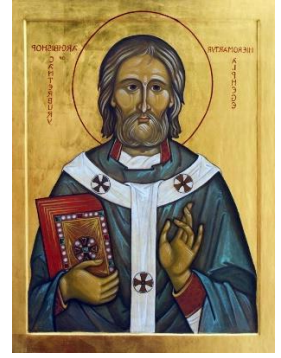


**Parish of  
Our Lady and St Alphege, Bath  
together with  
St Joseph's, Peasedown St John**

**Parish Priest: Father Alex McAllister SDS  
The Presbytery, Oldfield Lane, Bath BA2 3NR  
01225 424894 / 07788 415200**

**bath.stalphege@cliftondiocese.com  
www.saintalphege.org.uk**

**Hall Bookings: Isabella Lo (Parish email above)**



**Feast of the Holy Family**

**31st December 2023**

*My eyes have seen your salvation*

**Mass Times at St Alphege**

or St Joseph's, Peasedown if indicated

<b>Sat 30th</b>	<b>Sixth Day in the Christmas Octave</b>	
	10.00	Maureen Dyson
<b>Sun 31st</b>	<b>The Holy Family</b>	
	9.00	Parishioners (Peasedown)
	11.00	Pat Carter
	18.00	Moira Horton +
<b>Mon 1st</b>	<b>Mary the Mother of God</b>	
	10.00	John Mill
<b>Tue 2nd</b>	<b>SS Basil the Great &amp; Gregory Nanzianzen</b>	
	10.00	
	11.00	(Peasedown)
<b>Wed 3rd</b>	<b>Weekday of Christmas Time</b>	
	11.15	Funeral Ann Alford
<b>Thu 4th</b>	<b>Weekday of Christmas Time</b>	
	11.00	Funeral Moira Horton
	18.00	
<b>Fri 5th</b>	<b>Weekday of Christmas Time</b>	
	12.00	Funeral Josie Cook
<b>Sat 6th</b>	<b>Weekday of Christmas Time</b>	
	10.00	Cadell Family
<b>Sun 7th</b>	<b>The Epiphany of the Lord</b>	
	9.00	Parishioners (Peasedown)
	11.00	Nell Pestel + (anniv)
	18.00	Bernadette McKee (ill)



The Holy Family with Saint Francis, *Rubens 1620-30*

**What the Holy Family shows us at Christmas**

Christmas is for many of us, a time when families get together. We remember friends especially those who are no longer with us and those family and friends who live far away.

Sometimes this brings great joy as we catch up on news. Sometimes it's hard going and we need patience in tolerating familiar bad habits, coping with old hurts and negotiating unrealistic expectations.

Many will be glad when Christmas is over. Nevertheless, there is a deeper point to our family gathering. We instinctively recognise the importance of the bond of flesh and blood.

We know that, in a family, we irrevocably belong to each other, no matter the distances that may separate us, or the rows we have lived through. We still look to our family for recognition, acceptance and love even when that hope is unfulfilled.

So, when you see the crib this Christmas, don't see in it an image of a vanishing world of father, mother and child. See, rather, a reminder of the truth about our human nature and a source of new encouragement and determination for us all.

Extract from: The Daily Telegraph 23/12/07 by Cardinal Vincent Nichols

**Information**

Coffee is served in the Parish Hall after 11.00 Sunday mass  
 Confessions..... Saturday 10.30 and at Call  
 Choir Practice..... 19.00 Wednesdays in Hall  
 Psalter .....2  
 Sunday Readings: ..... Year B  
 Weekday Readings: ..... Year 2  
 Baptisms & Marriages: ..... Contact the Parish Priest  
 Diocesan Prayer League..... St Augustine, Matson  
 English Martyrs, Tuffley

**Cycle of Prayer: Advent and Christmas**

Openness to the Word of God, Migrants and Refugees,  
 Expectant Mothers

### A Prayer for Families

We bless your name, O Lord,  
for sending your own incarnate Son,  
to become part of a human family,  
so that, as he lived its life,  
he would experience its worries and its joys.  
We ask you, Lord,  
to protect and watch over our own family,  
so that in the strength of your grace  
its members may enjoy prosperity,  
possess the priceless gift of your peace,  
and, as the Church present in the home,  
bear witness in this world to your glory.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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**May all your troubles last as long  
as your New Year's resolutions**

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### Diocese of Clifton Year Book

The Diocesan Yearbook is now available at the back of the Church. Copies cost £6 each.

### SPUC

The annual While Flower Appeal for the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child will take place on Sunday 7th January.

### Legacies

Please think about the parish when drawing up your last will. Our beautiful Church was built through the generosity of parishioners often by means of legacies. Think of a legacy as a gift to the next generation of Catholics enabling them to maintain a truly worthy place of worship. Explanatory leaflets are available at the back of the Church.

### Christmas Crib

All gifts at the Crib are given to the Catholic Children's Society. Please support this work as generously as you can.



IN BRITAIN AND IRELAND

This year the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is from 18th to the 25th January. Church Unity Week always concludes with the Feast of St Paul.

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**You don't choose your family  
They are God's gift to you,  
as you are to them**

Desmond Tutu

### Christmas Crib

All gifts at the Crib are given to the Clifton Children's Society. Please support the important work of our adoption agency as generously as you can.

### Forthcoming Dates

First Communion Classes Start ..... 7th January  
Film Night ..... 19th January  
Beetle Drive ..... 2nd February



### First Holy Communion

First Communion classes for children in Year 3 and above will commence on 7th January. Sessions start at 10.00 and last an hour so that parents can go with the children to Sunday mass afterwards.

Please note that going to mass is an essential part of the package. The dates for the sessions are: January 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th, February 4th and 25th, March 3rd, 10th, 17th and 24th, April 21st and 28th, May 12th (with an additional practice after Mass). Any changes to these dates will be notified. The First Holy Communion Mass will be on either 18th or 19th of May depending on numbers. Application forms are at the back of the Church. Please return as soon as possible with a copy of the Baptismal certificate and £10 for the book, etc.

### Year of Prayer

Pope Francis has asked us to keep 2024 as a Year of Prayer in preparation for the Holy Year of 2025. At St John's Church they will be holding a series of talks on prayer throughout next year. The talks will be held in St John's Church on Tuesdays at 19.00. The talks are as follows: 23rd January Lord Teach us to Pray, Fr Tom Dubois; 20th February The Prayer of Jesus, Fr Dermot Power; 30th April The Prayer of the Desert, Fr John Udris; 28th May The Prayer of St Benedict, Fr Mark Hargreaves OSB; 25th June The Prayer of St Dominic, Sr Hyacinthe OP; 23rd July Window on the Divine -Icons, Tamara Penwell; The Prayer of St Martin & St Clare, Fr Maximilian Martin OFM Conv; 29th October The Prayer of Carmel, Fr Michael McAndrew; 26th November The Prayer of St Ignatius Fr James Hanvey SJ.

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**If you believe what you like in the gospel,  
and reject what you don't like,  
it is not the gospel you believe but yourself**  
St Augustine

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### A Prayer for the New Year

Heavenly Father, as we stand on the threshold of a new year, we want to express our deepest gratitude for the blessings of the past year. Thank you for your faithfulness, your love, and your constant presence in our lives. We acknowledge your sovereignty over the days gone by and the days yet to come. Amen.

### Thank You

Christmas at St Alphege is a very busy and lively time; it is a real celebration of the love of God made manifest in the birth of his Son, Jesus Christ. Our grateful thanks go to those who cleaned and decorated the Church so beautifully, to our singers and musicians, to the Altar Servers, to the readers and catechists and to all those who are involved in so many ways. Also thank you very much for your very generous Christmas offerings, cards and gifts.

### Upcoming Special Collections

7th January SPUC, 11th February Aid to the Church in Need, 25th February CAFOD

### Readers

11.00: Simon n/w Relston, 18.00; Seena n/w Dominic



# DECLAN, BISHOP OF CLIFTON

## PASTORAL LETTER FOR THE FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ

Christmas is a time when many families come together to celebrate the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord. Members of the family can be scattered around the country or even further afield, but they are often drawn together by a strong bond which is celebrated at Christmas.

Pope Benedict XVI said 'The family is the privilege setting where every person learns to give and receive love. The family is an intermediate institution between the individuals and society and nothing can completely take its place. The family is a necessary good for peoples, an indispensable foundation for society and a great lifelong treasure for couples. It is a unique good for children to learn from their parents total and generous self-giving. The family is also a school that enables both men and women to grow to the full measure of their humanity'. The family is the basis of society and the Church.

Family life is challenged daily by demands such as work, finance, employment, ill health, trust and children but in many parts of the world family life is also threatened by violence, war and terrorism. Many families both in Israel and Palestine have seen the destruction of family life. Parents have seen their children killed, children have seen their parents executed, homes have been destroyed and people have been displaced in large numbers. Violence breeds violence and families are often victims of such atrocities both in Israel, Palestine and other parts of the world.

There is a small Christian community in Gaza. The Holy Family Church compound in which people have taken refuge was thought to be a safe place but this proved not to be true. A sniper killed a mother and daughter who were making their way from the church to the convent within the compound. A home within the compound for profoundly disabled people was destroyed and is no longer habitable displacing 54 people. The school run by the Sisters of Our Lady of the Rosary has also been badly damaged. There are many other stories of cruel and shocking reality.

In Bethlehem there have been no public festivities this year. Christmas is being celebrated quietly. However, the message of peace is still proclaimed and urgently needed. In the midst of conflict we are called to be peacemakers placing our faith in Jesus who came to reconcile us to God, to one another and to the whole of creation. The darkness of war cannot overcome the light of Christ even though at times the darkness seems to be triumphant.

Please keep the peoples of Israel, Palestine and other parts of the world where there is war and violence in your prayers. Give support to organisations such as Friends of the Holy Land and Cafod who are providing humanitarian aid as best they can and will be instrumental in building up a new society when the war is over. As we approach the New Year may God bless you and keep you. May the Lord let his face shine on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord uncover his face to you and bring you peace.

Rt Rev Declan Lang  
Bishop of Clifton