



OUR LADY OF GRACE PRESTWICH

'Stay with us, Lord, on our journey'

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4th SUNDAY OF ADVENT 20 December 2020

HOLY MASS THIS WEEK

MONDAY	12 noon	Advent Weekday/St Peter Canisius
TUESDAY	12 noon	Advent Weekday
WEDNESDAY	12 noon	Advent Weekday/St John of Kanty

THURSDAY	Christmas Eve	7.00 pm	Midnight
FRIDAY	Christmas Day	9.00 am	10.30 am 12 noon

Please note: because of the Covid restrictions, admission to church for these Masses will be by ticket only. If you do not have a ticket, please do not turn up. If possible, take part virtually by following a live-streamed Mass (see over the page).

SATURDAY	12 noon	St Stephen, the first Martyr
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.

There will be other arrangements for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day:
Christmas Eve, the church will open from 6.30 pm to 8.00 pm and 11.20 pm to 1.00 am.
Christmas Day, the church will open from 8.30 am to 1.00 pm.

My dear Parishioners and Friends,

We may not have the chance to see or speak to one another during this unusual Christmas Season. So let me take this opportunity to wish you and all your loved ones the blessings that come at this time. Fr Dearman sends his greetings too. We are very grateful for your prayers and for the kindnesses you have shown us both.



Since lockdown began, I have not been able to take

Holy Communion to those who are housebound. I have been sending them material to help them follow the Lord's Day at home.

A number of people who are not normally housebound have also been 'confined to barracks' over the past months. If that is the case with you, and you would like to receive some material to help you each week, please let me know by phone or email. If you have relatives or friends in this category, you

might draw their attention to this note.



I'm sure you will understand that because of the pandemic requirements, admission to all Masses on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day must be by ticket only. You have been sending a steady stream of applications for tickets during the past week.



The first Mass of Christmas, 7.00 pm on Christmas Eve, is now full.

As we go to press, there is still room at the other four Masses. If you would like to be present at one of these, please 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.



England, and many other places, celebrate two different kinds of Christmas. There is the *secular* Christmas, with all its razzamatazz and its commercialism. This secular Christmas ends with the Boxing Day sales.

There is also the *real, authentic* Christmas – the original one, concerned with the birth of Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. This real authentic Christmas is too big to finish in one day. It has a whole Octave – eight days – of celebration, and extends to the feast of the Baptism of Our Lord.

During the Octave we celebrate the fact that the Child born at Bethlehem is truly Emmanuel – God-with-us. The feasts of the Holy Family and the Epiphany help us to see more clearly the face of Christ. At his baptism in the river Jordan, God the Father speaks: ‘This is my Son, the Beloved.’

So if you can't be at Mass on Christmas Day, don't worry. You have the whole Christmas Season in which to come. And each day during the Octave of Christmas is, in the Church's liturgy, the equivalent of Christmas Day itself.



What about singing in church? How we love to join in the carols at Christmas!

This year however must be different. Covid regulations allow a small choir, suitably spaced, to sing as part of the liturgy, but they don't allow congregational singing. So at Christmas midnight Mass, we will be able to listen to the carols and other music sung by the choir, but we won't be able to sing ourselves. Mind you, the regulations don't say anything about humming ...



While on music, you might like to know that this year the Hallé will be sharing their annual Christmas concert free for all to watch from today, Sunday 20 December. Sponsored by Brother, and part of the series presented in association with Siemens Plc, the hope is that this concert will help to launch Christmas week for families everywhere.

The concert will be released today on the Hallé's YouTube channel:
<https://www.youtube.com/user/TheHalleOfficial>

If you are unable to access the concert via this link you can email
RSVP@halle.co.uk



Thank you so much for supporting the **Christmas Draw**. It brought in the grand total of £3,525. Winners are on the church notice board.

As we come to Christmas week, I want to say thank you to all of you who have worked hard for the parish during this difficult year. I think especially of the Welcomers who have kept the church open. Thank you too to those who beautify it in so many ways for the Christmas Season. I wish you all a very blessed Christmas.

Fr Dearman's reflections on the Creed -

10 THE CHURCH

Without the Church there would be no Creed. Some Christians claim to base their faith entirely on the Bible, yet how can they know which writings are truly the Word of God and which are fanciful inventions? We need the authority of the Church, which is based on the authority of Jesus, the Son of God and the Word of Truth.

“I believe in one, holy catholic and apostolic Church.”

The true Church founded by Jesus must be one, and we accept the Pope as the focus and guarantee of that unity. We are united in Faith with our brothers and sisters throughout the world.

The Church must be holy. Not that all its members are perfectly holy all the time, but striving for holiness is an essential duty for a Christian and fulfilling our duties as members of the Church helps us to come ever closer to the God of all holiness. Over the centuries there have been many outstanding examples of heroic saints to inspire us.

The Church is catholic, spread around the entire world from a small beginning with a tiny group of Apostles, whose successors continue the work of teaching and sanctifying by the power of the Holy Spirit, so that the Church can truly be called Apostolic.