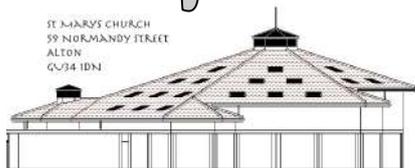


St Mary's Parish Newsletter



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TIMES OF MASSES & INTENTIONS

Sunday 7th December, 2025

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT (Year A)

Saturday	<i>Feria</i>	
	5.30pm	Roy Light (SL)
Sunday	First Sunday of Advent	
St. Lucy's	9.00am	The People of The Parish
St Mary's	11.00am	Santiago Rodrigues, RIP (LR)
Monday	The Immaculate Conception	
	9.30am	Special Intention
Tuesday	<i>Advent Feria</i>	
	NO MASS	
Wednesday	<i>St Swithin Wells</i>	
	9.00am	Rosary
	9.30am	Rosamma Augustine, RIP (RG)
Thursday	<i>Advent Feria</i>	
	9.30am	Special Intention
Friday	<i>Advent Feria</i>	
	9.30am	Eileen McDermott, RIP (KMcd)
Saturday	<i>St Lucy</i>	
	5.30pm	Mary & Jack Lucas, RIP (CA)
Sunday	Second Sunday of Advent	
Medstead	9.00am	The People of The Parish
St Mary's	11.00am	Welfare of Mary McGinty (RE)
<i>Confessions: Saturday 4.45pm prior to Mass and by request.</i>		

Sunday, 7th December, 2025

Entrance Antiphon

O people of Sion, behold, the Lord will come to save the nations, and the Lord will make the glory of his voice heard in the joy of your heart.

First Reading Isaiah 11:1-10

Responsorial Psalm

In his days shall justice flourish, and great peace for ever.

Second Reading Romans 13:11-14

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, Alleluia! Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight; all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

Alleluia!

Gospel Matthew 3:1-12

Communion Antiphon

Jerusalem, arise and stand upon the heights, and behold the joy which comes to you from God.



Flowers for the Church at Christmas

Many thanks to those who contributed to the collection last week-end. For those who still wish to make a donation, there will be a further collection this week-end and next.

Charity unites us to God... There is nothing mean in charity, nothing arrogant. Charity knows no schism, does not rebel, does all things in concord. In charity all the elect of God have been made perfect.
-- Pope St. Clement I



SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

8th December, 2019

Throughout the first three weeks of Advent our focus is very clearly on the End of Time, and the Second Coming of the Lord - not on the run up to Christmas (that only comes in the last week). If we only view Advent as a

Season preparing for Christmas then these readings will make little sense - and neither will the figure of John the Baptist who appears today: if it was only about the preparation for Christmas, then John the Baptist, preaching after Jesus was born, becomes a confusing figure: his role is to preach to us, as he did of old, and to prepare us for the (second) coming of the Lord. Everything gets more specific today: what is being preached is not an event, but a person: Isaiah promises him, John welcomes him, Paul invites us to imitate him.

We have here a thumbnail portrait of the Messiah useful to refer to when we get to Christmas and he is revealed as a child in a manger!

Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand!

A Pope's Reflection *Benedict XVI*

For a week we have been experiencing the liturgical Season of Advent: a season of openness to the future of God, a time of preparation for holy Christmas when he, the Lord, who is the absolute innovation, came to dwell among this fallen humanity to renew it from within. A message full of hope resounds in the liturgy of Advent, inviting us to raise our gaze to the ultimate horizon but at the same time to recognize the signs of the God-with-us in the present. On this Second Sunday of Advent the Word of God acquires the moving tones of the so-called "Second Isaiah", who announced to the Israelites, tried by decades of bitter exile in Babylon, liberation at last: "Comfort, comfort my people", the Prophet says in God's name. "Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended" (Is 40: 1-2). This is what the Lord wishes to do in Advent: to speak to the heart of his people and through it to the whole of humanity, to proclaim salvation. Today too the Church raises her voice: "Make straight in the desert a highway for our God" (Is 40: 3). For the peoples worn out by poverty and hunger, for the hosts of refugees and for all who are suffering grave and systematic violations of their rights, the Church stations herself as a sentinel on the lofty mountain of faith and proclaims: "Behold your God! Behold, the Lord God comes with might" (Is 40: 10).

This prophetic announcement is fulfilled in Jesus Christ, who with his preaching and, later, with his death and Resurrection, brought the ancient promises to fulfilment, revealing an even deeper and more universal perspective. He inaugurated an exodus that was no longer solely earthly, in history, hence temporary, but rather radical and definitive: the transition from the kingdom of evil to the Kingdom of God, from the dominion of sin and death to that of love and life. Therefore, human hope goes beyond the legitimate expectations of social and political liberation because what Jesus began is a new humanity that comes "from God" but, at the same, time germinates on our earth, to the extent that it lets itself be fertilized by the Lord's Spirit. Thus it is a question of fully entering the logic of faith: believing in God, in his plan of salvation, and at the same time, striving to build his Kingdom. Justice and peace are in fact gifts of God, but require men and women to be the "good ground" ready to receive the good seed of his Word.

Christmas Services

Christmas Eve

5.00pm - Children's Christmas Mass

7.00pm - Christmas Carols

7.30pm - First Mass of Christmas

Christmas Day - 10am

St Stephen's Day - 10am

CHRISTUS
NATUS
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CHRISTUS
NATUS
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Diaries, Calendars & Christmas cards

are now available to purchase from the Repository.

Saints of the week

December 8th The Immaculate Conception

A feast called the Conception of Mary arose in the Eastern Church in the 7th century. It came to the West in the 8th century. In the 11th century it received its present name, the Immaculate Conception. In the 18th century it became a feast of the universal Church. It is now recognized as a solemnity. In 1854, Pius IX solemnly proclaimed: *“The most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instant of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the saviour of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin.”* It took a long time for this doctrine to develop. While many Fathers and Doctors of the Church considered Mary to be the greatest and holiest of the saints, they often had difficulty in seeing Mary as sinless—either at her conception or throughout her life. This is one of the Church teachings that arose more from the piety of the faithful than from the insights of brilliant theologians. Even such champions of Mary as St. Bernard of Clairvaux and Thomas Aquinas could not see theological justification for this teaching. Two Franciscans, William of Ware and Blessed John Duns Scotus, helped develop the theology. They pointed out that Immaculate Conception of Mary enhances Jesus’ redemptive work. Other members of the human race are cleansed from original sin after birth. In Mary, Jesus’ work was so powerful as to prevent original sin at the outset. **Reflection:** In Luke 1:28 the angel Gabriel, speaking on God’s behalf, addresses Mary as “full of grace” or “highly favoured”. In that context, this phrase means that Mary is receiving all the special divine help necessary for the task ahead. However, the Church grows in understanding with the help of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit led the Church, especially non-theologians, to the insight that Mary had to be the most perfect work of God next to the Incarnation. Or rather, Mary’s intimate association with the Incarnation called for the special involvement of God in Mary’s whole life. The logic of piety helped God’s people to believe that Mary was full of grace and free of sin from the first moment of her existence. Moreover, this great privilege of Mary is the highlight of all that God has done in Jesus. Rightly understood, the incomparable holiness of Mary shows forth the incomparable goodness of God.



December 14th, Saint John of the Cross

John is a saint because his life was a heroic effort to live up to his name: “of the Cross.” The folly of the cross came to full realization in time. “Whoever wishes to come after me must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me” (Mark 8:34b) is the story of John’s life. The Paschal Mystery—through death to life—strongly marks John as reformer, mystic-poet, and theologian-priest. Ordained a Carmelite priest in 1567 at age 25, John met Teresa of Avila and like her, vowed himself to the primitive Rule of the Carmelites. As a partner with Teresa and in his own right, John engaged in the work of reform, and came to experience the price of reform: increasing opposition, misunderstanding, persecution, and imprisonment. He came to know the cross acutely, to experience the dying of Jesus—as he sat month after month in his dark, damp, narrow cell with only his God. Yet, the paradox! In this dying of imprisonment John came to life, uttering poetry. In the darkness of the dungeon, John’s spirit came into the Light. There are many mystics, many poets; John is unique as mystic-poet, expressing in his prison-cross the ecstasy of mystical union with God in the Spiritual Canticle. But as agony leads to ecstasy, so John had his Ascent to Mt. Carmel, as he named it in his prose masterpiece. As man-Christian-Carmelite, he experienced in himself this purifying ascent; as spiritual director, he sensed it in others; as psychologist-theologian, he described and analyzed it in his prose writings. His prose works are outstanding in underscoring the cost of discipleship, the path of union with God: rigorous discipline, abandonment, purification. Uniquely and strongly John then underlines the gospel paradox: The cross leads to resurrection, agony to ecstasy,



darkness to light, abandonment to possession, denial to self to union with God. If you want to save your life, you must lose it. John is truly “of the Cross.” He died at 49—a life short, but full. **Reflection:** In his life and writings, John of the Cross has a crucial word for us today. We tend to be rich, soft, comfortable. We shrink even from words like self-denial, mortification, purification, asceticism, discipline. We run from the cross. John’s message—like the gospel—is loud and clear: Don’t—if you really want to live!

POLITE REMINDER

A gentle reminder to those who already have a Gift Aid Number to place your offering in an envelope and mark with your name or personal Gift Aid Number. If you are not already a member of the Diocesan Gift Aid Donation Scheme and pay tax in the UK, then please consider joining. By completing one of the forms, available at the back of the Church or from the Parish Office, we would be able to claim back, from the “Tax Man”, 25p for every £1 that you give to St. Mary’s. This makes a huge difference to our income and the ever increasing costs of maintaining the property and grounds.



CHRISTMAS TABLEAU

Once again we are planning to have a Nativity tableau at the Children’s Mass. Just to give us an idea of how many to cater for could you please sign the sheet indicating how many children there are. Many thanks.

DAILY BIBLE READINGS & PRAYERS

There are several excellent links that will email daily Bible readings and reflections to computer, phone etc.

Bishop Robert Barron

<https://www.wordonfire.org/>

Dr Scott Hann

<https://stpaulcenter.com/studies-tools/sunday-bible-reflections/>

Catholic Daily Reflections

<https://catholic-daily-reflections.com/daily-reflections/>

Irish Carmelite Reflections

<https://carmelites.ie/resources/>

Universalis.com

<https://universalis.com/index.htm>

Catholic Daily Reflections and Prayers

<https://catholic-daily-reflections.com/daily-reflections/>

The Morning Offering

O Jesus, through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I offer You my prayers, works, joys and sufferings of this day for all the intentions of Your Sacred Heart, in union with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world, in reparation for my sins, for the intentions of all my relatives and friends, and in particular for the intentions of the Holy Father. Amen.

L	O	C	U	S	T	S	S	M	E
R	E	I	E	G	A	S	S	E	M
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Y	L	A	P	R	A	E	E	G	C
S	E	E	N	E	C	A	D	A	A
E	R	N	B	I	R	I	L	N	E
C	N	H	O	J	A	P	I	A	R
I	O	V	I	H	I	S	W	S	P

JOHN
PREACHED
WILDERNESS
MESSAGE
REPENT
VOICE
PREPARE
BELT
LOCUSTS
HONEY
SANDALS
RIVER



Please remember in your prayers

Baby Polly Phillips, John D., Sr. Joan Henry Mary McGinty, Maria Proli, Francesca Adams, Mary McGrath, Annie Tomlinson, Rita Rawling, Kate Cradock, Alex Smith, Jonathan & Lindy Wiltshire, Simon Wilder, Mary Sturgess, Theresa Davies, Flavia Stampa Gruss, Kay Hulbert, Pam Barbour

