

St Mary of the Annunciation Catholic Church

SECOND SUNDAY
OF ADVENT

NEWSLETTER

Prepare the way of the Lord



St Mary of the Annunciation Catholic Church

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Served by the Rosminians

Parish Priest

Fr Paul Gillham, IC

On attachment

Fr David Jones, OLW

Safeguarding Rep

Jane Monaghan

01509 262123

Parish Catholic Schools

St Mary's Primary

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Headteacher: Miss P Jordan

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Thorpe Hill

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Headteacher: Mr C Maher

With Christmas falling on a Monday this year we only have three weeks of Advent, so we must make the most of this time. Our Gospel reading today is the beginning of Mark's Gospel (1:1-8) where we have this extraordinary character of **John the Baptist**, dressed in camel-skin, feeding on locusts and wild honey, preaching in the desert, and calling everyone to **repentance**. We are told that this is **to prepare a way for the Lord and to make His paths straight**. This doesn't refer to anything physical. We're not suddenly going to get rid of all winding roads! Rather it's a matter of **preparing our hearts and souls** for the coming of Our Lord at Christmas. That's the point of this reading.

So is there anything standing between you and God that needs to be got rid of? What are your crooked ways? If you were to stand before the judgement seat of God today, what would He hold against you? Whatever it is, that's what you are called to try and eliminate. This is how we make the Lord's paths straight and prepare for His coming.

Advent, therefore, is a very good time to make a good and humble confession of our sins in the Sacrament of Penance. We can easily dream up all kinds of excuses not to do so. For example, "Why do I have to confess my sins to a priest?" Well, Our Lord made the Apostles His first priests and commanded them to preach **penance** to the whole world. He gave to them and to their successors the **power of forgiving sins in His name** when He said, "*Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven; whose sins you shall retain, they are retained*" (John 20:22). He wills us to confess to His priests so that we may obtain forgiveness of our sins and be delivered from eternal punishment. Is it possible to be forgiven outside of Confession? Yes, but only in extraordinary circumstances when there is no priest available and we make an **act of perfect contrition**, which can be very hard to do – to have deep sorrow for our sins purely out of love of God and for having offended Him, and even in this case we must have the intention to confess to a priest at the first available opportunity.

Another excuse is, "I used to go to Confession but it didn't stop me sinning again." We could also say there was a time when I washed but it didn't prevent me from getting dirty again. I used to eat but now I'm hungry again!

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St John of the Cross

Please pray for those who are sick

for those who have recently died:

Geoffrey Garfield,
Carmelina Cuff,
Norah McKeown

May they rest in peace

and for those whose anniversaries occur at this time

Mavis Maguire,
Lawrence Rayburn,
Fr Kit Cunningham IC,
Peter Stonehouse,
Giuseppe Sacchetta,
Hryhori Westyn,
Luisa De Blasio

PLEASE NOTE

Due to government regulations regarding personal data (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

Sat 9th Vigil Mass
6.00pm Catherine Connolly (RIP)

Sun 10th Second Sunday of Advent
9.00am James O'Rourke (RIP)
11.15am For the Parish
4.00pm **Italian Mass**
6.00pm *Parish Carol Service*

Mon 11th St Damasus I (Memoria)
9.15am Anne Finnegan (RIP)
1.00pm *Requiem Mass: Norah McKeown RIP*

Tues 12th Our Lady of Guadalupe (Memoria)
9.15am Sheila McFerran (RIP)

Weds 13th St Lucy, Virgin and Martyr
12 noon *Funeral Service: Carmelina Cuff RIP*
6.00-6.25pm *Parish Rosary*
6.30pm Intention for the living (Latin)

Thurs 14th St John of the Cross (Memoria)
9.15am Intention for the living

Fri 15th Advent Feria
6.45am Rorate Mass: Intention for the living
1.00pm *Funeral Service: Geoffrey Garfield RIP*
6.00-6.25pm *Confessions*

Sat 16th Advent Feria
10.00am Intention for the living **NO PUBLIC MASS**
10.30am *Private prayer with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament with Confessions 10.30-11.30am & Benediction 12.20pm*
6.00pm **Vigil Mass:** Intention for the living

Sun 17th Third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete)
9.00am Evelyn Woodhouse (RIP)
11.15am For the Parish
4.00pm **Italian Mass**

This week at St Mary's

Tues 12th UCM Christmas dinner

***Fri 15th Rorate Mass, 6.45am (Please note change of time)**
There will be no evening Mass

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The soul is like the body and it has to be cared for. Our Lord said, *“Only he who perseveres to the end will be saved”* (Matthew 24:13). Just as you wash and eat for today, so you need to take care of your soul for today.

A further objection might be, “My sins are far too terrible for God to forgive.” On the contrary, there is no sin too great for God to forgive if we tell Him we’re sorry. This is a matter of faith. JESUS pardoned great sinners throughout the Gospel. Think of the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11), Zacchaeus the tax collector (Luke 19:1-10) and the thief on the cross (Luke 23: 39-43) to name a few. If your sins are great, throw yourself at the feet of JESUS like the prodigal son in the parable (Luke 15:11-32). Have no fear. Repent, receive pardon and be at peace.

People are sometimes so foolish as to think they will confess as they are about to die and not before. I say foolish because generally people die as they live, and so the way to die well is to live well. Don’t allow yourself to remain in mortal sin out of pride. And what if you die before a priest can get to you? What if you die suddenly in an accident? We hear all the time of people dying unexpectedly. To think you will confess only on your deathbed is taking a great risk with your eternal salvation.

God’s mercy is a great gift. So don’t hold back from letting Him restore you to a state of grace should you have lost it, and reconciling you to Himself. And the way God wants you to do that is through the ministry of His priests. *“Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven; whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.”*
Fr Paul Gillham, IC

Bambinelli Sunday: Next weekend you are invited to bring your cribs or figure of Baby JESUS for blessing at the end of Mass. This tradition was begun in Rome by Pope St John Paul II.

St Mary’s Catholic Primary School Christmas Fair and Santa’s Grotto: Thursday 14th December 3.15p.m - 5.15p.m. Entrance through the Parish Hall. Music, Gift Stalls, Tombola, Games, Refreshments and Raffle.

Christmas Appeal

Please consider giving to SHARP (Shelter Housing Advice & Research Project (Leicester)) this Christmas. SHARP is the only local charity whose primary purpose is to prevent homelessness in Leicester and Leicestershire. They receive no government funding and rely very much on donations from individuals and organisations. To give online visit www.leicestershelter.org.uk or send a cheque to SHARP, 13 Welford Road, Leicester LE2 7AD. Thank you

Christmas Masses

Sunday 24th December
6.00pm: Family Vigil Mass
11.30pm: Carols
Monday 25th December
12.00am: Midnight Mass
10.30am: Solemn Mass

Christmas Services:

Cards with the times of the Christmas and New Year services are available for you to take from the back of the church.

Rorate Mass

As is our tradition, there will be a ‘Rorate Mass’ (the Advent Mass of Our Lady celebrated by candlelight) on **Friday 15th December** at 6.45am. Please note there will be no evening Mass that day. Make the most of Advent as this year, as with Christmas Day falling on a Monday, we lose an entire week of Advent.

Loughborough Food Bank/Your Store:

The Christmas collection will be on Saturday **16th December** between 10.30 and 11.00am in the car park. There are posters on the notice boards and the front door with ideas for contributions. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Jane Monaghan

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.

The diocese is producing a monthly podcast for the Year of Prayer

called 'Encounter Prayer'. Each month a different type of prayer will be showcased; this first episode is given by Bishop Patrick who introduces the Year of Prayer, his hopes for it, and shares insights from his own prayer life. The Podcasts can be found on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google Podcasts, Amazon Music and Audible by searching Diocese of Nottingham; they are also on the diocesan website: www.dioceseofnottingham.uk/yearofprayer.

Church Cleaning for Christmas: Friday 22nd December 11am-

12.30pm. Please come along to help prepare our church for Christmas. If you are able to help please see Emily. Thank you.

Sale of Christmas cakes and various other cakes: Sunday 17th

December, after the 9am and 11.15am Masses. The money raised will help pay for Mary and Lizzy Offiler-Russell's to go to Lourdes.

From the Saints

"When you are guilty, say so to God through a confessor. Acknowledge your problems and sins. The moment you have stated them, God puts His hand over you and you are a newborn babe."

(St John Vianney, 1786-1859)



Fatima and the First Saturdays study groups

The study group covers: the apparitions of the Angel of Peace; Our Lady's six appearances at Fatima; the three important appearances after Fatima; additional crucial information found in Sister Lucia's memoirs, letters, and locutions up to 1945; additional information up to the present time; how all of this content is related to the First Saturdays Devotion.

Next groups start the week of **14th-18th January 2024**. Meet on Zoom for an hour a week for 13 weeks. You can choose a time from various days and times. To register for the English Study Groups, go to: <https://www.communalfirstsaturdays.org/study-groups>. **Deadline: 8th January 24**

Please could all Missio box holders return their boxes to church before Christmas. Thank you.

Last Week's Finance

1st Collection: £678 of which £166 was gift-aided

Exaireo Trust: £506

Standing orders: £722 @ 30/11, of which £650 was gift-aided

Attendance: 493

Thank you
