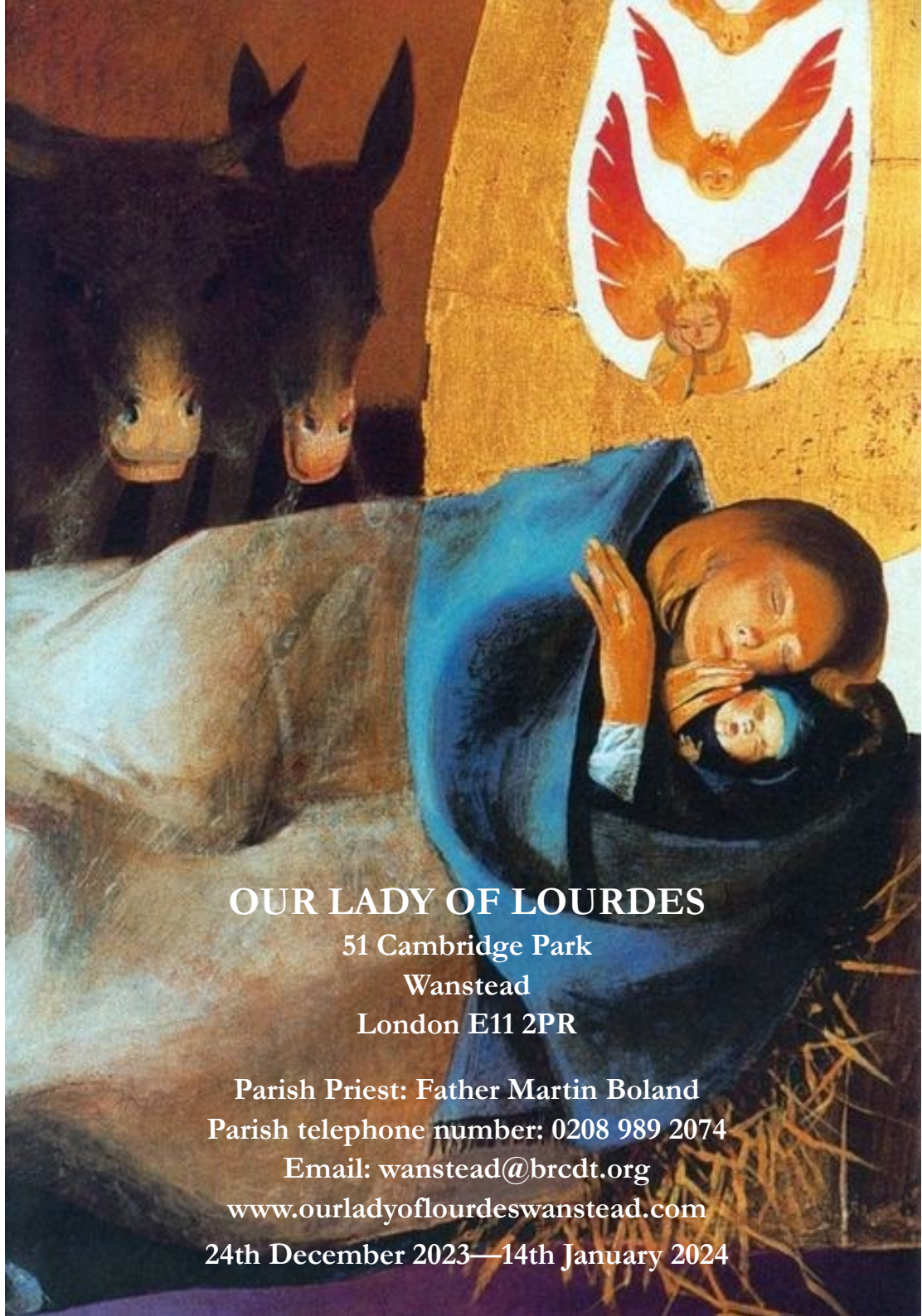


“God could have come wrapped in glory, splendor, light and power, to instill fear, to make us rub our eyes in amazement. Instead he came as the smallest, the frailest and weakest of beings. Why? So that no one would be ashamed to approach him, so that no one would be afraid, so that all would feel close to him and draw near him, so that there would be no distance between us and him. God made the effort to plunge, to dive deep within us, so that each of us, each of you, could speak intimately with him, trust him, draw near him and realise that he thinks of you and loves you... *He loves you!* Think about what this means! If you understand this, if you remember what I am saying, you will have understood the whole of Christianity.”

Blessed Pope Paul VI, Christmas, 1971

“The mystery of Christmas therefore lays upon us all a debt and obligation to the rest of the human race and to the whole created universe. We who have seen the light of Christ are obliged by the greatness of the grace that has been given us to make known the presence of the Savior to the ends of the earth. This we will do not only by preaching the glad tidings of his coming, but above all by revealing him in our lives. Christ is born to us in order that he may appear to the whole world through us. This one day is the day of his birth, but every day of our mortal lives must be his manifestation, his divine epiphany, in the world which he has created and redeemed.”

Thomas Merton



OUR LADY OF LOURDES

51 Cambridge Park
Wanstead
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Parish Priest: Father Martin Boland
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24th December 2023—14th January 2024

GENERAL PARISH NEWS

God comes to us as a child: vulnerable, small, and human. He comes swaddled in the blanket of night, quietly without swagger or cavalcade. He does not wish to overwhelm us by force but to love us into freedom. He will not crow bar His way into our lives. Instead, He waits for us to slip the bolts and swing open our hearts to Him. *Let Him enter the King of Glory.*

God has come among us and remains with us through the life of His Church, above all, in the Eucharist. God is now real to us in the forms of bread and wine. Our hands are the manger that hold His precious Body. He is our divine feed. The warm breath from our every "Amen" thaws all that is frostbitten in ourselves.

God has made His home with us, becoming a little child so that we might come to know our dignity as His adopted children. We are free men and women in Christ. Like the shepherds and kings before us, His light guides our way to the manger where we disable our cynicism and humble our sophistication by climbing down on our knees to worship Him.

And when He cries, He cries for all those who grieve and bruise and feel the hard edge of loneliness. The homeless find an eternal home in Him; the lost, a sanctuary; the weary, a place to rest and heal. Tears dry. All that is broken, mends. Angels sing in the oratory of hope.

Christ is born this day. This knowledge swells our hearts and compel us to tell others that we have seen the Saviour and to help cut a path for them to Him.

Hodie Christus Natus est. Christ is born this day. May Christ bless and protect you, your families and friends during these coming holy days. May He strengthen your hope and give you the courage to play your part in His mission of salvation. *Let him enter the King of Glory.*

Fr. Martin

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USEFUL PARISH CONTACTS

Pastoral Assistants - Carmel Docherty Tel: 07906 406938
Frank Adesegha adesegha@aol.com

Parish Secretary - Eileen Crotty
wanstead@brcdt.org Tel: 0208 989 2074

Chair of Parish Council - Fiona Christison
flumblefly@hotmail.com Tel: 07812 766082

OLOL Site Manager - Bernie Dando
BernadetteDando@brcdt.org

Pastoral Centre Caretaker - Camille Mouquet
Tel: 07442 118589 (Text messages preferred)

Catechetical Co-coordinator - Michaela Mouquet
wansteadcatechist@brcdt.org

To register as a new parishioner - Tricia Webb
wansteadregistrar@brcdt.org

Headteacher OLOL School - Ruth Boon
admin@ourladyoflourdes.redbridge.sch.uk
Tel: 020 8989 9521

Finance and Gift Aid Queries - Bob Fox
wansteadfinancegiftaid@brcdt.org



WEEKDAY AND SUNDAY MASS INTENTIONS

Sunday 7th January THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

9.30 a.m. MASS - Pat & Norman Yearly RIP
11.30 a.m. Mass - People of Parish
6.30 p.m. Mass - Maria Pumar RIP

Monday 8th January 2024

9.00 a.m. Mass - Ernest Peace RIP

Tuesday 9th January NO MORNING MASS

Wednesday 10th January

9.00 a.m. Mass - Elena Deer RIP

Thursday 11th January

9.00 a.m. Mass - Kathleen Carrigan & Family INT

Friday 12th January

9.00 a.m. Mass - Dolores Hurley RIP

Saturday 13th January

NO MORNING MASS

10.00 a.m. -11.00a.m. Confessions
6.30 p.m. Vigil Mass - Members of the Nolan Family RIP

Sunday 14th January Second Sunday in Ordinary Time PEACE DAY

9.30 a.m. MASS - Charles & Mary O'Rawe RIP
11.30 a.m. MASS - People of Parish
6.30 p.m. MASS - Seamus, Mary & Family INT

Christmas Masses 2023

Saturday 23 December Fourth Sunday of Advent

6.30 p.m. Vigil Mass

Sunday 24th December

10.00 a.m. Mass

Christmas Eve Masses

5.00 p.m., 7.00 p.m. and 10.00 p.m.

Carols at 9.30 p.m.

Monday 25th December

Christmas Day Masses

9.30 a.m. and 11.30 a.m.

No evening Mass

A SPECIAL WELCOME to any visitors to our community and to our brothers and sisters in Christ who join the parish family to celebrate this great feast at Holy Mass, around the tables of the Word and the Eucharist. All who come here to share in the faith and fellowship of Our Lady of Lourdes are most welcome.

CRIB OFFERINGS support the work of the *Brentwood Catholic Children's Society* that cares and supports the most vulnerable children and their families in Essex and the East End of London www.bccs.org.uk

A SINCERE THANK YOU to all those involved in the preparations for the Christmas Masses we celebrate during these coming days and for helping to make the church a place of welcome and beauty. Thank you to all who have played any part in our liturgies and helped others to participate in their saving mysteries. So many people have given of their time and talents to ensure that our celebration of the birth of Christ gives glory and praise to Him. May God bless you for your generosity and for helping to build his Kingdom here in Wanstead and Leytonstone.

CHRISTMAS OFFERINGS are your gift to the parish priest. For those who are tax payers and might wish to Gift Aid their offering, envelopes are available at the entrance to the Church. If you normally give your Sunday offering by envelope, you may wish to use the envelope in your box.

COVER IMAGE Madonna and Child by the French artist Jean-Marie Pirot, also known as Arcabas. His *magnum opus* is the interior decoration of Saint-Hugues-de-Chartreuse in the Isère region of France, which comprises over a hundred works by the artist created over a span of thirty-five years.

THE PARISH OFFICE is now closed until 2nd January. We thank Eileen, the parish secretary, for all her dedication and hard work during this past year.

FR MARTIN will be on a post-Christmas break from 28th December until 5th January. During that time, Fr Liam Hayes will celebrate Mass and be resident in the parish. Fr Liam is a senior research fellow at the Margaret Beaufort Institute of Cambridge www.mbit.cam.ac.uk

ALTAR SERVERS Tuesday 26th December (Boxing Day) is the Feast of St Stephen, Patron Saint of Altar Servers and all servers are welcome to serve at the 10.00 a.m. Mass on that day.

THIS NEWSLETTER covers the period of 24th December until 14th January.

THANK YOU to everyone who made a donation at the Wednesday Teas Christmas gathering on 13th December. Thanks to your generosity, a donation of £100.00 was made to Forest Churches Emergency Night Shelter in Walthamstow.

CONFESSIONS There will be no Confessions on a Saturday evening for the time being. Confessions will be on Saturday morning from 10.00 a.m. – 11.00 a.m. Please note that there will be **no morning Confessions on 30th December**.

THE FUNERAL MASS of Rosina Forestiero will take place on Friday 19th January 2024 at 11.00 a.m. May she Rest in Peace and Rise in Glory. There will be no 9.00 a.m. Mass on this day.

WEEKDAY AND SUNDAY MASS INTENTIONS

Sunday 31st December THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

6.30 p.m. Vigil Mass - Michael O'Donnell RIP

9.30 a.m. Aongus and Geraldine O'Carroll and all family members living and dead

11:30 a.m. Mass - Lilian Peace RIP

6.30 p.m. Mass - People of Parish

Monday 1st January 2024 MARY, THE MOTHER OF GOD

9.00 a.m. Mass - Marie Sheehan INT

Tuesday 2nd January SS BASIL THE GREAT & GREGORY NAZIANZEN

9.00 a.m. Mass - Edward Joseph Raynor RIP

Wednesday 3rd January

9.00 a.m. Mass - George & Catherine Crowhurst RIP

Thursday 4th January

9.00 a.m. Mass - Rev. James V Hemming RIP

Friday 5th January

NO MORNING MASS

Saturday 6th January

NO MORNING MASS

10.00 a.m. - 11.00a.m. Confessions

6.30 p.m. Vigil Mass - Denise Ryan RIP

Sunday 7th January THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

9.30 a.m. MASS - Pat & Norman Yearly RIP

11.30 a.m. Mass - People of Parish

6.30 p.m. Mass - Maria Pumar RIP

WEEKDAY AND SUNDAY MASS INTENTIONS

Sunday 24th December THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD (evening)

6.30 p.m. Vigil Mass - Lorraine Campling RIP

10.00 a.m. MASS - G Ajuzieogu INT

5.00 p.m. MASS - People of Parish

7.00 p.m. MASS - Maura Boland RIP

9.30 p.m. CAROLS

10.00 p.m. MASS - Carmel & Edward Benson RIP

Monday 25th December - CHRISTMAS DAY

9.30 a.m. Mass - Maria Elizabeth Falco RIP

11.30 a.m. MASS - Canon Patrick Sammon RIP

NO EVENING MASS

Tuesday 26th December— ST STEPHEN, THE FIRST MARTYR

10.00 a.m. Altar Servers Mass - Brazier/Copping
Families (Dec'd)

Wednesday 27th December ST JOHN

9.00 a.m. Mass - Rosina Forestiero RIP

Thursday 28th December THE HOLY INNOCENTS

9.00 a.m. Mass - Siobhan Howard RIP

Friday 29th December ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY

9.00 a.m. Mass - James Howard RIP

Saturday 30th December

NO MORNING MASS

NO CONFESSIONS

6.30 p.m. Vigil Mass - Michael O'Donnell RIP

ADORATION takes place on Fridays from 9.30 a.m. to 1.00 p.m. and from 7.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m. Please note that there will be no morning Adoration on 12th and 19th January 2024.

CAFOD ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN CRISIS APPEAL Donate to CAFOD's Israeli-Palestinian Crisis Appeal at cafod.org.uk/ipc or call 0303 303 3030 to support those affected and get funds to local trusted experts in Gaza and southern Israel who have been working alongside communities helping those most in need.

WINE TASTING EVENING 3rd February 2024 8 p.m. to approx. 10 p.m. Ticket price £25.00 Whether you want to learn more about wines or just enjoy the taste, please join us in the hall for an evening of wine tasting. You will sample 6 wines and 1 fizz and the Theatre of Wine will talk you through the wines and producers which will be accompanied by cheese, meat platters and other nibbles. This would make a great Christmas present and something to look forward to in the New Year. This is a limited ticket only event and must be bought in advance. You can book your place by emailing events@ourladyoflourdeswanstead.com or call Natasha on 07977 863362. Due to numbers, unfortunately tickets will not be sold on the night. I do hope you can join us.

RECOMMENCEMENT OF GROUPS/CLUBS

THE MEDITATION GROUP Tuesday 9th January at 10.50 a.m.

UNDER 5's Tuesday 9th January from 1.00 p.m. - 3.30 p.m.

THE DIVINE MERCY PRAYER GROUP Tuesday 9th January 7.30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY TEAS 10th January after the 9.00 a.m. Mass.

THE SHEILA LOVELL CLUB Wednesday 10th January 1.30 p.m.- 3.30 p.m.

BEREAVEMENT GROUP Thursday 25th January 2.00 p.m.—3.30 p.m. and then on the last Thursday of every month.

THANK YOU SVP/SHEILA LOVELL CLUB A great Christmas party was held at the Pastoral Centre on Wednesday 13th December. Thank you all for coming. A special thanks to our musicians, choir from Our Lady of Lourdes School and all the people who helped in any way to make it so special. Thank you Fr Martin for a beautiful Healing Mass. Happy Christmas to you all.

SICK LIST A list of the sick and housebound can be found at the entrance to the Church.

PEACE SUNDAY 14th January 2024 - There will be a second collection after Masses this weekend. A message from Bishop Malcolm McMahon:

“The theme for Peace Sunday is Pope Francis’ theme for the World Day of Peace - ‘Artificial Intelligence and Peace’. I am sure you will agree that it is a highly relevant theme as Governments across the world, including our own, wrestle with the ethics and consequences of significant and potentially dangerous developments in technology. Pope Francis’ overriding concern is that artificial intelligence should be used in the service of humanity and the protection of our common home and not to further injustice and inequality or to fuel division and violent conflict.

Finally, Peace Sunday is an important opportunity for Pax Christi to raise funds. Our small team of staff and volunteers are highly dedicated and work hard to support and encourage us all in working for peace. I greatly appreciate the support our parish communities give through collections and donations and would ask that you take this opportunity to support us this year.”

For more information go to www.paxchristi.org.uk

THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM marks the beginning of a child’s relationship with Christ. This is also an opportunity for parents to thank God for the gift of their child and to strengthen or rekindle their own relationship with Christ by the practice of their faith, that is, by coming into Christ’s presence at the celebration of Sunday Mass. If you wish to have your child baptised, there are three simple steps:

i) Please phone the parish office and register for the next two formation sessions. You will be asked to confirm that, at least, one parent is a Catholic and that you are living in the parish.

ii) Parents must attend both formation sessions. The next sessions will be held on *11th and 18th January 2024*, starting promptly at 8 p.m. Please note that this formation is for the parents of babies, including those babies not yet born. If your child is 7 or over, they will have to be prepared in an alternative age appropriate way.

DIOCESAN NEWS

BCYS FLAME 2025 “Unstoppable” - *Fan the Flame of Hope*

Although it may feel like months away, we are excited to be preparing for Flame in March 2025, following on from the incredible experience that 1,000 young people from the Brentwood Diocese had at the event earlier this year. Once again, the BCYS will purchase a block of earlybird tickets on behalf of the Diocese, to enable us to allocate seats together, in a very desirable area as close to the front as possible.

These earlybird tickets are £29 each, a saving of £5 per ticket on the full price of £34, and will be purchased in January, which is why we are asking for your ticket requests now!

BCYS SUMMER LOURDES YOUTH PILGRIMAGE—July 2024 (exact dates TBC) - Bookings are now open online for the Brentwood Catholic Youth Service Pilgrimage to Lourdes in July. The week is spent serving the main Diocesan Pilgrimage, assisting the elderly and infirm, alongside times of retreat, reconciliation, visiting the baths, taking part in the beautiful Processions, an afternoon in the mountains, party and social nights - all with other young Catholics from around our Diocese.

The pilgrimage is open to all those in school year 10–13, with all those of school leaver age (18+) invited to join us as young leaders (subject to attending a training weekend). All details and applications can be found on the website www.bcys.net/events/sl24.