



St Mary's Catholic Church

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Newsletter for Sunday 15th December 2019

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Psalter Week 3

St Francis of Assisi and the Crib

Today, as well as being '**Gaudete**' Sunday is also '**Bambinelli**' Sunday when it has become traditional to bless the figure of the Baby JESUS for your cribs at home. This tradition was begun by **Pope St John Paul II** when the children and adults would bring their Baby JESUS figures to be blessed by the Pope in St Peter's Square on the Third Sunday of Advent, and it continues to this day.

The origin of the Christmas Crib is attributed to **St Francis of Assisi** (1181-1226). He had recently been in the Holy Land where he had visited the traditional birthplace of Our Lord. So he was inspired to recreate the scene in the woods of **Greccio** near Assisi, on Christmas Eve. St Francis had a friend by the name of Giovanni Velitta to whom he said, "*If you desire that we should celebrate this year's Christmas together at Greccio, go quickly and prepare what I tell you; for I want to enact the memory of the Infant who was born at Bethlehem and how He was bedded in the manger on hay between a donkey and an ox. I want to see all of this with my own eyes.*" Giovanni did exactly as Francis asked. Hay was brought in and even the ox and the donkey! Then all the villagers came with lighted candles and torches and sang hymns. Holy Mass was celebrated at which Francis, who was a Deacon, solemnly chanted the Gospel and preached, where he "*spoke charming words concerning the birth of the poor King, and the little town of Bethlehem.*" It is recorded that after Mass, Francis went to the crib and stretched out his arms as though the Baby JESUS was there, and that the Babe appeared and the empty manger was filled with the radiance of the new born King.

St Francis, by creating the crib, wanted to show us what God had done for us and how poor He became for us. Our Lord was not a Divine Person hiding behind the facade of a human being. He truly became one of us and "*emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men*" (Philippians 2:7). In the words of Pope Benedict XVI, "*His poverty enriches those who embrace it and Christmas brings joy and peace to those who, like the shepherds in Bethlehem, accept the Angel's words: "Let this be a sign to you: in a manger you will find an Infant wrapped in swaddling clothes" (Luke 2: 12). This is still the sign for us too, men and women of the third millennium. There is no other Christmas.*" So may our cribs at home help us to come to a much deeper understanding of God's great humility and what He has done for us. And let us ask Our Lady to help us enter into the true spirit of Christmas, the coming of the God Man into our world and into our lives.

Fr Paul Gillham, IC

MASS TIMES AT ST MARY'S

Sat	14 th	6.00pm	Vigil Mass
Sun	15 th	<u>Third Sunday of Advent – Gaudete Sunday</u>	
		9.00am	Parish Mass
		<i>10.30-10.55am</i>	<i>Confessions + on request</i>
		11.00am	Parish Mass
		3.00pm	Christingle Service
		4.00pm	Italian Mass
Mon	16 th	9.15am	Advent Feria
Tues	17 th	9.15am	Advent Feria
Weds	18 th	9.15am	Advent Feria
		<i>12 noon</i>	<i>Requiem Mass for Beverly Ryder RIP</i>
Thurs	19 th	9.15am	Advent Feria
		6.00pm	School Carol Service
Fri	20 th	6.45am	Rorate Mass
Sat	21 st	9.15am	Advent Feria
		<i>10.00-11.00am</i>	<i>Eucharistic Adoration and Confessions</i>
		<i>5.30-5.55pm</i>	<i>Confessions + on request</i>
		6.00pm	Vigil Mass
Sun	22 nd	<u>Fourth Sunday of Advent</u>	
		9.00am	Parish Mass
		<i>10.30-10.55am</i>	<i>Confessions + on request</i>
		11.00am	Parish Mass

THIS WEEK AT ST MARY'S

Sun	15 th	3.30pm	Christmas Party for children and young people – Hall
Tues	17 th	6.45-7.15pm	Holy Rosary – Church

NB: Due to the government regulations regarding personal data (GDPR), we are only able to publicise the Mass intentions in the printed edition of the newsletter.

RORATE MASS: The Rorate Mass this morning (Friday) was a great success and attendance by parishioners was excellent. It was very beautiful and atmospheric and there have been many requests to do the same again next week! So we will celebrate another Rorate Mass this coming **Friday 20th December** at 6.45am. Again this will replace the 9.15am Mass that day. *Fr Paul*

CHRISTINGLE SERVICE: This Sunday afternoon at 3pm, followed by a Christmas party for children and young people in the hall. Please come along and support them, and bring something for the shared table. A special visitor will be arriving towards the end. *Liz Abell*

KITCHEN FOR THE PARISH HALL: At all Masses this weekend we are asking you to complete a short questionnaire to help us assess the need for an improved kitchen for the hall. Please complete your questionnaire after the Homily; it will be collected during the Offertory. Thank you.

CHURCH CLEANING: Volunteers needed to help clean the church for Christmas. Come any time after 10.00am (after the morning mass) on Friday morning, **20th December**. Everyone welcome. Equipment provided.

PARISH CAROL SERVICE: This will be next **Sunday 22nd December** at 4.30pm.

ALTAR SERVERS: Your Patron is St Stephen and we will have a Mass on St Stephen's Day, **26th December** at 10.30am during which younger servers will be enrolled into the Guild of St Stephen. All parishioners welcome to attend.

NEW YEAR: There will be the customary Te Deum and Benediction on **New Year's Eve** at 7pm. A Plenary Indulgence is attached to the recitation of the Te Deum on this day under the usual conditions: Confession, receive Holy Communion and prayers for the Pope's Intentions. There will be a Solemn Mass on **New Year's Day**, the Solemnity of Mary Mother of God at 10.30am.

ST MARY'S 2020 DIARIES: On sale at the repository from this weekend for £1. Pocket sized and with a colour photo of the church on the front, the diary contains Mass times, the Catholic liturgical calendar and a selection of religious articles. Get yours while stocks last.

THE NEXT ASCRIBED MEETING will be on **Thursday 19th December** (7pm) at the Convent.

PARISH SAFEGUARDING REPRESENTATIVE: This is a voluntary role which needs to be filled as soon as possible. You will be supported by the Diocesan Safeguarding Office and training will be provided. You will support Fr Paul by providing the safe recruitment of volunteers in the parish, and by verifying DBS applications to submit to the Catholic Safeguarding Advisory service. If you would like to know more or see a role description, please contact Sue Clarke on 01509 267248.

Please pray for those whose anniversaries occur at this time: Hryhori Westyn, Luisa deBlasio, Gertrude Tyler, Rita Message, Elizabeth Jordan, Veronica Burton, Alojgy Panna, Carmel Berridge, Peter Robinson, Virginia Stocks, Brian Stack, Francis Boyne, Lily O'Neill, Anthony Field, Dorothy Ginns, Margaret Dawson and Charles Connolly

and for those who have died: Salvatore Corbinzolu, Beverly Ryder, Rosa Tidy. **May they rest in peace.**

PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS TO THE PRIESTHOOD AND RELIGIOUS LIFE

- LEADER:** Please kneel for our prayer for vocations. Let us ask God to give worthy Priests to His Holy Church and Brothers and Sisters to Religious Orders.
- ALL:** O God, we earnestly beseech You to bless this diocese with many priests, brothers and sisters, who will gladly spend their entire lives serving Your Church and making You known and loved.
- LEADER:** Bless our families. Bless our children.
- ALL:** Choose from our homes those who are needed for Your work.
- LEADER:** Mary, Queen of the Clergy!
- ALL:** Pray for us. Pray for our priests and religious. Obtain for us many more. *Amen.*

PRAYER TO SAINT MICHAEL: Holy Michael, the Archangel, defend us in the day of battle. Be our safeguard against the wickedness and snares of the devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray; and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly host, by the power of God thrust down to hell Satan and all the wicked spirits who wander through the world for the ruin of souls. *Amen.*

FROM THE SAINTS: “Christian, remember your dignity, and now that you share in God’s own nature, do not return by sin to your former base condition. Bear in mind Who is your Head and of Whose Body you are a member. Do not forget that you have been rescued from the power of darkness and brought into the light of God’s Kingdom” (*Pope St Leo the Great, d.461*).

DID YOU KNOW THAT? Advent originated as a period of fasting. Monks in the 5th century began fasting three times a week in November, either to prepare for Christmas or Epiphany.

APPEAL FOR VARIEGATED HOLLY: If you can spare any from your garden, please let Bernie know (07919 865410). She will be happy to come and collect it.

ST MARY’S SCHOOL CHRISTMAS EVENTS: Parishioners are warmly invited to attend any of the following: Key stage one Nativity on **Monday 16th December** at 2.00pm and **Tuesday 17th** at 9.30am, both in the school. The Junior Carol Concert will be at 6pm on **Thursday 19th** in St Mary’s Church. Please support these events if you can. *Fr Paul*

A HUGE THANKS FROM DETTIE AND TEAM AT EXAIREO for the **£615** collected from parishioners. This will contribute towards their Christmas lunch next week, gifts for residents’ children and night shelter provision.

The **second collection** this weekend is for **Poor & Needy Parishes NRCDT**

LAST WEEK’S FINANCE	
First Collection: £813	
Standing Orders: £ 667 @ 29/09	<i>Thank you</i>