



OUR LADY OF GRACE PARISH, PRESTWICH

PARISH PRIEST Fr. PHILIP CALDWELL

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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: Maria Bligh, Kathleen Davison, Joe Fitzpatrick, John Doheny.

Anniversaries: Ambrose Kirwan, Jack Heavy, Syd Wilson, Geoff Daley, John McManus, Tim Conhenney, Lillie Cooper, Makin and Towey Families, Anne Johnson, .

WISDOM FROM THE SAINTS

“A good deed is never lost; he who sows courtesy reaps friendship and he who plants kindness gathers love.”

St Basil

“Since with all my soul I beheld the face of my God—therefore all the beauty of his form is seen in me.”

St Gregory .



“The home of Nazareth is the school where we begin to understand the life of Jesus—the school of the Gospel. How gladly would I become a child again and go to school once more in this humble and sublime school of Nazareth: close to Mary, I wish I could make a fresh start at learning the science of life.”
Pope St Paul VI



Last Week’s collection was: £1090.98. Thank you

£££

The monthly figure for Standing Orders: £1366.00

The Christmas Collection totalled £2325.67 Thank you.



This week, the Sacred Heart Lamp burns for an increase in vocations.



This week, Our Lady’s Lamp burns for all families.

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY

Sunday 31st December

Holy Masses 9am & 11am

New Year’s Eve

Monday 1st January

Holy Mass 12 noon

Mary the Mother of God

Tuesday 2nd January

Holy Mass 12 noon

Ss Basil and Gregory

Wednesday 3rd January

Holy Mass 12 noon

The Most Holy Name of Jesus

Thursday 4th January

Holy Mass 12 noon

Friday 5th January

Holy Mass 12 noon

Saturday 6th January

Exposition 11.30am-1pm
Confessions 11.40am-12.50pm, 4-4.40pm
Holy Mass 11am Vigil 5pm

The Big Listen

The Big Listen. We have arranged 3 parish meetings for the Big Listen, the first stage of the Salford Diocesan Synod, to be held in early January. These are:

- Thursday evening, 4th January, 7pm to 9pm in the Parish Hall,
- Friday evening, 5th January, 7pm to 9pm in the Parish Hall, and
- Tuesday evening, 9th January, 7pm to 9pm in the Cottage.

Everyone in the parish – no matter your age, and whether or not you filled in a questionnaire – is welcome to attend one of these meetings.

There is no preparation needed before the meeting, but if you would like further information about the Synod, there are details on the Diocesan website: www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk.

It would help us if you could let us know which meeting you would like to attend; telephone Vin Allerton on 0161-773 3318, text him on 07305 737900 or email him at vinallerton@gmail.com

Baptism Meeting

Please note that there will be no Baptism Meeting in the month of January. The next meeting for those who would like to have their child baptised at Our Lady of Grace is Wednesday 6th February at 7.30pm in the Hall.

Crib Figures

I'm very grateful to Fr George Henwood and the Parish of St Gerard Majella, Bristol for kindly donating a set of crib figures to us. Fr George has overseen the closure of nearby Holy Cross Parish, Bristol and was pleased that these figures have a good home. The figures that were used here previously were more suitable for children and have been welcomed by Mrs Casey for use at Our Lady of Grace Primary School.

YCW

Thanks to the group in Bury, which included some of our own young people, around 1000 meals were made and distributed on Christmas Day. It's a tonic to see young people putting their faith into action in this way. Thanks again for your financial support which made this good work possible.

Thanks

Finally, thanks to everyone who helped make our Christmas celebrations such beautiful expressions of faith: all those who attended, cleaners, musicians and church helpers. And thanks for the very generous collections too!

Counting our Blessings

Counting is a feature of life at this time of year: part and parcel of our Christmas and New Year habits. Whether we were counting up who'd be there for Christmas dinner, parcels under the tree—or We're now counting up the years or the seconds down to midnight; now's the time for counting.

But the Christmas story and today's feast in particular, teaches us that there are ways of doing this. The Christmas story begins with Caesar Augustus declaring a count: a census of the whole world. Such was the sense he had of himself and his importance. Very different to Abram, who, in his poverty and humility, is told "look up to heaven and count the number of the stars":- A sign of the inheritance that God will give.

The first lesson of Christmas, then, is that we must only ever count in the context of the family, the family of faith: count the blessings of our heavenly Father to us and add them up to his glory and not our own. What counts in faith is quite different to what counts in the world: Abraham, the father of our faith family, teaches us this. Genesis says clearly: "Abram put his faith in the Lord, who counted this as making him justified." What makes us right with God is the realization that everything—even our breath—comes from him. Counting in faith—is to know that we count on God for everything—and to number everything as a blessing.

Abraham isn't the only one to show us how to count our blessings at Christmas time. Mary and Joseph didn't count on their two turtledoves as making them right before God. But in their poverty they wondered at God's goodness and pondered on it in their hearts:— They counted on the Child, recognising him as the one blessing for many. These holy people knew that they had nothing of their own that would make them worthy in God's sight; except the child they'd been given: that's why they went up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.

And Simeon and Anna teach us something of how to count . They, too, show us something of when and where and how. As he counts his blessings and the blessings of all the nations, Simeon's first word is "Now," "Now, let your servant go in peace". To ponder on the blessings of the Lord—to look back over the years and calculate God's goodness to us, brings a peace to our present moment, now. That's when to count, now. And how ... in silent wonder. Joseph, Mary and Anna are caught in the silence of wonder. And they do this in the Temple—they ponder in the temple of their hearts.

This Christmas and New Year, let's decide to do our counting in the context of our family. We're justified in doing this: In adding up all the blessings of God to us in Christ and counting on Him alone.