

violent night,
hell and heaven
meet to fight.

Wars have been waged over money, property, honour, power, and oil. But this war—the greatest conflict in human history - is over us.

The dragon sports many names—the serpent, the liar, the god of this world—but perhaps his most fitting name is Satan. It means Accuser. That's what John calls him later in the chapter: "the accuser of our brethren ... who accuses them day and night before our God."

He wields the weapon of accusation. And by it he enslaves us in guilt, shame, depravity, and lies. Each evil is a link in the chains that bind us. And each chain the Accuser wraps round and round our souls. His greatest fear is that we will hear that his enemy has come to set us free.

So, in the little town of Bethlehem a red dragon swoops in to swallow this child who has come to liberate us from accusation. To make us children of his Father. To shatter every chain that binds us to a life of bondage. He must be stopped. He must be silenced. He must be killed.

The Christmas story begins the narrative of violence that marks the life of the Liberator. The dragon misses his opportunity in Bethlehem. So he hounds our Lord down to Egypt. Then back to Galilee. He trails him into the desert with tempting words. And, finally, after 33 years of warfare - and repeated defeats - he finally wins.

The dragon who failed to devour the child in the manger swallows the man atop the cross.

In so doing, unbeknownst to this beast, he ate poison. For if anything will destroy an accuser, it is taking freedom into his bowels.

At the death of Jesus there was a great rattling of chains. The links of evil that bound us snapped in two. A world held in bondage to the dragon was, in the death of the Son of God, immediately and irrevocably freed forever from his captivity.

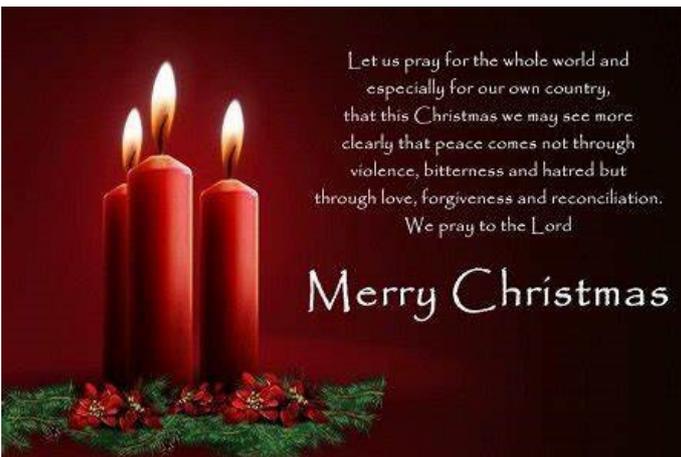
It all began in Bethlehem. Unseen by human eyes, hell and heaven battled over us. And heaven, in the end, stood on the neck of hell and pressed his foot into the throat that had so long accused us. The accuser of our brethren, John wrote, "has been thrown down." He was conquered "by the blood of the Lamb."

All the dragon gets for Christmas is a mouthful of shattered teeth, fiery lungs flooded with oceans of divine wrath, and a sword swinging down from above to chop off the head that spouted accusation.

Merry Christmas! The dragon is dead, the baby is alive, and his victory has set you free.

Thank you:

As we near the end of what has been a most extraordinary year, thank you to everyone for all their continued support,, prayerful, practical and financial, during this time of huge disruption; and for the cards and presents received by Fr Ross, Sister Janet and Fr & Mrs Tunji Adebijiyi.



Omnia Christus est nobis!

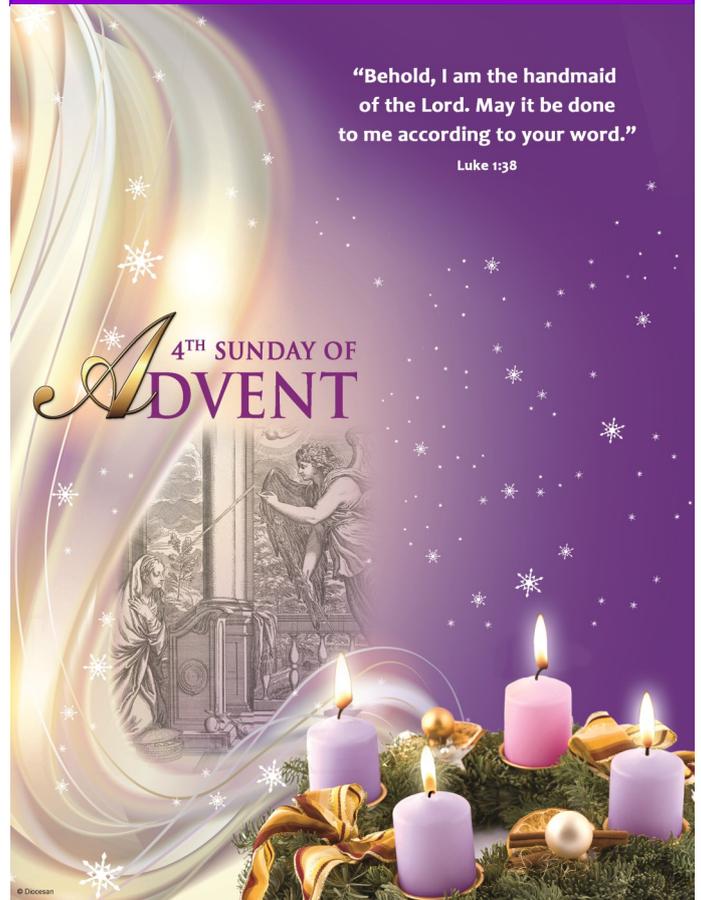
To us Christ is all!



**St Mary & St Giles with All Saints,
Parish of Stony Stratford with Calverton**

THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

20th December AD 2020



Welcome to the Parish Church where, after the example of the early church, we celebrate the Eucharist: the "apostles teaching and fellowship, the breaking of bread and the prayers" (Acts 2:42)

At the moment our Lady said: "be it done to me according to thy word" the most stupendous event that ever happened, or ever could happen on earth, took place on this planet of ours. The Son of God took on human nature in the womb of the Blessed Virgin. We are familiar with this story from childhood. We often say the Angelus in which this tremendous act of God's love is described. Although familiarity, in this case, does not breed contempt, it does help to blunt the real impact on our minds of such an extraordinary occurrence. If God had created a very special child, and made him into an outstanding saint, so that he could intercede with God for us, this would be a great act of love for us on God's part. Or, if he had sent an angel from heaven in human form, to teach us all about God and to help us to lead holy lives, this would deserve our deepest gratitude. But neither a saintly man nor a holy angel could do for us all that God wanted. No man or angel could make us adopted sons of God and heirs of heaven. It was necessary, in God's plan for us, that his divine Son should become man, should share our humanity so that we could share his divinity.

INFORMATION



Safeguarding: Our Parish Churches have adopted and follow the Diocese of Oxford's recommended policies for the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults. Details of these policies and of our Safeguarding Officers are available on the noticeboards inside each Parish Church. Should you have any safeguarding concerns then please see one of them.

Restrictions During the Current Pandemic:

Unfortunately, we are required to observe the following restrictions:

- ◆ **FACE MASKS: MUST BE WORN** by all attending worship as required by Law, apart from the Priest and any Lay Ministers assisting him. **N.B. IF YOU CANNOT WEAR A MASK FOR MEDICAL REASONS YOU MUST WEAR A FACE SHIELD.**
- ◆ Only 3 or 4 **Church Bells** are permitted to be rung, because ringing chambers are not large enough for distancing requirements when a full team is present. The Tower Captain and Assistant must keep a record of who is present to ring on what dates and ensure that distancing is maintained on the staircase. Bell ringing practice is not permitted.
- ◆ **Entry and exit** to our Parish Churches - entry via the West (Tower) Door and exit via the Parish Hall at St Mary & St Giles - entry via the South Porch and exit via the West (Tower) Door at All Saints
- ◆ There cannot be an **social gathering** in either of our Parish Churches before or after Mass - social intercourse may take place in the churchyards before or after Mass.
- ◆ 'Shared' **Mass cards** are not permitted. Please do not take a copy for someone else - either retain it for your devotions at home, or place it in the bin provided at the exit points in both churches.
- ◆ Until further notice all **communal singing**, singing rehearsals and concerts are prohibited in all places of worship. It is now possible to have a small choir and Organ Music played.
- ◆ **Collections:** Cash donations and envelopes must be placed either in the large plinth donations box at St Mary & St Giles, or in the bowl by the south porch door at All Saints. We are not allowed to pass a collection plate/bag to one another.
- ◆ **'The Peace'** may not be shared physically. We may however join our own hands and bow to each other at The Peace.
- ◆ **When going forward to receive Holy Communion** - at St Mary & St Giles please approach centre of the altar rail in single file via the main aisle, observing a two metre distance, and return to your place via the side aisle. At All Saints: again single file two metres apart but keeping to the south porch side of the main aisle on approaching the altar rail and returning to your place on the vestry side. N.B. in both churches Holy Communion must be received whilst standing and please extend your arms as far as you are able. Textile kneelers and cushions have had to be removed.
- ◆ **'Receiving Holy Communion'** is in one kind, i.e. The Host. This must be received in the palms of our hands - not on the tongue.
- ◆ **Please maintain a two metre distance** from each other on approaching the altar rails and on leaving our churches after Mass.
- ◆ **Lavatory Facilities.** Strict hand-hygiene must be observed and hand-dryers only used. In the lavatory at each church there is a spray sanitiser and single use sanitising wipes for each user to wipe the seat, flush-handle, water taps, sink and door handle. Used wipes should be placed in the waste baskets provided.

All of these restrictions, whilst not what we would wish for, do not detract from the fact that we are able to receive the Lord in his Blessed Sacrament.

**Please take this Service Sheet home with you
and use as part of your devotions during the week.**

Prayer Thought

On this the last Sunday of Advent we are near the end of waiting. Christ will be coming in a special way this Friday and our season of penance will give way to one of joy. We come to the Lord to thank him for all his gifts to us and especially for the gift of his Son, our Saviour.

(STAND) **THE INTRODUCTORY RITES**

Organ Introit:

The Truth from Above arr. Vaughan Williams

As the Sacristy Bell is rung we STAND, and the Cantor sings the **Introit Antiphon:**

O drop down ye heavens from above, and let the sky pour down righteousness. Let the earth open and bring forth a Saviour!.

https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stmarystgilesstonystatford/?utm_campaign=raise-more&utm_content=w4

Thank you!

Rector's post-Christmas break: Over the past year due to the requirements on clergy as part of this pandemic, I have not been able to take my holiday entitlement, and although I tried to take a break in the summer, it proved impossible to do so, as I was contacted about various matters each day. Therefore from 26th December to 5th January inclusive I shall not be contactable. Worship will still be held on Sunday 27th December and Sunday 3rd January, and other clergy will cover these Services and any funerals etc. I shall return for the Sung Mass of the Epiphany at 7:00pm on Wednesday 6th January in St Mary & St Giles.

Sacristy & Office Roofs, Rainwater Goods & Wall Repairs at St Mary & St Giles: The Rector has been successful, with our architects' assistance, in obtaining a £20,000 grant towards these urgent repairs. We managed at very short notice to get four tenders submitted, the lowest being for £50,000 (including Architect's Fees). The grant comes with conditions - the principal one being that in order not to have to return the grant we have to have completed the work by the end of September 2021. These repairs are essential works because, if not undertaken, the damage to the fabric of the building could be considerable, even more costly, and call into question our ability to maintain it.

The PCC will be giving this further consideration at its January meeting. In the meantime, it would be very much appreciated if everyone could pray about this, and offer help with further fundraising in order that we can make use of this grant and secure the future of our Parish Church's fabric. *Thank you.*

When a Dragon Tried to Eat Jesus: The Nativity Story We Don't Talk About:

I recently came across this article by Chad Bird (a Church Minister, writer, and Biblical Studies Lecturer). It certainly makes a connection that I hadn't thought of before. Perhaps it will set you wondering too....

I'm still searching for a Christmas card with a red dragon in the Stable, lurking amidst the cows and lambs waiting to devour the baby in the manger.

None of the Gospels mention this unwelcome visitor to Bethlehem, but the Apocalypse (the Book of Revelation) does. John paints a seven-headed, ten-horned red dragon onto the peaceful Christmas canvas. You can read all about it in Revelation 12.

It's the nativity story we don't talk about. A dragon trying to eat our Lord.

The red dragon was standing "before the woman who was about to give birth, so that when she bore her child he might devour it. She gave birth to a male child, one who is to rule all the nations with a rod of iron."

Clearly, more was going on at Christmas than drinking eggnog and kissing under the mistletoe. Or even peace on earth.

Hark the herald angels sing, a dragon waits to eat our king.

December 25 marks the genesis of war. God invading our world. Hell's foundations quaking as the ancient terrors of demons awake. The dragon spreading his wings and flying into battle, flames bellowing from his lungs of brimstone and fire.

Philip Yancey writes, "From God's viewpoint—and Satan's—Christmas signals far more than the birth of a baby; it was an invasion, the decisive advance in the great struggle for the cosmos."

Silent night,

- ◆ *part of group all from the same household or from two linked households or*
- ◆ *part of group all from the same linked Christmas households (23 – 27 December only) and must not join any other group or mingle with any person from another group.*
- ◆ *NB non-household groups of 6 are not permitted*

This means that, whilst in our churches, we should remain safely distanced from others outside of our household or support bubbles.

Therefore, no social interaction/converse should take place within our churches.

However, social interaction/converse can take place within the curtilage of our churchyards provided that it occurs with all involved being safely distanced.

From what I hear from other clergy in Tier 3 areas, there is evidence of inspections taking place to ensure that the restrictions are being followed. I am sure that you will agree with me that we would not want to be found to be at fault.

With regard to the Christmas Services, I have taken considerable time to plan seating arrangements. I would very much appreciate it if everyone took their seats as soon as they arrive and did not mingle or converse.

The sidesmen will have a plan of the seating and a list of who is sitting where.

The Parish Mailing out for delivery on Thursday and Friday of last week included tickets for those who requested them. These tickets have a row number and seat number upon them for the 'Nine Lessons & Carols' and the 09:30 Parish Mass on Christmas Morning.

The Masses on Christmas Eve at 6:00pm and 9:00pm, and that at 8:00am on Christmas morning are low in numbers and therefore our usual arrangement of each row holding a household (or bubble), a married couple at either end, or three individuals, will apply.

I hope that by making these arrangements and with your assistance in abiding by them, this will help us all to continue to care and safeguard one another.

Do you shop online?

If you shop online, please could you sign up to easyfundraising.org.uk to support St Mary & St Giles, Stony Stratford? Thank you to those 8 people who have signed up so far, this has resulted in over £15 being raised for our Parish Church.

You may have seen the previous notice about this and thought, 'That's a good idea' but then it slipped your mind to sign up. once you have signed up you will see the 'easyfundraising' logo and donate button to the clearly visible to the right hand side of any participating online retailers website.

Alternatively, you just use the 'easyfundraising' site to shop online with thousands of retailer like eBay, Argos, ASOS, Expedia, M&S, Just Eat, Uswitch, Amazon, eBay, Tesco, John Lewis and Booking.com and when you make a purchase, the retailer sends us a free donation

It's a really easy way to raise money for us. Supporting St Mary & St Giles, Stony Stratford doesn't have to cost you anything! Over 4,000 shops and sites will donate for FREE when you use 'easyfundraising' to shop with them.

This means you can raise donations for us when you buy clothes and accessories, electricals, homeware, groceries, book holidays, take out insurance, switch energy providers or anything else!

You can register to support us here (don't worry, it's completely free!):

V. The heavens declare the glory of God * and the firmament showeth his handiwork.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost as it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world with out end. Amen.

Rejoice ye in the Lord God always, and again I say rejoice.

In the name of the Father, ✠ and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

The priest greets the people

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.
and also with you.

The Lighting of the Fourth Advent Candle

The priest lights the Fourth Candle on the Advent Wreath in honour of St John the Baptist and then leads the people in prayer:

Blessed are you, Sovereign Lord, merciful and gentle: to you be praise and glory for ever! Your light has shone in our darkened world through the child-bearing of Blessed Mary, Ever-Virgin; grant that we who have seen your glory may daily be renewed in your image and prepared like her for the coming of your Son, who is Lord and Saviour of all.
Blessed be God for ever.

Penitential Rite

(STAND)

The priest invites the people to call to mind their sins and repent of them.

**Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us, forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you
in newness of life
to the glory of your name. Amen.**

The priest pronounces the general absolution

Almighty God, who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you, ✠ pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and keep you in life eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

The Kyries:

Kyrie, eleison.

Kyrie, eleison.

Christe, eleison.

Christe, eleison.

Kyrie, eleison.

Kyrie, eleison.

The Gloria in excelsis is omitted during Advent.

The Collect

Let us pray.

O God our redeemer, who prepared the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the mother of your Son: grant that, as she looked for his coming as our Saviour, so we may be ready to greet him when he comes again as our judge; who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

The First Reading

2 Samuel 7: 1-5, 9-11, 16

(Old Testament Page 230 in the Bibles) The promise made to David by God through Nathan, ending with the phrase 'your throne will be established for ever.' The prophecy is fulfilled in Christ who is of the line of David.

The Responsorial Psalm

(from Psalm 89)

R/. I will sing for ever of your love, O Lord.

I will sing for ever of your love, O Lord;
through all ages my mouth will proclaim your truth.
Of this I am sure, that your love lasts for ever,
that your truth is firmly established as the heavens. ©

'With my chosen one I have made a covenant;
I have sworn to David my servant:
I will establish your dynasty for ever
and set up your throne through all ages.' ©

He will say to me: 'You are my father,
my God, the rock who saves me.'
I will keep my love for him always;
with him my covenant shall last. ©

The Second Reading

Romans 16 :25-27

(New Testament Page 137 in the Bibles) Paul is God's will that the mystery of Christ, be revealed to the whole world.

Gospel Acclamation

(STAND)

Alleluia, alleluia!

Behold the handmaid of the Lord;
let it be to me according to your word.

Alleluia!

The Gospel

Luke 1:26-38

(New Testament Page 48 in the Bibles) The angel Gabriel tells Mary that she is to conceive our Lord.

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

As the Gospel is announced the people respond:

✠ ✠ ✠ **Glory to you, O Lord.**

At the conclusion of the Gospel Reading:

This is the Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

The Homily

The Nicene Creed

STAND

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one Being with the Father; through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,

all bow during the next three lines

**by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.**

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again 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.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Fa-

Reflection after Mass:

Looking forward to Christmas?

Some of us experience the ironic reality that Christmas can be the loneliest time of our lives. Some of these "mixed feelings" or "sad feelings" are difficult to recognize or name. For some of us, the Christmas we will celebrate this year pales in comparison to wonderful Christmases of our past - perhaps because we were younger or more "innocent" then, perhaps because some of our loved ones who were central to our Christmas are no longer living or not where I am, perhaps because the burdens and struggles of my life or the changes in our world and the economy have robbed this Christmas of something that was there before.

For some of us, Christmas will be just another day. Unable to get out to go to Mass to be with the People of God, and without family or friends to be with, Christmas will be a day we are tempted to ignore.

For some of us, Christmas inevitably means family conflicts. Facing the days ahead, whether it be the last few remaining parties, or conflicting demands of family and friends, or the friend or relative who drinks too much, or the experience I'm having that I drink too much and this season is an easy excuse.

For some of us, Christmas challenges us with terrible financial burdens. Children today become victims of the gross commercial exploitation of the day. For those of us struggling to make ends meet on a day to day basis, feeling the cultural pressure of buying for our children things which we can't afford, can lead us to put more debt on the credit card in ways that simply push us further and further behind.

Some of us, might be really looking forward to Christmas, and not be aware of these struggles with Christmas, yet feel that, in spite of our best efforts to make Advent different this year, there is still something missing, and we still feel unready for Christmas.

For all of us, the story behind these days can draw us in, and invite us to bring our lives to the mystery of how Jesus came into this world and why. Our best preparation for the Holy Night ahead and the Joyful Morning to follow is for us to reflect upon how he came. He came in the midst of scandal and conflict. He came in poverty. He was rejected before he was born. As a new-born babe he was laid in a cattle feeding trough. He was hunted. He grew up in obscurity. He did not shun our world and its poverty and conflict. He embraced it.

And he desires to embrace us today, in this day. Right where we are. Right where we are feeling most distant, when we are feeling least "religious" or "ready." If we let him come into our hearts to be our Saviour during these challenging days, we will find ourselves entering the sacred night and morning of Christmas "joyful and triumphant" as never before.

Come, Lord Jesus. Come and visit your people.

We await your coming. Come, O Lord.

PARISH NOTICES

The Impact of Milton Keynes being in Tier 3 on Worship: It is now officially announced that Milton Keynes is in Tier 3. This DOES NOT change our ability to worship together.

However, the current restrictions are still in effect; namely that:

"You can attend places of worship for a service. However, you must not mingle with anyone outside of your household or support bubble."

Further clarification has now been given:

Public worship is permitted as an organised gathering provided any person attending is:

◆ alone or

Go in the peace of Christ.
Thanks be to God.

'THE ANGELUS'
The Memorial of the Incarnation

V/. The Angel of the Lord brought tidings to Mary;
R/. **And she conceived by the Holy Ghost.**

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee;
blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
**Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.**

V/. Behold the handmaid of the Lord;
R/. **Be it unto me according to thy word.**

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee;
blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
**Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.**

V/. And the Word was made flesh;
R/. **And dwelt among us.**

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee;
blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
**Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.**

V/. Pray for us, O Holy Mother of God.
R/. **That we may be made worthy
of the promises of Christ.**

Let us pray.

We beseech thee, O Lord, to pour thy grace into our hearts;
that as we have known the Incarnation of thy Son Jesus
Christ by the message of an angel, so by his ✠ Cross and
Passion, we may be brought unto the glory of his resurrec-
tion. Through the same Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Recessional:

Toccata 'Of the Father's Love Begotten' - John Cook

*Please remain seated until the Recessional Music has ceased. This is
integral to the liturgy of the Organ Mass and therefore applause is
not appropriate. Once concluded, leave the Parish Church of St Mary
& St Giles via the Parish Hall; and at All Saints via the West (Tower)
door. The Priest will be outside in the churchyard.*

Masses this week:

Today: **FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (O Oriens)**
9:30am **PARISH MASS at St Mary & St Giles**
11:15am **Family Mass at All Saints**
6:00pm Nine Lessons & Carols at St Mary & St Giles
Intention: Our Parish

Tuesday: **O Rex**
10:30am **Mass at All Saints**
Intention: That Christ may reign in our hearts and lives

Wednesday: **O Emmanuel**
6:00pm **Mass at St Mary & St Giles**
Intention: For the health and safety of all in our pa

THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

Thursday **Christmas Eve**
4:30pm Christingle Service - broadcast on Facebook
6:00pm Vigil Mass of Christmas at St Mary & St Giles
9:00pm **Mass during the Night at All Saints**
Friday: **CHRISTMASS DAY**
8:30am Mass of the Dawn at St Mary & St Giles
9:30am **MASS OF THE DAY at St Mary & St Giles**
Pray for: Our Parish

Next Sunday: **The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph**
9:30am **PARISH MASS at St Mary & St Giles**
11:00am **FAMILY MASS at All Saints**

ther and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has
spoken through the Prophets.

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. We
acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We
look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the
world to come. Amen.**

The Prayer of the Faithful

(STAND)

Priest: My brothers and sisters, as 'nothing is impossible to
God' with confidence let us join our prayers with the Mother
of the Lord for the Church and the world,

Intercessor: For the Bishops, Priests and Deacons of the
Church, and for all the faithful, that we may be given grace
to proclaim the Faith with fidelity and courage.....

V/. Lord, hear us.
R/. **Lord, graciously hear us.**

For those nations where atheistic governments or material-
istic greed stifle the faith of the people....

For our parish and the strengthening of our common life,
that the Lord may give us wisdom in assisting those whose
problems lead them to deny that God can help them. May
he also bless us with the grace and resources needed to
sustain and further the work of mission and ministry within
our parish...

For all those who are in pain or suffering at this time, either
in hospital or at home, especially....for all victims of COVID-
19 - in particular for those in intensive care; and generally
amongst the sick we pray by name for...Malcolm, Shirley,
Jane, Cecilia, Christel, Joan Carrigan, Margaret DeSousa,
Richard Desousa, Ronnie DeSousa, Rene Hazlewood, Fr
Joseph, Lilith, Lorna, Sr Janet, James, Peter, Rosie, Fr Fran-
cis Rodriguez-Veglio, Susie, Dee, Stacey, Isa, Wendy, Janet,
David, Adam Viard, Eric, Davida Wiseman...

For all the departed who await the reign of Christ that will
have no end, in particular we are asked to pray for the souls
of.....Theresa Martin, Sylvia Mundy, Charles Smith, Danny
Stott, Gren Wiseman.....and for those whose anniversaries of
death occur during this week, amongst them...**20th** Thomas
Stockings, Flora Bodfish, Robert Martin, George Russell;
21st Denis Church, Jane Bailey, Stanley Barker, Frederick
Baker, Myrtle Wrack, Annie Cowley; **22nd** James Newbury,
Winifred Chambers, Marion King; **23rd** Caroline Read, Sarah
Newbury, Amy Palmer, Rudy Zehofofer, Robert James
Williamson; **24th** Margaret Paterson, Eileen Haseldine; **25th**
Gladys Clarke, Amy Dolling; **26th** Irene Thorn...

✠ Rest eternal grant to them, O Lord.
And let light perpetual shine upon them.

For ourselves during the week ahead that we may be
granted the grace of perfect trust in God, after the example
of the Virgin of Nazareth...

Priest: God our Father, as the annual celebration of the Na-
tivity of the Lord draws near, we beseech you to hear these
prayers we have placed before you, assisted by blessed
Mary, ever-virgin, your faithful handmaid, the Mother of
your Son who lives and reigns for ever and ever. **Amen.**

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

*The Gifts of Bread and Wine are placed upon the altar. The
Cantor sings the **Offertory Antiphon:***

Ave Maria, gratia plena, Dominus tecum. Benedicta tu in
mulieribus, Alleluia.

*Then priest says the Offertory Prayers to which the people
respond: **Blessed be God for ever.***

(STAND) Pray brethren that my sacrifice and yours
may be acceptable to God the almighty Father.
May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the

praise and glory of his name,
for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

The priest says the Prayer over the Gifts to which all respond: Amen.

The Eucharistic Prayer

The Lord be with you
and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give him thanks and praise.

*The priest sings a Eucharistic Preface appropriate to the celebration,
after which all join in the acclamation: (KNEEL)*

**Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

*The priest continues the Eucharistic Prayer of thanksgiving, recalling
the command of Jesus Christ, 'Do this in memory of me.'*

Priest: The mystery of faith:

**All: We proclaim your Death, O Lord,
and profess your Resurrection
until you come again.**

*The Eucharistic Prayer continues with the priest interceding for the
Church, the world, all those present at this celebration, and the Faithful
Departed. At the Doxology at the end of the Eucharistic Prayer all
join in the Great Amen.*

Priest:for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord's Prayer

The priest introduces the Lord's Prayer. (STAND)

**Our Father,
who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done;
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.**

*Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, graciously grant
peace in our days, that, by the help of your mercy we may
be always free from sin and safe from all distress, as we
await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Je-
sus Christ.*

**For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now
and for ever.**

*Lord Jesus Christ, who said to your Apostles: Peace I leave
you, my peace I give you, look not on our sins, but on the
faith of your Church, and graciously grant her peace and
unity in accordance with your will. Who live and reign for
ever and ever. Amen.*

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And also with you.

Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

The Agnus Dei (KNEEL)

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

The priest shows the consecrated Host to the people, saying:

Behold the Lamb of God,
behold him who takes away the sin of the world.
Blessed are those who are called
to the supper of the Lamb.

**✠ Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,
but only say the word, and I shall be healed.**

*The Communion Antiphon is sung by the Cantor after the
Priest has received Holy Communion:*

R/. Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bring forth a Son,
and his true Name shall be called Emmanuel. Alleluia.

The heavens declare the glory of God *
and the firmament shows his handiwork.

Day unto day uttereth speech *
and night unto night shows knowledge..

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul *
the testimony of the Lord is sure, and wisens the simple.

Organ Voluntary during the Distribution of Holy Communion: Lied (from 24 pieces) Louis Vierne

*It is customary to kneel throughout the distribution of Holy
Communion except when going forward to receive the
Blessed Sacrament and upon returning to your place.*

Prayer after Communion (STAND)

Let us pray.

*And all pray in silence with the Priest for a while, unless the
silence has just been observed. Then the priest, with hands
extended, says the Prayer after Communion; at the end of
which the people acclaim: Amen.*

All then pray:

**Almighty God, we thank you for feeding us with the body
and blood of your Son Jesus Christ. Through him we offer
you our souls and bodies to be a living sacrifice. Send us
out in the power of your Spirit to live and work to your
praise and glory. Amen.**

(STAND) THE CONCLUDING RITE

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

*For the dismissal, the Priest faces the people and with his
hands extended over the people, blesses them using a form
appropriate to the Season:*

May the almighty and merciful God,
by whose grace you have placed your faith
in the First Coming of his Only Begotten Son
and yearn for his coming again,
sanctify you by the radiance of Christ's Advent
and enrich you with his blessing.

Amen.

As you run the race of this present life,
may he make you firm in faith,
joyful in hope and active in charity.

Amen.

So that, rejoicing now with devotion
at the Redeemer's coming in the flesh,
you may be endowed with the rich reward of eternal life
when he comes again in majesty.

Amen.

And may the blessing of almighty God,
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit,
come down on you and remain with you for ever. **Amen.**