

They will be visiting church on two occasions over the next couple of weeks to practise. On **Monday 8th December**, they will attend Mass to celebrate the beginning of Advent and the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. They can be dropped off from 0845. Children who attend Breakfast Club walk up to Church as usual accompanied by members of staff.

CHORLEY AND PRESTON HOSPITALS: Please contact St Joseph's Chorley (262713) if any member of your family is admitted into Chorley Hospital and needs a visit. In urgent cases or emergency please ask the ward staff to call the duty Chaplain on his bleep/phone. For the chaplaincy service at Royal Preston Hospital Tel: 01772 522435. For the chaplaincy service at Wigan Infirmary Tel: 01942 822324

COULD YOU HELP? A lady who lives in Astley Village would very much like to come to a weekend Mass. Could someone bring and take her home please? Thank you. **Would the lady who contacted the parish office, please ring again. Thank you.**

HAPPY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR 2026



Christmas tree and crib organisers, and everyone who contributed to making our church so beautiful throughout the year and at Christmas. I would also like to thank Kieron Huddy who has dedicated his heart and soul with a great serving contribution to St Mary's on a daily basis. You are all very much appreciated. Thank you. Also, my thanks to all the parishioners who come to Mass and support this church and to all who financially contribute so we can pay the bills. Thank you.

We wish Canon Neil Kelley and his parishioners Christmas Blessings of health, peace and joy. We hope that the building works at St Laurence's run smoothly and on time and are successful.

Parish Priest: Fr. Francis Marsden

Tel: 01257 262537 E-mail: stmaryschorley@yahoo.co.uk

Parish website: www.stmarys-chorley.org

Parish Office: Tues - Fri 10.30-13.00. 14.00-17.00

Parish Centre: 270122 or 07377 341969 (Manager – Heather Cheyne)

ARCHDIOCESE OF LIVERPOOL Registered Charity No. 1199714

St Mary's Catholic Church, Chorley

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

21st DECEMBER 2025



Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to send her away quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 'Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel' — which means, God with us. When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife. Matthew 1:18-24

Sat 20th
16.15-16.45
17.00

Sun 21st

Day of Prayer for Expectant Mothers.
Confessions
Mass – Maura Brown (Christmas Mass)
FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
[St Peter Canisius]



09.30
15.00
16.30
Mon 22nd
09.00

Mass – Teresa and Jimmy Halpin RIP
Advent Holy Hour at St Joseph's Anderton
Christmas workshop for decorating St Mary's church

Tues 23rd
12.00
12.30-13.00

Mass – Anna Doherty (birthday remembrance)
St John Kanty
Mass – Thanksgiving for 70th birthday (TL)
Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Wed 24th
15.15-16.00
16.00
16.30
Thurs 25th
09.30

CHRISTMAS EVE

Confessions
Carols
Mass – Samuel Round (A)

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

Mass – Parishioners, sick and housebound of the parish

Fri 26th
12.00
12.30 – 13.00
Sat 27th
16.15-16.45
17.00
Sun 28th
09.30

St Stephen the First Martyr
Mass – Fr Laurence Mayne RIP
Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

St John the Evangelist
Confessions
Mass – Carole Foscke 90th birthday

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

Mass – Dorothy Burgoynes (A)

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK AND THE HOUSEBOUND: Margaret Arrowsmith, Kathleen Coyle, Rosemary Hough, Archbishop Emeritus Patrick Kelly, Theresa Martin, David Monks, Vasil Olijniczuk, Molly Redhead, and parishioners in the Adelphi, Westwood, and Gillibrand Hall. **Please note: We now need written permission to add a name to the above sick list. This can be done by the sick person or by the next of kin, if the sick person cannot give permission themselves. Written permission can be made via email to stmaryschorley@yahoo.co.uk**

ANNIVERSARIES: Samuel Round, Dorothy Burgoynes, Stella Mayne, Ian McCarrick, Colette Bury, Thomas Booth.

READERS: Sat: 20th 17.00 Gillian Sharples Sun: 21st 09.30 Charlotte Eccles
Christmas Eve 16.30 Chris Thorpe and Eleanor Jenner
Christmas Day 09.30 Gillian Sharples and Richard Gillett
Sat: 27th 17.00 Eileen McCarrick Sun: 28th 09.30 Paul Lennon

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS: Dr Jane Eccles would like to invite all willing hands to decorate the church and for a Christmas workshop **today Sunday 21st December at 16.30**. As usual, sherry and mince pies will be provided to bring out the artistic talents of all the volunteers, (cordial or pop for drivers).

FOOD BANK: If you have any spare tins of food, cornflakes, UHT milk, pasta, sauces, sugar, coffee and tea, could you please donate and leave your items at the parish office? We always are asked several times to give out food over the Christmas and New Year time. Our stocks are down and need replacing. Many thanks.

ST JOSEPH, THE RIGHTEOUS MAN OF DREAMS: In the New Testament, only the Gospel of Matthew explicitly presents dreams as a means of revelation. Matthew relates six instances of divine communications in dreams, five of which are in the infancy narrative, one to the Magi and the other four to Joseph. Those to Joseph concern the journeys from Bethlehem to Egypt and back to Nazareth in Galilee. They each fulfil prophecies.

- 1) his taking Mary as wife and naming the child "Jesus;"
- 2) fleeing to Egypt to rescue the child and his mother;
- 3) returning from Egypt to Israel with the child and his mother;
- 4) withdrawing to Galilee and establishing residence in Nazareth.

While rare in the New Testament, dreams are rather common in the Old Testament, and a variety of significances accompany them. When foreigners such as Pharaoh or Nebuchadnezzar dreamt, a Hebrew man of God, such as Joseph or Daniel, was needed to interpret for them).

Israel, however, needs no help in interpreting dreams, which are often means of divine communication. Yahweh, whom no one can see and still live, commonly reveals in dreams and night visions his plans for his people and the role they are to play in those designs, as seen in the examples of Abraham, Abimelech, Laban, Jacob-Israel, Joseph, Samuel, Nathan, Solomon, and Daniel.

In St Joseph's dreams it is the "angel of the Lord," who appears to him. Joseph invariably awakes with total faith and no doubt whatsoever about their interpretation.

Matthew shows how Joseph received the vocation to be a key personage in Jesus' infancy, and how that role could only be fulfilled by a special charism, a charism communicated to him by an angel of the Lord in dreams.

Joseph received an initial revelation about the identity of the child Jesus, conceived of the Holy Spirit to save his people from their sins. He then received subsequent messages about how he was to cooperate in that work of salvation by guarding and protecting the child and his mother.

In the Gospels, this manner of divine communication is unique to Joseph, so he alone can be called a "man of dreams," a title previously given to his namesake, the patriarch Joseph. St Joseph received two means of divine communication common in the Old Testament: dreams and appearances of the angel of the Lord. By his obedient cooperation with the messages, he fulfilled Old Testament prophecies.

St Joseph parallels his Old Testament namesake in his association with dreams and Egypt, in escaping threats of death, and in being protected and blessed for his faithful exercise of the responsibility entrusted to him. St Joseph, righteous and just man, husband of Mary, pray for us.

ADVENT QUOTATION: "There are two births of Christ, one unto the world in Bethlehem; the other in the soul, when it is spiritually reborn. Men think of the former much more than the latter, and celebrate it every year; but the spiritual Bethlehem is equally momentous. . . . It was the second birth that Saint Paul

insisted on when he wrote from prison to his beloved people, the Ephesians, asking that Christ may dwell in their hearts by faith and that they be rooted and grounded in love. This is the second Bethlehem, or the personal relationship of the individual heart to the Lord Christ." – Ven. Fulton Sheen