### CHRISTMAS MASSES IN SEVENOAKS PARISH 2022



St Thomas's, Sevenoaks Granville Road, Sevenoaks, TN13 1ER

Christmas Eve - Saturday 24th December Vigil Mass ..... 6:00pm Midnight Mass ..... 11:30pm

Christmas Day - Sunday 25th December Mass of the Dawn ..... 8:00am (Latin) Mass of the Day ..... 9:15am Mass of the Day ..... 11:15am

Most Holy Trinity, Otford High Street, Otford, TN14 5PH

Christmas Eve - Saturday 24th December Vigil Mass ..... 8:00pm

Christmas Day - Sunday 25th December Mass of the Day ..... 9:30am

St Joseph's, Borough Green Western Road, Borough Green, TN15 8AG

Christmas Eve - Saturday 24th December Vigil Mass ..... 6:00pm

Christmas Day - Sunday 25th December Mass of the Day ..... 9:30am

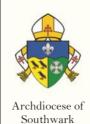
St Bernadette's, West Kingsdown Fawkham Road, West Kingsdown, TN15 6JP

Christmas Eve - Saturday 24th December Vigil Mass ..... 7:30pm Christmas Day - Sunday 25th December Mass of the Day ..... 11:00am

Confessions Saturdays 10:00am - 10:30am and 5:15pm - 5:45pm in St Thomas's or after any Mass at any church or by appointment

Presbytery: 01732 454177

Website: http://www.sevrcparish.org.uk



## PARISH OF ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY SEVENOAKS

#### CHURCHES IN SEVENOAKS, OTFORD, BOROUGH GREEN AND WEST KINGSDOWN

Parish Newsletter



Today's Mass: FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (Year A) Isaiah 7: 10-14, Psalm 23, Romans 1: 1-7, Matthew 1: 18-24

The **First Reading** contains *Isaiah's* famous prediction of the virgin birth of the Messiah. In fact, there is much debate about this, and much scholarly ink has been used, mainly over whether the word translated as 'maiden' means a virgin or not. However, it is perfectly acceptable for us to interpret the words in the same way as *Matthew* does in the Gospel.

In its Isaiah context, the prophet is attacking King Ahaz for entering into an alliance with foreign powers instead of putting his trust in God; but God will send this sign to ensure that the dynasty of David will endure.

The man referred to in verses 2 and 3 of the **Psalm** is often taken to refer to King David and bringing the Ark into Jerusalem.

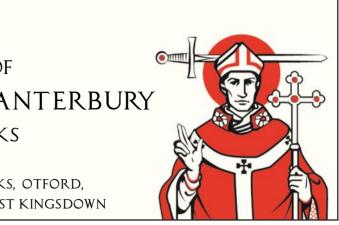
The Second Reading is from the beginning of St Paul's letter to the Church in Rome. The good news is that Jesus, a "descendant of David", is both human and divine.

The last line of this reading provides the second option for the priest's greeting at the beginning of Mass.

Gospel: Matthew depicts God's preparations for the birth and explains how this fits in with scripture, quoting the verse from *Isaiah* in today's First Reading. Notice how prominent Joseph is in this story: God takes the initiative in offering his grace, but we humans must make an active response

Although the term 'virgin birth' is often used, a more accurate term to designate Jesus' birth is 'virginal conception'. This idea, which both *Matthew* and *Luke* stress, helps us to understand Jesus as divine, the Son of God, but also as the long predicted Messiah, who must be born into the house of David (to which Joseph belonged).

Fr Davíd



18th December 2022

### ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY SEVENOAKS

Sunday Mass times: Saturday 6:00pm

Adoration:

Monday

Tuesday

Sunday 8:00am (Latin) **9:15am** (Children's Liturgy of Word) 11:15am 6:00pm

8:30am - 9:30am

6:00pm - 7:00pm

Weekday Mass times: 8:00am Monday Tuesday 9:30am 8:00am Wednesday Thursday 12:00noon Friday 8:00am Saturday 9:30am

Sacrament of Reconciliation:

10:00am - 10:30am,

5:15pm - 5:45pm

Saturday



Granville Road. Sevenoaks TN13 1ER

Parish Office: Magdalena Wiacek Monday - Friday 9:00am - 12:00noon Tel: 01732 454177 sevenoaks@rcaos.org.uk www.sevrcparish.org.uk



High Street, Otford TN14 5PH



ST JOSEPH'S

BOROUGH GREEN

Mass times: Sunday 9:30am

(with Children's Liturgy of the Word)

Thursday 10:00am

Holy Days of Obligation 6:00pm

Mass times: Sunday 9:30am (with Children's Liturgy of the Word) Wednesday 10:00am Holy Days of Obligation **10:00am** Adoration: Thursday 7:30pm - 8:30pm Friday 11:00am - 12:00noon

Church contact: **Barry Authers** Tel: 01959 524362 sevenoaksmht@rcaos.org.uk

Church contact: Antoni Offert Tel: 07513 041075 sevenoaks@rcaos.org.uk

Western Rd, Borough Green TN15 8AG



Fawkham Rd, West Kingsdown TN15 6JP

#### ST BERNADETTE'S WEST KINGSDOWN

Mass times: Sunday 11:00am Friday 10:00am Holy Days of Obligation 11:00am Adoration: Wed 12:00noon- 1:00pm

Church contacts: Jill & John Gobel Tel: 01474 853676 sevenoaks@rcaos.org.uk

Executive Head: Mrs Katherine Sexton Academy Principal: Ms Geraldine Leahy Tel: 01732 453921





ST THOMAS' CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

> South Park, Sevenoaks. TN13 1EH www.saintthomas.co.uk

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## CONTACTS & ORGANISATIONS

#### Parish of St Thomas of Canterbury, Sevenoaks

Presbytery and Parish Office: 12 Granville Road, Sevenoaks, TN13 1ER Website: www.sevrcparish.org.uk Tel: 01732 454177

Parish Priest: Fr David Gibbons, KCHS davidgibbons@rcaos.org.uk Assistant Priest: Fr Peter Littleton peterlittleton@rcaos.org.uk **Parish Deacon:** Rev'd Neil Philipson neilphilipson@rcaos.org.uk

Parish Secretary: Mrs Magdalena Wiacek sevenoaks@rcaos.org.uk Parish Office hours: Monday - Friday 9:00am - 12:00noon

**Safeguarding Rep:** Ken Baines sevenoakssg1@safeguardrcaos.org.uk The Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator can be contacted on 020 7261 1606; in an emergency dial 999

Adoration Barry Authers adoration@sevrcparish.org.uk

Altar Servers (St Thomas's) Catherine Ingram Ingramfamily15@yahoo.com

Catenians Social club for Catholic men Aiden O'Mahony aidan.omahony@btinternet.com

Children's Liturgy of the Word, Sunday Mass Sevenoaks, 9:15am Mass: Mark O'Prey sevenoaksclow@rcaos.org.uk Otford, 9:30am Mass: Magdalena Wiacek sevenoaks@rcaos.org.uk Borough Green, 9:30am Mass: Fiona Newton - fionanewton321@btinternet.com

#### Choirs

Music Group: Lonnie Christophers lonniechr@hotmail.com Traditional Choir: Barbara Page 01732 454729 Borough Green: Chris Hurll chris.hurll@outlook.com

Church Cleaning (St Thomas's) James McSharry jamesmcsharry@hotmail.com

Church Flowers Kate Travers katetravers521@hotmail.com

**Confirmation Programme** Gabrielle Ellis sevenoaksconfirmation@rcaos.org.uk

**Parish Finance Committee** Secretary: Mary Scott 3maryscott@gmail.com

First Holy Communion & Reconciliation Programme Fr Peter Littleton: peterlittleton@rcaos.org.uk

Gift Aid: Sean Corrigan sevenoaksgac@rcaos.org.uk

**Holy Trinity Committee** Secretary: Barry Authers sevenoaksmht@rcaos.org.uk

Lectio Divina Kathie Gonzalez 01732 761253

Listening to you (Bereavement Support) Third Monday, 10:30am in Parish Room Ronnie Campbell 01732 452988, Sarah Harrison 01959 522357, Kate Travers katetravers521@hotmail.com and Ann Livingston annlivingston@hotmail.co.uk

Loaves and Fishes Foodbank Isabelle Mercer: h.imercer@btopenworld.com

**Mothers' Prayers** Mondays, 11:30am at Star House, Star Hill Road 01959 532505

Baby & Toddlers Group Tuesdays 10:00am - 12:00noon, Parish Centre Mary Hunt 07890 229794

**RACET (Rural Africa Children's Education Trust)** MaryAnn Perasso 01959 522337, www.racet.org

Readers, Ministers & Welcomers Rota (St Thomas's) Andrew Pembroke st.thomas.rota@gmail.com

Repository

Saturday 6:00pm, Sunday: 8:00 am, 11:15am Sophie McBrien sophiemcbrien@yahoo.co.uk

RCIA For adults becoming Catholic Andrew La Trobe andrew.latrobe@gmail.com

Retreats Catherine Roger c.rodger@btinternet.com

St Bernadette's Committee Secretary: Jill Gobel jill.gobel@btinternet.com

St Joseph's Committee Secretary: John Foley johnandmariefoley@gmail.com

The Pilgrims For retired parishioners Jackie Pembroke 01732 450197

**Scripture Fellowship** Reading a Gospel together Andrew Wilkinson andrewwilkos@gmail.com

St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP) Paul Boyle 07796564018 Kathie Gonzalez sevenoakssvp@gmail.com

Union of Catholic Mothers (UCM) West Kingsdown UCM: Monica Biggs mmdbbiggs@outlook.com

Webmaster Barry Authers sevenoakswebmaster@rcaos.org.uk

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## PARISH NOTICES

### TODAY

#### **Day of Prayer**

Today is a Day of Prayer for Expectant Mothers.

#### Supply Priests

We welcome Fr Bryan Wells at St Thomas's and one of the Capuchin friars at Borough Green and West Kingsdown.

#### 11:15am Mass

The Music Group leads our music.

### THIS WEEK

#### Weekday Masses

All Masses are at the normal times in all churches. Why not take time out from Christmas shopping and come to Mass, to help you prepare properly for Christmas?

#### Christmas Eve Crib Service at St Thomas's

We are looking forward to having the Crib Service again this year at St Thomas' at 5:30pm on the 24<sup>th</sup> of December before the first Christmas Mass. We hope to involve many children from the parish who would like to take part. We will be meeting at the Parish Centre at 4:30pm on the day to go through the parts and give children their costumes.

The Service will involve some singing and a retelling of the Christmas story - it is planned to last 15 minutes to allow time for the preparation for Mass at 6:00pm.

Children can be collected by parents at 5:45pm if they are not staying for Mass or can then sit with their parents for mass.

Please send Mary Hunt (marystrinati@gmail.com/ 07890229794) a message if you plan on your child coming in order to give us an indication of numbers.

### NOTICES

#### St Thomas's Repository

You can now pay for Repository items by the card reader: just select the third option. Cash can be put in the wall box marked 'Repository', by the door to the Sacristy.

#### **Primary School Applications**

Parents of children who were born between 1st September 2018 and 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019 can now apply for primary school places for their children. Applications should be made through the Local Authority online at www.kent.gov.uk/ola. Please note that the closing date for applications is 16th January 2023.

Families wishing to apply to St Thomas' Catholic Primary School in Sevenoaks also need to complete and return a Supplementary Information Form to the school, which can be downloaded from the school https://www.saintthomas.co.uk/ website at admissions/. Email Fr David to make an appointment for him to countersign the form.

Parents with children in the Nursery class at St Thomas' School are reminded that their children will not automatically be given a place in the Reception class; you have to make a formal application for a Reception place through the Local Authority and submit a Supplementary Information Form to the school.

If you have not already had a school tour, please contact the school office at office@st-thomassevenoaks.kcsp.org.uk or call on 01732 453921.

#### **Christmas Offering**

Envelopes are available in all four churches. Please note that if you make your parish contribution by Standing Order this won't include the Christmas Offering to Fr David and Fr Peter. You can also make a bank transfer (to NatWest Bank, RCAS Sevenoaks, Sort Code 60-19-02, A/c No 25782002); please put Christmas Offering as the reference.

This parish has a fine tradition of being very generous in the Christmas and Easter Offerings, and your priests thank you in advance.

#### Greenery donations

These can be left to the right of the Parish Centre on the pathway through the gate during the few days before 23<sup>rd</sup> December. This is a good opportunity for you to prune your garden! Many thanks. Any queries 3 to Kate Travers 01732 668706.

## PARISH AND OTHER NOTICES

#### Advanced Altar Servers' Training

#### - Year 7 and above

Training sessions for the Advanced Altar Server course - for those in Year 7 and above who regularly serve at Mass - will take place on the first two Fridays of January, beginning on Friday 6<sup>th</sup>, at 5:00pm for one hour, in the Parish Centre. Contact Catherine Ingram (ingramfamily15@yahoo.com) for more information and to book a place.

#### St Thomas's Catholic School

#### - Breakfast Club Assistant required

A Breakfast Club Assistant is required to join the team from January 2023. We can offer:

- an enthusiastic, dedicated and supportive staff team
- a happy working environment
- children who enjoy being at school
- the possibility of additional hours in our After School team.

The successful candidate will

- work well as part of a team, and have good communication skills
- demonstrate high standards of health and safety for food preparation and cleaning
- be energetic, self-motivated and consistent in their approach
- be flexible and able to think on their feet.

Salary range: KR4. Hours 7½ per week (7:30am - 9:00am), term time only.

St Thomas' Catholic Primary School is part of the Kent Catholic Schools Partnership who are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff to share this commitment. The above post is subject to an enhanced disclosure check. Please email <u>office@st-</u> <u>thomas-sevenoaks.kcsp.org.uk</u> for more information. *Geraldine Leahy* 

#### Advance Notice

Friday 6<sup>th</sup> January is the Solemnity of the Epiphany and a Holyday of Obligation. Holy Mass will be at the usual times at all four churches.

#### World Youth Day - 1<sup>st</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> August 2023

Next summer will see another international meeting of young Catholics from around the world, who will make a pilgrimage to gather with the Pope in Portugal. This is a wonderful opportunity to get to know other young Catholics, to see the universality of the Church and to grow in faith. If you are **18 - 30 years old** and would be interested in being part of a group travelling from this area please contact Fr Peter (<u>peterlittleton@rcaos.org.uk</u>) for more information.

#### The Angelus

P: The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary,

C: And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary, full of grace; the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.

P: Behold the handmaid of the Lord.

C: Be it done unto me according to thy word.

Hail Mary, full of grace; the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.

P: And the Word was made flesh.

C: And dwelt among us. (Bowing slightly.)

Hail Mary, full of grace; the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death.

P: Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God.

*C:* That we might be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

#### P: Let us pray,

Pour forth, we beseech Thee, O Lord, Thy grace into our hearts; that, we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ, Thy Son, was made known by the message of an angel, may by His Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of His Resurrection. Through the same Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

From the Desk of the Parish Priest

### The Virginal Conception of Jesus 4

#### onvincing proof

If we take the four bits of evidence for the virginal conception, which I have summarised in the previous three weeks, we would have to conclude if we

were being honest that each of the four 'proofs' is either weak or inconclusive.

However, suppose Fr Peter were found dead, having been stabbed, in a pool of blood in the Presbytery. Suppose the Parish Secretary and Parish accountant had earlier heard us having a blazing row, during which they heard me shout 'if you do that again I'll kill you'. In itself this does not prove I was the murderer. Suppose the murder weapon were found to be the letter opener I have on my desk; again not conclusive in itself, as a third party might have picked it up. Suppose, thirdly, I were seen by reliable witnesses with blood on my hands; again I could have simply discovered the body and inadvertently got Fr Peter's blood on me while I was seeing if I could resuscitate him. Suppose, fourthly, that the door entry log recorded that no one rang the door bell in the critical period: would this mean that no one else had entered the Presbytery, or could it be that the murderer was a burglar who climbed in through a window?

Individually, these four bits of evidence are not sufficient to prove that I was the murderer, but taken together the jury might well convict me. It is the same with the arguments in favour of the virginal conception: we can find arguments against accepting any of them, but put them together and we can conclude that the combined assertion is strong.

#### Does it matter?

At the beginning I said that this question is an important one, because as Christian disciples we should be clear as to who we think Jesus Christ is and confident in our understanding of the Person we follow. It also matters because if we start to question the historicity of one bit of Scripture, especially part of a Gospel, we begin to question the rest. Worse, if we

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reject this doctrine we then begin not only to undermine who Jesus was and is, but also to question God's actions in history, and we begin to chip away at the role and importance of Mary.

Put another way, unpick one thread of the tapestry of Christian doctrine and teaching and we soon find that the whole thing is unravelling. If we can't rely on the Gospels and other bits of Scripture, if we can't rely on the testimony of the first Christians (and remember that the evangelists were writing for people some of whom will have known perhaps Jesus Himself and certainly the Apostles and Mary), if we can't rely on the teaching authority of the Catholic Church (guided as we believe it to be by the Holy Spirit down the ages), then our whole faith dissolves.

#### Summary

At Christmas we focus on the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. We don't simply recall it, as we do on Bonfire Night when we recall Guy Fawkes' plot to blow up Parliament. We meditate in the Christmas season on the various mysteries involved: the birth of God as a man, the union of God and man in Jesus Christ, the new beginning in the course of human history, the rescuing of fallen humanity from sin and so the instigation of our redemption and salvation, the cooperation of Mary and others in God's plan, and so on. Above all, the doctrine of the virginal conception attests to the fact that God's redemption of his creation is an act of his grace alone; even Mary's acceptance of her part is God's gracious gift.

At Mass at Christmas we make present in our churches Jesus Christ Himself, 'born of the virgin Mary', and who is among us in His Body and Blood. After Communion in the Mass of the Dawn on Christmas morning the priests prays

> Grant us, O Lord, as we honour with joyful devotion the Nativity of your Son, that we may come to know with fullness of faith the hidden depths of this mystery and to love them ever more and more.

## UKRAINIAN WELCOME CENTRE

On Wednesday, 30<sup>th</sup> November, the Ukrainian Welcome Centre in London was officially opened by His Majesty King Charles III alongside the First Lady of Ukraine, Mrs Olena Zelenska.

The centre, based at the Eparchy's cathedral, was set up to provide guidance and assistance to temporarily displaced Ukrainians.

#### **Our Lady of Tenderness**

King Charles was presented with an icon drawn on a munitions box, a gift from His Beatitude Sviatoslav Shevchuk, Patriarch of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church. The icon of Our Lady of Tenderness was 'written', painted, by Oleksandr Klymenko and Sofiia Atlantova – Ukrainian iconographers who founded a charity project called "Icons on munitions boxes".

#### **A Significant Day**

Bishop Kenneth Nowakowski, Eparch, or Bishop, of the Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy of the Holy Family of London, spoke shortly after the visit, and explained the significance of the day:

"I think that the support of His Majesty is very important for people here, both British citizens, newlyarrived Ukrainians, and it also gives a very strong message to the people in Ukraine that they have the support of the people of the United Kingdom".

Bishop Nowakowski also expressed his gratitude to Mrs Zelenska for visiting the community:

"For the Ukrainians that were here at our Welcome Centre today, to be able to have this visit of the First Lady, knowing that she hasn't – and Ukraine hasn't – forgotten about those that have had to flee, and showing her compassion, was a very important thing".

"Her gentleness and her kind words to the people, being able to speak to them in their own language was very, very reassuring and heart-warming."

Bishop Nowakowski said that during the visit, he was able to explain to King Charles how the Ukrainian Welcome Centre is helping Ukrainians displaced by the war:

"I was able to talk to him about our church community here, our Cathedral community, and also introduce him to our Cathedral staff, which I think was important...".

"One of the touching moments was when His Majesty was talking to some of these young mothers with their children and the expressions on the children's faces. They maybe didn't recognise who His Majesty was but they knew that people were paying attention to them and it was a wonderful experience".

"Others were just overwhelmed by the fact that they woke up this morning and they had no idea that today they would be meeting the First Lady and His Majesty the King. A lot of people were showing their emotions at being greeted both by His Majesty and the First Lady of Ukraine."

#### **Photos**

You can view a full album of photos on the Flickr channel: <u>https://www.flickr.com/photos/catholicism/</u> <u>albums/72177720304101344</u>.

# ALL MASSES ARE AT ST THOMAS'S CHURCH UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED

SUNDAY 18 <sup>th</sup> December	FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVE
6:00pm (Sat) 8:00am (Latin) 9:15am 11:15am 6:00pm 9:30am <i>Otford</i> 9:30am <i>Borough Green</i> 11:00am <i>West Kingsdown</i>	Jeanne Brady and the comf People of the Parish Dec'd member: Waite & Me Thomas Healy RIP (birthday Ken Connole RIP Mary & Matthew Scott RIP Archie Payne RIP Michael Goodall RIP
Monday 19 <sup>th</sup> Advent we	ekday
8:00am	3 Richards and Phyllis & all
Tuesday 20 <sup>th</sup> Advent we	ekday
9:30am	Michael Castelli RIP
Wednesday 21 <sup>st</sup> Advent weekday	
8:00am 10:00am <i>Otford</i>	Kenneth & Sylvia Shore RIP Parish Priests
Thursday 22 <sup>nd</sup> Advent we	ekday
10:00am <i>Borough Green</i> 12:00noon	Martin & Vivienne Andrews Jim Cairney RIP
Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup> Advent we	ekday
8:00am 10:00am <i>West Kingsdown</i>	Good intentions of the done Peace in the World
Saturday 24 <sup>th</sup> Advent we	ekday
9:30am	Holy Souls
	CHRISTMAS EVE
6:00pm 6:00pm <i>Borough Green</i> 7:30pm <i>West Kingsdown</i>	Leonard Gould RIP Dec'd members: Corrigan & Summerville fa Patrick O'Grady RIP (annive
8:00pm <i>Otford</i> 11:30pm	Peace in the World People of the Parish
SUNDAY 25 <sup>th</sup> December	CHRISTMAS DAY
8:00am (Latin) 9:15am 11:15am 9:30am <i>Otford</i> 9:30am <i>Borough Green</i>	Dec'd members: Rodrigues Emily French & Angus Goule Dec'd member: Waite & Me Tom Tunney RIP Hong Ling Chang Kid RIP

11:00am West Kingsdown

ENT (Year A)	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •
fort of her family	Pray for the recently departed
	Margaret Thackaberry
ernock family γ)	Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace
	Departed anniversaries
l deceased	Elizabeth Dean, Stanley Waghorn, Dick Doherty Patricia Player, John Vaughan, Piotr Oscilowski, Michael Self, David Joyce, Albinia Lunn, Geoffrey Gass, Julia Hessey, John Grandi, Mary Walshe, Teresa Leigh, Joan Angibault, Percy Best, Josephine Harris, Simon Emmerson, Agnes Eccles, Anne Handman, Winifred Chinnery,
	Kathleen Lambert.
s RIP	Please remember the sick who have been commended to our prayers, especially:
or	Lynne Stanley, Yvonne Bollen, Peter Ringham, Ann Steven, Lilian Spragg, Jane Tabor, Ken Holmes, Mary Scott, Sean Cloke, Ann Farren and all in care and nursing homes.
	LATIN ANTIPHONS
amilies	Entrance
ersary)	Rorate, cæli, desuper, et nubes pluant iustum; aperiatur terra et germinet Salvatorem.
	Communion
& D'Souza family d (engagement) ernock family	Ecce Virgo concipiet, et pariet filium; et vocabitur nomen eius Emmanuel.