

Prayer Intentions for the Sick

Craig Millward, Anne Holland, David Millward, David Noble, Clare Levy, Christine Rogers, Roxine Calow, Patrick Hulinson, Barbara Murphy, Florence Ward, Peggy Sugrue, Dale Broom, Jackie Berry, Bernard Holt, Patricia Greene, Bernadette Greene, Henry Marron and Johnny Falloon.

Prayer Intentions for the Dead

Recently Deceased: Federico Angiolini, Tricia Smith, Fr Eric Fisher.
Anniversaries: Elizabeth Robinson, Robert Francis Smith, Sheila Carr, Cyril and Padmini Saverimuttu, Irene and Harry Caswell, Alan and Betty Braithwaite, Joseph Tolan, Bridget Rolston, Walsh and Foy families, Patrick and Mary Monagle, William Garside, Stella Garside, Frank Carey, Sheila Carr.

WISDOM FROM THE SAINTS

“If you have too much to do, with God’s help you will find time to do it all.”


St Peter Canisius

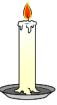
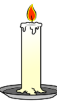
“Arise everyone! Mary invites you all, rich and poor, just and sinners to enter the cave and kiss the feet of her newborn Son.””

St Alphonsus Liguori.



“This is how our tradition began: with everyone gathered in joy around the cave, with no distance between the original event and those sharing in its mystery now ... From Bethlehem and from the nativity scene of that first Christmas in 1223 everyone went home with joy. Today it can be the same.”
 Pope Francis

	Last Week’s collection was: £1179.91. Thank you	£££	The monthly figure for Standing Orders: £1366.00
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	This week, the Sacred Heart Lamp burns for the lonely.		This week, Our Lady’s Lamp burns for world peace.
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**OUR LADY OF GRACE
 PARISH, PRESTWICH**

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THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Sunday 17th December	Holy Masses 9am & 11am
Monday 18th December	Holy Mass 12 noon
Tuesday 19th December	Holy Mass 12 noon
Wednesday 20th December	Holy Mass 12 noon
Thursday 21st December	Holy Mass 12 noon
Friday 22nd December	Holy Mass 12 noon
Saturday 23rd December	Exposition 11.30am-1pm Confessions 11.40am-12.50pm, 4-4.40pm Holy Mass 11am Vigil 5pm

Christmas Services

Next Sunday is the 24th December—it's the Fourth Sunday of Advent but also Christmas Eve. Mass times for the Fourth Sunday will be as usual: The Vigil Mass on Saturday 23rd will be at 5pm. The Morning Masses will be at 9am and 11am. The First Mass of Christmas will be at 7pm in the evening and then there will be the usual Midnight Mass preceded by carols. On Christmas Day—Monday 25th December—there will be Masses at 9am and 11am. Please note that there will be no confessions on Christmas Eve.

Christmas Crib

This year marks the 800 year anniversary of the first crib made at Greccio, a little town near the Italian city of Rieti, by St Francis of Assisi. In 1223, on his return from Rome, Francis stopped off at Greccio. The caves in the area reminded him of Bethlehem. Two weeks before Christmas, Francis called on a man known only as John and asked him to help him build a crib. So it was on December 25th 1223, St Francis, when he saw the first crib was filled with joy and said: "In that moving scene, shines forth the simplicity of the Gospel: poverty is praised and humility shown us: Greccio has become our Bethlehem."

To mark the 800th anniversary, a man who wants to be known only as David has built a new crib for us to be a little Bethlehem in Prestwich: that we might be moved by the scene and give glory to God. Pope Francis has written an Apostolic Letter on the Meaning and Importance of the Nativity Scene: *Admirabile Signum*—copies are available from the CTS stand near the church door.

Children's Liturgy

This Sunday, there will be children's liturgy in the Hall during the 11am Mass. Any children (and their parents) who'd like to take part please come to the side door at the beginning of Mass.

Baptism Meeting

There will be no meeting in the month of January. The next meeting for those who would like to have their child baptised is Wed 7th Feb 2024.

Thank-You

David and all the family of the late Shirley Higgins, would like to express their thanks for all the kindness shown to them by parishioners at the time of their loss—especially for the prayers, Masses and kind thoughts expressed by many.

Notice Board Decorations

Children from OLOG school have made the decorations in the Church porch.

A Recipe for Joy

Whether it's a block of butter to keep the up-turned breast of the turkey moist, some sherry in the soup, or bits of salty bacon in the sprouts—at this time of year there's always someone who would have us believe that they have the right ingredients to change our lives: the recipe for Christmas joy.

Yet, on this Gaudete Sunday, I really do believe that the word of God offers us a recipe for real happiness:—the secret that enables us to attain the joy of salvation, as today's Collect says. The Holy Spirit is the special ingredient and when this special Substance is worked into the recipe with love the results are outstanding.

Our readings show us three servants who have filled their work with the Spirit and who sing the praises of this method. Isaiah gives us the first servant song and says straight away: "The spirit of the Lord has been given to me—for he has anointed me!" For the ancients, the sensation of oil on the skin represented the intimate closeness of God's consoling Spirit: like a sweet-smelling restorative oil that wraps the whole body in warmth and well-being: That brings ease and flexibility to old bones—and restores the joy of youth.

The second servant to attain the joy of salvation is Mary who says "yes" to the Spirit's overshadowing and finds all that was empty in life filled with blessings. Enabling the Spirit to take control through her free self-offering, Mary sees marvellous results and cannot cease singing the praises of the One who brings life, liberty and good things.

Finally, there is John the Baptist, who experiences a complete turn-around in life as a result of the Spirit's action in his life. So much so that he feels himself to be a completely new person: When asked by others, he can only describe himself, as God did to Moses, with the name: "I am." So fully immersed in the Spirit is John, that he has taken on the very life of God, as Mary did in her womb, and Isaiah did in his heart.

The marvellous results of this recipe for joy, has spread wherever the Spirit blows and the Gospel has been preached—because there is One amongst us now, whom we hardly recognise but who is making all the difference to life and bringing us happiness. No wonder that Paul, the Apostle, says to us today: "Be happy! And never try to suppress the Spirit." This gift of God keeps us safe in spirit, soul and body and will never fail us until Jesus comes again.

So there's only one recipe that we need to use and that'll really make a difference to this year's Christmas. It's a tried and tested, family recipe, homemade and with only one ingredient: the love of the Holy Spirit, who, if we're willing to try, can fill our lives with joy.