

PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR THE SICK

Ann Berry, Christine Rogers, David Noble, Patrick Hullinson, Florence Ward, Barbara Murphy, Della McKernan, Dale Broom, Jackie Berry, Bernard Holt, Patricia Greene, Bernadette Greene, Eileen Butt, Frank Colgan, Marian Whyte, Stephen King, William Lyons, Beth Anistead-Cargan, Sue Zimny, Tom Cutler, Rosemary Keyes, Anne Holland, Caroline Hoad, Kevin McCormick, Ellen Sumaya and Sean Galvin.

PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR THE DEAD

Recently Deceased: Anna Martini, Chris Tracey.

Anniversaries: Joseph Tolan, Bridget Rolston, Sheila Carr, Harry and Irene Caswell and Elizabeth Robinson.

WISDOM OF THE SAINTS


Advent Healing



A thousand graces diffusing, He passed through the groves in haste, and merely glancing as He passed, clothed them with His beauty. Oh! Who can heal me? Give me at once Yourself, send me no more a messenger who cannot tell me what I want.

Why after wounding this heart, have You not healed it? And why, after stealing it, have you thus abandoned it and not carried away the stolen prey? Quench my troubles, for no one else can soothe them. And let my eyes behold You, for You are their light and I will keep them for You alone.
St John of the Cross

SOCIETY OF ST VINCENT DE PAUL

THE SECOND COLLECTION TODAY IS FOR OUR PARISH SVP

	Last Week's collection was: £1328.84 Thank you	£££	The monthly figure for Standing Orders: £1380.00
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	This week the Sacred Heart Lamp will burn for those in hospital.		This week, Our Lady's Lamp burns for expectant mothers.
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WEEKLY NEWSLETTER 14TH DECEMBER



OUR LADY OF GRACE PARISH, PRESTWICH

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THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Sunday 14th December Gaudete Sunday	Holy Masses 9am & 11am
Monday 15th December	Holy Mass 12 noon
Tuesday 16th December	Holy Mass 12 noon
Wednesday 17th December O Wisdom	Holy Mass 12 noon
Thursday 18th December O Lord	Holy Mass 12 noon
Friday 19th December O Root	Holy Mass 12 noon
Saturday 20th December O Key	Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament Confessions 11.40am-12.50pm, 4-4.40pm Holy Mass 11am Vigil 5pm

In The Pink On Gaudete Sunday

If we describe someone as being “in the pink,” then we mean that they’re the picture of health. Initially, that phrase, “the pink,” simply meant the best of examples, the epitome of something. In Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, for instance, Mercutio says, “Nay, I am the very pink of courtesy.” Meaning he’s the best example, the epitome of polite behaviour. On Gaudete Sunday we, each one of us, are ‘in the pink,’ because, today, we have a taste—an experience—of what the epitome of health in Christ will be like.

In the world of rehab and recovery from addiction—there’s something called “the pink cloud.” It’s a temporary phase on the road to sobriety that’s characterised by feelings of euphoria, exhilaration, and optimism about the future. It’s a honeymoon period, I suppose, after overcoming the trauma of withdrawal, when the person in recovery experiences what freedom, health and wellbeing entail. There is a sense that the struggle is over and this time often coincides with a newfound appreciation for life and it’s possibilities: A glimpse of the life that addicts went into the wilderness of withdrawal to find and see.

This Advent we’ve been thinking about healing: the restorative action of the coming of the Son of Man in the flesh at Bethlehem and in glory at the end of time. And on this Third Sunday, the readings give us a picture of the health and wellbeing He brings that answers a central question that we have: If the coming of God brings healing, and if Christ is coming to us now, why do we not always experience His healing in our bodies? It’s all very well, you might say, to listen to Isaiah’s beautiful words—“Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees” - but we can feel that our grip is not what it was and our knees are gone!

How can we be in the pink? What does healing mean for me today, now? Thankfully, the life that God gives to us in Jesus Christ isn’t restricted to the physical. God’s life does, sometimes, miraculously coincide with our bodies but more often His healing isn’t simply physical.

Fr Pedro Arrupe was a Jesuit priest with wide experience of life and the world. Before he was a priest he trained as a doctor. As a young man, he one day witnessed the miraculous cure of a disabled boy at Lourdes. Later, working in Japan, he ministered to those suffering from the terrible radiation poisoning that resulted from the atomic bomb. And as an older man, he suffered a stroke that debilitated him almost completely.

Looking back over his long and eventful life he singled out two experiences in which he recognised God’s healing presence most deeply. During the war, and while in Japan, he was imprisoned: Separated from his parish and community he was put into a tiny cell and completely isolated. He describes himself there on Christmas night alone and looking back over happier joy-

-filled Christmases spent with his people. Just then, he heard hushed movement and whispering outside his cell. He was deeply afraid - scared at what might be happening. “Suddenly, above the murmur that was reaching me, there arose a soft, sweet, consoling Christmas carol, one of the songs which I had myself taught to my Christians. I was unable to contain myself. I burst into tears. They were my Christians who heedless of the danger of being themselves imprisoned, had come to console me, to console their *Shimpu Sarna*, their priest, who was away that Christmas night which hitherto we had always celebrated with such great joy ... The song with those accents and inflections which are not taught or learned, poured forth from a touching kindness and sincere affection. It lasted for a few minutes; then there was silence again. They had gone and I was left to myself. But our spirits remained united at the altar on which, soon after, would descend Jesus. I felt that He also descended into my heart.”

And yet this was not the healing presence of God that touched Pedro Arrupe most. After his stroke, when he had lost much of his movement and most of his speech, he said this in a homily that he got someone else to preach: “More than ever, I now find myself in the hands of God. This is what I have wanted all my life, from my youth. And this is still the one thing I want. But now there is a difference: the initiative is entirely His. It is indeed a profound spiritual experience to know and feel myself so totally in His hands.”

Somehow, in the midst of suffering, God had visited Arrupe with complete healing. St James tells us today, “Be patient, brothers and sisters.” - Three times he repeats that word “patient” and gives the indictment “You also, be patient.” Doctors have patients don’t they? Because the word means quiet endurance, steadfastness or constancy—this is the attitude that leads to health: When we establish our hearts in patience, then the precious fruits of healing appear—sometimes physically but always spiritually.

As we know, this is not always easy: Even John the Baptist, the greatest of the prophets, struggled to establish his heart with forbearance and to see the healing touch of God. So while he was also waiting in isolation he was comforted by a different hymn of praise—the carol that Jesus Himself sent to him in his cell: “Go and tell what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear.”

God’s coming holds the promise of healing. It is a firm promise made to the little ones of the Kingdom who, in their fragility, are attentive to His arrival. It may not be the end of our suffering, of our aches or pains, but when His coming establishes our hearts in patience and peace, when He comes again in clouds of glory—they will be pink and bring with them a healing deeper than any doctor.