



St. Joseph's Church Wilton

Telephone: 021- 4341362 Website: www.smawilton.ie email: stjosephschurchwilton@sma.ie



Bless My Family This Christmas

There is so much joy in presents and gifts at Christmas. But the most precious gift comes from you Lord, the gift of your love.

This is the gift I ask you to bestow on my family this Christmas, a gift more wondrous than any from Father Christmas.

Bless each and every one of them, keep them in your love, and keep them from harm.

Bless all our loved ones departed, too,

Those we miss so much!

May they know your peace.

And may your peace reign in our hearts

So that your love may always be at the heart of our family.

Amen.

Tax Back 2025

We thank our members who participated in our Tax Back program during 2024. We ask new members who can join and participate with us for 2025 to please do so.

All that is required is for a person to be paying tax and during the course of the year, if the accumulation of your contributions exceeds €250 we, the Church, can submit your name to revenue and the parish will receive €120 from the Government, **at no cost to yourself**. This money will be of great benefit to the upkeep of our parish in 2026.

Parish Calendar 2025

Our parish calendar for 2025 is available. The cost of printing is covered from the proceeds from our Pastoral Fund collections taken up as a second collection on certain Sundays. Feel free to take a copy.



*Wishing you every happiness
for Christmas and the
New Year.*

Fr Michael and SMA Wilton staff

Christmas Mass Times 2024

Wednesday 25th December: Christmas Day

Masses at 10.30 am and 12 noon

No evening Mass on Christmas Day

Thursday 26th December

Mass at 12 noon

The Mass Office will reopen on 2nd January 2025.

Christmas Charity

People have been quietly making contributions via the box on the wall at the back of the church over the past months. In this regard I am happy to declare for the Christmas period we will make another drive in support of the people of Gaza, in conjunction with Trócaire.

Our Christmas appeal 2024 in support of Gaza now stands at €3,525. If you'd like to support our Gaza appeal, place a red ribbon on the Christmas tree and place your donation in the money box beside the tree.

Parish Charity

Recently Fr. Michael visited the home of the Cork City Missing Person's Search and Recovery whom we supported with a donation of €3,000. Paul O'Flynn was on hand to record the visit and produced an interesting video of the work of the group and their motivation.

Scan the QR code to view the video.



SMA Journal for December

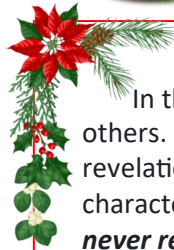
Paul O'Flynn has put together a video of some of the different events that happened across the SMA community for the month of December and over the Christmas season. Scan the QR code with your phone camera to view the video.





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Lessons We Should Take from the Christmas Story

In the Christmas story, once Jesus' identity has been revealed, it is quickly shared with others. In Matthew, the revelation given to Joseph is made known to Gentile Magi. In Luke, the revelation given to Mary is made known to the Jewish shepherds. Although the cast of characters differs sharply, each evangelist in his own way is teaching us that **Christ's identity is never received to be kept as a private possession.**

There is a negative side to the public manifestation of Jesus' identity: a warning found in both evangelists that not all will accept the gospel **especially some who should have been eager.** If the Magi come without hesitation to worship Jesus, guided by a star, the king, the chief priests and scribes who possess the Jewish heritage and can read the scriptures easily are quite hostile to Jesus and refuse to come. If Luke describes the rejoicing of the shepherds and of Simeon and Anna over the birth of "a Saviour who is Christ the Lord", there is nevertheless a solemn warning that this child is set for the fall and the rise of many in Israel.

The Christmas story is a story of "good news" but it also has an element of sadness because not all will believe. In a very real way, the Christmas story of Matthew and Luke are whole Gospels. They contain the revelation of the full identity of Jesus and the way in which this revelation was quickly shared with others, evangelizing some, but causing rejection and hatred among others.

What is my response to the Christmas story this Christmas?



Putting the Adult Christ Back Into Christmas

If it comes as a shock to many Christians to find that Matthew and Luke are our only source of knowledge about Jesus's infancy, it may be an even greater shock to realize that the two Gospels differ so much. Our Christmas crib, and most TV programs about Christmas, intermix details from both Gospels; but if you pick up the New Testament without previous assumptions – without being conditioned by the customary blending of the two stories – you might be dumbfounded by the enormous differences between the first two chapters of Matthew and those of Luke – and this is where we find the Christmas story.

If you have not done so already, take some time and read the infancy stories. In a real way, the Infancy stories of Matthew and Luke **are whole Gospels.** They contain the basic revelations to the full identity of Jesus and the way in which this revelation was quickly shared with others, evangelizing some, but causing rejection and hatred among others.

These are not sentimental stories about the "Baby Jesus". It's an invitation for us all to decide what meaning we bring to the Christmas story. You are invited and I am invited to decide.

Update on Trócaire's Work in Gaza

For St Joseph's Wilton Parish—December 2024

The Raw Facts:

- The latest death toll (as of 12 December 2024) stands at 45,614 Palestinians of which 17,492 are children. 1,139 people from the Israeli population have lost their lives.
- 106,257 Palestinians have been injured and 11,000 are still missing, many remain under the rubble and demolished homes, schools and other buildings that once stood in Gaza.
- So far, 90% of the Gazan population has been displaced – this is 1.9 million IDPs (internally-displaced people).
- Close to 100% of Gaza's population now live in poverty. 495,000 people are facing catastrophic levels of food insecurity.
- The education system has collapsed. All 625,000 school-aged children of Gaza have been out of school since October 7, 2023.
- Gaza's health system has been significantly compromised. 80% of the primary care centres are no longer functional. 19 hospitals out of 36 are out of service.
- Over 300 humanitarian workers have been killed in Gaza in the past year.

