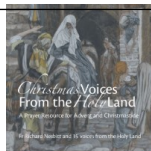


CHRISTMAS VOICES FROM THE HOLY LAND: Friends of the Holy Land have produced this publication, 'Christmas Voices from the Holy Land', a collection of Christ-centred prayer resources for Advent and Christmas which speak powerfully to our journey through Advent to the Nativity of Jesus, and beyond. The publication is available now from



<https://www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk/shop/advent-book-2021> All funds raised from the sale of this book will be used in the charitable activities of Friends of the Holy Land, and so help those who have suffered in Gaza, the West Bank (including east Jerusalem), and the divided communities in Israel this Christmas.

FR CHRIS'S THOUGHTS FOR SUNDAY:

Today we celebrate Gaudete Sunday or "rejoice Sunday" with Christmas on the Horizon. There is joy in the first reading for the People as God will renew Zion, St Paul exhorts us to be full of Joy: *Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I say, rejoice for the Lord is near. (The translation of the 2nd reading is weak.) And even in the Gospel there is joy in the Call to repentance for the promised One is coming with the Holy Spirit. Even if he has his winnowing fan in his hand!*

What is the cause of our joy in all these readings? I think most simply, it the awareness that indeed God is present and at work in our world. What better reason could we have for joy? And why would we not seek this true joy? Yet so often we don't. God promises to come to his people in Jerusalem and he would bring an end to evil by renewing their hearts and forgiving their sins creating a humble and lowly people (Zeph3:8ff). When Jesus came so many did not want to recognise him. Rather it was the disadvantaged, the alienated, the lost, the despised, the crippled and the sick, the Poor of heart who found rejoicing because they recognised their need of God and rejoiced to welcome him. Can we pray: lord I need you,..... I need you desperately. Then we will really rejoice.

St Paul calls on the Philippians to rejoice always for the lord is near with his peace. This should be our intense experience - To ask the Lord for a deep sense of his closeness to us. In Advent we undergo a sort of spiritual retreat through the expectation of his arrival, as if we were Israelites looking forward to the Messiah. He gives us some keys: Firstly, not to be anxious but to trust in God's providence. Worry is a great killer of joy. The person who knows God is Emmanuel – God who is with us – does not let worry take over. Trusting in God he prays for what he needs or thinks he needs but always - in imitation of Our Lord – trusting that God is a loving father. We may think we know what we need to make us happy but in the end, we must leave it to God who truly knows. Let your will not mine be done. We bring our worries before the Lord and leave the rest to him. This brings us the peace of God which is the forerunner of joy. And Saint Paul underlines that within that prayer must always be the sense of Thanksgiving. Because this makes us aware of the presence of God through what he has already done for us or given to us. Joy is the theme of the Gospel. John the Baptist calls all to joy through repentance and a new style of life. The question is simple and stark: What must I do? This is the first step. John the Baptist tells the people they must share what they have: food and clothing, the basics in life so that all can have them. For the Soldiers and tax collectors they must be honest and not greedy. They must not fall into the corrupt practices of their fellow workers. These are the actions of people who are not merely living for this life but see their life opening out to an eternal life. Their ultimate reality is eternal, so they do not need to be greedy. And thus, they have a confidence that makes them generous and so always joyful. This first step leads to joy because it opens us up to the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of true and eternal joy. Not a joy that we must create and sustain by our own effort but a gift of God who dwells in us deep down even in the most difficult of times. It is the joy of Christmas: that Christ has come, and taken up residence in our hearts, giving us communion with God even now.

So let us rejoice, Gaudete the Church cries out. Indeed Let us share in the joy of God which Zephaniah describes: *The Lord your God is in your midst, a victorious warrior. He will exult with joy over you, he will renew you by his love; he will dance with shouts of joy for you as on a day of festival.*



Our Lady of Victories

Market Harborough

12th December 2021
3rd Week of Advent
Psalter Week 3

Parish Priest: Fr. Chris O'Connor
Tel: House: 01858 462359
Email: parishpriest@olvic.com
Convent: Presentation Sisters 01858-462432
Parish Website: www.olvic.com
Safeguarding: safeguarding@olvic.com

Schools:
Parish Primary: St. Joseph's Academy 01858-465359.
Deanery Comprehensive: St. Paul's 0116 241 4057
Parish Accountant: finance@olv.com
Parish Gift Aid Organiser: giftaid@olvic.com
Parish Pastoral Council Members: see photos on notice board

Diocese of Nottingham: Company Number 7151646 Charity Number: 1134449
Registered Address: Wilson House, 25 Derby Road, Nottingham, NG1 5AW

Times of Services

Sunday: 3rd of Advent - Gaudete Sunday

6.00pm Mass: Jim McCabe RIP birth (Joan)
9.00am Mass: People of the Parish
11.00am: Mass: Michael Donnelly RIP (McGlone)

Monday: St Lucy

9.00am Mass: November Dead List

Tuesday: St John of the Cross

9.00am Mass: Margaret Coyle RIP - Months Mind

Wednesday: Advent Feria

10.00am Mass: Max Muckle RIP

Thursday: Advent Feria

10.00am Mass: Collins Family

Friday: Advent Feria

6.15pm - 7.00pm Confessions
7.00pm Mass: Gary Nottingham RIP (O'Neill)

Saturday: Advent Feria

6.00pm: First Mass of Sunday 19th December - Michael Gatens RIP (Taylor)

Sunday: 4th of Advent

9.00am Mass: Dana Rinaldi (Blamires)
11.00am Mass: People of the Parish



What must we do?

CONFESSIONS

11am & 5.15 —
5.45pm
Saturdays

2nd Collection this weekend for New & Poor Parishes

PLEASE NOTE: YOU MUST PRE BOOK FOR OUR WEEKEND MASSES:

Booking is now online: www.Massbooking.uk You can sign up there and then book. If you do not have the internet you can ask someone else to book for you, a child or grandchild or ring or email Fr. Chris on 01858 462359 giving your name and phone number. Please see instructions on our website: www.olvic.com/news.htm

FR CHRIS WRITES: We are moving closer to the last days of advent which begins on 17th December when we look directly to the Feast of Christmas especially with Mary. The whole Church prays the great O antiphons which express our desire for God. We will have some music at our Christmas Masses thanks to our organist & music group & our soloists.

I have mentioned Confessions! I will be available as always on a Saturday at 11.00am and also from 5.15pm – 5.45pm on Sat evenings and also if needed after Mass. Also this week on Friday 17th December 6.15pm -7.00pm God Bless you all and especially all who are isolating and unable to come to Church

Sadly we lost some parishioners recently. **Bill Spicknell.** His funeral Mass will take place on **Wednesday 22nd December at 2.30pm.** Also Eddie Armstrong husband of Pat. His funeral will be at Great Glen Crematorium on **Friday, 7th January at 2.30 p.m.**

Ps Do not forget the Parish Carol Service on Sunday 19th December at 3.00pm.

The PPC reflected further on the responses to the Synod questions and the themes that emerged. We have been asked to present to the diocese some proposed actions: One of them is immediate: we realised we need to update the Parish List to build the community through good communication. We are thinking the best way to do that in present times. More information to follow. The longer term proposal is to develop a Pastoral Plan based on the feedback following prayerful discernment. There will be feedback of the responses to the Parish. Some common themes were the need to rebuild and develop the parish Community and from there to reach out, Churches Together, Marginalized groups, the youth, better communication through technology, keeping in touch with older people, PPC, Adult formation & renewing the spiritual life of the Parish with better Liturgy & Music.

The PPC now has a notice board in the cloister where minutes and notices etc will be put up. Please contact one of the members or Fr. Chris if there is any particular subject to be raised, we will try to keep people informed.



PARISH WELCOMING: It's a couple of months since we resumed Welcoming at some of the weekend Masses, but currently we only have 3 people on the rota for Sunday 11am Mass, and 5 people for the Saturday evening Mass. We're appealing to any welcomers who maybe didn't see our original email requests or who may now have changed their minds, to consider helping out, and also to anyone else who feels that they would like to volunteer to take part in welcoming their fellow parishioners to Mass. Please do consider helping out if you are able to, and feel free to contact either of us if you would just like to chat about it. Many thanks, Beatrice ([01858 465492](tel:01858465492)) and Theresa ([07748 591398](tel:07748591398)) or email totskendrick@sky.com

Christmas Flowers: There will be a collection next weekend for Christmas Flowers.

READERS WANTED: It is time, once again, to compile a new Readers' Rota for the coming year. Anyone who would like to read at one of the weekend masses, please contact Margaret Atkins as soon as possible, stating which mass you normally attend, and giving your email address and preferred telephone number. Email margaretatkins52@gmail.com or call **01858 446369.**

The Victory Prize draw: 1st Prize £100 D England ticket No 70; 2nd Prize £50 J Masding ticket No 99; 3rd Prize £30 D Wilson ticket No 238. Annual ticket holders are reminded that they need to renew. Cheques to be made out to THE VICTORY PRIZE DRAW and forwarded to Keith Shiers 23 Fairfax Road M.H. LE16 9JT or left for collection with Fr Chris. Many thanks.

Christmas Masses Our Christmas Masses will be booked through the online booking system: www.Massbooking.uk They will appear a week before. For those of you who are new to it when you register with the System, the confirmation email link often goes to the spam Junk folder of your email. Also **please book just one place for up to three of you** in a family or a family bench for 4 or more. See instructions under our parish.. In respect of COVID: All to wear Masks and I would advise any concerned about COVID to **avoid the 6.00pm vigil Mass** as it may be full .However, given the present situation we will maintain social distancing. **Pre booking will be essential.**

Christmas eve: 6.00pm & 10.00pm. (Preceded by carols 9.30pm)

Christmas day: 8.30am: & 10.30am:

On Sunday the Masses will be the normal 9.00am & 11.00am.

Parish Christmas Carol Service on Sunday 19th December 3.00pm. Supported by the Catenians. Parishioners family and friends are very welcome. Children from school will also be taking part. As COVID is still with us bring your masks and also use the online booking system for Masses where the Event will be posted a week before. As before one place can be booked for up to three people.

ALTAR SERVERS: Following the recent notice and appeal we are pleased to welcome James to our Altar Serving Team, Welcome James. If anyone else is interested please contact myself or Fr. Chris for an informal chat. It's Advent already and we have to prepare for the services at Christmas. I hope to contact all servers/parents on the rota about their expectations over the Christmas period, if anyone knows they will be at a particular mass or can offer to be flexible can you please call/text/email me so I can start putting the rota together.



Once again **Reusable Face masks for Sale:** to order Masks Telephone Maggie on 01858 461909 and leave a message.

SALE OF KNITTED GARMENTS : Many thanks to all who knitted such wonderful garments. We raised a total of £155 for Church funds. Many thanks from the Bits & Pieces stall!

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION FOR 2022. We are now looking forward to First Holy Communion in 2022. Applications forms are now available from Fr Chris after any of the Masses. Please return the form by **Friday 17th December 2022.** It is for children in year 3 and above, The first meeting for **parents** will take place on **Wednesday 12th January 2022 at 7.30pm** in the Octagonal Hall when we will introduce the course and give out the plan. The first session for **children** will take place on **Friday 14th January 2022 from 3.30-4.30pm** in the same place and then the 21st & 28th January. Depending on the numbers & COVID there will be two first communion days: 18th June 2022 & 2nd July 2022



The Universe Catholic Weekly is thrilled to announce that we have launched our new online newspaper with the full support of our first subscriber none other than His Eminence Cardinal Vincent Nichols. Order **your Digital** copy by going to www.universecatholicweekly.co.uk or call us on 0743661 7650 and ask for Michelle. Special offer: Only £20 for 3 months.

Also could People bring in their **Red Mission Boxes** for emptying. If anyone would like a box please let myself or Christine Shepherd know

