

Thank you for your generosity
last weekend

4th Sunday of Advent Collection -
€1,160.00.

*This collection is for the ordinary day-to-day
running of the Church in Gurrabraher.*

Christmas Collection - €3,229.00

This Christmas collection is part of the
Priests' Income. We thank you for your
generosity.

**Donations gratefully received for Church
Building Fund from the following.**

Ms Eily Morris & supporters - €500.00
Christmas Raffle - €902.00.
Old Coins - €240.00
Blarney St. Post Office Raffle - €515.00

*Donations for roof repairs gratefully accepted at
Parish Office or they can be lodged directly into:*

**Ascension Church Building Fund A/c at
AIB Bank
IE65 AIBK 934194 32642064**

SUNDAY DUTY ROTA

December 31, 2017

A priest can be contacted if required
this Sunday by phoning:

Gurrabraher: 085 - 8041951

*"If my people
who are called by my name
Will humble themselves and pray
and seek my face -
and turn from their wicked ways,
then I will hear from heaven
and I will forgive their sin
and I will heal their land."
- 2 Chronicles, 7:14.*

Mass Intentions this Week

Sat. 30, December

6pm. Paddy O'Connor, RIP.

Sun 31,

9am. Michael Sheehan, RIP & Sheehan Family

11.30am. RIP members of Collins & O'Connor Faml.

Mon 1, January, 2018,

10am.

Tue 2,

8am. Novena Mass 1.

10am. For Holy Souls.

Wed 3,

8am. For Holy Souls

10am. Dominic & Margaret Myers & Dominic Jun.

Thu 4,

8am. Novena Mass 2.

10am. Alex Morrissey, RIP.

Fri 5,

8am. Sheila Lynch, RIP.

10am. Mary & Shay Forde, RIP.

Sat 6,

10am. Pro-Populo.

RECENT DEATHS

We pray for those recently deceased...

Pauline Twomey, Columcille Road

Mary O'Leary, Churchfield Tce, East.

..... Requiescat in Pace.

*On First Friday of each month a special Mass
(Month's Mind) is offered at 7pm in Gurrabraher
for those who died over the past month. We
specially invite family member to attend and pray
for the person who has died.*



Ascension Parish
Gurrabraher, Cork. TK23 HK31
Sunday, December 31, 2017.
Feast of Holy Family (B)

Parish Office – 021-4303655 (If Urgent: 085-8041951)
email: ascensionparish123@gmail.com

Priests of the Parish:

Fr. Tomás Walsh, SMA. Tel: 021-4303658. (tomas.walsh@sma.ie)

Fr. Aidan Vaughan, OFM, Cap. Tel: 021-4397472. (aidan1302@gmail.com)

Weekend Masses – Saturday 6pm (Vigil) & Sundays – 9am & 11.30am.

Feast of Holy Family

This Sunday we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family. When the shepherds went to the stable of Bethlehem after hearing the angels' announcement of glad tidings, they found Mary and Joseph – and the baby in the manger. The scene invites us to contemplate on what we see - and the mystery it reveals for all families.

The feast of the Holy Family reminds us of the sacredness of the institution of the family itself. The family is the most important cell of human society - and essential for human flourishing. It should be obvious that much of the dysfunction that occurs in people's lives, or in the life of society has its roots in the dysfunction of the family.

The family then – founded on the marriage of a man and a woman – is the path where children can best encounter and know God; it is a school of faith and of values; it is where the mutual self-giving and faithfulness of husband and wife provides a secure and protected home for children to best grow in virtue and to assume their own responsibilities as members of society and as citizens of a country.

*We wish all our parishioners God's blessings throughout
2018. May each of us discover anew the Christ Child - and
filled with his blessings may we renew the face of the earth.*

The Feast of the Epiphany – Saturday, January 6 – A Holyday of Obligation

This feast commemorates the visit of the wise men to worship the baby Jesus. Tradition tells us that their names were Caspar, Melchior and Balthassar. The men were astrologers who were looking for the star that would lead them to the promised Messiah. According to the Gospel narratives, the wise men brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh with them. These gifts were very meaningful. Gold was a precious and expensive gift; traditionally exchanged between royalty – a sign that Jesus, despite his lowly birth, is King. Frankincense is a sweet perfume which was often burned in the temple to worship God. It was a sign that Jesus should be worshipped. Myrrh was used to keep things fresh, and it was used by the women to anoint Jesus' body when he died. By bringing it as a gift to Jesus, the wise men foretold his suffering and death. As this feast is a Holy Day of Obligation, all Catholics should participate in the morning on this day.

Mass Times – Vigil Mass: Friday @ 6pm and Saturday morning at 10am.

Mass of Thanksgiving on Sunday night at 11pm.

There will be a special Mass of Thanksgiving on this Sunday night at 11pm to thank God for his blessings and favours during 2017. In many parts of the world Christians come out in great number to acknowledge God's blessings and protection in the year that is ending - and asking for the same blessings as they begin a new year.

Mary – Mother of God. January 1st.

On this coming Monday, January 1st, we begin the New Year, by calling on the intercession of Our Lady, Mother of God, to guide us through 2018. No one knows the future – Thank God we don't! Yet we know that like previous years; bereavement, accidents, terrorist attacks, unemployment, pain and hurt will be part of the human condition. Let us begin 2018 by asking Mary, Mother of God, to shield us from all danger. May Mary guide our paths - and lead us into the ways of joy and peace.

Without Jesus man suffers only an aching hunger

The world's only hope is Christ, the Infant King, born in Bethlehem... When Bethlehem fades from the heart and souls of men, then their starved souls escape to a dead-end transcendence. Look at our culture without Christ. Its men and women, especially its young, seek to step beyond their flattened world by absorption with ghosts, and zombies; with end of the world obsessions and cartoon superheroes. In Eliot's arresting lines from *Burnt Norton*, they "distract themselves from distractions by distractions." A thousand pities - for the true Hero is so close - awaiting them in the unthreatening face of a Divine Child. Christmas imposes upon every Catholic a solemn obligation: to tell the world that our joy, our answer, our peace and our rescue lay in the humility of Bethlehem.

What did Mary know and when did she know it?

Obviously, the idea that Mary was simply in the dark about her Son's identity and mission is a nonstarter. Among other things, Mary knew what she heard from the Angel Gabriel at the annunciation, (cf Lk 1: 26-38); what the angel told Joseph in his dream, (Matthew 1:18-25); what Elizabeth told Mary under the influence of the Holy Spirit at the Visitation (Luke 1:39-56); what Gabriel told Zechariah about his own son John the Baptist, (Luke 1:5-23); what the shepherds told Mary at the Nativity - news that they heard from the heavenly host (Luke 2:8-20); and; what Simeon and Anna told Mary at the Presentation in the Temple (Luke 2:22-38).

That's before Jesus was two months old, before we even get to the Magi and Joseph's dreams that saves Jesus from Herod and bring the Holy Family to live in Nazareth. We are also told that Mary was overshadowed by the Holy Spirit, and are twice told that she "kept all these things, pondering them in her heart" (Luke 2:19, 51). She thought about them long and deeply - and her Magnificat shows that she had deep insight into what God was doing in her.

On the other hand, nothing in divine revelation or Catholic tradition obliges us to believe that the Virgin Mary could have given a precise account of Trinitarian theology, the Hypostatic Union, much less that she had complete and exact foreknowledge of his entire ministry, including his passion, death and resurrection. (She did know, via Simeon, that "a sword" would pierce through her own soul.)

The Jewish people of Jesus' day looked forward to the coming of the kingdom of God, when all would be set right. The oppressed would be liberated, the blind would see, the dead would live again, and the Lord would rule over all the nations, which would turn from their idols to serve the God of Israel. Did Mary have reason to believe that her Son would usher in the kingdom of God? Here the answer is clearly 'Yes'. At the Annunciation Mary was told of her Son: "*He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there will be no end.*" (Luke 1:32-33).

All of this is clearly messianic, kingdom-of-God language. To be the Son of the Most High, to reign forever in a kingdom without end, is to be the Messiah and to usher in the kingdom of God. But that's not all Mary knew. Mary knew her Son would bring salvation. "Mother of my Lord" is widely understood to anticipate Mary's title *Theotokos* or Mother of God... And if Elizabeth had an intimation of Mary as *Theotokos*, surely Mary did also. She knew!