



# ST. BONIFACE



Bringing Christ to the people and people to Christ

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## January 7, 2024 – THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

**Newborn King: Scott Hahn Reflects on the Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord** - Today the child born on Christmas is revealed to be the long-awaited king of the Jews. As the priests and scribes interpret the prophecies in today's Gospel, He is the ruler expected from the line of King David, whose greatness is to reach to the ends of the earth (see [Micah 5:1-3](#); [2 Samuel 5:2](#)). Jesus is found with His mother, as David's son, Solomon, was enthroned alongside his Queen Mother (see [1 Kings 2:19](#)). And the magi come to pay Him tribute, as once kings and queens came to Solomon (see [1 Kings 10:2,25](#)). His coming evokes promises that extend back to Israel's beginnings. Centuries before, an evil king seeking to destroy Moses and the Israelites had summoned Balaam, who came from the East with two servants. But Balaam refused to curse Israel, and instead prophesied that a star and royal staff would arise out of Israel and be exalted above all the nations (see [Numbers 22:21](#); [23:7](#); [24:7, 17](#)). This is the star the three magi follow. And like Balaam, they too refuse to be tangled in an evil king's scheme. Their pilgrimage is a sign—that the prophecies in today's First Reading and Psalm are being fulfilled. They come from afar, guided by God's light, bearing the wealth of nations, to praise Israel's God. We celebrate today our own entrance into the family of God, and the fulfilment of God's plan that all nations be united with Israel as co-heirs to His Fatherly blessings, as Paul reveals in today's Epistle. We too must be guided by the root of David, the bright morning star (see [Revelation 22:16](#)), and the light of the world (see [Isaiah 42:6](#); [John 8:12](#)). As the magi adored Him in the manger, let us renew our vow to serve Him, placing our gifts—our intentions and talents—on the altar in this Eucharist. We must offer to Him our very lives in thanksgiving. No lesser gift will suffice for this newborn King.

**Here's what some saints have said about the Feast of the Epiphany:** Give me, therefore, I pray Thee, this gold, this incense, and this myrrh. Give me the gold of Thy holy love; give me the spirit of holy prayer, give me the desire and strength to mortify myself in everything that displeases Thee. I am resolved to obey Thee and to love Thee; but Thou knowest my weakness, oh, give me the grace to be faithful to Thee! (St Alphonsus Liguori).

For by gold the power of a king is signified, by frankincense the honour of God, by myrrh the burial of the body; and accordingly, they offer Him gold as King, frankincense as God, myrrh as Man (St John Chrysostom).

Today the Magi gaze in deep wonder at what they see: heaven on earth, earth in heaven, man in God, God in man, one whom the whole universe cannot contain now enclosed in a tiny body. As they look, they believe and do not question, as their symbolic gifts bear witness: incense for God, gold for a king, myrrh for one who is to die (St Peter Chrysologus).

**Human and Divine Relationship:** Jacques Phillippe writes in "Thirsting for Prayer": "Each of us can experience that in Jesus' eyes we are loved, chosen by God, in an extremely personal way. We often have a feeling that God loves in a general way: He loves all men. But being loved in a 'global' way cannot satisfy us. And it is absolutely different from the reality of the particular, unique love that God the Father has for each of his children. God's love is personal and individual. God does not love two people in the same way because it is actually His love that creates our personality, a different personality for each. There is a much greater difference between people's souls than between their faces, says St Teresa of Avila." The Benedictine monks Fr Thomas Acklin and Fr Boniface Hicks write in "Personal Prayer. A Guide for Receiving the Father's Love": "As persons we are capable of having personal relationships. We are made in the image and likeness of God, who is relationship Himself: an interrelation among three Persons whose love for each other is so perfect that these three Persons are truly one God. When we were created in His image and likeness, we were created in relationship with each other, male and female, and even more fundamentally, in relationship with Him.... The foundational way that we, in our humanity, can begin to enter into prayer is by entering into relationship. The only way to enter into a relationship with someone is to pay attention to him, to be attentive by focusing on him, but also by remaining in the relationship even when we are not attentive to it. Prayer is focusing on God, turning towards God as another Person, in fact, three Persons." We need to dedicate exclusive, extended, and focused time to cultivate our relationship with the Lord. The ongoing experience of prayer is finding out, enjoying, and uncovering all that it means to have and actually enter into a real relationship with God. We cannot let God remain abstract when we pray. "Speaking with God is both like and unlike speaking with another human being, but imagining what it is like to speak to another human being is a helpful starting point. We can imagine God looking at us, gazing into our eyes, seeing deep into our hearts. If we use our imagination to visualize God giving us a penetrating look filled with love, that will engage our humanity in the right way to help us enter into a concrete encounter with the real and living God.

God has revealed through Jesus Christ that He is a loving Father whose love is infinite in His mercy for sinners. He has revealed that He is sovereign, and yet He reverences and sustains our freedom. He has a definite plan for our eternal lives which He realizes by providing for us and drawing us in a way which potentiates our free will. He pursues us like the Good Shepherd and yet gives us space and patiently waits for us like the father of the Prodigal Son. So uniquely personal is His love that He loves each one as if each were the only person in the world.

“The disciples asked the Lord to teach them to pray. In fact, it is the Lord who leads the way every time we pray, and He teaches us how to pray. Without Him prayer is not possible and without Him we would be simply talking to ourselves or talking to nothing. Jesus becomes transparent and introduces us to our Father in the Holy Spirit, revealing that God is three Persons in one God. In prayer we are taken up into the intimate relationships among the persons of the Trinity.” Ask Jesus to teach you how to pray. The more you ask this of Him, the more He will send His Holy Spirit to you, who will become your guide and inspiration. As you seek a deeper, more personal relationship with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, always remember that Father, Son and Holy Spirit want a personal relationship with you. In the coming weeks we will continue to explore the beauty and power of growing in our relationship with God.

**Enthronement of the Santo Niño (Child Jesus) Statue** – A group of Filipino parishioners recently acquired a replica of the statue of the Child Jesus venerated in the famous Basilica of the Santo Niño on the island of Cebu in the Philippines. They also acquired from the Rector of the Basilica a relic containing the cloth of the inner garment of the original statue, which dates to almost 502 years ago. In Philippine history, the statue was presented by Ferdinand Magellan, a famous world naval explorer, to Hara Amihan, the queen of Zebu (Cebu). Written accounts said that she joyfully leaped and danced the “sulog” or the dance of the tides when the image was entrusted to her. This event marked the beginning of the Sinulog Festival, which honours the Feast of the Child Jesus every second Sunday after Epiphany. It is with great joy that this replica will be enthroned at St Boniface on **21 January** at the end of the **11am Mass**. The Eucharistic celebration will be followed by the Sinulog festival in the church hall, where there will be prayers, dancing (Sulog) and fellowship. Everybody is welcome.

**The funeral Mass of Jane Barber** is on **Wednesday 17 January, at 1:15pm** in our Church. Some refreshments will be ready afterwards in our Church Hall. All are welcome.

**CAFOD School Volunteers needed** - Do you enjoy working with children and young people? Could you help to inspire and empower children and young people in your local Catholic schools by delivering an assembly or a workshop? Supported by CAFOD with training and all resources provided please consider the role of CAFOD school volunteer. For more information contact Jo Lewry [jlwry@cafod.org.uk](mailto:jlwry@cafod.org.uk) or phone 07710 094447

**Volunteers Needed for our Safeguarding Team** – If you would like to be actively involved in making sure that St Boniface always remains a safe haven for our children and for the vulnerable, please consider joining our Safeguarding Team. For more information, please contact our Safeguarding Officer Angela Braga: [safeguarding@st-boniface.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@st-boniface.org.uk)

**White Flower Appeal – 13/14 January** - Every year hundreds of churches across Britain take part in the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC) White Flower Appeal, making it one of their largest and most important educational and fundraising events of the year. Most appeals take place in January. St Boniface will host this appeal on the weekend of 13/14 January. The success of the White Flower Appeal is founded on the compassion and generosity of faithful churchgoers in parishes across the UK. SPUC is grateful for the unapologetic defence of unborn babies and vulnerable people that the teaching of the Catholic Church provides. The name was originally inspired by the work of the White Rose movement, a non-violent, intellectual resistance to the Nazis in Germany at the height of the Second World War. In February 1943 Hans and Sophie Scholl, two of the group’s core active members, were caught and arrested. Following interrogation, they were tried by the Gestapo and beheaded along with four others. The Weise Rose and Sophie Scholl have been the subject of several films retelling the story of their bravery to new generations. The White Rose still serves as an example to us of what can be achieved by standing up for what is right.

**Mass Intention Offering** - Please be advised that offerings can be made by cash (in an envelope clearly marked “Mass Intention”), or by cheque payable to **CDP Oblates of the Virgin Mary**; or via a bank transfer using the details given here: Payee Name: **CDP Oblates of the Virgin Mary**; Branch Sort Code: **30-80-27**; Account Number: **36062268**; Reference: **Mass Intention**. Or simply give it to the Priest on the day of your Mass requested/attended.

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Parish website: [www.st-boniface.org.uk](http://www.st-boniface.org.uk)

Parish Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/stbonifacesouthampton>

Parish Office opening hours: Mon to Fri - 9:30am to 12:30pm

Parish Secretary: Margaretta Livingstone

[office@st-boniface.org.uk](mailto:office@st-boniface.org.uk) Tel: 023 8077 3640

Safeguarding Officer: Angela Braga

[safeguarding@st-boniface.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@st-boniface.org.uk)

Parish Pastoral Council: [ppc@st-boniface.org.uk](mailto:ppc@st-boniface.org.uk)

Newsletter deadline 9.00pm on Wednesday for inclusion on following Sunday, space permitting. This Parish is within the Southampton Pastoral Area.

Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth Registered Charity: 1199568.