



# Our Lady & The English Martyrs

## Litherland

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Sunday 24th December 2023



Parish Priest: Very Rev Canon Mark B Madden KCHS FRSA

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## QUESTION OF THE WEEK

How do I discern what God's will is? Am I willing to trust in God and follow God's will?

### 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.

### CRIB COLLECTION 2023

It is traditional to offer a donation when visiting the Christmas Crib and this year our money will go to the Catholic parish of the Holy Family in Gaza who suffered a tragic terrorist attack last weekend when parishioners were killed and their church and other church buildings very badly damaged in the bombing. Please be generous as we show them our support, our love and we continue to hold them in our hearts.

Our Christmas Crib will remain in church until Friday 2 February.



## **SUNDAY THOUGHTS**

Where do you house what is most important to you? For the Chosen People, the ark of the covenant was the most important object they had. David concluded that it should be housed in a palace, not a tent. But God's perspective was different. For God, it was the house of David, his family line, that is, which was much more important than an object, no matter how sacred it was. Therefore, God blessed David's lineage, establishing a house, not for the ark, but for David. Perhaps that can be a lesson to us to view the people in our lives as more important than our possessions. Do we take more care of our loved ones than we do our precious belongings?

King David lived in a palace, but when it came for Jesus to be born, it did not take place in anything resembling a palace. Instead of a luxurious palace in the holy city of Jerusalem, our Lord was born in a meagre stable in tiny Bethlehem. In fact, he was conceived in the remote village of Nazareth, days away from Judea. Why? The person of Mary was much more important than the City of David. God's priority was not the external environment of the holy city, but the blessed womb in which Jesus developed.

Gabriel's visit is shocking and greatly troubling to this young, lowly, unmarried woman. Everything Gabriel said was as incredible as she could possibly imagine. Yet, she immediately assents to God's will, saying, "May it be done to me according to your word" (Luke 1:38). It is Mary's faith and trust in the Lord that makes the incarnation possible. It is our faith and trust in God that continues

## **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.

## Masses & Services for the coming week

DATE	MASS INTENTIONS & SERVICES
<b>Saturday 23rd December</b>	<b>NO MASS</b>
<b>Sunday 24th December</b> <i>Fourth Sunday of Advent</i>	<p><b>10.30am</b> People of the Parish</p> <p><b>6.00pm Christmas Vigil Mass</b> Perpetual Mass List</p> <p><b>9.00pm First Mass of Christmas</b> People of the Parish</p>
<b>Monday 25th December</b> <i>Solemnity of Nativity Of The Lord</i>	<p><b>10.30am</b> Private intention</p>
<b>Tuesday 26th December</b> <i>Saint Stephen</i>	<p><b>12.00pm</b> Joseph &amp; Kathleen Willis</p>
<b>Wednesday 27th December</b>	<b>NO MASS</b>
<b>Thursday 28th December</b> <i>Feast of Holy Innocents</i>	<p><b>12.00pm</b> Frances McDonagh</p>
<b>Friday 29th December</b> <i>St Thomas Becket</i>	<p><b>12.00pm</b> Stephen McQuade</p>
<b>Saturday 30th December</b>	<b>NO MASS</b>
<b>Sunday 31st December</b> <i>Feast of The Holy Family</i>	<p><b>10.30am</b> People of the Parish</p>

## Masses & Services for the week commencing 30th December

DATE	MASS INTENTIONS & SERVICES
<b>Saturday 30th December</b>	<b>NO MASS</b>
<b>Sunday 31st December</b> <i>Feast of The Holy Family</i>	<b>10.30am</b> People of the Parish
<b>Monday 1st January</b> <i>Mary, the Holy Mother of God</i>	<b>12.00pm</b> John Dunn
<b>Tuesday 2nd January</b>	<b>10.00am</b> Tony Coady
<b>Wednesday 3rd January</b>	<b>NO MASS</b>
<b>Thursday 4th January</b>	<b>10.00am</b> Ruth Richardson
<b>Friday 5th January</b>	<b>10.00am</b> Dorothy Frodsham
<b>Saturday 6th January</b>	<b>NO MASS</b>
<b>Sunday 7th January</b> <i>Solemnity of The Epiphany of The Lord</i>	<b>10.30am</b> People of the Parish  <b>11.45am</b> Baptism - Lucas Liang

### **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.



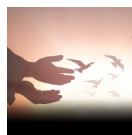
Metropolitan Cathedral  
of Christ the King Liverpool

### **FAITH DISCUSSION GROUP**

The next meeting is on Monday 8 January at 7pm when we will discuss some passages from 'Laudato Si'. John Smartt has drawn up some points for discussion which will be circulated prior to meeting - ask in Parish Office if you need a copy

### **PEACE SUNDAY MASS, LIVERPOOL METROPOLITAN CATHEDRAL -**

Sunday 14th January 2024,  
11am Join Archbishop  
Malcolm and Pax Christi  
Liverpool for  
solemn mass at  
11AM to mark  
Peace  
Sunday



**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](mailto:events@cafod.org.uk) or telephone 07779 804242



### **CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY**

The parish office is now closed until Tuesday 2 January, 9.30am - 2.30pm.

**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](http://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](http://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](mailto: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:

**'Joseph & Kathleen Willis'**



## FEAST OF THE WEEK

**St Thomas Becket (1118-1170)**

He was born in London and became a close friend of King Henry II. He was only a deacon when he was appointed chancellor of England. When he was ordained as archbishop of Canterbury, he underwent an abrupt conversion of life and began to defend the Church's rights against the king. He had to take refuge in a French monastery for six years, and when he returned to his diocese four knights, inspired by careless words from the king, assassinated him in his cathedral on 29 December 1170. He was immediately acknowledged as a martyr and the king later did penance and endowed his shrine. He is remembered for his courage in defence of the rights of the Church.



## 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](mailto:e.parsons@rcaol.org.uk)

## CHRISTMAS 2023

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



**24 December**

**Christmas Eve**

6.00 pm

Christmas Vigil Mass

9.00 pm

The 1st Mass of Christmas

**25 December**

**Christmas Day**

10.30 am

Mass of Christmas Day

**26 December**

**St Stephen**

12.00pm

Mass

**28 December**

**The Holy Innocents**

12.00pm

Mass

**29 December**

**St Thomas Becket**

12.00pm

Mass

**31 December**

**The Holy Family**

10.30am

Mass

**1 January**

**Mary, the Holy Mother of God**

12.00pm

Mass

From 2 January Masses return to 10.00am

## POPE FRANCIS PRAYER INTENTION FOR JANUARY

### For The Gift Of Diversity In The Church

Let us pray that the Holy Spirit helps us recognise the gift of different charisms within the Christian community, and to discover the richness of different ritual traditions in the heart of the Catholic Church.

*Lord in your mercy...*



## SANCTUARY LAMP

The Sanctuary Lamp for the week commencing 31

December is for:

**‘Kitty & Joe Maloney’**



## 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.*

Happy Christmas!

May the peace and light which  
only the Child of Bethlehem can  
bring, fill your hearts this  
Christmas and in the New Year.

Fr. Mark

