

**PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR THE SICK**

Caroline Williams, Christine Rogers, Craig Millward, David Noble, Patrick Hullinson, Barbara Murphy, Florence Ward, Peggy Sugrue, Dale Broom, Jackie Berry, Bernard Holt, Patricia Greene, Bernadette Greene, Eileen Butt, Johnny Falloon, Carol Doherty, Frank Colgan, Marian Whyte, Blanche Pollard.

**PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR THE DEAD**

**Recently Deceased:** Katherine Moir, Damian Brooks, Mary Hughes, Maureen Gilbert, Sean Keogh, Alan Hibbert, Ray Teasdale, Patricia Burke.

**Anniversaries:** Michael Murphy, Bridie Heavey, Anthony Richards, Janet Richards, Myra Healey.

**WISDOM FROM THE SAINTS**

“Learn to bury the dead past, not to worry about the unborn future but to live and enjoy the realistic present.”

St Francis Xavier


“Let your door stand open to receive Him, unlock your soul to Him, offer Him a welcome in your mind and then you will understand riches.”

St Ambrose

**ADVENT**

Advent, this powerful liturgical season that we are beginning, invites us to pause in silence to understand a presence—a presence that appears increasingly close. It is an invitation to understand that the individual events of the day are hints that God is giving us—hints that are becoming increasingly strong:—signs of the close attention God has for each one of us.



	Last Week's collection was: £1071.00 Thank you	<b>£££</b>	The monthly figure for Standing Orders: £1380.00
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	This week, the Sacred Heart Lamp burns for the parishioners of OLOG.		This week, Our Lady's Lamp burns for all expectant mothers.
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**OUR LADY OF GRACE PARISH, PRESTWICH**

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**FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

<b>Sunday 1st December</b>	<b>Holy Masses 9am &amp; 11am</b>
<b>Monday 2nd December</b>	<b>Holy Mass 12 noon</b>
<b>Tuesday 3rd December</b> St Francis Xavier	<b>Requiem Katharine Moir</b> 12 noon
<b>Wednesday 4th December</b>	<b>Requiem Damian Brooks</b> 12 noon
<b>Thursday 5th December</b>	<b>Funeral Service 10am</b> <b>Holy Mass 12 noon</b>
<b>Friday 6th December</b>	<b>Holy Mass 12 noon</b>
<b>Saturday 7th December</b>	<b>Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament</b> <b>Confessions 11.40am-12.50pm, 4-4.40pm</b> <b>Holy Mass 11am Vigil 5pm</b>

## Parish Christmas Fair

A big thank-you to all who helped to make the Parish Christmas Fair such a success. It takes a great deal of work but I'm sure it will pay off and make a great contribution towards the Redecoration Fund.

## Cottage Christmas Café Produce

Mark and I have been busy in our spare time! We decided to make some lovely homemade Christmas goods: marmalade, lemon curd, chutney, Christmas mince, cranberry sauce and even fruit in brandy! A little cottage industry to support the parish. If any of the produce is left over you'll get a second chance to buy after the Christmas Choir Concert on December 7th..

## Christmas Brochures

Thanks to those who have delivered so many of the leaflets. If you have a spare hour this week and could help to distribute leaflets on any streets not yet covered that would be a great help.

## Synod News

Parish meetings, to explore both the 3rd and 4th themes, will be held Monday 2nd Dec at 7pm, Tuesday 10th Dec at 7pm, Thursday 12th Dec at 2pm (all in the Cottage) and Friday 13th Dec at 7pm in the Parish Hall. Everyone – whether or not you attended a Big Listen meeting in January or a meeting to explore Themes 1 & 2 last month - is welcome to come to one of these 4 meetings. It would help if you could let us know which – ring Vin Allerton on 0161=773 3318 or Eddie Welch on 0161-798 0309.

## Thank You

I'd like to acknowledge a number of individual donations that we have had to the redecoration fund since the posters went up. On behalf of the parish can I express our gratitude to the donors for their kind contributions.

## Manchester Gospel Choir

We're very much looking forward to the arrival of the Choir for our concert in the Church at 7.30pm on Saturday 7th December. After the concert the bar will be open in the Parish Hall and we will draw the Christmas Raffle and have a time to meet and chat. Thanks to all who have supported this event.

## Time is Ticking Away

Do you remember the ticker-tape timer from school? Simple little machines used in physics lessons to calculate speed. Physics was very difficult for me but even I remember and understand the ticker-tape experiment. A long thin strip of paper was attached to a toy car. The car was set rolling down a ramp. As the tape passed through the timer, a bar would hammer down dots on to it and mark it. The bar came down so many times a second - so the fewer the dots and the bigger the spaces between the dots on the tape, the faster the car was moving. Simple - change over distance equalled speed.

Jeremiah knew all about this principle too - the impression of God on his people exposed the spaces in the heart of humanity. The spaces revealed to him the speed of God's coming: time was ticking, getting short. The day of the Lord getting closer.

Because there are spaces in each of us aren't there? And mysteriously, the size and frequency of these spaces show us the closeness of the Lord - the more conscious we are of the space, the nearer God seems. As Paul tells the Thessalonians - when our hearts open up in love, more and more - when we increase the space for others in our lives - the closer and closer God appears to be - until the day of His revealing.

For the ancients, the sun and moon and stars marked out the day and allowed them to measure time. Jesus warns that the regular pattern of things is changing: events of history are intensifying time: they're bringing to a crescendo this sense of space - of what's missing at the heart of humanity: *then they will see the Son of Man* he says. We will see what is at the heart of each one of us and how much we long for God.

It makes sense, then, doesn't it? - not to fill our hearts with other things but to open up a space: not to let them be coarsened - to blunt our attentiveness with all that doesn't matter but to open up a space in our heart for the one thing that does: God. And the more intense our sense of emptiness the more quickly God will come! Paradoxically, that's true of all waiting isn't it - the deeper the desire, the more intense the demand. If all we want is to stand before the Son of Man, then everything else comes into perspective and the words of St Thérèse come true: *In the evening of this life, I desire to appear before You with empty hands, for I do not ask You, Lord, to count my works. All our justice is stained in Your eyes. I wish, then, to be clothed in Your own Justice, and to receive from Your Love the eternal possession of Yourself.*

So Advent is here and the time has come to open up a space in our hearts for others and for God—and to it quickly: the timer is ticking and the Day of the Lord at hand.