14-20