

Third Sunday of Advent - 17th December 2023

“ Renew Your wonders in this our day, as by a New Pentecost. Grant to Your Church that, being of one mind and steadfast in prayer with Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and following the lead of blessed Peter, it may advance the reign of our Divine Saviour, the reign of truth and justice, the reign of love and peace. Come Holy Spirit, in Your power and might to renew the face of the earth”. (Pope St.John XXIII)

Prayer for Ukraine (from the Bishops 'Conference) *“Mary, Our Lady of Kiev, Mother of God, We ask you to intercede for the people of Ukraine, For their government and all who suffer as a result of war. Be with them as you stood beside your Son, Suffering on the Cross at Calvary. Give them strength and courage, Through faith, hope and justice. May we, in our turn, Support them through prayer and generosity, That lives may be saved, the injured healed, that the dead may rest in peace, And that war will end in peace”.*

ADVENT - marks the beginning of the New Year in the Liturgical Calendar of the Church as we enter the cycle of Christmas celebrations and festivities which began on **Advent Sunday** and take us all the way through to **Candlemas** on 2nd February (40 days after Christmas Day). Advent gives us the opportunity to reflect on the Coming (the “Advent”) of Christ - (i) His **First** Coming at His Birth in Bethlehem, and also (ii) His **Second** Coming upon the clouds of Heaven when He will return “in power and great glory”. Let us pray that this Advent season may be for us a time of preparation as John the Baptist (the Forerunner and Herald of Christ) and Our Blessed Lady (the Bright Morning Star of Christ's Appearing) point us to Jesus and say, “ Behold the Lamb of God!” – “Do whatever He tells you!”

Mass Intentions this Sunday (17th December) **Saturday** 4-00 p.m. (St. John Kemble) Parish & People; 6-00 p.m. (St. Joseph's) Mike O'Hea (RIP) (Eirwen & family); **Sunday** 10-30 a.m. Anne Williams (RIP) (The family).

Pastoral Letter from Archbishop Mark to be read out in all the churches this weekend regarding future plans for the Diocese of Menevia and the Archdiocese of Cardiff.

This Sunday (17th) **Cancer Challenge Singers** to begin our celebration of Christmas, a Service of Christmas Carols & Readings at 5-00 p.m. here in St. Joseph's followed by refreshments in the Hall. Tickets now available £5 – (please see Angela or Geraint) to support Cancer Challenge.

Christmas Carol Service at St. Joseph's School and Sixth Form Centre, Port Talbot this Monday evening at 6-30 p.m. followed by refreshments (mulled wine and mince pies). All welcome.

Weekday Mass Intentions Wednesday (20th) 9-30 a.m. Finnan Costello (RIP) (Deidre Love); 11-00 a.m. (St. John Kemble) Kathryn Woolley (RIP) (Nancy);Thursday (21st) 9-30 a.m. James O'Donnell (RIP) (Ann-Marie O'Donnell); Friday (15th) 9-30 a.m. Fr. Ted Harrington (RIP) (SPCD).

Mass Intentions next Sunday (24th) **Saturday** 4-00 p.m. (St.John Kemble) Parish & People; 6-00p.m. June & David Vaudin (Sp.Int.) (Parish Guild); **Sunday** 10-30 a.m. Kathryn Woolley (RIP) (Sheila & David).

Christmas Mass Times: Christmas Eve (Sunday 24th) St. John Kemble 4-00 p.m. St. Joseph's 6-00 p.m. Joan, Harry & Bryan (RIP) (Babs); 10-00 p.m. “Midnight Mass” Annie Halloran & Kevin Halloran (RIP); **Christmas Day:** St Joseph's 10-30 a.m. Deceased Members of the Grant Family (RIP) (Robert).

Christmas Party and Raffle Many thanks to the mothers for arranging a lovely Christmas Children's Party (and for us older ones as well!) – with games and carols to sing. Thanks also to those contributing food and presents, and also to Peter for arranging the Christmas Raffle this year (32 prizes! – details of winners on the notice board and available from the sacristy) which raised the magnificent sum of £840 for parish funds. Many thanks.

WARNING After a wonderful School Christmas Carol Concert on Wednesday evening, cars parked in front of the garages, opposite the church gates, were smeared in a sticky oily substance over the door handles and windscreens. Obviously this is a criminal offence and I have suggested to those affected that they report the matter to the police.

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Readers: This Sunday (17th) 6-00 p.m. Ceri McAteer; 10-30 a.m. Barbara Hunt. Next Sunday 6-00 p.m. Gerald Smith; 10-30 a.m. Sheila Williams. (Volunteers please for our Christmas Masses). **Please take the opportunity to arrive early and look at (and prepare) the readings beforehand. Thank you.**

A gentle reminder (!) – please observe and respect a prayerful silence before Mass to prepare yourself for the celebration of Mass. Loud conversations are disturbing (and upsetting) for those who may come early to church precisely to have a time of quiet reflection (including the parish priest!) who do not want to overhear personal conversations about family, friends, future plans etc! Plenty of time to exchange news and information after the end of Mass. Thank you.

Candles: Sacred Heart – Norman Evans (RIP); Our Lady – Gladys Gallagher (RIP); St. Joseph – Lydia Crocker (RIP).

Christmas Flowers Donations toward the cost of the Christmas flowers would be much appreciated. Thank you.

Anniversaries: Of your charity, remember in prayer those whose anniversaries occur at this time; Madeline Lewis (2016); Kevin O’Brien (2017); John Turner (2000); Elsie Farnell (2000); Desmond Comerford (2011). Anthony Oakley (2021); Tom Thomas (2011); Gladys Gallagher (2016); Douglas Hearne (2018); Jaquelinr Joseph (2006); Ena Hynes (2005). Grace Phillips (2006); Vernon Doyle (2006). *Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, And let light perpetual shine upon them. May they rest in peace. Amen.*

Mass Intentions Please note that weekend and weekday Mass intentions are now reserved into **February 2024**. Please be thinking ahead by several months if you would like a Mass intention for a loved one on a particular day/date – even so, some dates are reserved a year ahead and if so Mass will be said on the nearest date available to the request. Thank you.

School Caretaker The School is looking to appoint a new caretaker from the beginning of January for 15 hours per week. If you are interested or know of someone please contact the school on 635099.

The Parish S.V.P. Group would like to thank fellow parishioners for their very generous response to their Christmas Appeal.

Last Sunday’s Collection: St. Joseph’s £331 (plus Direct Debits) – and £840 raised from the Christmas Raffle. St John Kemble – £30-48 Many thanks.

Legion of Mary Every Tuesday evening at 4-45 p.m. in the Hall. New members very welcome. Please come along.

Parish Coffee Morning Every Thursday from 10-00a.m. to 11-00 a.m.

ST.JOSEPH’S PRIMARY SCHOOL If you have a child over 2 years of age or are new to the area and are looking for a school – look no further! St Joseph’s has a loving, caring ethos to bring out the full potential of your child. Please contact the school on 01639 635099 for further details

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, George Johnson, Cheryl Ford, Julie, Stephen & Jason Saunders, Yolanda Jones, Elizabeth Fluck, Lorna and Joe O’Brien, Betty Hopkins, Rose Williams, Margaret Jeffrey, Marion Brocksopp., Marlene John, Pat Day, Daniel John, George McIntyre, David Reynolds, Adrian Macpherson-Jones, Roger Horton, Kath Davies. If you would like others to be remembered in this prayer list (with their permission) please supply their names.

PRAYER AFTER MASS *St. Michael, the Archangel, defend us in battle, be our defence 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, cast into hell Satan and all other evil spirits who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen*

TO CONTACT THE PARISH/FATHER NEIL - The Presbytery, Hillside Lane, Neath, SA11 1TG. 01639 643323
Parish Website – www.catholicchurchneath.org.uk

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