



OUR LADY OF GRACE PRESTWICH

‘Stay with us, Lord, on our journey’

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2nd Sunday of Christmas 3 January 2021

HOLY MASS THIS WEEK

SUNDAY	First Mass of Sunday is 7pm Saturday. Sunday morning 9.00 & 11.00 am
MONDAY	12 noon Christmas Weekday
TUESDAY	12 noon Christmas Weekday

WEDNESDAY	The Epiphany of the Lord Mass for the Epiphany: 7.00 pm Tuesday, 12 noon Wednesday
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THURSDAY	12 noon	Christmas Weekday/St Raymond of Penyafort
FRIDAY	12 noon	Christmas Weekday
SATURDAY	12 noon	Christmas Weekday
SUNDAY NEXT: The Baptism of the Lord		

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. Also Tuesday this week 6.45pm to 8pm.

My dear Parishioners and Friends,

Welcome to 2021. We all pray that this year will see an end to the pandemic afflicting not just this country but the whole world

Government experts and leaders warn us about the rapid spread of the new strain of coronavirus. However, churches have been shown to be among the safest places where people gather. Our gratitude goes to the Welcomers who give generously of their time to ensure that Our Lady of Grace church remains open



Thinking about these present worrying times of the pandemic, I wondered what the people of Prestwich made of the times a hundred years ago, when they were recovering from the horrors of the first World War and the devastation wrought by Spanish flu.

An entry in the parish logbook tells us:

In the Spring of 1921, the District Council constructed a main sewer in Fairfax Road. It runs along the centre of the roadway and is 12 or 14 feet deep. The contractors experienced great difficulty from the constant flow of land water. The pumps were working day and night

The writer, Fr James Corkery, was the third parish priest of Our Lady of Grace. He was born in Cloyne, County Cork, in 1871.

Ordained priest in 1896 he served as curate at St Edmunds, Miles Platting until 1901. After a year on sick leave, he went as curate to St Chads, Cheetham Hill and in 1905 became parish priest of English Martyrs, Urmston. He was parish priest of Our Lady of Grace from 1910 until 1926 when he moved to Mount Carmel, Blackley. He died at Colwyn Bay from hemorrhage of the lungs, aged 59.

Fr Corkery carefully recorded how the contractors came across an old land drain which ran diagonally through the parish property. He drew a diagram of the position of this land drain, noting that it's position would be important "when the time comes for laying the foundations for a new church". The new church was then still five years off and opened in 1931.

The next entry in the logbook reads: *June 25th. Garden Party held in the grounds adjoining the presbytery. The proceeds amounted to £229 1s 11d.*

Let us hope for such glorious days to come again this year! For the equivalent value of £229 today, see bottom of next column.



We celebrate the **Epiphany of the Lord** next Wednesday. Epiphany isn't a word we use every day. It's a Greek word meaning appearing. We celebrate the fact that Our Lord Jesus Christ was revealed to the Gentiles, the non-Jewish peoples of the world.

The Magi, the Wise Men, represent us. The Epiphany is therefore the Christmas Day of the Gentiles. And the Epiphany is still happening today. We welcome Jesus Christ who is revealed today in our time. As the New Testament puts it, *Jesus Christ, yesterday, today and the same forever* (Hebrews 13:8).

But how does He appear today? Isn't it through us, through His Church? The Church speaks to those who have eyes to see and ears to hear. But we can make it harder for people to see and hear. The Church has a

human face and Christians can give bad example. Where we should reflect the glory on the face of Christ, our risen Lord, we can instead show the grime and the mess of the stable at Bethlehem. Where people should see one holy Catholic Church, they can sometimes see anything but holiness. We can blur the image of Christ and make it harder for the world to believe.

The Epiphany must inspire us to become again what we are – the holy people of God. People have a right to look at us, the disciples of Christ, and say: "This is what Christ is like: And we can be like Him, with the help of the grace of God. We can and we must reveal Christ to those around us.



The Christian Heritage Centre at Stoneyhurst College near Whalley is offering a free series of online talks. A range of excellent speakers will deliver 'The Drama Displayed: A journey of Salvation', examining the key moments of salvation history with the aid of great works of art 7.30pm every second Thursday, from 14 January to 25 March. For info and registration. <https://christianheritagecentre.com/events/the-drama-displayed/>

£229 in 1921 is equivalent to about £11,263.55 today



Remember, the Christmas Season lasts until next Sunday, the feast of the Baptism of Our Lord. Happy Christmastide!

Fr Dearman's reflections on the Creed -

11 ONE BAPTISM

"I confess (that is, I profess) one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins."

When a person is baptised, he or she is totally united to Jesus, the all-holy Son of God. St Paul sees this as like granting a new growth on to a tree. The newly-baptised person is a member of the Body of Christ, which is the Church

As a result of receiving this Sacrament, the new Christian is totally free of all sin. That is why we profess Baptism 'for the forgiveness of sins'.

Baptism is a spiritual birth, it cannot be repeated, Even if we should commit some terrible sin, cutting ourselves out of the Church, and then find repentance and wish to be readmitted, we cannot be re-baptised. We profess ONE Baptism.

That is why we have another Sacrament for the forgiveness of sins, the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Unfortunately, we are all liable to fall away from the state of purity that we had when we were baptised, but Jesus is always ready to forgive our sins, no matter how serious they may be.

When a baptised Christian dies we pray that he or she who was united with Jesus by dying, as he did, will now be united with him in his Resurrection. What a consoling prayer!