

## 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 Aninstead-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, Kathleen Higgins.

**Anniversaries:** David Hindle, Kazimierz Rybicki, Sheila Carr. At this time we remember all our loved ones who have gone before us in faith.

## 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

### Christmas Greetings

A Happy and Holy Christmas to one and all. Every blessing for 2026.

Last Week's collection was: £1015.59 Thank you	£££	The monthly figure for Standing Orders: £1380.00
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	This week the Sacred Heart Lamp will burn for those who are travelling.		This week, the lamp at the crib burns for members of our family who are sick.
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## WEEKLY NEWSLETTER 21ST DECEMBER



## OUR LADY OF GRACE PARISH, PRESTWICH

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## FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

<b>Sunday 21st December</b>	<b>Holy Masses 9am &amp; 11am</b>
<b>Monday 22nd December</b>	<b>Holy Mass 12 noon</b>
<b>Tuesday 23rd December</b>	<b>Holy Mass 12 noon</b>
<b>Wednesday 24th December</b>	<b>First Mass of Christmas 5pm</b>
<b>Christmas Eve</b>	<b>Christmas Midnight Mass 12am</b>
<b>Thursday 25th December</b>	<b>Dawn Mass of Christmas 9am</b>
<b>Christmas Day</b>	<b>Day Mass of Christmas 11am</b>
<b>Friday 26th December</b> St Stephen's Day	<b>Holy Mass 12 noon</b>
<b>Saturday 27th December</b> Holy Family	<b>Sunday Vigil Mass 5pm</b>

## Christmas Services

The First Vigil Mass for Christmas will be at 5pm on Christmas Eve. This is especially for families with young children. The usual Midnight Mass will be preceded by carols but will commence at 12am. On Christmas Day there will be the usual Masses at 9am and 11am.

At some point, I'm hoping to have a bit of time with my family –so on Saturday 27th there will be no morning Mass or Confessions. The first Mass that day will be the Vigil Mass for the Feast of the Holy Family at 5pm.

## Car Parking

Parking has been difficult over the last few weeks and I'm grateful for your patience. The contractors will not be working over the Christmas period so hopefully things will be less pressured. Vinci have been instructed not to allow any of their vehicles to park in the church carpark. Please be aware that usual parking restrictions still apply on Highfield Road and Fairfax Road and that traffic wardens are particularly vigilant in this area.

## Saint Vincent de Paul Society

The St. Vincent de Paul Society would sincerely like to thank all the very kind people who responded to our appeal and generously contributed to our collection last weekend. The collection raised £1340 for which we are extremely grateful. Thank you everyone. We will endeavour to use your money wisely for those in our own area who are in need. Please be aware that all monies placed in the St Anthony's Bread Box are allocated to the SVP.

## Food Bank

The SVP are now taking care of food bank donations for our parish. They can be placed in the basket at the foot of the choir-loft steps. Please **do not remove the basket**. This will be emptied each day. **Any donations of dry and tinned food** will be gratefully received.

## Statue of Our Lady

The statue of Our Lady has been returned by Lewis & Lewis—the head has been restored and the statue fully decorated. When the crib has been taken down the statue will be installed above the altar. The present position is temporary—just so you can see. Please don't touch the statue.

## Rehabilitation

The very first words of Jesus to us at the start of this Season, His opening words in the Gospel on the first weekday of Advent were, “I will come and heal.” He speaks in the imperative voice—He did then to the Centurion, whose servant he cured, He still does now to us. The Lord Jesus remains faithful to His promise—determined to bring God's work to fruition in our body, soul, and spirit. Of course, our immediate reaction to this has also remained the same over the years. We think we can manage on our own, and we feel we are not worthy for Him to enter into us, under our roof.

Just before we receive Holy Communion, every Mass revisits this moment: God's determination to come to us and our stubborn refusal and sense of unworthiness. And we cry out, “say but the Word and my soul shall be healed.” God can do no other but say His Word. Eternally, the creative and healing Word has proceeded from God's mouth and achieved what it was sent to do—the making of us, the healing of our souls.

The Feast of St John of the Cross always falls in Advent. John died on the 14th December. This day marks the end of his earthly journey, the day he entered the Father's house, and we keep this day as a celebration of the Saint's union with God. It's fitting that this is always an Advent day because John's whole spiritual journey to complete union was an Advent quest. In fact, the 14th December wasn't the first time John of the Cross entered the Father's house. It wasn't the first time he achieved union with God. From start to finish, his whole life was an Advent way of healing.

In the *Spiritual Canticle* he sings of this journey. He speaks of God's absence and of how, in His mercy, God has wounded us and made us feel our distance from Him—only so He can come to us completely and make us whole. John understands our yearning for God as a sickness that can only be cured by the complete presence of the Beloved. “Oh! Who can heal me? Give me at once Yourself. Send me no more a messenger who cannot tell me what I wish,” he says.

On the Fourth Sunday of Advent, the Gospel always speaks of a healing rehabilitation—of the dispelling of fear and a coming home, an entering of the house. Joseph receives the Angel's message to take Mary under his roof as his wife. With her, he is given the privilege to *tantum dic Verbo*—to say but the Word, to name Jesus—the One who began this Season determined to heal us, the One Who will come to save His people from their sins.

St John of the Cross said something beautiful about all this: “In giving us His Son, His only Word, God spoke everything to us at once in this one Word—and he has nothing more to say.” In these last days, “say but the Word and my soul shall be healed,” could be our prayer.