

St Mary of the Annunciation Catholic Church

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

NEWSLETTER

Gaudete Sunday: signs of joy and hope

This Sunday we exchange the sombre purple, the usual colour of Advent for rose, and we're even allowed some flowers on the altar. Why? Because today, the Third Sunday of Advent is '**Gaudete Sunday.**' It is a sign the Church gives us that the fasting, prayer and the waiting for the birth of our Saviour is almost over, and the **rose-coloured vestments** and the **rose-coloured candle on the Advent wreath** lifts us from pure penance to an **anticipatory joy.**

Rose is the liturgical colour of joy in this period of preparation, indicating that something wonderful is near. The Church is saying, **"It's fine to be joyful now, because God is coming."** And the Latin word '*gaudete*' comes from the first words of today's Entrance Antiphon from St Paul's letter to the Philippians (4:4): **'Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say rejoice. Indeed, the Lord is near.'** And this joy is rooted not in the passing pleasures of this world, but in the assurance that **God is faithful to His promises.** That's why we have in the First Reading another powerful prophecy from Isaiah (35:1-6, 10). He gives the signs by which the Messiah will be known. ***"Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy."*** These are the credentials of the Messiah in which God tells us what the Messiah is going to do.

And then, seven centuries later, when John the Baptist was suffering in prison and near martyrdom, he sends his disciples to JESUS to ask Him, ***"Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?"*** But Our Lord doesn't give them a speech. He simply says, ***"Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind see, the deaf hear, the lame walk, the dead rise, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them."*** In other words, the prophecies are being fulfilled. The Messiah is here. So God really does keep all His promises. And that's why we rejoice today. This is the point of the rose candle, the rose vestments, the flowers on the altar and the readings about rejoicing. It all points to one truth: **Christ is near. His coming is now imminent. So get ready, stay faithful and rejoice.**



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

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: Mr C Maher

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Rorate Mass

Please pray for those who are sick

for those who have recently died:

Neal Sheppard

May he rest in peace

and for those whose anniversaries occur at this time:

Giuseppe Sacchetta

Luisa De Blasio

Peter Robinson

Brian Stack

Russell Lomotos

Margaret Dawson

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

Sat 13th Vigil Mass
6.00pm Gregory Baker (RIP)

Sun 14th Third Sunday of Advent
9.00am For the Parish
11.15am John McEnery (RIP)
5.00pm Carol Service

Mon 15th Advent Feria
9.15am Bridget Scott (RIP)

Tues 16th Advent Feria
6.45am Brian de Silva (RIP) *Rorate Mass*

Weds 17th Ember Wednesday
6.30pm Deceased of the Faulks & Hallam Families (Latin)

Thurs 18th Advent Feria
9.15am Anthony Richard Hutchings (RIP)

Fri 19th Advent Feria
2.30pm Confirmation
6.00-6.25pm Confessions
6.30pm Vittorio Giorgio (RIP)

Sat 20th Advent Feria
10.30am Private prayer with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament
-12.30pm with Confessions 10.30-11.30am & Benediction 12.20pm
6.00pm **Vigil Mass:** Intention for the living

Sun 21st Fourth Sunday of Advent
9.00am For the Parish
11.15am Wladyslaw Moson (RIP, Anniversary)
4.00pm Italian Mass

Rosary Mon, Tues, Thurs after 9.15am Mass; Wed, Fri at 6.00pm;
First Saturday of each month after 10.00am Mass

THIS WEEK AT ST MARY'S

Thurs 18th RCIA - 7.00pm in the library

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So don't just look at the rose candle and vestments and think, "How lovely!" Let it challenge you. Think, right, Advent is almost complete. Christ really is coming, and He's coming very soon. So I need to try and develop a deeper prayer life, I need to go to **Confession** and get my soul in order. And because the coming of the Lord is now so close, I'm joyful and full of hope, because of what I know He's going to do for me. He's coming to save me.

Gaudete! Rejoice! The Saviour is at the door.

Fr Paul Gillham, IC

Rorate Mass: This Tuesday 16th December at 6.45am, begin your day with something very special by attending the Rorate Mass - the Advent Mass of Our Lady celebrated entirely by candlelight. It will be over by 7.30am giving everyone time to get to work, university or school. Whether or not you've been before, come and be part of one of Advent's most beautiful celebrations. There is a wonderful atmosphere. And don't forget to bring your lanterns!

Fr Paul

Preparation for Christmas: As we continue on our Advent journey of preparation for the Lord's coming, this is a gentle reminder that Confessions are available on Friday evenings before the 6.30pm Mass and on Saturday mornings at 10.30am. Please take the opportunity to receive the Sacrament if you haven't done so recently. I would also encourage you in this holy season to attend an extra Mass during the week, if you are able. Daily Mass is a beautiful way to deepen our prayer, find some quiet time, and prepare spiritually for Christmas.

Fr Paul

The Advent "O Antiphons": As Advent draws to a close, I thought it would be interesting to mention the ancient "O Antiphons" which are prayed each evening at Vespers, the Evening Prayer of the Church, from 17th - 23rd December. They are called the "O Antiphons" because they begin with the word "O", and they address Our Lord by one of His Old Testament titles. You will find these titles in the well-known Advent hymn, O come, O come Emmanuel. The Latin words of each of these titles are: *Sapientia* (Wisdom), *Adonai* (Lord), *Radix* (Root), *Clavis* (Key), *Oriens* (Dawn), *Rex* (King), and *Emmanuel* (Emmanuel). Now interestingly, if you take the first letter of each title and spell it backwards, you get the Latin words, ERO CRAS, which means, "Tomorrow I will come." So just think, every time you sing the hymn O come, O come Emmanuel, you are joining yourself to the vast throng of Christians going back centuries who prayed as all Christians do to this day, "Come Lord JESUS!" (Rev 22:20).

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

Christmas Cards with the dates and times of Advent, Christmas and New Year services are now available for you to take from the church exits.

Enabling Our Mission Campaign

Thank you to all of those who have engaged with the Diocesan Campaign to date. I'm grateful for your time and generosity, with nearly £55,000 pledged so far. Further information will be provided on this initiative to the rest of the parish in the New Year. If you are intending to donate and haven't yet managed to return your pledge form, the campaign manager has asked that you please do this before next weekend, to enable a comprehensive update to be provided to the parish in January.

Many thanks for your support.

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.

Christmas Fayre/Raffle: Please see the noticeboard for information about the prize winners. Unclaimed prizes can be collected from the parish office.

St Mary's School: Heartiest congratulations to Priscilla Jordan and the whole team at St Mary's following a highly successful Diocesan Canonical Inspection. The school was awarded an overall good grade with an outstanding grade for its Catholic Life and Mission. The inspectors made some wonderful comments including "The school beautifully reflects its Catholic character giving visible witness to a community rooted in faith and Gospel values." St. Mary's was highly praised for its links with the parish and work with our priests. Grateful thanks to Priscilla and the leadership team, The full report is available to view on the St Mary's School website.

Jane Monaghan

From the Saints

"All that was foretold of Him came to pass, so that through the prophets we might recognise the Christ."

St Cyril of Jerusalem (ca 315-386)



CHRISTMAS MASSES

Weds 24th December

5.30pm: Carols

6.00pm: Family Vigil Mass

Thurs 25th December

12.00am: Midnight Mass

10.30am: Solemn Mass

The parish carol service will be this afternoon (Sunday) at 5.00pm

Missio Red Box holders:

The 2026 calendars have now arrived. Please speak to Samantha Edwards for your copy.

Last Week's Finance

1st Collection: £819 (of which £164 was G/A)

Poor & Needy Parishes: £505

Standing orders: £852 @ 31/10 (of which £730 was G/A)

Attendance: 629

Thank you

St Mary's bank account details for online donations

Bank: Lloyds

A/c name: St Mary of Annun Lough RCP

Sort code: 30-95-21

A/c no: 00481028

Alternatively, scan this QR code to donate securely from your phone

