



OUR LADY OF GRACE PRESTWICH

‘Stay with us, Lord, on our journey’

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3rd SUNDAY OF ADVENT 13 December 2020 ‘Gaudete’ – ‘Rejoicing’ Sunday

HOLY MASS THIS WEEK

MONDAY	12 noon	St John of the Cross
TUESDAY	12 noon	Advent Weekday
WEDNESDAY	12 noon	Advent Weekday
THURSDAY	12 noon	Advent Weekday
FRIDAY	12 noon	Advent Weekday
SATURDAY	12 noon	Advent Weekday
SUNDAY	First Mass of Sunday is 7pm Saturday. Sunday morning 9.00 & 11.00 am	

The church is open every day

Monday to Friday from 11.45 am-4.00 pm. **Saturdays** from 11.45 am-3.00 pm, 6.45-8.00 pm
Sundays from 8.45 am to 10.00 am, 10.45 am to 12 noon.

My dear Parishioners and Friends,

Today is known as ‘Rejoicing Sunday’. It gets that name from the first words of today’s Mass, taken from St Paul’s letter to the Philippians:

*Rejoice in the Lord always;
again I say, rejoice. Indeed,
the Lord is near.*

Rose coloured vestments are often worn today, a break from the more sombre colour of purple. The rose is also a symbol of our Blessed Lady Mary.

The second half of Advent begins next Thursday. Up to then, the readings at daily Mass are about the promise of the coming Messiah. From then on, the readings will focus more on His birth at Bethlehem. We are now only twelve days from Christmas.

Masses at Christmas will be as follows: 7.00 pm on Thursday 24 December; Midnight Mass; 9.00 a.m., 10.30 am and 12 noon on 25 December.

Because of the pandemic requirements, admission at all Masses must be by ticket only. You have been sending a steady stream of applications for tickets during the past week. If you would like to be present at one of the Masses please be sure to fill in the application form and return it to the presbytery asap. You can find the form at the back of church and on the parish website.



Pope Francis spoke some wise words about the difference between happiness and joy:

To be happy is good, yet joy is something more. It’s another thing, something which does not depend on external motivations, or on passing issues: it is more profound. It is a gift.

To be ‘happy at all moments, at all cost,’ can at the end turn into superficiality and shallowness. This leaves us without Christian wisdom, which makes us dumb, naïve. No, joy is something else; it is a gift from the Lord.



Pope Francis is full of surprises. Last week he announced a **special year dedicated to St Joseph** starting from 8 December 2020 until 8 December 2021. The year marks the 150th anniversary of the

proclamation of St Joseph as the Patron of the Universal Church. Pope Francis hopes that during this period, we will have the opportunity to commit ourselves *'with prayer and good works, to obtain, with the help of St Joseph, head of the heavenly Family of Nazareth, comfort and relief from the serious human and social tribulations that besiege the contemporary world today.'*

The Salford diocesan website notes that the Holy Father *'has written a powerful meditation on St Joseph, particularly in the light of the current pandemic. It is well worth reading and is a rich stimulus to prayer.'* It can be read now on the Vatican website.



Bishop John Arnold has announced that the diocese has started work with academic partners on a 'decarbonisation strategy.' This will involve understanding our carbon footprint and ways to reduce it, over the next two years. The team would welcome anyone with expertise in this area in our parish communities to get in touch at decarbonisation@dioceseof-salford.org.uk



Our diocese of Salford is joining with the Anglican diocese of Manchester, the Council of Christians and Jews, Young Christian Workers, The Victoria, Walshaw, and Impact! in offering a **Christmas Dinner** on Friday 25 December. There is **no charge** for this meal. If you or someone you know would like to order a meal, please contact 07855 306 074. There is a delivery service, or a take-away is

available from 1.00-3.00 pm at Bury parish church hall, The Rock, Bury.



Home Mission Sunday is usually in September. This year it was moved to today, Gaudete Sunday. The 'Joy of the Gospel' fills the hearts and lives of all who know Jesus. As Pope Francis put it: *'Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ, joy is constantly born anew.'* Preparing for Christmas can give us many opportunities to share our faith with the people we love.



Thank you for supporting the raffle and for returning your tickets for the **Christmas Draw**. It takes place **today**. Results will be published on the church notice board. Thank you also to those who donated prizes.

Thank you too to the **primary school children**. They have made the delightful decorations now in the side chapels. In the light of this 'Rejoicing Sunday', I wish you all a good week ahead.

Fr Allen

Fr Dearman's reflections on the Creed -

9 HOLY SPIRIT

"I believe in the Holy Spirit." The Third Person of the Holy Trinity makes a spectacular contribution to the Bible story when he comes in tongues of fire upon the frightened group of Apostles and inspires them with enthusiasm and courage to go out and spread the good news. Jesus had prepared

them for this as he spoke to them at the table of the Last Supper.

The Holy Spirit plays an important role in the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Orders, with the significant symbolic laying on of hands, and we call on him for guidance and encouragement when we need help beyond our human powers. He is "the Lord, the giver of life".

He "proceeds from the Father and the Son". The meaning of this proceeding is a mystery, similar to the Son being born of the Father, but it obviously implies an extremely close union of all three Persons. He is traditionally thought of as the love between Father and Son, which is so infinitely strong that it becomes a third Person.

"With the Father and the Son he is adored and glorified." Just as being a son does not make the Son less than the Father, so 'proceeding' does not make the Spirit inferior to the other Persons.

He "has spoken through the prophets". In these words the Creed pays tribute to those gigantic characters in the Old Testament who were inspired by the Spirit of God to lead the People of Israel, and at the same time honours the human authors of the Old and New Testaments through whom the Spirit gave us the Word of the Lord.