

TO CONTACT THE PARISH/FATHER NEIL

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Fourth Sunday of Advent – 19th December 2021

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

On that first Christmas night the Light of the World was laid in the manger - “ the Light of the Nations and the Glory of Israel”. On that Holy and Sacred night, into a darkened world, the Glory of God descended - “the Word became Flesh and dwelt among us full of light and truth”. In our dark times, we turn to that Light and invite Him to break into our lives Who, in His Incarnation and Resurrection from the Dead, has conquered darkness and fear, and pray to Him in the words of the Christmas hymn “O come to my heart, Lord Jesus , there is room in my heart for Thee”. There was found no room for our Infant Saviour on that first Christmas night – at this Christmastide may He find us longing for Him, as Mary longed for Him, “with a love beyond all telling” and may He bless us everyone.

Mass Intentions this Sunday (19th December) **Saturday** (St.John Kemble) 4-00p.m. Parish & People; (St. Joseph’s) 6-00p.m. Michael McAteer (RIP) (The Family); **Sunday** 8-00a.m. Annie & William Cochrane (RIP) (Jean Evans); 10-30a.m. James O’Donnell (RIP) (Anne-Marie O’Donnell).

Weekday Mass Intentions: **No Mass this Tuesday.** **Wednesday** 22nd December (St.Joseph’s) 9-30 a.m. Deceased family and friends (RIP.) (Rosemary Insole); (St.John Kemble) 11-00 a.m. MICF (RIP); **Thursday** 23rd December (St.Joseph’s) 10-30a.m. Funeral Mass – Brendan Harvey (RIP).

PLEASE NOTE - there are four Christmas Masses at St.Joseph’s over ChristmasEve/Day. It is only necessary to have reserved a seat for the 6-00 p.m. Christmas Eve Mass. There is plenty of space at the other three Masses. **THE OMICRON VIRUS IS EASILY TRANSMISSABLE - IF YOU HAVE ANY RESERVATIONS/CONCERNS ABOUT MIXING IN LARGE GROUPS, PLEASE BE AWARE THAT THERE MAY BE LARGE NUMBERS AT ANY OF THE CHRISTMAS MASSES.**

Christmas Eve – Friday 24th December (St.John Kemble) 4-00 p.m. (Reserved Seats) Elizabeth Ellis (Good Health) (Nancy) (St.Joseph’s) 6-00 p.m. (**ALL SEATS ALREADY RESERVED**) Parish & People; and 10-00 p.m. Kevin Halloran and Annie Halloran) (RIP).

Christmas Day – Saturday 25th December (St.Joseph’s) 8-00 a.m. George & Bridie (Sp.Int.) (Paula & Adrian); (St.Joseph’s) 10-30a.m. Bryan, Joan & Harry (RIP) (Babs); (**NB** No Mass at 4-00 p.m or 6-00 p.m. on Saturday evening/Christmas Day).

Mass Intentions this Sunday (26th December – The Holy Family) **Saturday** – No Mass on Saturday Evening/Christmas Day; **Sunday** 8-00 a.m. Christine Minty (RIP) (Kathleen & Family); 10-30a.m. Bernard Allen (RIP) (Elias Family).

Brendan Harvey (RIP) Please remember Brendan in your prayers. Please also remember Jan and the family in your prayers. Brendan’s Funeral Mass will take place here in St;Joseph’s next Thursday 23 December at 10-30a.m.. The Coffin will be received into the Church at 5-00 p.m. the night before. *Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord. And let perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace. Amen.*

Kevin Halloran (RIP) Please remember Kevin in your prayers who died peacefully at home on Tuesday morning. Please also remember Lorna and the family in your prayers. Kevin’s Funeral Mass will take place here in St.Joseph’s on Friday 31st December at 10-30 a.m.. The Coffin will be received into the church at 6-00 p.m. the night before. *Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord. And let perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace. Amen.*

Anniversaries: Of your charity, remember in prayer those whose anniversaries occur at this time: Elsie Farrell (2000); Desmond Comerford (2011); Tom Thomas (2011); Gladys Gallagher (2016); Douglas Hearne (2018); Jacqueline Joseph (2006); Ena Hynes (2005); Grace Phillips (2006); Vernon Doyle (2006); Paddy O'Reilly (2005); Rose Hoptroff (2007); *Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, And let light perpetual shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen.*

Candles The Sacred Heart – McAteer Family (Deceased members - RIP); St.Joseph – Christopher Davies (Good Health); Our Lady – Gladys Gallagher (RIP).

Readers: **This Sunday** (19th December) 6-00 p.m. Sian Loynes; 8-00 a.m. Gregory Page; 10-30 a.m. Sheila Williams. **Next Sunday** (26th December) 8-00 a.m. Adrian & Paula Macpherson-Jones; 10-30 a.m. Barbara Hunt.

Cleaning Teams. **This Sunday** (19th December) 6-00 p.m. Sian & Mary; 8-00 a.m. Martin & Nuala; 10-30 a.m. Volunteers please. **Next Sunday** (26th December) 8-00 a.m. Martin & Nuala; 10-30 a.m. Joan & Ann.

N.B BIG CLEAN FOR CHRISTMAS?? Cleaners urgently needed to help clean and tidy the Church on a once-a-fortnight rota. We are currently down to just 6/7 volunteers. A commitment of just one hour in the fortnight. **Thank you for volunteering!** Please have a word with either Nora or Sheila. Many thanks!

Parish Collection Last weekend **St.Joseph's** £316-10 (plus Direct Debits). **St.John Kemble** 4/12/21 £109-00 plus £20 (SVP); 11/12/21 £29-00. Many thanks.

Afghanistan CAFOD Crisis Appeal There will be a special collection for Afghanistan on Sunday 2nd January.

First Holy Communion Classes. Classes resume on Sunday 9th January. Because of the large number making their first Holy Communion and so as to accommodate family/friends the **First Holy Communion Mass** will be on **Saturday 29th January at 10-30 a.m.** (First Confession – Saturday 22nd January at 10-30 a.m. in the Church).

The Sacrament of Confirmation Archbishop George Stack will be with us on **Friday 29th April** (7-00 p,m,) to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation. There is no Confirmation Group this Sunday – we shall resume our meetings in February. Attendance at Mass continues to be an essential part of the preparation process.

THE PARISH SYNODS The date of the next meeting is now **re-scheduled** for **Wednesday 5th January** at 2-00 p.m. in the Hall. All are invited to contribute to consultation process.

APF (Red Mission Boxes) . A volunteer is needed to empty 6 boxes in the Bryncoch and Cimla area. If you would be able to help in this parish ministry please have a word with Angela Brennan or Fr.Neil. Thank you to those who have continued to empty the boxes especially during the Covid period.

Angela Bennan We offer our grateful thanks to Angela who is retiring from her role as Parish APF Secretary after 50 years (!) – (1971) - looking after and co-ordinating the parish collections for Home Missions. Grateful thanks to you Angela and also to Sian who has very kindly offered to take on the role of APF Parish Secretary. Many thanks.

SVP Childrens' Christmas Gift Appeal Thank you to all those who bought gifts for children in need. They were most gratefully received.

The Sick and Housebound Please continue to remember in your prayers all those who are sick and housebound, those in hospital and in our local care homes. Especially at this time, Peggy Swan (Glynneath), Jane Boland, George Johnson, Nancy Morris, Cheryl Ford, Andrew Jenkins, Jason Saunders, Stephen Saunders, Yolanda Jones, Elizabeth Fluck, Lorna O'Brien, Betty Hopkins, Rose Williams, Donie O'Connell, Maureen Pitt. If you would like others to be remembered in this prayer list (with their permission) please supply their names.

"More honourable than the Cherubim,

And infinitely more glorious than the Seraphim,

Thou, who without corruption, didst bear God the Word,

Thee, true Mother of God, we magnify"

CHRISTMASS MASS TIMES AND THE PANDEMIC (OMICRON)

All the seats for the 6-00 p.m. Christmas Eve Mass are now reserved. (see below)

There is plenty of space at the other three Christmas Eve/Day Masses. However, the Omicron Virus is easily transmissible and if you have any reservations/concerns about mixing in large groups, please be aware that there may be large numbers at any of the Christmas Masses and there is **no obligation** to attend Mass this Christmas.

Please note, every other pew continues to be roped off. This allows us to sing hymns (whilst wearing masks).The alternative would be to allow seating in every pew but without congregational singing – not a happy prospect for the celebration of Christmas! In some cases, people from different households/bubbles will be sat together in the same pew. If, in view of the new omicron variant (which is more transmissible and predicted to rapidly become the dominant strain of the virus before Christmas) you are uncomfortable about this please consider attending a different Mass (where there are just the usual restrictions on numbers).

Masks must continue to be worn (unless medically exempted), hands sanitized and social distancing when entering and leaving the church, and when coming forward to receive Holy Communion.

Please keep up to date with how regulations may be changed (and tightened) in Wales which may affect arrangements for our Christmas Masses and also our regular Sunday and weekday Masses.

Please note (!) – if Fr.Neil should catch the new virus (even though triple jabbed!) it may mean, unfortunately, that the Christmas Masses will have to be cancelled at the last moment (with little or no warning) as there is no realistic possibility of arranging cover when other priests are already fully committed to their own celebrations of Mass over the Christmas period. Should this happen, notification will be posted on the Parish Website and Facebook.

Reserved seats for the 6-00 p.m. Christmas Vigil Mass

PLEASE NOTE If you decide not to attend the 6-00p.m. Christmas Eve Mass please let Fr.Neil know so that he can offer your seat(s) to someone else. Thank you.

Martin & Nuala Rees (2), Susan Farid (2), Eleanora Evans (4), Betty Thomas (1), Pat (1), Anna Stephens (6), John Morris (1), Mary Blackmore (1),Annette Blackmore (1), Stephen Evans (1), Eileen Reynolds (1), Maralyn Jones (2), Angela Healey (1), Chris Burbidge (1), Mary Isaac (2), Ceri & Patrick McAteer (2), Geraint Jones (1), JR & C. Parker (2), Clare Morley (3), Christopher Robinson (3), Creisna Comerford-Davies (5), Des Nicholas (1), Sheila Morgan (1), Julia Wheatley (6), Joan Michael (7), Sian Smitham (5), Sheila Abell (6), Betty & Roger Horton (2), Remo Moruzzi (3),Liny Crago (1), Mary Prendergast (1), Michelle Bray (6), Siobhan Fitchett (6).

ENTRANCE

- 1 God is working his purpose out
as year succeeds to year,
God is working his purpose out
and the time is drawing near;
nearer and nearer draws the time,
the time that shall surely be,
when the earth shall be filled with the
glory of God
as the waters cover the sea.
- 2 From utmost east to utmost west
where human foot hath trod,
by the mouth of many messengers
goes forth the voice of God.
'Give ear to me, ye continents,
ye isles give ear to me,
that the earth may be filled with the
glory of God
as the waters cover the sea.'
- 3 What can we do to work God's work,
to prosper and increase
the friendship of all humankind,
the reign of the Prince of Peace?
What can we do to hasten the time,
the time that shall surely be,
when the earth shall be filled with the
glory of God
as the waters cover the sea?
- 4 March we forth in the strength of God
with the banner of Christ unfurled,
that the light of the glorious Gospel of
truth may shine throughout the world.
Fight we the fight with sorrow and sin,
to set their captives free,
that the earth may be filled with the
glory of God
as the waters cover the sea.
- 5 All we can do is nothing worth
unless God blesses the deed;
vainly we hope for the harvest-tide
till God gives life to the seed;
yet nearer and nearer draws the time,
the time that shall surely be,
when the earth shall be filled with the
glory of God
as the waters cover the sea.

OFFERTORY

- 1 It came upon the midnight clear,
that glorious song of old,
from angels bending near the earth
to touch their harps of gold;
'Peace on the earth, good will to all,
from heaven's all gracious King!'
The world in solemn stillness lay
to hear the angels sing.
- 2 Yet with the woes of sin and strife
the world has suffered long;
beneath the angel-strain have rolled
two thousand years of wrong;
and man, at war with man, hears not
the love song which they bring:
O hush the noise, ye men of strife,
and hear the angels sing!

- 3 For lo, the days are hastening on,
by prophets seen of old,
when with the ever-circling years
shall come the time foretold,
when the new heaven and earth shall own
the Prince of Peace their king,
and all the world repeat the song
which now the angels sing.

HOLY COMMUNION

- 1 Silent night, holy night,
all is calm, all is bright,
round yon virgin mother and child;
holy infant, so tender and mild:
sleep in heavenly peace,
sleep in heavenly peace.
- 2 Silent night, holy night.
Shepherds quake at the sight,
glories stream from heaven afar,
heavenly hosts sing alleluia;
Christ, the Saviour is born,
Christ, the Saviour is born.
- 3 Silent night, holy night.
Son of God, love's pure light
radiant beams from thy holy face,
with the dawn of redeeming grace:
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

RECESSIONAL

- 1 The angel Gabriel from heaven came,
his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame;
'All hail,' said he, thou lowly maiden
Mary,
most highly favoured lady.' Gloria!
- 2 For know, a blessed Mother thou shalt be,
all generations laud and honour thee,
thy Son shall be Emmanuel, by seers
foretold;
most highly favoured lady.' Gloria!
- 3 Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head,
To me be as it pleaseth God,' she said.
'My soul shall laud and magnify his
holy name.'
Most highly favoured lady. Gloria!
- 4 Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ was born
in Bethlehem, all on a Christmas morn,
and Christian folk throughout the world
will ever say
'most highly favoured lady.' Gloria!

Each Church is Bethlehem

I open the stable door,
I kneel before the infant.
I worship with the shepherds.
I adore the Christ child.
I ponder the Word made flesh.
I absorb the love of God.
I sing Glory with the angels.
I offer my gifts with the Magi.
I have come from lands afar.
I receive the living Lord.
I hold him in my hands.
I go on my way rejoicing.
Glorifying and praising God.



All of creation rejoices in thee, O Full of Grace, the assembly of angels and the race of men. O sanctified temple and spiritual paradise, the glory of virgins, from whom God was incarnate and became a child; our God before the ages. He made thy body into a throne, and thy womb He made more spacious than the heavens. All of creation rejoices in thee, O Full of Grace. Glory to thee!

Hymn to the Theotokos from St Basil's Liturgy

PRAYER FOR ADVENT

LOVING GOD, we seek you in both the light and the darkness, the silence and the sounds, the fullness and the emptiness of this Advent season. Fill our hearts with hope for your coming, love for those who are most in need, and faith in your promises. May this time of preparation help us celebrate the birth of your Son with deep gratitude and abundant joy. We ask this in the name of Jesus, the Light of the world. Amen.