



St Mary of the Annunciation Catholic Church

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Newsletter for Sunday 10th January 2021

BAPTISM OF THE LORD

The Sacrament of Baptism & Sanctifying Grace

Today is the Feast of the **Baptism of Our Lord**. Baptism is the first of the **Seven Sacraments**, all of which were instituted by Christ. By it we are made members of the Church and heirs of Heaven, and so the day of Baptism is the most important day of our lives, and parents should not delay in having their children receive it.

Due to our fallen nature, we are all born in a state of **Original Sin**; that is without **sanctifying grace** (the life of God) in us. Baptism fixes this, and if we receive the Sacrament after the age of reason, all our personal sins as well as all due punishment is removed too. In Baptism we receive sanctifying grace into our souls and we are thus *born* into the supernatural life and become the adopted sons and daughters of God. **We need sanctifying grace in our souls to get to Heaven**. Think of it like this. We cannot fly by ourselves because it is beyond our *natural* powers to do so. We need a flying machine. The same is true of the spiritual life. If we rely on our *natural* powers to get to Heaven after death, we won't make it. So we have to receive *supernatural* powers, which are above our human nature, which can only come as a free gift from God. So the most important thing in life is whether or not we have sanctifying grace in our souls, and that sanctifying grace is first given at Baptism. (I know there is also Baptism of Desire and Baptism of Blood. I will expand on this on another occasion). We can lose sanctifying grace through **mortal sin**, because mortal sin kills the supernatural life in us. This is why Our Lord instituted the **Sacrament of Confession** which is for the forgiveness of sins *after* Baptism, and if we have any mortal sins, by humbly confessing them and receiving absolution, sanctifying grace is restored to our souls. Dare I say it again, this is why to confess regularly is so important and why it was so disastrous spiritually not to have it freely available during recent lockdowns. We're talking about eternal life here!

JESUS is the **new Adam** and the first of a new humanity. As He was baptised in the waters by John, God's Spirit, like a dove descended on Him and anointed Him, ushering in the start of the **new Creation** in Christ. And so **St Paul** can say, "*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come*" (2 Corinthians 5:17). St Mark in

(cont'd on page 3)

MASS INTENTIONS AT ST MARY'S

Sat	9th	6.00pm	For the end of the Pandemic – PUBLIC MASS
Sun	10th	<u>BAPTISM OF THE LORD (Feast)</u>	
		9.00am	For the Parish – PUBLIC MASS
		11.15am	Sam Hart (GE) – PUBLIC MASS
		4.00pm	Italian Mass – PUBLIC MASS
Mon	11th	9.15am	Intention for the living – PUBLIC MASS
Tues	12th	9.15am	Patsy Boyle RIP
Weds	13th	6.30pm	Intention for the living (Latin, old rite) – PUBLIC MASS
Thurs	14th	9.15am	Frances Ebong RIP
Fri	15th	6.30pm	Jimmy McDonagh RIP – PUBLIC MASS
Sat	16th	9.15am	Hazel Abell RIP
		10.30am-	Private prayer with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.
		12.30pm	Confessions available 10.30am-11.30am
		6.00pm	Andy Newbold RIP – PUBLIC MASS
Sun	17th	<u>Second Sunday in Ordinary Time</u>	
		9.00am	Deceased members of the Kenyon & Monaghan families – PUBLIC MASS
		11.15am	For the Parish – PUBLIC MASS
		4.00pm	Italian Mass – PUBLIC MASS

MASS INTENTIONS: Although the times of Masses are all displayed in this newsletter, the **PRIVATE** Masses (ie those not open to the public) will not necessarily be offered at those times. But the Masses will all be celebrated for the particular intentions on the days advertised.

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

PLEASE PRAY for those who have recently died: Jim Moreland, Alexandrina Nyajena, Charles Pratt, Paul Gibson, Russell Glenn Lomotos and Theresa Mammicka. **May they rest in peace**
and for those whose anniversaries occur at this time: Cedric Spencer, Tony Kennedy, Frederico Buccheri, Helly Claydon, Armando Zollino, May Adam, Montague McArdle, Laurie Devaney, Mary Brookes, Margaret Woodhouse, Bill Davey, Clarice Ryder, Amelia Blake, Michael Robinson, Annie Heath, Ian North, Paul Turner, Rev Fr Joe Mullen IC, Eamon Keating, William Hodgson, Albin Topolewski and Nora Cunningham

(cont'd from Page 1)

today's Gospel tells us that the heavens were literally "torn asunder" at our Lord's Baptism, meaning that Heaven is then dramatically opened to us. **St Thomas Aquinas** (1225-1274) teaches that when Our Lord was baptised by John, He sanctified the waters. As that muddy water from the Jordan poured down over His body, the Spirit of God entered it. No longer would Baptism be merely symbolic (as was the case with John's baptism). Now it would truly cleanse the soul and fill it with divine life, with sanctifying grace. What was muddy is now the instrument of purity. Divinity enters humanity and we now become sharers in His divinity, thus giving us the ability to enter Heaven.

Fr Paul Gillham, IC



"You are my Son, the Beloved; with You I am well pleased."

PUBLIC WORSHIP AT ST MARY'S DURING THE NATIONAL LOCKDOWN

JANUARY 2021: Following the Prime Minister's statement on 4th January 2021, St Mary's can remain open for public Masses and other acts of worship following the covid-security guidance that has been published by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. Public Masses will continue at the times advertised. As before, face-coverings are required to be worn by law in public places of worship unless you have an exemption. After Mass, please maintain social distancing and do not congregate in the car park. Take any printed Mass sheets and newsletters with you. Thank you.

Fr Paul

EPIPHANY CHALK: The chalk blessed on the Epiphany to inscribe your homes with a blessing is available at the exit of the church together with a sheet of instructions if you don't already have one. *Fr Paul*

THE CRIB, as has become our tradition, will remain up until 2nd February, the Feast of Candlemas which is the traditional end of Christmastide. These forty days of Christmastide parallel the forty days of Eastertide which ends with the Ascension of Our Lord. Pay a visit to the crib if you can.

Fr Paul

LAST RITES DOES NOT MEAN LAST MINUTE: As soon as a person begins to be in danger of death because of illness, injury or old age, the time for anointing has surely already come. Don't leave it too late.

Fr Paul

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.*

A SPIRITUAL COMMUNION: My Jesus, I believe that You are truly present in the Most Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things and I desire to possess You within my soul. Since I am unable at this moment to receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as being already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

PRE-BOOKING PLACES FOR MASS: Online bookings can be made on the diocesan website at <https://massbooking.uk>. Telephone bookings can be made by calling **07554 603972 on Tuesday or Wednesday between 2pm and 4pm or Thursday and Friday between 5pm and 7pm. Please do not phone the Presbytery.** Due to the higher demand at weekend Masses, a pre-booked seat is not guaranteed if you arrive after Mass has begun. May I take this opportunity to remind you that **the Sunday obligation is still suspended, and therefore I would encourage some of you to take advantage of attending Mass during the week if possible** to help ease the numbers at the weekend. Thank you.

Fr Paul

There will be a Second Collection for Sick & Retired Priests on 16th/17th January.

LAST WEEK'S FINANCE	
Collection: £397 of which £83 was gift-aided	
Standing orders: £776 of which £679 is gift-aided	
Mass attendance: 187	<i>Thank you</i>