

ST MARY'S & ST PAUL'S NEWSLETTER

The R.C. Diocese of Shrewsbury is a registered charity

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2nd Sunday of Advent

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THEME: Planning and preparation.

Before anything can be built in a desert wilderness there has to be straightening out and reordering. Advent is a good time to prepare our lives for Christ to build on, by rigorously cutting out and reshaping the areas which are barren. Then, as he builds, we shall be taking part in the establishing of God's kingdom, which culminates in the new heaven and the new earth, where God reigns forever with unending love, peace, and joy.

SERVICES: Mass: St Paul's Saturday 6-00pm Vigil mass. St Mary's: Sunday 9-30am and 11-00am
Weekday Mass: St Mary's Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday 9-00am Saturday 10-00am.

BAPTISM: Isla Mai Appleton was welcomed into the family of God last Sunday.

RECENT DEATHS: Mary Gorman (May), Rebeca Unsworth, Ernestine Margareta Kruszyna. We offer our sympathy to all their relatives and friends.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE: Mark 1:1-8. Mark begins his Gospel with the prophecy in Isaiah being fulfilled. John the Baptist's call to repentance is exactly the kind of highway building that was necessary to prepare the people for the ministry of Jesus. The excitement quickens, the sense of urgency and immediacy grows, and crowds flock to set about straightening their lives out and starting afresh. How easy it would have been for John to hang on to the glory himself instead of making it quite clear that he was only a forerunner; his humility taught as powerfully as his words. Repentance puts us right with God, but the spirit of Jesus living in us daily is what enables us to grow and yield fruit.

ADVENT: The English word 'advent' comes from the Latin *adventus* meaning 'coming' or 'arrival'. The term, however, originally meant not the arrival of simply anyone but rather that of a person of noble birth. Of course, in the season of Advent this person is the Lord of Lords, the servant King, Jesus of Nazareth, and we celebrate his three comings, the first in a manger, the second at the end of time and the third into our hearts. The liturgy kicks off the season of Advent by focusing not on Jesus' first coming but on his second, reminding us that we need to prepare ourselves for that great day. The scriptures reveal that the deepest longing of the Holy Spirit is expressed by the cry, 'Come'. This same deep prayer that the Holy Spirit gives every believer and to the church as a body. The prayer of the Spirit and the Bride his Church will be always be 'Come, Lord Jesus, come.

Advent is then, a time to grow in holiness through repentance and the forgiveness of sins and to grow in faith as we celebrate the birth of God-made-man and pray for his second coming. The return of Jesus will usher in the definitive establishment of the kingdom in power, in glory, in triumph and in strength. Since the beginning the Church has taught that we should pray for it, long for it and even groan for it because it is imminent -it could be today! We join in the cry of the church through all the ages, 'Come, Lord Jesus, Come'. Lord Jesus, as I reflect on your first coming, help me to look with hope, confidence and expectation towards your second coming in glory, power and triumph. Come, Lord Jesus, come.

ARRANGEMENTS for MASS

- If you are intending to come to mass please provide advance notification, preferably by email john.storey6@btopenworld.com or tel: 0161 330 2424.
- A face mask must be worn whilst you are in Church. The only exception is for children 3 and under. Please do not come to mass if you are feeling ill or if you are unable to wear a face covering.
- On arrival you will be asked to sanitise your hands and check your name against the booked list. If you have not pre-booked, please give the steward your details.
- You will be guided to a pew. To avoid passing those already seated, pews are filled from the front.
- Mass will take approximately 30 minutes, there are no mass sheets and there will be no singing
- **Holy Communion will be distributed after the final blessing.** Please remain seated whilst Father prepares for communion. Stewards will then guide the congregation for communion starting with the front pews of the centre aisle. After receiving communion **do not return to your seat** and leave church by the exit doors on the left (front of church at St Mary's, back of church at St Paul's).
- **Parishioners with disability must not leave St Mary's church through the front door of the house due to the steps but through the main door of the church.** John Storey and his helpers will assist you with advice if needed.
- **The toilets will not be open.**

Stewards are needed to assist at the 11-00am Mass with ensuring the safety of those who will be participating. If you can help, please contact John Storey or Fr Oliver.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES: St Paul's Christmas Eve 5-00pm St Mary's 6-30pm. Christmas day will be 9-30am and 11-00am at St Mary's. As numbers attending mass continue to be significantly restricted please request a place (or places) at the mass of your choice by emailing John Storey as soon as possible at johnstorey6@btopenworld.com Please note that while every effort will be made to accommodate your preference, numbers remain limited and you may be asked to accept an alternative mass.

ST PAUL'S CHURCH ROOF: Fr Oliver has received an estimate for replacing the slate on the church roof. The total cost is £895 + VAT

THE CHURCH BOILER: W&G services will be installing the new boiler this week.

ST MARY'S CHURCH: The diocesan painters have informed Fr Oliver that they will be painting St Mary's church from Monday January 11th to Friday 5th of February. The church will be closed during this period due to scaffolding throughout the church and for safety reasons. The Sunday morning masses will be transferred to St Pauls during this period.

RIGHT TO LIFE: Stand up and smile campaign to protect babies with clip lip and club foot are appealing for prayers for their cause. The suggested prayer this week, recognising that Tuesday we will be celebrating the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary is: On this day let us remember all unborn children, especially those recently conceived. That safety, protection and love would be granted to them, and that we the church, with the intercession of Our Lady would take on the call to support these precious children of our God. Lord hear us.

SEARCH FOR MEANING: Trappist monk Thomas Merton sought after the true meaning of life and he came to realise very early on in his search that God represented the true meaning. In a sense the simplicity of this truth may take the shine off the search for some people. Surely, they feel, it requires far more searching before arrival at the answer. Thomas Merton spent his life searching not for meaning (he had already found it in his faith) but rather he searched for new meanings and new approaches to focus one's attention on and find ways to freshly focus on God-meaning of life. (*"Peace Smiles, Rediscovering Thomas Merton"* by Bishop Fintan Monahan.).

BIDDING PRAYERS for the Second Sunday of Advent

Priest: God our Father, inspired by John the Baptist, we bring you our prayers spoken and unspoken knowing that you will listen; that you love; that you care.

We pray for the Pope: that as he speaks in our worlds wilderness, people will listen and respond to the Gospel message of peace.

Lord, hear us.

We pray for marginalised people of our world who feel unheard and unloved: that their cries for help will not be ignored and that they will receive the help and support that they need

Lord, hear us.

We pray for our fragile natural world which is so easily damaged by lack of care for the environment: that human hearts will respond and nurture that beautiful gift of God as a treasure for all the peoples of every age .

Lord, hear us

We pray for ourselves, our families, friends and all those whom we love that we will grow closer to God and to each other during Advent.

Lord, hear us

We pray for those who have died and for those whose anniversaries we keep at this time: that they may enter into the kingdom God has prepared for them.

Lord, hear us.

We pray for our own special needs.

We ask Mary the Mother of God to join us in our prayers as we pray Hail Mary.

Priest: Loving Father, hear all these prayers and what we ask in faith. May you grant these through your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

The readings for Sunday 6th December

Entrance Antiphon

O people of Sion, behold, the Lord will come to save the nations, and the Lord will make the glory of his voice heard in the joy of your heart.

A Reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah 40:1-5,9-11

'Console my people, console them' says your God. 'Speak to the heart of Jerusalem and call to her that her time of service is ended, that her sin is atoned for, that she has received from the hand of the Lord double punishment for all her crimes.' A voice cries, 'Prepare in the wilderness a way for the Lord. Make a straight highway for our God across the desert. Let every valley be filled in, every mountain and hill be laid low. Let every cliff become a plain, and the ridges a valley; then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all mankind shall see it; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.' Go up on a high mountain, joyful messenger to Zion. Shout with a loud voice, joyful messenger to Jerusalem. Shout without fear, say to the towns of Judah, 'Here is your God.' Here is the Lord coming with power, his arm subduing all things to him. The prize of his victory is with him, his trophies all go before him. He is like a shepherd feeding his flock, gathering lambs in his arms, holding them against his breast and leading to their rest the mother ewes.

Psalm 79

Response: **Let us see, O Lord, your mercy, and give us your saving help.**

I will hear what the Lord God has to say,
a voice that speaks of peace, peace for his people.
His help is near for those who fear him
and his glory will dwell in our land. **Response**

Mercy and faithfulness have met;
justice and peace have embraced.
Faithfulness shall spring from the earth
and justice look down from heaven. **Response**

The Lord will make us prosper
and our earth shall yield its fruit.
Justice shall march before him
and peace shall follow his steps. **Response**

A reading from the second Letter of Saint Peter 3:1-14

There is one thing, my friends, that you must never forget: that with the Lord, 'a day' can mean a thousand years, and a thousand years is like a day. The Lord is not being slow to carry out his promises, as anybody else might be called slow; but he is being patient with you all, wanting nobody to be lost and everybody to be brought to change his ways. The Day

of the Lord will come like a thief, and then with a roar the sky will vanish, the elements will catch fire and fall apart, the earth and all that it contains will be burnt up. Since everything is coming to an end like this, you should be living holy and saintly lives while you wait and long for the Day of God to come, when the sky will dissolve in flames and the elements melt in the heat. What we are waiting for is what he promised: the new heavens and new earth, the place where righteousness will be at home. So then, my friends, while you are waiting, do your best to live lives without spot or stain so that he will find you at peace.

Alleluia, alleluia! Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight, and all mankind shall see the salvation of God. **Alleluia!**

A Reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark 1:1-8

The beginning of the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is written in the book of the prophet Isaiah: *Look, I am going to send my messenger before you; he will prepare your way. A voice cries in the wilderness: Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight.*

and so it was that John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. All Judaea and all the people of Jerusalem made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins. John wore a garment of camel-skin, and he lived on locusts and wild honey. In the course of his preaching he said, 'Someone is following me, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptised you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.'

Communion Antiphon

Jerusalem, arise and stand upon the heights, and behold the joy which comes to you from God.

The Gloria is not said during Advent

Credo:

I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
Of all things visible and invisible.
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate
of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and
glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.
I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.