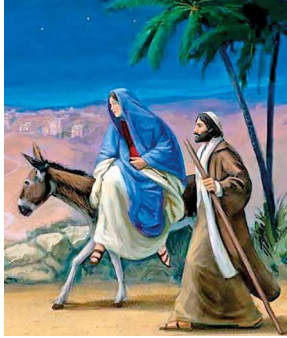


# St Mary of the Annunciation Catholic Church

FOURTH SUNDAY  
OF ADVENT

# NEWSLETTER

## The Virgin Birth



St Mary of the Annunciation  
Catholic Church

97 Ashby Road  
Loughborough LE11 3AB  
01509 262123

office@

stmarysloughborough.org.uk

*Served by the Rosminians*

**Parish Priest**

Fr Paul Gillham, IC

**Assistant Priest**

Fr Simon Giles, IC

**On attachment**

Fr David Jones, OLW

**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

As Christmas draws nearer, we move from St John the Baptist's preparing for the coming of Christ to the actual announcement of His birth. Today's Gospel is Matthew's account of JESUS' birth (1:18-24), His virginal conception and birth through the Blessed Virgin Mary. Matthew actually highlights this **virginal conception** of JESUS. It is the fulfilment of the prophecy from Isaiah which we hear in today's First Reading: *"Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel"* (7:14). This prophecy is truly fulfilled in the virginal conception and birth of JESUS Christ, Who was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of Our Lady, and Who is literally *"God with us"*.

But why is JESUS born of a virgin? Why couldn't He have been born in the natural way by the coming together of a man and a woman? The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) can help us here. The virginal conception of JESUS shows us that His birth was *"a divine work that surpasses all human understanding"* (CCC 497). In other words it is a miracle which we cannot fully understand, that God Who created everything out of nothing could become man through the virginal conception by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Catechism also highlights that it is the **fulfilment of prophecy**. The Church teaches very clearly that the virginal conception was the fulfilment of *"the divine promise given through Isaiah"* already mentioned above. People in our day are tempted to think the virgin birth is just a myth or a legend because virgins don't have babies. But the Catechism teaches very clearly that the virginal conception of JESUS was neither a myth or a legend (CCC 498). It is, in fact, **a miracle**.

Sometimes people say that the early Christians were so primitive and gullible they would believe anything back then. But this is not true. Both the ancient Jews and ancient pagans rejected the virgin birth completely and mocked it because ancient people knew, just as we do today, that virgins don't have babies! It was a supernatural and miraculous act of God. **The virgin birth was not man's idea – it was God's.**

*Continued on page 3*

## MASS INTENTIONS AT ST MARY'S

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**Sat 17th Vigil Mass**  
6.00pm Giuseppina Giorgio (RIP)

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**Sun 18th Fourth Sunday of Advent**  
9.00am For the Parish  
11.15am Anthony Richard Hutchings (RIP)  
4.00pm **Italian Mass**  
6.00pm *Parish Carols & Readings*

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**Mon 19th Advent Feria**  
9.15am Living & deceased members of the Shaw & Harrison families

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**Tues 20th Advent Feria**  
9.15am Pat, Nancy, Brenda & Albert Rogers (RIP)  
1.00pm *Requiem Mass: Girolamo Perone (RIP)*

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**Weds 21st St Thomas, Apostle**  
6.00-6.25pm *Parish Rosary*  
6.30pm John Kane (RIP) (Latin, old rite)

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**Thurs 22nd Advent Feria**  
9.15am Iris & Pat Sadd (RIP)

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**Fri 23rd Advent Mass of Our Lady**  
6.45am\* Wladyslaw Moson (RIP, Anniv.) **Rorate Mass** \**Note time*\*  
5.30-6.30pm *Confessions*

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**Sat 24th Advent Feria**  
10.00am Nick Knudsen (RIP) **NO PUBLIC MASS**  
10.30am *Private prayer with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament*  
-12.30pm *with Confessions 10.30-11.30am*  
6.00pm **Christmas Vigil Mass: Holy Souls**  
11.30pm *Carols & readings*

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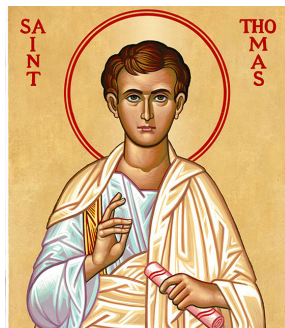
**Sun 25th The Nativity of the Lord (Solemnity)**  
12.00am Midnight Mass - For the Parish  
9.00am Hollingsworth Family Intention  
11.15am Andy Newbold (RIP)  
4.00pm **No Italian Mass**

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### This week at St Mary's

**Fri 23rd** Church cleaning for Christmas - 11am-12.30pm.  
All welcome to join the regular volunteers

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St Thomas

**Please pray for those who are sick**

**for those who have recently died**

Jonathan Rayson  
Girolamo Perone

*May they rest in peace*

**and for those whose anniversaries occur at this time**

Peter Robinson  
Brian Stack

Russell Lomotos

Dorothy Ginns

Margaret Dawson

Mary Black

Denise Carnell

Christopher Hubbard

Giuseppe Calardo

John McGeechan

Giovanni Brunette

Liz Prentice

John Moore

Sue Moreland

### 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.

*Continued from front page*

Finally, why did God do it this way? The CCC explains it is one of the ways God reveals to us the mystery of the Incarnation (God becoming man). It is the way God reveals that JESUS Christ is not merely human or merely divine, but **fully human and fully divine**. He is God and man at the same time, and the true Son of the Father by **nature**. All who are baptised are children of God by **adoption**, whereas JESUS is God's Son by nature, because He shares the divine nature with the Father and the Holy Spirit. So His divinity He received from His Father, and His sinless humanity from His mother, the Immaculate Virgin Mary.

So the divine and the human have come together in Christ, the God man, so that all humanity might be redeemed through Him and share in the divine life. This is the true joy of Christmas – God isn't just with us in spirit, He is **'Emmanuel'**, God with us in the flesh.

*Fr Paul Gillbam, IC*

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## The Synod – Continental Stage Consultation

All the Synod feedback from parishes, dioceses, and national Bishops' Conferences around the world has been gathered, considered, discerned, and distilled into a Report which is now being given to each continent to consider in light of their own tradition, history, experience, and religious perspective. Within Europe we now have the opportunity to consider the Synodal feedback from around the world and to report on:

- a) What we feel resonates with our own experiences – list the top three priorities from those given
- b) Consider what are the challenges and tensions in each of those three areas
- c) Define the next steps which move us (parish, deanery, diocese, the Church) forward.

Please engage with this consultation by:

- a) Completing the form available at the back of the church
- b) Completing the feedback form online at:  
<https://forms.office.com/e/2Yfs77hHsp>
- c) Following the QR code to access the online diocesan consultation.

All responses should be received by **9th January 2023** so they can be included in the overall diocesan response. Let us dream of the Church the Holy Spirit is calling us to become.

## CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES

**Saturday 24th December:**

6pm Vigil Mass. **Sunday**

**25th December:** Midnight

Mass, preceded by carols

at 11.30pm, 9.00am and

11.15am. **Monday 26th**

**December:** 10.30am.

**Confessions** at the usual

times: **Saturdays** 10.30-

11.30am and **Friday 16th**

**and 23rd December** 5.30-

6.30pm, or on request.

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## Christmas Grub Club

Free hot lunch and fun

activities. **Monday 19th**

**December 11am - 2pm**

at United Reformed

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.

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## Altar Servers: The

10.30am Mass on **Monday**

**26th December** will be a

special Mass for our altar

servers on the feast day of

their patron, St Stephen.

New servers who have

been serving for a year or

more will be enrolled into

the Guild of St Stephen.

All are welcome. *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.

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**Rorate Mass:** The second Rorate Mass will be this coming **Friday 23rd December** at 6.45am. This is the Advent Mass of Our Lady celebrated at dawn and by candlelight. Bring your own lantern if you have one. Please note that **there will be no 6.30pm Mass that day.**

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**The Parish Carols and Readings will be this evening (Sunday 18th December) at 6.00pm,** followed by mince pies and mulled wine in the hall after. We haven't been able to hold this event since before the Covid lockdown so do come along to reflect on the readings, join in the singing and meet with fellow parishioners afterwards.

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**St Mary's School:** Well done to the children, their families and all the staff for the appropriate and fitting ways in which the season of Advent continues to be celebrated in the school community. We thank them for joining in with the parish and contributing to the Loughborough food bank appeal. We extend our good wishes to Mr. Ashenhurst who leaves the school at the end of term to take up a post at Leicester University. We thank him for his dedication to the school and wish him every success in his new role. *Jane Monaghan*

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556 561  
S. PELAGIUS I

### From the Saints

*“JESUS Christ, true God and the same true man proceeded, that is, was born, while His mother's virginity remained intact: for the Virgin remained such in bearing Him just as she had in conceiving Him.”*

(Pope Pelagius I, died 561)

## CHURCH CLEANING FOR CHRISTMAS

### Friday 23rd December

11am to 12.30pm. Anyone is welcome to join our small team of volunteers.

There will be **no cleaning on Friday 30th December.** Cleaning will resume on **Friday 6th January**, 11am to 12.30pm. Thank you.

*Emily*

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**Missio:** Could all Missio box holders please return their boxes to the church before Christmas. Thank you. *Marie Brookes*

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### Confirmation 2023

Application forms for the Sacrament of Confirmation on **Tuesday 23rd May 2023**, for Year 7 and above, are available from Fr Paul. The **closing date is today, Sunday 18th December.** Candidates must already be attending weekly Mass and forms will only be given to those who are doing so.

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### Last Week's Finance

**1st Collection:** £730 of which £113 was gift-aided

**Poor & Needy Parishes:** £234 of which £10 was gift-aided

**Standing orders:** £783 @ 30/11, of which £648 was gift-aided

**Attendance:** 438

*Thank you*

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