



Dear parishioners,

Our picture today is Piero della Francesca's beautiful 'Madonna del parto' – or 'the Virgin about-to-give-birth'. A reminder that Christmas is now very close – and we need to be ready.

With that in mind, please read on...

1. We have now published our **Mass schedule for Christmas**. We will have Masses on **Christmas Eve at 5.30 pm, 9.00 pm and 12.00 midnight – and on Christmas Day at 8.00 am, 9.30 am and 11.30 am**. Entry to all the Masses will be on a 'first come, first serve' basis. Since we have more Masses than on a usual Sunday, we hope to be able to accommodate everyone who wants to take part – and we do look forward to seeing you.

Please note that during the **Christmas Octave (Monday 28th December – Friday 1st January inclusive)**, daily Mass will be at 10.00 am (not 9.30) – to give everyone (including the priests!) a slight lie-in during the festive season. This Octave contains many beautiful feasts, so do make an effort to come along, as a continuation of the Christmas celebrations.

2. We are also offering **extra times for Confession** in the run-up to Christmas. In addition to our regular slots, on Saturday 19th December there will be Confessions from 10.30 – 11.30 am and again from 4.30 – 5.30 pm. On Christmas Eve, there will be Confessions from 10.00 – 11.00 am, from 4.30 – 5.30 pm and from 8.00 – 9.00 pm.

We are all encouraged to make a good Confession before Christmas, as part of our spiritual preparation for this great feast.

3. We also need **your help with stewarding for our Christmas Masses** (and for the first weekend of January). Since, probably, more people will attend church at Christmas than on a normal Sunday, and we may also have visitors who will not be so familiar with our 'COVID – era' procedures, having enough stewards to guide and help really important. If you will be around, and could assist, please do consider giving your time.

To volunteer, please go to:

<https://doodle.com/poll/gnakvqpa3c3uy8xn>

If you have difficulty using the Doodle, or have any questions, please email Monse and Sara at holyghostvolunteers@gmail.com

Many thanks!

4. This Sunday marks the last weekend before Christmas. We wish you and your families every blessing at this time. If you are staying here in Balham, we hope to see you over the Christmas period, and if you are travelling to be with loved ones, we hope you will stay safe and return refreshed! With our best wishes,

Fr Richard and Fr Giovanni