



PARISH OF ST. AGATHA

FOURTH 2018



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Christmas Services Timetable



**Christmas Eve
24th Dec**

**10.00am Daily Mass
5.30pm Family Vigil Christmas Mass
8.00pm Vigil Christmas Mass**

**Christmas Day
25th Dec**

**9.00am Dawn Mass
11.30am Christmas Day Mass**



**Wed. 26th Dec, St. Stephen Day: 12.00pm
Thurs. 27th Dec, St. John Evangelist: 12.00pm
Fri. 28th Dec, Holy Innocents: 12.00pm
Sat. 29th Dec, 12.00pm
Sat. 29th Dec, Vigil Mass for Sunday 5.30pm
Sun. 30th Dec, The Holy Family of Jesus: 11.30am**

**News Years Eve
31st Dec**

**12.00pm Daily Mass
11.00pm –12.00am Eucharistic Adoration
12.00am Midnight New Year's Mass**

**News Years Day
1st Jan**

12.00pm Mass, Mary the Holy Mother of God

BLESSED IS THE FRUIT OF YOUR WOMB

The Birth (day) of Jesus is now imminent and today's Mass prepares us for the Christ-mass celebration. The fourth candle representing peace is lit today on the Advent wreath. Bethlehem, in English means the "House of Bread" and is the chosen location for the Word of God to come into the world, in the human form of Jesus: the Second person of the Blessed Trinity. The Father "prepared a Body" for His Son in the womb of Mary.

THE WOMB IS FULL OF LIFE

In today's Gospel, we are given the privileged insight of that beautiful moment when Mary, who is carrying Jesus in her womb (approx. 3 weeks old), is greeting her cousin Elizabeth, who is carrying John the Baptist (24 weeks old) in her womb. This really is a moment between the two babies in the womb. From inside the womb of Mary, the power of the presence of the Holy Spirit of Jesus (God) enters into the womb of Elizabeth, baptising the 6 month old John, making him jump for joy. Elizabeth, enlightened by the power of the same Holy Spirit acknowledges that Living Presence of God made Flesh, in Mary's womb by declaring; **Blessed is the fruit of your womb.** The womb is full of life.

LIFE BEGINS IN THE WOMB

There is no coincidence that Jesus proclaims today, this Gospel of Life, just days after the Republic of Ireland's President signed new legislation to abort life in the womb. President Higgins signed the Health (Regulation of Termination of Pregnancy) Bill 2018 last Thursday (20th December) and it has become law. The new laws will allow for unrestricted access to abortion up to 12 weeks of pregnancy, subject to a cooling-off period and a requirement for medical consultation. That's not all, as after 12 weeks, abortions will be permitted in exceptional circumstances. Where will it end?

GOD WILLS OUR EXISTENCE FROM HEAVEN

The existence of Jesus and John would not have happened if Mary and Elizabeth terminated life in their wombs. The Will of God would have been disobeyed and Eternal Life would not exist for us. Others suffer. God willed the existence of Himself, in human form, to begin in the womb of Mary - long before she ever conceived, as Holy Scripture informs us. He also willed the existence of us in the wombs of our own mothers, a long time ago from Heaven and, through the seed of our fathers, brought us into existence at this time. We are born to help Him in His Plan for the Salvation of the world. This is the purpose of our earthly life to be instruments in the hands of God, leading us to eternal Life, beyond this world.

LIVE THE GIFT OF LIFE

Anyone who acknowledges making any mistake (sin) in the past and truly regrets it now will be forgiven by God, in the Sacrament of Confession. He sympathises with our remorse at our time of weakness and always offers us Hope to bring Peace into our hearts and souls. Never doubt His Divine Mercy and trust in His Compassionate Love. This Christmas, let us give birth to Jesus in our hearts and do our best to follow His Ways and Teachings. Have a blessed and peaceful Christmas and God bless, Fr. Brendan.