



Our Lady & The English Martyrs

Litherland

Second Sunday of Advent

Sunday 10th December 2023



Parish Priest: Very Rev Canon Mark B Madden KCHS FRSA

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www.ourladyandenglishmartyrs.co.uk

QUESTION OF THE WEEK

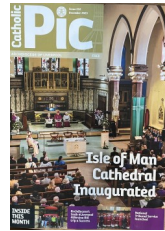
What is the most difficult obstacle I face in preparing a way for Christ to come into my heart anew this Christmas? How can I remove this obstacle?

WEEKDAY MASS

We welcome some of the children from school who will join us for Mass on Monday. There will be NO Mass on Tuesday.

CATHOLIC PIC

The December edition is now available from the shop, free of charge. The main feature is a report on the new Cathedral in the Isle of Man and also an excellent interview with our very own John Smartt on his important work in the field of ecumenism.



CHRISTMAS BINGO AND GRAND CHRISTMAS RAFFLE

The Christmas Bingo will be held on Wednesday 13 December in Parish Hall. 'Eyes down' at 7pm. Entrance £1



Please come and join us! This night is always fun and we have some amazing raffle prizes! Bingo tickets and raffle tickets are on sale at back of Church



Metropolitan Cathedral
of Christ the King Liverpool

All are welcome to attend the Clatterbridge Christmas Concert at the Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King - **December 14th 7.30pm.**

Legendary entertainer Pete Price will host as the Wirral Orchestra and Choir take you on a sleigh ride of Christmas favourites. There will also be a chance to win a Christmas shop full of treats, courtesy of Tesco.

Tickets from eventbrite.co.uk are priced at £8/£12 or call 0151 556 5566

SUNDAY THOUGHTS

It is the passage we hear in the first reading that Mark chooses in part to open his Gospel, which he calls “the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God”. This is telling. His goal in writing this account, the first of the Gospels to be written, is to establish that the man Jesus was, first, the Messiah (Christ in Greek), but more importantly, the Son of God. Therefore, it makes sense that he starts by quoting Isaiah and Malachi, identifying John the Baptist as the messenger who prepared the way for the Messiah. Immediately after this passage, Mark describes Jesus’ baptism, during which God’s voice is heard saying, “You are my beloved Son”. However, as Mark goes on to reveal, both assertions are rejected by most people and doubted by even his disciples. As his disciples now, we too can have our doubts.

Perhaps our task this Advent is to prepare our hearts for the Lord by removing those obstacles that can lead us to doubt. Perhaps the mountain that blocks our faith is a narcissism that wants to believe that we can do it alone. Perhaps the valley that needs to be filled in is a despair that makes us feel abandoned by God. Perhaps the rugged land is an overwhelming guilt that makes us feel unworthy of forgiveness. Perhaps making a straight path is as simple as opening our hearts to the possibility that God has an answer to all our doubts. Perhaps God’s power, comfort, and forgiveness, proclaimed by both Isaiah and John, are just searching for a clear path into us.

John the Baptist baptised with water, precious to someone like John who had emerged from the desert. But ever since Jesus, the Holy Spirit has also come in baptism, bringing life and sustenance to our spiritual thirst. May we realise what a life-giving gift we have received in baptism. May we find in the Holy Spirit the power we need to overcome the obstacles that thwart our joy.

Masses & Services for the coming week

DATE	MASS INTENTIONS & SERVICES
Saturday 9th December	NO MASS
Sunday 10th December <i>Second Sunday of Advent</i>	10.30am People of the Parish 11.45am Baptism - Reuben Kennedy
Monday 11th December	10.00am Ray Downey
Tuesday 12th December	NO MASS
Wednesday 13th December	NO MASS
Thursday 14th December	10.00am Alexander Barr
Friday 15th December	10.00am Cath Carney
Saturday 16th December	NO MASS
Sunday 17th December <i>Third Sunday of Advent</i>	10.30am People of the Parish

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...



GAZA COLLECTION

The Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem have launched an appeal for funds which will go directly to support the Catholics in Gaza. This will also help in the rebuilding of homes once the war ends. This collection will remain open for a couple of weeks if you wish to make a donation.



Metropolitan Cathedral
of Christ the King Liverpool

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.

LGBT+ Catholic Gatherings

Next LGBT+ Catholic gathering is on Sunday 10th December 2023. Mass at 2.00pm. Venue: All Saints Church, High Street, Golborne, WA3 3BG (**Please note this Mass is NOT in Anfield as normal, it is in Golborne just off the East Lincs Road.**)

LIGHTS TO REMEMBER

All are welcome to attend Marie Curie's Lights to Remember Service at Liverpool Metropolitan Cathedral on Sunday 10 December at 5pm - 6pm, with refreshments and mice pies served afterwards. The event is for people who have been affected by terminal illness or bereavement, and an opportunity to come together in our local community, joined by Marie Curie staff and inspirational supporters. All are warmly invited.



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, 10 December, 3pm Benjamin Britten's A Ceremony of Carols. Benjamin Britten's famous carol sequence will be sung following a shorter Evening Prayer.

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

THANK YOU - to everyone who donated coats for Irenaeus. We have made 7 trips to drop off coats and toys over the last few weeks. All much appreciated by Fr Chris and staff

Missionaries of Charity Carol Singing Missionaries of Charity invite everyone to join them for carol singing at the roadside crib on Church Street, Liverpool, at 2pm on Saturday 16 December.

HELP NEEDED

In order for parishes to function we need people who are willing to help and to ensure the smooth running of the church, the parish and the liturgy. We are desperately in need of people who are willing to help clean the church for 1 hour every couple of weeks. We also need a few more volunteers to help wash the church linen. Can you help? Please give your name to the Parish Office.

CAFOD WORLD GIFTS

This year why not send someone a CAFOD World Gift this Christmas? 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 will 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

FEAST OF THE WEEK

St Lucy (-303)

She was martyred in Syracuse, probably during the persecution of Diocletian (which started in 303).

Devotion to her spread rapidly across practically the whole Church and her name is included in the Roman Canon of the Mass.



ST WINEFRIDE'S WELL

During their recent meeting the Bishops of England & Wales have elevated the Shrine of St Winefride in Holywell, north Wales, to the status of a National Shrine for England and Wales. It's one of the oldest places of pilgrimage in Britain and has an unbroken 1,400-year tradition of pilgrimage. This puts the shrine on the same level as Walsingham.

The Catholic Bishop of Wrexham, Bishop Peter Brignall. said: *"It's an important recognition by the bishops of the value of shrines and is totally in accord with Pope Francis. Recently, the Holy Father met the directors of shrines and spoke to them of the importance of shrines as places of pilgrimage, prayer, consolation, and hope for all who visit them. Indeed, the Jubilee Year of 2025 has been given the theme Pilgrims of Hope. We are all pilgrims and these shrines are little windows onto the whole pilgrimage of our lives."*

Bishop Brignall also wants St Winefride's Shrine to be a beacon of hope and healing for women who have suffered from violence and abuse in parallel with the experiences of the saint herself.

In 630, St Winefride spurned the advances of Caradog, a chieftain from Hawarden who attempted to seduce her. The aggressor then pursued and decapitated her as she ran towards the church which had been built by her uncle, St Beuno. In the place where her head fell, a spring of water came up. St Beuno came out from the church, took up her head and placed it back on her body before praying and miraculously raising her to life.

Fr Mark will arrange a day pilgrimage to this beautiful shrine sometime in the summer months.



★ **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.





SANCTUARY LAMP



The Sanctuary Lamp for the coming week is for:
**'All those suffering as a result of the many
conflicts throughout the world**

ADVENT EVENING PRAYER SERVICE - last Saturday Fr Mark gave us the most beautiful service for the beginning of Advent. The Church looked absolutely amazing - totally lit by candles. The whole service was very moving. There is a short video on the website of how the Church looked when we entered - have a look.

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 will be 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

DEANERY NEWS

Families of Parishes.

Following the extensive consultation in each of the parishes across the deanery, the priests met last week to look at all the comments and suggestions offered by people and they can confirm that there was widespread agreement with the proposed families of parishes and an acknowledgement that that was the right way forward. The priests have now sent the formal proposal to the Archbishop who will ratify the decision. Our deanery will have two families:

Family 1: Our Lady & The English Martyrs, St Elizabeth of Hungary, St. Robert Bellarmine. St Benet's & Our Lady of Walsingham.

Family 2: Holy Rosary, St George, St Mary & Kentigern, St Catherine of Alexandria.

We will continue to work as a deanery but the parishes in both families will work closer together and the priests, the Deanery Synodal Council and parishes will continue to look at the ways in which the families will operate.

Deanery Patron

During the consultation process for Families of Parishes we also invited people to propose a Patron for our Deanery.

Overwhelmingly the name that came up most consistently in the area was **St Teresa of Calcutta**. The priests have informed the Episcopal Vicar for Pastoral Organisation with this proposal and he has formally replied to accept it.

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



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