



ST JOSEPH'S and HOLY FAMILY

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Parish Priest: Father Stephen Woolley
and Permanent Deacon, Reverend John Hamilton

Mass Times and Intentions for – FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT – 24th December 2023

Saturday 23 rd December	6.00 pm (Vigil)	Edward McGinity (RIP)	
Sunday 24 th December FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT	9.00 am 10.00 am HF 11.00 am	People of the Parish Topp & Rourke Family Joe & Agnes Daly (RIP)	
VIGIL MASSES FOR CHRISTMAS	4.30 pm HF 6.00 pm	Joseph & Helen Riley (D'cd.) James Brennan (RIP)	
Monday CHRISTMAS DAY	Midnight 9.00 am 10.00 am HF 11.00 am	John George Holden (RIP) Edward (Ted) Woolley (Christmas Rem.) Rosaline & John Fernandes (RIP) Mary Thornley (9 th Ann.)	THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD
Tuesday BOXING DAY	8.30 am 10.00 am HF	Allan Radcliffe (Sick) Thanksgiving for new job (RA)	St Stephen
Wednesday	<u>12.00 noon</u>	Mary Jennings (B'day Rem.)	St John
Thursday	9.30 am HF 12.00 noon	NO MASS Francesca Smithers (19 th Ann.)	The Holy Innocents
Friday	<u>10.00 am</u>	Monica Allcroft (RIP)	St Thomas Beckett
Saturday 30 th December	12.00 noon	Nora Rigby (Remembrance)	Sixth Day of Christmas Octave
	6.00 pm (Vigil)	Beryl Houghton (RIP)	<u>No Confessions today</u>
Sunday 31 st December HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY & JOSEPH	9.00 am 10.00 am HF 11.00 am 5.30 pm	Jean Booth (RIP) Des Taylor Yegor Grabar (RIP) People of the Parish	Tea & Coffee after 11.00am Mass

Final Answer?

“Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you . . . Do not be afraid, for you have found favour with God.” Imagine for one moment, that instead of the Angel Gabriel speaking those words to Mary, that they had been spoken directly to you. How would you feel? It would of course be a life changing moment . . . a moment filled both with great excitement and of great uncertainty. In that moment you would know that life would never be the same again. In that moment you would know that God had great plans for you. How must Mary have felt? It must have taken huge courage for her to agree to conceive God's Son. By saying 'yes' to God's plan she was allowing her whole life to be turned upside down.

By saying 'yes' she was to turn her back on the security of the normal life she had planned with Joseph, her husband-to-be.

God's call to Mary is what we refer to today as the “Annunciation” which means an announcement or a calling. There are other places in the Bible where we see people called unexpectedly from the normality of their hum-drum lives to serve God. The calling is always a two-way thing. God requires a response. Of course we don't have to respond to God's call if we don't want to. Mary didn't have to say 'yes' to God's plan. She could have declined and lived out her years in trouble free comfort.

God still calls people today. Sometimes the call is insistent, as many who have been called to religious vocation will testify. Often the call is less obvious, and yet we are told that God has called each of us, and that for each of us there is a role to play. We are favoured and chosen just as Mary was. The main difference is that Mary responded fully to her unique role, whilst we remain hesitant and half-hearted, plagued by doubts as to our worth. Answering God's call isn't a comfortable business. Answering God's call might involve difficult decisions and hardship; but it might also be hugely rewarding, exciting and invigorating. How do we see God's call? Do we see it as a great burden, or as a great gift?

Although Mary was young and uneducated, she had the faith to see that what the Angel Gabriel was offering her in calling her for God was a great gift.

The call is to us all. How does God call each of us? What talents skills and characteristics do we each possess that God can use? Advent is a time in which we can look for the ways in which God is calling us a time in which we can decide on the answer we will give.

Entrance Antiphon : **Drop down dew from above, you heavens, and let the clouds rain down the Just One; let the earth be opened and bring forth a Saviour.**

Responsorial Psalm : **I will sing for ever of your love, O Lord.**

Gospel Acclamation : **Alleluia, Alleluia! I am the handmaid of the Lord: let what you have said be done to me. Alleluia!**

Communion Antiphon: **Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son; and his name will be called Emmanuel.**

Year B 2 Samuel 7:1-5.18-12.14.16 Psalm 88 Romans 16: 25-27 Luke 1: 26-38

<p>SACRAMENT OF CONFESSION 11.00am – 11.50am Saturdays or by appointment</p>	<p>SACRED HEART LAMP In loving memory of Francesca Smithers 19th Anniversary and birthday</p>	<p>OFFERINGS WEEKEND 17th December 2023 SJ £2013.53 HF £ 309.74</p>
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HAPPY CHRISTMAS

I wish everyone a Happy and Holy Christmas. Let us not forget all who will be spending Christmas alone and also those who are recently bereaved.

I would also like to say a big *thank you* for all the cards and gifts received for Christmas.

Each and every one is greatly appreciated.

God bless you all.

Father Stephen Woolley

CRIB OFFERINGS

Please support *Caritas* by placing your offerings in the basket by the crib. Thank you.

ST. STEPHEN'S DAY TRADITION

26th December

St. Stephen's Day, better known to us as Boxing Day, is traditionally celebrated on December 26th. The old custom of giving to the poor is reflected in today's Christmas carol 'Good King Wenceslas' who gave gifts of bread and wine to a poor man on 'the feast of Stephen'. In short Boxing Day is a day of good will to those who are not so well off as we are.

FEAST OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS

28th December

The feast of the Holy Innocents recalls the boys aged under two whom Herod killed in order to try and remove Jesus from the scene. This is very much a feast of our time. On this day we also remember those innocent and defenceless children who still suffer today.

We remember those children who suffer neglect, and abuse. We remember those children in poorer countries who suffer from hunger, poverty and poor health. We remember those children who are forced to fight or to work long hours for little or no money in hazardous conditions. We remember the children who are victims of war. On this day we remember that every child has a right to love, security, and basic needs.

CONFIRMATION

Confirmation will take place on 17th May 2024, which will be the 140th Anniversary of the laying of the foundation stone at St. Joseph's.

Forms are available in the sacristy for anyone in Year 8 and above wishing to be confirmed next year.

The Confirmation Programme will begin in the New Year & registration must be received before the programme begins.

COMMENDED TO GOD

We hold in loving memory and prayers, Brian Weatherilt, Marie Baxter, Patricia Brazier and Marc Renshaw who have died recently.

May they rest in peace.

We extend to their families and friends our deepest sympathy at this sad and extremely difficult time.

Death is not extinguishing the light.

It is putting out the lamp because the dawn has come.

CHRISTMAS

Christmas is the one time we will all go to church and celebrate something that happened a long time ago..... but that something that 'happened a very long time ago' is with us every day.

We go to church to celebrate the wonderful Christmas message that God loves us so much that he sent his Son to be with us, to support us, to endure with us, to share life's struggles and to guide us. Our challenge is to move forward through life's joys and sorrows confident in God's love. Our challenge is to make it to next Christmas better and stronger than we are today.

CAFOD 39TH CHRISTMAS FUN RUN/WALK

(3km & 5km) on Wednesday 27th December at "The Mystery" Wavertree Liverpool at 11.00am – If interested please contact Kieron 07785 344102 (posters in narthex/Parish Centre) – lifts can be provided. All walkers/runners welcome. Sponsorship will be collected nearer the time and collected after Christmas.

Help CAFOD help the poorest in communities around the world.

NEW YEAR FISH 'N CHIP SUPPER & ENTERTAINMENT

Enjoy an evening out with parishioners and friends with good British food and entertainment.

Saturday 6th January (6.45pm after 6.00pm Mass) in St Joseph's Parish Centre. £12 with fish and chips, mushy peas, tea, bread & butter.

Booking forms in the sacristy.

ST JOSEPH'S SCHOOL

On Tuesday 9th January, we will be inviting any prospective parents to come and see our wonderful school in action! We will begin with a tour around school from 9.00am and will finish in the hall, where there will be some light refreshments.

This will be followed by an open afternoon on Thursday 11th January from 3.30pm - 4.30pm; this, again, is for prospective parents of children who are going to be in Nursery or Reception in September 2024. We look forward to seeing you there!

ST JOSEPH'S & HOLY FAMILY WALKERS January walk – 9 miles

A strenuous walk in the Peak District starting from Hayfield to Kinder Reservoir with a steady incline to Ashop Head and around to Kinder Downfall and down the Pennine Way to Edale Cross and back to start. Saturday 20th January 2024

Meet at St Joseph's car park 9.00am prompt departure 9.15am Return ~ 5.30pm

See poster in Narthex for more details.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

We welcome to the Church and Parish Community **Maisie Grace Thomas** who was baptised at St. Joseph's last weekend. We welcome Maisie into the Church and commend her parents for passing on to her the Faith of the Apostles.