



OUR LADY OF GRACE PRESTWICH

'Stay with us, Lord, on our journey'

Phone/Fax: 0161 773 2324

Parish web page:
www.ourladyofgrace.co.uk

Parish Email:
john.allen@dioceseofsalford.org.uk

Diocesan web page:
www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT 28 NOVEMBER 2021

HOLY MASS THIS WEEK

SUNDAY	First Mass of Sunday is 7pm Saturday. Sunday morning 9.00 & 11.00
MONDAY	12 noon Martyrs of the Venerable English College, Rome
TUESDAY	12 noon St Andrew, apostle
WEDNESDAY	12 noon Advent Weekday
THURSDAY	12 noon Advent Weekday
FRIDAY	9.15 am St Francis Xavier (with primary school children)
SATURDAY	11.00 am Advent Weekday/St John Damascene

The church is open every day

Monday to Thursday from 11.45 am to 6.00 pm

Fridays from 9.00 am to 6.00 pm. Saturdays from 10.45 am to 8.00 pm

Sundays from 8.45 am to 12 noon (or later if Baptisms)

Confessional times: Saturday 11.40 am-12.50 pm, 6.00-6.40 pm

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament: Saturday after 11.00 am Mass until 1.00 pm.

My dear Parishioners and Friends,

Welcome to Advent! The very colour of this newsletter tells us something. Tells us that we are waiting in darkness for the coming of light. In Advent, we wait for the coming of Christ. He has already come as the Light of the world. He will come again in glory at the end of time.

Advent then is a time of waiting. But looking around us, it seems that Christmas has already come. Or at least, what some people call Christmas. We have to stand up for the true meaning of Christmas. Advent and Christmas are both being smothered out of existence by the retail trade.

Shops have already seen to that. We must remind ourselves and those around us that the true meaning of Christmas involves a wait, and a journey, and only then a gift.

Advent wreaths can remind us of that. We light one candle as each week of Advent passes. **If you would like to make a wreath for your own household, come to the parish hall this afternoon at 2 o'clock.** Our gifted flower arranging team will be there to help. **Christmas posters** can also help. Pick up one from the back of church today, and let's see a forest of these posters in windows in Prestwich and Whitefield. A simple but effective witness of faith.



Have you noticed in church the new banner of St Joseph? Some time ago, Pope Francis invited us to celebrate a **Year of St Joseph**. He wrote a letter entitled *Patris corde* – 'With a Father's heart' – describing Saint Joseph as a beloved father, a tender and loving father, an obedient father, an accepting father; a father who is courageous, a working father, a father in the shadows.

The Holy Father wrote *Patris corde* against the background of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has brought much suffering to many families but which, he says, has helped us see more clearly the importance of

'ordinary' people who, though far from the limelight, exercise patience and offer hope every day. In this, they resemble Saint Joseph, 'the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence'.

Pope Francis calls St Joseph 'an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble. St Joseph reminds us that those who appear hidden or in the shadows can play an incomparable role in the history of salvation.' The letter can be read on the Vatican and other websites.



Beginning from this Wednesday, 1 December, the Friendship Club will be open in the Hall, and then every fortnight, from 12.30 until 3 o'clock. There will be an opportunity for light refreshments, a chat, maybe music and games, and bingo. Come along, and bring family members and friends. It is **your** Club, to make of it what you want. We are hoping to arrange trips out but it may be better to wait until the new year for that.



Pope Francis has called a **Universal Synod** which is taking place in every Catholic diocese across the world. The Synod is themed: "**For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission**".

Everyone can take part by completing an online submission following this link:

www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/3D3FXJ2.

We have until 1 March 2022 to make our submissions. Then, after national and continental gatherings, the Synod of Bishops will gather

in Rome in 2023 to reflect on what has been heard.

The survey is being taken on behalf of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. They want to hear from as many people as possible, those involved in the Church and those who are not. We are told that our contribution is invaluable and could make a difference to the future of the Church in our diocese and across the world. We are asked to remember the Synod in our prayers.



Thanks to a great team, the **district bags** are now ready for distribution. In the next few days each house should receive the **2022 Year Book, two books of raffle tickets and a covering letter.** It all depends of course on **you!** Will you take a district to deliver, preferably your own? With no Christmas Fair this year we will depend on the raffle for much valued income. Anything you can do will be greatly appreciated.

Confirmation meetings are today and next Sunday, in the upper hall at 12 noon. I wish you all a grace-filled Advent.

Fr Allen



Fr Dearman's reflections on Advent Hymns.

1 – HARK, A HERALD VOICE IS SOUNDING

This ancient hymn can give us a much-needed boost as we embark on the annual celebration of Advent, the coming of the Lord.

Hark, a herald voice is sounding: Christ is nigh, it seems to say. Cast away the dreams of darkness, O ye children of the day.

At this time of the year in the Northern hemisphere many people feel sadness as the night seems to intrude upon the daylight. This symbolises the sinfulness of the world which is overcome by the coming of our Saviour, the Light of the world.

Startled at the sudden warning, let the earth-bound soul arise. Christ, her sun, all sloth dispelling, shines upon the morning skies. *If our thoughts are constantly rooted on the mundane realities all around us, the coming of Jesus may come as a great shock. But even on the gloomiest days we have the light of Christ to brighten us and drive out thoughts of self-pity.*

Lo, the Lamb so long expected comes with pardon down from heaven. Let us haste, with tears of sorrow, one and all to be forgiven. *Our Lord comes to bring pardon and peace. This joyful reality is not to be taken for granted. We need to examine ourselves in this holy season and weep for the times when we have neglected our duty of love towards God and our neighbours. We know that our sins will be forgiven when we truly repent.*

*In this part of Advent the readings and prayers of the Mass are directed very much towards the Second Coming of Christ, when he will come in glory to complete his transformation of this world into the kingdom of glory. **So when next he comes with glory, shrouding all the earth with fear, may he then as our defender on the clouds of heaven appear.***
