



Our Lady & The English Martyrs

Litherland

Third Sunday of Advent
Sunday 17th December 2023



Parish Priest: Very Rev Canon Mark B Madden KCHS FRSA

0151 928 3471 englishmartyrs@rcaolp.co.uk

www.ourladyandenglishmartyrs.co.uk

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

How can I recognise and then bear witness to the light that comes from God?

WHEN YOU PRAY:

A Clear path to a deeper relationship with God.

You know that prayer is important but still find it challenging. Perhaps it's hard to find time, or you're unsure what to do when you pray. Or maybe you feel discouraged by your weaknesses and your inability to overcome them. If you have any of these feelings, you are not alone. Many of the saints struggled in prayer. They were like us. But each time they fell, they got up again and learned to rely more on God's grace. What God did in the lives of countless saints, he wants to do in the lives of ordinary people like us.

Starting on Monday 5 February, a 7 week course will begin in the parish hall on prayer and how to begin to pray better. This video presentation will help us on the journey of prayer God wants to take us on and it will lead us through the season of Lent.

To register, please give your name to the parish office.

WEEKDAY MASS We welcome the last group of children who will join us for Mass on Monday.

CAFOD's Christmas Fun Run is back on Wednesday 27 December 2023!

Join hundreds of people around the country as you walk, run, stroll or roll around this festive fun run with a difference. Run starts at 10.00am at Wavertree Sports Park, Wellington Road, Liverpool, L15 4LE To register email: events@cafod.org.uk or telephone 07779 804242



THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Usually celebrated from 4.00pm - 4.30pm on Saturday. Fr Mark is often available in the 20 minutes before each Mass. Please pop into the sacristy to ask.

SUNDAY THOUGHTS

If the first half of the first reading sounds familiar, it may be because this is the passage that Jesus reads in the synagogue at the beginning of his ministry. If you recall, after reading it Jesus proclaims that this scripture passage has been fulfilled in their hearing. Because Jesus is with us as we are gathered here today, Isaiah's words are fulfilled now as well. Jesus continues to bring glad tidings, healing, justice, favour, and vindication. So we prepare ourselves this Advent as a bride prepares for her wedding, wearing the promise of justice and the hope of salvation and shining with the jewels of generosity and praise.

In darkness, the first need is for light. At any given time the world can be full of darkness, but lately it seems like the darkness threatens to overwhelm us. War abroad. Strife at home. COVID-19. Mass shootings. Natural disasters. And on and on. But into all this darkness comes a light. Not just a light, but the light, the light John testified to. The kingdom of God has drawn near to us in Christ and we respond with joy when we realise that he comes to us, for us, and remains with us, even when we're not conscious of his abiding presence. May we recognise the light of the Lord that is within us and our neighbour as well.

May we be as bold as John the Baptist, who testified to the light but declared that he himself was not the light. Even if we have the light within us, we did not create that light, we did not produce that light. That light comes above and we merely direct it in the way that we live. May we bear witness to the light by directing it upon the darkensses in our world, producing glimmers of goodness.

Fr Mark's Theatre Group

SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS AT THE PHIL' Still a couple of tickets available for the visit to the Philharmonic on Friday 22 December. Cost is £49. Names to office if you are interested

Masses & Services for the coming week

DATE	MASS INTENTIONS & SERVICES
Saturday 16th December	NO MASS
Sunday 17th December <i>Third Sunday of Advent</i>	10.30am People of the Parish
Monday 18th December	10.00am Thomas Toolan
Tuesday 19th December	10.00am James Barr
Wednesday 20th December	NO MASS
Thursday 21st December	10.00am Philip Mellon
Friday 22nd December	10.00am Hughes & Gray family
Saturday 23rd December	NO MASS
Sunday 24th December <i>Fourth Sunday of Advent</i>	10.30am People of the Parish 6.00pm Christmas Vigil Mass Perpetual Mass List 9.00pm First Mass of Christmas People of the Parish
Monday 25th December <i>Solemnity of Nativity Of The Lord</i>	10.30am Private intention

POPE FRANCIS PRAYER INTENTION FOR DECEMBER

For persons with disabilities

We pray that people living with disabilities may be at the centre of attention in society, and that institutions may offer inclusive programmes which value their active participation. .



Lord in your mercy...

MIDNIGHT MASS AT THE CATHEDRAL - 11.30pm



We are delighted to announce that Midnight Mass, celebrated by Archbishop McMahon OP, will be broadcast live on BBC Radio 4 this year, from the Metropolitan Cathedral with the Cathedral Choir. The start time is 23.30 and the congregation are asked to be in their seats by 23.15. No tickets are required.

FEAST OF THE WEEK

St Peter Canisius (1521-1597)

He was born in Nijmegen (now in the Netherlands) in 1521. He studied at Cologne and joined the Society of Jesus: he was ordained priest in 1546. He was sent to Germany, where for many years he worked hard to defend and strengthen the Catholic faith both by writing and by preaching. He wrote many books, of which The Catechism is particularly noteworthy. He died at Fribourg in Switzerland in 1597.



ENGLISH MARTYRS JOSPACE "200 CLUB" DECEMBER DRAW

1st	£20	No. 127	E Ponting
2nd	£15	No. 4	B Benbow
3rd	£10	No. 77	R Butler
4th	£10	No. 201	R Hilton

Many thanks for your continued support. This year we have been able to donate £1450 to the Hospice. Many blessings to you all for Christmas and the New Year - Myra

ADVENT SEQUENCE

Each Sunday throughout Advent, you can hear our Cathedral Choir sing a sublime selection of seasonal music designed to reflect the wonder and joy of Advent. Entrance is free and no tickets are required.



Sunday, 17 December, 5pm Festival Carol Service. A mix of seasonal music and readings as well as congregational carols.

Christmas By Candlelight (Last few tickets left!) 7pm Friday 22 December - Set by candlelight in the beautiful Crypt Concert Room, we will start the evening with the Cathedral's Youth Choir who will perform some beautiful Christmas pieces of music as a group and also solo. You will then enjoy a delicious two-course Christmas supper prepared and served at your table by Horseradish, one of the Cathedral's preferred caterers. To end the evening, the Dean's band will play a few Christmas tunes to dance the night away! If you would like to buy individual tickets or reserve a table for friends and family please email c.hanlon@metcathedral.org.uk Tickets are limited so get them today and leave the rest to us! Cost: £50.00 per person.

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY

The parish office closes on Thursday at 1.00pm and will re-open on Tuesday 2 January, 9.30am - 2.30pm. Parish staff will take a well earned rest and Fr. Mark thanks Bernie and Nigel for their hard work this year.

THANK YOU! Thank you to everyone who joined us for the evening on Wednesday. We made an amazing £915 from the raffle and bingo. But more importantly we all had a really lovely evening. Details of raffle winners on Notice Board

CAFOD WORLD GIFTS This year why not send someone a CAFOD World Gift? The Christmas catalogue is at the back of Church. Have a look at all the fantastic gifts that you can purchase that will help people in communities all around the world. People experiencing poverty and injustice will be helped with your donation. You receive a beautiful illustrated card to send that explains the gift



Mary's Meals – **Double the Love**

From 22 November 2023 to 22 January 2024, donations made to Mary's Meals will be doubled by a group of generous supporters, up to £1million. Today, we face some of our greatest challenges yet in a world devastated by conflict, food insecurity and the cost of living crisis, which we know is affecting people here in the UK as well as in the countries where we work, such as Syria, Haiti and South Sudan. With Double the Love, your donation will be matched and your kindness will go even further – meaning we can reach even more desperately hungry children with a life-changing school meal. There are many ways to get involved, find out more at www.marysmeals.org.uk

FEEDING LIVERPOOL

This Christmas, we are asking people to join together to support Feeding Liverpool's Christmas Appeal to help us and the 70 member charities we support that provide emergency and community food support in the region as we work towards #GoodFoodForAll. Your support will help us continue to put good food on tables this winter and beyond, at a time when Government Statistics indicate that 132,000 people in the Liverpool City Region– or 9% of the population – are having to turn to emergency food charities to feed themselves or their family.

Feeding Liverpool's donation page: Help Feed Liverpool this Christmas -

www.justgiving.com/campaign/feedingliverpoolchristmasappeal

JUSTICE & PEACE COMMISSION

Andrew Jackson CEO of Pax Christi England and Wales will speak at the Archdiocesan J&P's Annual Memorial Lecture on 'The challenges of non-violence in 2024: being non-violent in a violent world.' Sunday 14 January, 1.30pm, Gibberd room at the Metropolitan Cathedral. For more details contact p.guidi@rcaol.org.uk

800 YEARS OF THE CHRISTMAS CRIB

As Christmas 1223 approached, St Francis of Assisi remembered his pilgrimage to the Holy Land and knew that most of his contemporaries could never visit Bethlehem or realistically imagine the Nativity. Artists who attempted to paint the scene engaged the mind and heart but couldn't offer the touch, smell and sounds needed to recreate the birth of Jesus.



Francis knew that the stable was associated with an inn and was possibly one of many hillside caves close to Bethlehem. At the time, he was staying just outside Greccio, a small town sixty miles south of Assisi and surrounded by the beautiful hills and valleys of Umbria. The town is very hot in summer and piercingly, bitterly cold in winter. If he could find a suitable cave for recreating the Nativity, the people of Greccio could experience the similar low temperatures of a Bethlehem winter's night. Like Joseph and Mary, they would also feel grateful for any shelter they could find and for a small fire which brought warmth and light into the cave's darkness.

Francis placed an ox and ass beside the manger, a logical step if Jesus was born in a stable: in Italy, as in Palestine, families lived alongside their beasts and depended on their bodily warmth for extra heating when temperatures dropped. There was, therefore, nothing particularly unusual in placing animals around the manger – and so Francis recreated the Nativity in the first-ever Christmas Crib, 800 years ago this Christmas.

Do you have a crib in your home? Pope Francis has written a letter, *'Admirable Signum'* (The meaning & importance of the nativity scene), in which he highlights the importance a crib should play in every home.

"With this Letter, I wish to encourage the beautiful tradition of preparing the nativity scene in the days before Christmas and setting it up in homes, workplaces, schools... Setting up a crib in our homes helps us to relive the history of what took place in Bethlehem".



SANCTUARY LAMP

The Sanctuary Lamp for the coming week is for:

'Celia Byrne'



JUSTICE & PEACE COMMISSION

Andrew Jackson CEO of Pax Christi England and Wales will speak at the Archdiocesan J&P's Annual Memorial Lecture on 'The challenges of non-violence in 2024: being non-violent in a violent world.' Sunday 14 January, 1.30pm, Gibberd room at the Metropolitan Cathedral. For more details contact p.guidi@rcaol.org.uk

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING

Did you know 57% of shoppers will do most of their Christmas shopping online this year? And did you know this shopping can easily turn into funding for our parish? 8,000 popular online shops including eBay, Argos, John Lewis, Currys, Etsy, M&S, Boots, Waterstones and Moonpig will donate money whenever our parishioners shop with them. To use this great facility log onto www.easyfundraising.org.uk

- * Search for the brand you want to shop with on the easy fundraising website
- * The website will take you to the brand's website and activate your donation
- * Get a free donation when you checkout - your shopping will cost exactly the same!

VATICAN II CONSTITUTIONS The Vatican II Constitutions Lecture & Seminar Series preparing for the Year in Prayer are at Liverpool Hope University. The dates and speakers are as follows:
Wednesday 17 January: Peter McGrail (Sacrosanctum Concilium)
Wednesday 28 February: Pat Jones (Gaudium et Spes)
The seminars will take place 3pm - 4:30pm, and after a break for refreshments, the lectures will be from 5:30 - 7pm. . If you would like to sign up, please register your interest with Elizabeth Parsons by emailing e.parsons@rcaol.org.uk

CHRISTMAS 2023

The times of Masses over the Christmas period are as follows:



24 December

10.30 am

Mass for the 4th Sunday of Advent

6.00 pm

Christmas Vigil Mass

9.00 pm

The 1st Mass of Christmas

25 December

10.30 am

Mass of Christmas Day

Masses from 26 December will be at midday until the New Year.

Christmas Eve falls on a Sunday this year which means that we are still obliged to attend morning Mass.

Evening Masses on Christmas Eve do not fulfil the Sunday obligation

ADVENT DATES

Sunday 17 December:

Fr Mark will bless our parish Christmas trees.

A blessing is in the Newsletter for you to bless your own tree.

Sunday 24 December:

Fr Mark will bless our parish Christmas Crib.

Pope Francis encourages all Catholics to have

a crib displayed in our homes. Bring your crib or the Baby Jesus to Mass this day and Fr Mark will bless them.



Fr Mark will place the Baby Jesus in the parish Crib on Christmas Eve night.



THE BLESSING OF A CHRISTMAS TREE

The use of the Christmas tree is relatively modern. Its origins are found in the medieval mystery plays which depicted the tree of paradise and the Christmas light or candle which symbolised Christ, the Light of the world. Gather your family around your tree at home and together say the words of blessing:

Holy Lord, we come with joy to celebrate the birth of your Son, who rescued us from the darkness of sin by making the cross a tree of life and light.

May this tree, arrayed in splendour, remind us of the life-giving cross of Christ, that we may always rejoice in the new life that shines in our hearts.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

ARCHDIOCESAN SYNODAL COUNCIL UPDATE

The inaugural meeting of the Archdiocese synodal council was held on the 25th November at St Margaret Clitheroe Centre. The day ran from 10 am till 3pm and was open to all to join and contribute online. There was representation from all the deaneries within the archdiocese as well as ecumenical observers, religious communities, and some minority groups within the catholic church such as the LGBTQ community. All 6 key themes of the pastoral plan were discussed in terms of what has been achieved so far. Prayer, discussion and discernment was the focus of the meeting in the process of developing priorities moving forward into 2024.

The day itself was really interesting and summarized the progress so far with the implementation of the pastoral plan, developed after the diocesan synodal council. There was a huge amount of feedback and suggestions in terms of key priorities that should be developed over the next 12 months. This information is currently being collated and will be written into a report which I will share with you as soon as it is available for me to do so.

Jill Williams.

Christmas at the Met




Principal services and concerts
during Advent & Christmas

Sunday 3 December
17.00 An Advent Sequence

Sunday 10 December
15.00 A Ceremony of Carols - Britten

Saturday 16 December
19.00 A Celebration of Christmas
www.ticketsource.co.uk/metcathedral

Sunday 17 December
17.00 Festival Carol Service

Sunday 24 December **Christmas Eve**
15.00 First Vespers of Christmas
18.00 Vigil Mass
23.30 Midnight Mass
Most Rev Malcolm McMahon OP, Archbishop of Liverpool
broadcast live on   

Monday 25 December **Christmas Day**
Masses at 9.00, 10.00 & 11.00 (Solemn)

For a full list of Christmas events and services,
please visit www.liverpoolmetro cathedral.org.uk



Metropolitan Cathedral
of Christ the King Liverpool

  @LpoolMetMusic

Archdiocese of Liverpool CIO no 1199714