



OUR LADY OF GRACE PRESTWICH

'Stay with us, Lord, on our journey'

Phone/Fax: 0161 773 2324

Parish web page:
www.ourladyofgrace.co.uk

Diocesan web page:
www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT 24 DECEMBER 2017

HOLY MASS THIS WEEK

SUNDAY First Mass of Sunday is 7pm Saturday. Sunday morning 9.00 & 11.00 am

MONDAY, CHRISTMAS DAY Holy Day of Obligation

Mass is at Midnight (Sunday)
beginning with the Office of Readings at 11.30 pm Sunday night.

Mass on Christmas morning will be the same as on normal Sundays, i.e. 9.00 and 11.00.

TUESDAY	12 noon	St Stephen, the first martyr
WEDNESDAY	12 noon	St John, apostle and evangelist
THURSDAY	12 noon	The Holy Innocents, martyrs
FRIDAY	9.15 am	St Thomas of Canterbury, bishop and martyr
SATURDAY	11.00 am	In the Octave of the Nativity (Novena 10.40)
SUNDAY NEXT -		The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

CONFESSIONS this week

SATURDAY 11.30 am-12.30 pm 6.00-6.45 pm

EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT Saturday 11.30 am-12.30 pm

YOUR PRAYERS are asked for Mr Christopher George, late of Heys Road, Prestwich; and Fr Michael Fraher, retired PP of St Mary Magdalene, Burnley. May they rest in peace.

DEANERY CIRCLE OF PRAYER Our Lady's, Langley, & St John Fisher, Boarshaw

Collection last Sunday £1126.90. Thank you also for donations of £10, £20 & £50 and also £30 for altar flowers & £30 for APF/Mill Hill Missions.

Crib Offerings this year will go to Friends of the Holy Land. They offer support in the form of education, employment, health and housing to the most needy and vulnerable Christian families in and around Bethlehem. Until the feast of the Epiphany the St Anthony's box at the back of church will be renamed 'Crib Offerings'.

Fr Allen and Fr Dearman wish you and your families every blessing this Christmas. They also thank you most sincerely for your Christmas greetings and presents, and promise to remember you in the Masses of Christmastide. Warmest thanks also to those who have worked so hard during the past week to make the church and the liturgy more worthy of the feast of Christmas, and of course grateful thanks to those who do so every week of the year.

NEWSLETTER

Parish

Christmas Choir Service

Our thanks go to the Primary School children and their teachers from Our Lady of Grace School who led the Service here last Monday. It was a delightful way to prepare for Christmas.

The side chapels in church are aglow with decorations made by children in Our Lady of Grace Primary School. Every class has contributed to the displays. Do take time to have a closer look. Thank you, children!

Children's Liturgy

The next Children's Liturgy will be **next Sunday 31 December** during the 11 o'clock Mass. Children in Year 2 and below are encouraged to attend.

Pre-Marriage Course

This Course, shared by the Servite parish and ourselves, will begin towards the end of January. Watch this space!

Eucharistic Congress

Looking forward to the National Eucharistic Congress in Liverpool next September, the Universe newspaper this week publishes an article by Fr Allen on recent International Congresses. Available from the piety stall.

Deanery/Diocese

Diocesan News

As part of the on-going reorganization in the Salford

Diocese, the parishes of St Sebastian, Pendleton, St Boniface, Lower Broughton and St Thomas of Canterbury, Higher Broughton have been amalgamated as one parish under the new name of 'The Parish of the Three Martyrs: St Sebastian, St Boniface and St Thomas of Canterbury.' Each church will however retain the name of its own patron.

Pope Francis and Mass

(Continuing Pope Francis' catechesis of 13 December, **Why go to Mass on Sunday?**)

For these reasons, Sunday is a holy day for us, sanctified by the Eucharistic celebration, the Lord's living presence among us and for us. Hence, it is the Mass that makes Sunday Christian! The Christian Sunday revolves around the Mass. For a Christian, what sort of Sunday is it that lacks the encounter with the Lord?

This is why we Christians go to encounter the Lord on Sunday in the Eucharistic celebration. Eucharistic Communion with Jesus, Risen and Living forever, anticipates the Sunday without sunset, when there will no longer be fatigue, or pain, or mourning, or tears, but only the joy of living fully and forever with the Lord. Sunday Mass also speaks of this blessed rest, teaching us, in the flow of the week, to entrust ourselves to the hands of the Father who is in Heaven.

What can we answer one who says there is no need to

go to Mass, not even on Sunday, because what is important is to live well, to love one's neighbor? It's true that the quality of a Christian life is measured by the capacity to love, as Jesus said: "By this all men will know that you are My disciples: if you have love for one another" (John 13:35); but how can we practice the Gospel without drawing the necessary energy to do so, Sunday after Sunday, from the inexhaustible source of the Eucharist?

We don't go to Mass to give God something, but to receive from Him what we truly need. The prayer of the Church reminds us of this, which addresses God thus: "You do not need our praise, but by a gift of your love you call us to render thanks to you; our hymns of blessing do not enhance your grandeur, but obtain for us the grace that saves us" (Roman Missal, Ordinary Preface IV).

In conclusion, why go to Mass on Sunday? It's not enough to answer that it's a precept of the Church; this helps to keep its value, but it's not enough on its own. We Christians need to take part in Sunday Mass because only with Jesus' grace, with His living presence in us and among us, can we put into practice His commandment, and thus be His credible witnesses.

P.S. The 'Lighthouse' rack with CDs is now on the back wall of church. CDs are £2 each and money can be put in the 'Papers, books' box,

or they can simply be
borrowed and put back.