

St Mary of the Annunciation Catholic Church

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

NEWSLETTER

Preparing for Christmas

Today, the **First Sunday of Advent**, is the first day of the **new liturgical year**, and the Church wants to remind us that although it is the beginning, we must also remember our end. Thus in today's Gospel (Matthew 24:37-44), we have a reminder of the **Last Judgement** and of Our Lord's **Second Coming**. Our Lord likens it to the days before the **Great Flood**, when people were making merry until the flood came suddenly and swept everything away. This is how it will be at the end of time. *"Therefore you must stand ready because the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect."*

Advent runs for four Sundays and it's also a time when we prepare for the **first coming of the Redeemer at Christmas**, and so we must prepare well in order to receive the graces He wants to give us in this holy season. So what are we supposed to do? In the early Church, Christmas was preceded by **forty days of fasting**, like the forty day fast in Lent prepares us for the joy of Easter. It began on the feast of St Martin on 11th November, and was called **'Martin's Lent'**. Today the Church no longer requires this fast, but She still wants us to make some sacrifices. We are reminded of this by the purple vestments and the suppression of the Gloria at Mass.

So Advent for us ought to be **anticipatory**, and what we do in this time should dispose us to being joyful at Christmas, because we are preparing our souls for the coming of our Redeemer and Saviour, which will be a time of **feasting**. Therefore, in order to feast well at Christmas, it would be a good idea *now* to give up some luxury so as to have greater rejoicing at Christmas. This would be a good way of anticipating Our Lord's coming. We don't have to go out of our way to be penitential as we do in Lent, but we shouldn't be seeking comfort. Another good way of preparing would be to accept the difficulties and frustrations of life and try not to become upset by them. Decide to accept it as part of the season in a spirit of penance, knowing that at the end of time every tear will be wiped away, and there will be no more mourning or weeping or pain (Apocalypse 21:4).

Then there are our **decorations at home**. Although there is no rule



St Mary of the Annunciation Catholic Church

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Served by the Rosminians

Parish Priest

Fr Paul Gillham, IC

Assistant Priest

Fr Simon Giles, IC

On attachment

Fr David Jones, OLV

Safeguarding Officer

Jane Monaghan: 07513 725546

Parish Catholic Schools

St Mary's Primary

Hastings Street

Loughborough LE11 5AX

01509 212621

office@stmarys-rc.leics.sch.uk

Headteacher: Miss P Jordan

De Lisle College

Thorpe Hill

Loughborough LE11 4SQ

01509 268739

enquiries@delisle.leics.sch.uk

Headteacher: Dr J F Pye

Continued on page 3



St Ralph Sherwin

Please pray for those who are sick

for those who have recently died

- Ian Billson
 - Thanh Vu
 - Girolamo Perone
 - Domenico Romano
 - Nick Knudsen
 - Teresa Lee
- May they rest in peace*

and for those whose anniversaries occur at this time

- Paul Adkin
- Dominko Horvathova
- Bernardo Messoro
- Beverley Ryder
- Robert Di-Niro
- Fr John Whelton

PLEASE NOTE

Due to government regulations regarding personal data (UK-GDPR), we are not able to publish name details of Mass intentions for the living in this online version of the newsletter.

MASS INTENTIONS AT ST MARY'S

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|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Sat 26th | Vigil Mass |
| <i>6.00pm</i> | Rita & Rocco Acierno (RIP) |

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|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| Sun 27th | First Sunday of Advent |
| <i>9.00am</i> | Chris Dover (RIP) |
| <i>11.15am</i> | Andy Newbold (RIP) |
| <i>4.00pm</i> | Italian Mass |

| | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| Mon 28th | Advent Feria |
| <i>9.15am</i> | Mario Sepede (RIP) |

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|------------------|--|
| Tues 29th | Advent Feria |
| <i>9.15am</i> | Holy Souls |
| <i>11.00am</i> | <i>Requiem Mass: Domenico Romano RIP</i> |

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| Weds 30th | St Andrew, Apostle (Feast) |
| <i>6.00-6.25pm</i> | <i>Parish Rosary</i> |
| <i>6.30pm</i> | Fr John Whelton (RIP, Anniversary) NO PUBLIC MASS |

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| Thurs 1st | St Ralph Sherwin & Martyrs of Derbyshire (Mem) |
| <i>9.15am</i> | Deceased members of the Myers family |

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|--------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Fri 2nd | Advent Feria (First Friday) |
| <i>6.00-6.25pm</i> | <i>Confessions</i> |
| <i>6.30pm</i> | For our deceased relatives & friends |

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|-----------------|--|
| Sat 3rd | St Francis Xavier (Mem) (Five First Saturdays Devotion) |
| <i>10.00am</i> | Jason Mistry (RIP) PUBLIC MASS |
| <i>10.30am</i> | <i>Private prayer with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament</i> |
| <i>-12.30pm</i> | <i>with Confessions 10.30-11.30am</i> |
| <i>6.00pm</i> | Vigil Mass: Charles Connolly (RIP) |

| | |
|----------------|------------------------------------|
| Sun 4th | Second Sunday of Advent |
| <i>9.00am</i> | Michael Smith (RIP) |
| <i>11.15am</i> | For the Parish |
| <i>4.00pm</i> | Italian Mass |
| <i>5.30pm</i> | <i>Student Choir Carol Service</i> |

Church flooring: The new scheduled dates for the replacing of the green floor tiles in the church are from **9th to 20th January**. The church will be unusable during this period and Masses will be in the hall. Further details nearer the time.

Fr Paul

Continued from front page

about this, we don't need to put them all up in one go. Remember Christmas begins on Christmas Day and traditionally runs until **Candlemas** on 2nd February. So there could be a progression in our home decorations during Advent. This is what the Liturgy does as it becomes apparent in the prayers during the second half of Advent that the Lord is drawing nearer. So you could perhaps add things to your decorations each Sunday. This can also be a great way of engaging children. As humans, being made up of body and soul, we need material things like colours and symbols to remind us of things. We use black, for example, at Requiem or Funeral Masses as a sign of mourning. Red is a colour of martyrdom and the shedding of blood, and we use white or gold as a sign of joy at Christmas and Easter. The **purple of Advent** is a colour of **penance** and a sign that we are waiting for or anticipating something.

One important decoration is the **Advent Wreath**. It's in the shape of a circle symbolizing **eternity**, because God has no beginning or end. It's also like a crown of victory with the prickly holly and the red berries symbolizing Our Lord's **Crown of Thorns** and His **Precious Blood**. The use of **evergreens** reminds us of eternal life with Christ, and we have the **flame of the candles** because Christ is the **Light of the World**. There are four candles for the four Sundays, which according to tradition, each represent one thousand years which together symbolize the four thousand years that humanity waited for the coming of the Saviour. The central white candle represents Christ Himself and is a symbol of purity and is lit at Midnight Mass.

Finally, we priests would strongly encourage you to prepare for Christmas by making a good sacramental Confession. As St Paul urges us in the Second Reading: *"The night is almost over, it will be daylight soon - let us give up all the things we prefer to do under cover of the dark; let us arm ourselves and appear in the light"* (Romans 13:12).

Fr Paul Gillham, IC

CHRISTMAS GRUB CLUB

Free hot lunch and fun activities. Monday 19th December 11am - 2pm at United Reform Church Hall, Frederick Street, Loughborough. It is aimed at primary school children and their families who are experiencing hardship. Children must be accompanied by an adult at all times. No need to book, just turn up. It's free. The whole family are invited. For more information contact Eileen Smith 07855456375 or email Grub-Club@outlook.com.

Confirmation 2023: The Bishop will be coming on **Tuesday 23rd May 2023** at 7pm to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation. Application forms are now available from me. Candidates should be in at least Year 7 and should already be attending weekly Mass. I shall only be giving forms to those I recognise as regular Mass attendees. Those who are not already attending weekly Mass will be asked to defer their Confirmation until such a time as they are. Confirmation is a serious commitment to the Faith.

Fr Paul

VACANCY: Parish Administrator, Sacred Heart Parish, Park Road, Loughborough. This is a part-time post (up to 5 hours per week initially). Please see the noticeboard for more information.

The Christian Heritage Centre has now opened applications for 2023's Christian Leadership Formation Programme for Sixth Formers. Further information about the programme can be found at www.christianheritagecentre.com or by emailing admin@christianheritagecentre.com

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!

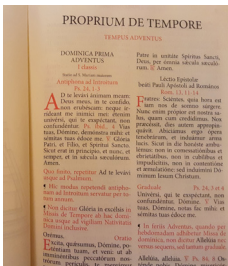
All: Pray for us. Pray for our priests and religious. Obtain for us many more. Amen.

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.

Catechist formation and training: For anyone interested in becoming a catechist, there are three short courses available which you may join on location or online. Please see the poster on the noticeboard for more information and if you have any questions or comments please contact Joe Hopkins: joe.hopkins@dioceseofnottingham.uk / 0115 953 9806.

FOOD BANK: The next collection for Christmas will be on **Saturday 3rd December** from 10.30 to 11.00am in the car park. Please consider donating sweets, chocolate and confectionery of any kind. The usual grocery items are also much appreciated (tinned goods, coffee, tea, hot chocolate, long life milk, rice pouches, pasta and toiletries). This is in addition to the collections the previous day from our two parish schools, St Mary's and De Lisle. *Jane Monaghan*



From the Saints

"May we receive Thy mercy in the midst of Thy temple, that we may prepare with due honour the coming feast of our redemption."

From the Roman Missal

Student Choir Carol

Service: Our student choir members from 11.15am Mass will be giving a Carol concert with readings on **Sunday 4th December** at 5.30pm before many of them go on their Christmas holidays. Refreshments will be served after in the parish hall. All welcome. This is in addition to the regular Parish Carol Service by Candlelight, which this year will be on **Sunday 18th December**.

Prayer cards with the new **Diocesan** Prayer for Vocations are available for you to take from the back of the church.

Please note there will be no Latin Mass this coming Wednesday.

Family Fast Day: We have received a letter from CAFOD thanking us for this year's Family Fast Day donation of £484.00.

Last Week's Finance

Collection: Figures not available. They will be published next week.

Standing orders: £783 @ 31/10, of which £648 was gift-aided

Attendance: 482

Thank you