

FIRST READING

Isaiah 61:1-2.10-11

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for the Lord has anointed me. He has sent me to bring good news to the poor, to bind up hearts that are broken; to proclaim liberty to captives, freedom to those in prison; to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord. "I exult for joy in the Lord, my soul rejoices in my God, for he has clothed me in the garments of salvation, he has wrapped me in the cloak of integrity, like a bridegroom wearing his wreath, like a bride adorned in her jewels. For as the earth makes fresh things grow, as a garden makes seeds spring up, so will the Lord make both integrity and praise spring up in the sight of the nations."

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Luke 1:46-60.53-54

My soul rejoices in my God.

1. My soul glorifies the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour.
He looks on his servant in her nothingness;
henceforth all ages will call me blessed.
2. The Almighty works marvels for me.
Holy his name!
His mercy is from age to age,
on those who fear him.
3. He fills the starving with good things,
sends the rich away empty.
He protects Israel, his servant,
remembering his mercy.

SECOND READING

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Be happy at all times; pray constantly; and for all things give thanks to God, because this is what God expects you to do in Christ Jesus.

Never try to suppress the Spirit or treat the gift of prophecy with contempt; think before you do anything - hold on to what is good and avoid every form of evil.

May the God of peace make you perfect and holy; and may you all be kept safe and blameless, spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has called you and he will not fail you.

**Alleluia, alleluia! The spirit of the Lord has been given to me.
He has sent me to bring good news to the poor. Alleluia!**

GOSPEL

John 1:6-8.19-28

A man came, sent by God. His name was John. He came as a witness, as a witness to speak for the light, so that everyone might believe through him. He was not the light, only a witness to speak for the light.

This is how John appeared as a witness. When the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" he not only declared but he declared quite openly, "I am not the Christ." "Well then," they asked "are you Elijah?" "I am not" he said. "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No." So they said to him, "Who are you? We must take back an answer to those who sent us. What have you to say about yourself?" So John said, "I am, as Isaiah prophesied: a voice that cries in the wilderness: Make a straight way for the Lord." Now these men had been sent by the Pharisees, and they put this further question to him, "Why are you baptising if you are not the Christ, and not Elijah, and not the prophet?" John replied, "I baptise with water, but there stands among you - unknown to you - the one who is coming after me; and I am not fit to undo his sandal-strap." This happened at Bethany, on the far side of the Jordan, where John was baptising.

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Priests: Fr. Peter Draper, Fr. John Moriarty (Tel: 725193)

Sunday Mass: 11.00 am.

Weekday Mass: Thur: 9.15am. (Other weekdays: 9.15am at St. Anthony's)

Sacrament of Reconciliation: on request

Holy Family Primary school: 727471 **Covenant Books:** 735993

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Rejoice always, pray without ceasing ...

...give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God.' St Paul is speaking to the people of Thessalonica who have been colonised by the Romans and certainly don't have any political reason to be happy. It is impossible to rejoice always, unless we pray without ceasing and unless we are ready to be grateful. What do we mean by praying always?

Prayer is a way of being; it's a connected way of love and communion. The deepest meaning of prayer is to be in a state of conscious loving union with God, with what we are doing, with the person we are with, with creation. We have to deliberately, consciously pray always. We can't accomplish this by will-power. It's a surrendering to the Love inside us, a Love that is bigger than we are. It is God loving in us and through us and with us and as us. Joy proceeds from our inner realisation of our union with God. We can so easily lose hope. We have to choose to rejoice, choose to be grateful, choose to not live with a sense of entitlement. We pray always by choosing to stay in Love, to stay in the positive – which is almost the same thing. We have previously learned that neural science research has found that whenever we have a negative, fearful, accusatory thought our minds wrap around it like Velcro and these thoughts imprint on our minds, actually shaping our neural network, and this creates our impression of reality. We are attracted to the negative. We have to choose the positive. When a loving, positive, or praiseworthy thought comes our way, we have to savour it consciously for at least fifteen seconds before it can imprint itself in our "implicit memory;" otherwise it doesn't stick. It slides off, like Teflon. We must savour the good in order to significantly change our regular attitudes and moods. And we need to strictly monitor all the "Velcro" negative thoughts.' (Richard Rohr)

'Remembering beautiful things has immense healing power: enjoying the red berries of the holly, we forget the thorns.' (Sister Stan)

'We might also ask, "What is the will of God?" God's will is the most loving thing I can do right now – for my body, my mind, this person, this relationship, this family, this

Third Sunday of Advent

Year B

13th December 2020

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DIARY AND MASS INTENTIONS

for the week beginning Saturday 12th December 2020

Sat 6.00pm	<i>St. Ant</i>	Edmund Machholz	
Sun 9.30am	<i>St. Ant</i>	Paul O'Kane	<i>Third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete)</i>
11.00am	<i>H.Family</i>	Francis Dewhurst	
5.00pm	<i>St. Ant</i>	Mary Dunn	
Mon 9.15am	<i>St. Ant</i>	For our parish	<i>Feast: St John of the Cross</i>
Tue 9.15am	<i>St. Ant</i>	For a stressed family	
Wed 9.15am	<i>St. Ant</i>	Len Stevens	
Thur 9.15am	<i>H.Family</i>	Private intention	
Fri 11.30am	<i>St. Ant</i>	<i>Funeral Mass:</i> Thomas Bell	
Sat 6.00pm	<i>St. Ant</i>	Ann Bolton	
Sun 9.30am	<i>St. Ant</i>	Daniel Carberry	<i>Fourth Sunday of Advent</i>
11.00am	<i>H.Family</i>	For our parish	
5.00pm	<i>St. Ant</i>	Private intention	

BIDDING PRAYERS

With Pope Francis this Advent and at his request, we pray that our personal relationship with Jesus Christ be nourished by the word of God and a life of prayer.

We pray for all parishes throughout the world who are currently striving to ensure that our Churches will be open, safe and ready to celebrate the coming of Christ on Christmas Day.

We pray for all those who work in the media that they may be messengers of the truth, a voice for the powerless and a challenge to the powerful. We pray that they carry out this duty with wisdom, integrity and truthfulness.

With the great Feast of the Immaculate Conception in mind, we offer all our prayers through the hands of Our Lady.

We pray for the sick and the housebound of our parish and for those who care for them, particularly: Mildred and Harold Slack, Bill O'Shaughnessy, Malaya, Ray Mannion, Bill York, Lawrence Dunnagan, Trevor Hughes, Claire, Joyce Hilton.

those who have died recently: Beryl Jacob, Edna Widdowson (Angela's sister), Daniel Carberry, Thomas Bell, Michael Gildea, Frank Baron;

and those whose anniversaries occur around this time: Mary Ellen Banner, Ronnie Kitchen, Robert Moon, Mary Ingleson, Margery Miller, Pauline Daly, Margaret Southworth, Sheila Hill, Edward Walsh, Agnes Riley, Kathleen (Babs) Marshall, Louis Baron, Elizabeth Waterfield, Lena Cragg, Helena Hodgson. May they rest in peace.

Mass At Christmas After listening to all the comments we can now confirm that we will have the two Masses as usual i.e. 8pm vigil and 11.00am Christmas Day. With everyone wearing masks we can go to 1-metre distancing which means we can add an extra row of seats to what we currently have. The seats in the sides of the church will still be 2 metres apart. But its possible we may still not have enough room at the Vigil Mass.

Advent

A group of St. Anthony's parishioners have produced two linked resources for Advent:

1. Advent Jesse Tree

- telling the Biblical story from Creation to the first Christmas in 25 colourful 'decorations' to be hung on our tree in church. Members of the parish are invited to colour these decorations or add a message. Return it to us and it will be displayed on the Jesse Tree. If you would like to take part please phone Peter on 724576 or email pjnewsham@aol.com.

2. Advent video reflections on Youtube and facebook

Tied in with this, members of the parish have recorded a series of 24 short YouTube Advent readings, again featuring the 'Jesse Tree bauble', followed by a brief time of reflection. The lighting of the Advent wreath candles each Sunday are shown separately.

'O come Emmanuel' - Advent reflection

Preparing for Christmas through song, Scripture and prayer – Taize style. Please join us at Holy Family next Sunday at 3.30pm.

Masses received this week: for a stressed family, Leonard Stevens, Anne Bolton, Gerry Allen, Elizabeth Anne Allen, Francis Dewhurst.

Crisis at Christmas (Homeless) Donation

WINGS donated £112.88 to reserve x4 places for homeless people who have nowhere to call home and no one to be with this Christmas. The coronavirus pandemic has exerted huge pressure on homeless people already pushed to the brink. Our sponsored guests will have a place to stay, receive a nutritious meal, friendship, care and importantly the chance to benefit from life-changing services provided by 'Crisis' over the Christmas period. A personalised card was issued to our guests from Holy Family with special prayers of support and in loving memory of our dear Fr Peter Dolan.

John Scarborough on behalf of WINGS.

CAFOD World Gifts

World Gifts, CAFOD's range of virtual gifts, make a real difference to families living in poverty across the world. While we have the coronavirus pandemic and lockdown here, we can still be good neighbours to our sisters and brothers overseas by giving World Gifts as Christmas presents to family and friends. The Keep Clean Kit gift for £6 and the Vegetable Garden gift for £10 are just two gifts that will help vulnerable families affected by the pandemic to protect and feed themselves. Let's spread joy and hope around the world this Christmas. Visit cafod.org.uk/worldgifts