

Monday 22nd December 2025 – O Rex Gentium: O King of the Nations:

When we pray to the Lord for something, we always get an answer, but sometimes the answer is not what we desire. The answer can be ‘no’, for this is not in accord with God’s plan for us or it can be ‘yes’, but in God’s good time not ours. In our prayer, we should have confidence that God provides everything we need, not necessarily everything that we want! Effective prayer brings our desires into line with God’s will, and in doing so, our joy is made complete. Mary’s Magnificat shows us that joy is the disposition of the redeemed, and one who is joyful, effectively magnifies the Lord, making His presence more keenly felt, especially to those in times of distress.

Tuesday 23rd December 2025 – O Emmanuel:

‘The Lord is now about to enter his Temple, he who is and who was and who is to come, God amongst, comes to meet his people’. And yet, we are not quite ready to celebrate, with many parishes and families using this time for some frantic last-minute preparations to welcome the Lord. The Advent (or arrival) of Christ is celebrated as a victory but only if we have faithfully lived out the gospel, keeping God’s command to love Him and our neighbour. For those who celebrate Christmas without Him and His Mass, risk a celebration that is empty; and so, we pray that the greatest gift our families will unwrap this Christmas will be a renewed sense of Christ’s presence in their life and a re-igniting of their Christian faith lived out in the body of Christ, the Church.

Christmas Eve: Wednesday 24th December 2025:

When the fulness of time had come, God sent his Only Begotten Son into the World for our salvation. And so, the ‘*Collect*’ (the opening prayer of the Mass) says everything we want to say today: *‘Come quickly, we pray, Lord Jesus, and do not delay, that those who trust in your compassion may find solace and relief in your coming.’*

The ‘**Mass of Midnight**’ is celebrated twice in St Joan of Arc Church at 4pm & 6.15pm. This is the Mass of the ‘*Angels*’ who joyful sing out the birth of the Saviour, announcing peace to all people of good will. As we receive this good news of great joy, may we join the whole company of heaven in singing out: *‘Gloria in excelsis Deo’!*

Christmas Day: Thursday 25th December 2025:

The '*Dawn Mass of Christmas*' is celebrated in St Joan of Arc Church at 9.15am. This is the '*Mass of the Shepherds*' who having heard the message of the angels, hurry to Bethlehem to see and adore the Lord. We too hurry to a liturgical Bethlehem, to the Holy Mass to adore the Lord Jesus made know to us in Word and in Sacrament.

The '*Mass of Christmas Day*' is celebrated in St Joan of Arc Church at 11.15am. This is the '*King's Mass*'. The final Mass of Christmas Day is celebrated in the fullness of daylight, signifying that the promised Son of God has been revealed to the world. All people and nations are called to come and worship the newborn King of Kings.

St Stephen's Day (Boxing Day): Friday 26th December 2025:

Our celebration of Christmas Day continues on this, day two of the Christmas Octave, with the Feast of St Stephen, the first Martyr of the Church. As the bishops of England and Wales said a few years ago, Friday abstinence is not required today, as we continue to celebrate our Feast of great joy. The name Stephen means '*crown*' and he is the first Christian to earn the crown of righteousness. He was a Hellenistic Jew who converts to Christianity and appointed as a deacon to look after the distribution of alms to the faithful. St Luke (in Acts) says that he was gifted by heaven with '*grace and power*', enabling him to engage effectively in debating with Jews in Jerusalem, telling them that God does not depend on the Temple or Mosaic Law, for these have been superseded by Jesus Christ (Messiah) that the Jewish people had waited so long for. For this, he is stoned for blasphemy without a formal trial after talking about his vision of Christ at God's right hand. Saul (St Paul) was a witness and approved of the killing.

St John's Day: Saturday 27th December 2025:

John (and his brother James) was a son of Zebedee, chosen as an Apostle. Being such a privileged witness to Jesus' pastoral ministry left him well placed to write the 4th Gospel. He was likely only 16 years old when asked to follow Jesus, and yet, he was first to understand the significance of the empty tomb, that Jesus is risen from the dead. Holy Tradition identifies him as the '*beloved disciple*' who leant on Jesus' breast at the Last Supper and did not abandon him at the crucifixion. John's gospel and letters stress Christ's Divinity, that Jesus is the Word '*who is Life*' and that fellowship with him unites us to his own fellowship with the Father and, therefore, makes our joy complete.