



CHRIST IS BORN FOR US!  
ALLELUIA!

## The Word This Week

It's only in this last week before Christmas that we begin to hear about the "Christmas story" itself. For the past weeks we have been preparing ourselves to greet the Lord, when he comes. Now we prepare to remember how he first came, by listening to the prophecies of his coming, and by hearing of the events before his birth. We meet the woman, Mary, who herself had been prepared for the coming of the Messiah. She has received the angel's greeting, and his strange news, and has accepted her role in God's plan. Now she hurries to her kinswoman, Elizabeth, who herself bears John the Baptist in her womb. John, just as we heard last week, alerts us to the presence of the Lord, as he leaps for joy in his mother's womb. His joy is that God has kept his promise, and is with his people.

## Christmas Flowers

If anyone wishes to donate to the cost of flowers for Christmas in memory of a loved one, please place your donation in an envelope marked "Christmas Flowers" and hand it in or post it through the Presbytery letterbox before the end of this **Sunday 22nd December**. Names of those to be remembered will be displayed in Church.

*Also it would be great if people could donate poinsettias for the decoration of the crib - please drop these off at Church by Monday lunchtime! Thank you.*

## Church Decorating

We'll be doing our Church Christmas decorations on **Monday 23rd December**, straight after the 9.30 a.m. Mass. There will be some heavy lifting (two massive Christmas trees, for example!) but lots of lighter work, such as decorating the trees and arranging the crib, so everyone is very welcome!

## Christmas Leftovers "Do"

As in the last two years (so it has now become traditional!) we will have special Coffee Morning this **Friday 27th December** from 10.30 a.m.—1.00 p.m. Please come along and bring some food or drink (a good way of getting rid of all those leftovers!), as well as games and toys—a chance for old and new to play with our Christmas presents! And to display your best ugly Christmas jumpers! We will open up the big hall so children

(including big kids!) can play. Last year everyone had a great time, so please make a note and come along to share some Christmas joy!

## S.V.P. Epiphany Party

Our Parish S.V.P. is hosting the traditional Epiphany Party on **Sunday 5th January** : everyone is welcome, but for catering purposes please fill in and return an "R.S.V.P." card—these are available in the porch. For more information please contact Joan on 0773 990 8561.

## Crib Offerings

This year our crib offerings will be added to our Appeal for the work of the Brothers of Charity at Standard House in Bury. Thank you for donations already received. Their mission is to help the most vulnerable in our area - often those suffering from mental or social problems which isolates and severely restricts them. Please place any donations you can in the white basket, which will be here until **12th January 2025**, the end of the Christmas Season. Standard House runs art classes for clients, but staff have to pay for supplies out of their own pockets: if you would like to donate new art supplies please place them in the basket provided!

## Next Sunday's Gospel

**Luke 2:41-52**

The parents of Jesus went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom. And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, but supposing him to be in the group they went a day's journey, but then they began to search for him among their relatives and acquaintances, and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him. After three days they found him in the Temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. And when his parents saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, 'Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress.' And he said to them, 'Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?'

And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them. And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favour with God and man.

## Grace Before and After Christmas Meals

**Lord and Father of us all, today we rejoice at the coming of your Son, born in simple silence, in humility and need. Pour out your deepest joy upon us as we gather to share this festive meal; help us to build joy for one another, and to remember those who spend this day, like Christ and his Mother, in humility and need. We ask this through Christ, our new-born King. Amen.**

**Thank you, God and Father, for these gifts. Bless those who worked so hard to make them ready. Help us to spread nothing but peace, joy and hope, in our home today and in our world always. We ask this through Christ, our new-born King. Amen.**

## A Christmas Word from Father James

*This Christmas Eve will see Pope Francis literally smashing open the "Holy Door" in Saint Peter's Basilica to usher in a Holy Year: a Holy Year is a special time of pilgrimage, penance, mercy and prayer. The Theme for this Holy Year is HOPE. Hope is, I often feel, the "Cinderella" of the Virtues - love and charity are much more "obvious". But how important is hope! Especially as we seem to hear nothing but bad news around the world - wars, economic crises, political turmoil, natural disasters - how much more do we need hope. Hope looks beyond the present to a future that only God sees. We do not know what 2025 will bring, but let us hope for peace and blessing for ourselves and our world. Especially as we remember the birth of the child who would change the world forever, let us pray for him to give us HOPE this Christmas and always!*

**May HOPE reign in your homes this Christmas and all through the New Year. With prayers and blessings for a happy and holy Christmas,**

Fr James (and Arthur!)

# CHRISTMAS WORDSEARCH

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| B | D | E | L | B | A | T | S | L | A | A | E | S |
| S | I | V | D | L | E | O | N | Z | T | R | H | N |
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| CHRISTMAS TREE | ADVENT      |
| DECORATIONS    | CAROLS      |
| HOLLY          | ANGEL       |
| REINDEER       | CRIB        |
| TINSEL         | HOLY        |
| MANGER         | NOEL        |
| BABY           | MARY        |
| JOSEPH         | BALTHAZAR   |
| JESUS          | MELCHIOR    |
| SHEPHERD       | CASPAR      |
| KINGS          | GOLD        |
| STAR           | MYRRH       |
| STABLE         | SANTA CLAUS |
| FRANKINCENSE   |             |



# Prayer and Care ...

## Requests for Masses & Prayers

**Recently Deceased:** Tony McPartland, Hilary Bellew, Maggi Hornby.

**Anniversary:** Jean Wright, Members of the Mulheran Family, Elizabeth Doyle & Family, Sheridan Farrell, Luis Rodrigues, Herbert Kershaw, Agnes Holohan, Michael Holohan, Stephen Naden.

## National Cycle of Prayer

During Advent and Christmastide we are asked to pray for these intentions: Openness to the Word of God, Migrants and Refugees, Expectant Mothers.

## Holy Father's Intention (December)

**For pilgrims of hope.** We pray that this Jubilee Year strengthen our faith, helping us to recognize the Risen Christ in our daily lives, and that it may transform us into pilgrims of Christian hope.

## Diocesan Cycle of Prayer

This week let us pray for the parish of Saint Oscar Romero, Blackburn and for Father Shaun Braiden, their parish priest. We pray for their parish primary schools.

## Our Parish S.V.P.

The S.V.P. Conference at Saint Vincent's support people in need in a variety of ways; if you or anyone you know would like any kind of help please contact Joan Hamilton on **0773 990 8561** or send an email to **[PresidentD111410@svp.org.uk](mailto:PresidentD111410@svp.org.uk)**. Please also remember that donations to the S.V.P. can made at any time through the donations slot on the back wall of Church, or by bank transfer online: Account Name **D111410 SVP ST VINCENT—ROCHDALE**; Account Number **4608 2506**; Sort Code **60-60-04**.

## Rochdale Food Bank

Please place your donations in the boxes at the back of the Church. The Food Bank is currently short of Jam, Cereal, Tinned Potatoes, Juice, Sugar and Coffee. More details at **[rochdalefoodbank.org.uk](http://rochdalefoodbank.org.uk)** and a full "shopping list" is available online.

## Donations

Please be aware that there are permanent donation boxes on the back wall of Church for CAFOD, Caritas Diocese of Salford, Caritas Ukraine and the Parish S.V.P. Thank you for your constant generosity!

# This Week

## FOURTH WEEK OF ADVENT AND BEGINNING OF CHRISTMAS OCTAVE

### Monday 23rd December Advent II weekday

📖 Malachi 3:1-4. 4:5-6; Luke 1:57-66

**9.30 a.m.** MASS

### Decorating Church after Mass

### Tuesday 24th December Advent II Weekday

📖 2 Samuel 7:1-5.8b-12.14a.16; Luke 1:67-79

**6.30 p.m.** The First MASS of Christmas

### Wednesday 25th December THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD (Solemnity)

📖 Isaiah 9:1-6; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14

**9.00 a.m.** MASS of Christmas

**11.00 a.m.** MASS of Christmas

### Thursday 26th December Saint Stephen, The First Martyr (Feast)

📖 Acts 6:8-10. 7:54-59; Matthew 10:17-22

**11.00 a.m.** MASS

### Friday 27th December Saint John, Apostle and Evangelist (Feast)

📖 1 John 1:1-4; John 20:2-8

**10.00 a.m.** MASS

**10.30—1.00 p.m.** Christmas Family Leftover Coffee Morning "Do"!

### Saturday 28th December The Holy Innocents, Martyrs (Feast)

📖 1 John 1:5-2:2; Matthew 2:13-18

**11.00 a.m.** MASS

**6.30 p.m.** First MASS of Sunday

### Sunday 29th December THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

📖 Sirach 3:2-6.12--17a; Col 3:12-21; Luke 2:41-52

**9.00 a.m.** MASS *Refreshments afterwards*

**11.00 a.m.** MASS *Refreshments afterwards*

