

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, Stephen King Dan McCormack and Patrick Horner.

PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR THE DEAD

Recently Deceased: Anne Minnett, Margaret Lawton, Gerry O’Rorke, John Smith, Peter Kirkman, Maureen Kelly, George Smyth.

Anniversaries: Bill and Mary O’Rourke, Jack Heavey, Mary Machin, Peter Machin, Maria Bligh, Erroll.

A POEM FOR EPIPHANY

When I heard the learn’d astronomer,
 When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns before me,
 When I was shown the charts and diagrams, to add, divide, and measure them,
 When, I, sitting, heard the astronomer,
 Where he lectured with much applause in the lecture-room,
 How soon, unaccountable, I became tired and sick,
 Till rising and gliding out, I wander’d off by myself,
 In the mystical, moist, night-air and from time to time,
 Look’d up in perfect silence at the stars.

Walt Whitman



	Last Week’s collection was: £1018.23 Thank you	£££	The monthly figure for Standing Orders: £1380.00
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	This week, the Sacred Heart Lamp burns for those who are sick..		This week, the lamp in the stable burns before the Holy Family for all returning to school.
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OUR LADY OF GRACE PARISH, PRESTWICH

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EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

Sunday 5th January	Holy Masses 9am & 11am
Monday 6th January	Holy Mass 12 noon
Tuesday 7th January	Holy Mass 12 noon
Wednesday 8th January	Holy Mass 12 noon
Thursday 9th January	Holy Mass 12 noon
Friday 10th January	Holy Mass 12 noon
Saturday 11th January	Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament Confessions 11.40am-12.50pm, 4-4.40pm Holy Mass 11am Vigil 5pm

2025 Jubilee Year of Hope

Pope Francis has designated 2025 as a Jubilee Year of Hope. All of us are invited to open the door of hope in our hearts and to see this year as a gateway to many blessings. In our own Diocese, five churches have been designated as local places of pilgrimage: St Mary's Bamber Bridge, St Mary's Burnley, St Alban's Blackburn, Schoenstatt Shrine Kearsley, St Peter's Stonyhurst and St Mary's (The Hidden Gem) Manchester. For Mass times and opportunities to visit, see the diocesan website.

Collections

You'll be pleased to know that the collection over Christmas amounted to £3,579.14. Thank you for your continued generosity to the parish. The special collection for the Caritas/YCW Christmas Lunch appeal, taken on the Fourth Sunday of Advent, raised £1797.00. The YCW and Caritas organisers are very grateful for your help. Thank you.

Dona Digital Collection Plate

We have invested in a digital collection plate which will allow people to make their offering with a bank card. The terminal has been installed at the back of the church and is now operational. If you want to register your card so that your donations are gift aided please **first** make a donation through the website link: <https://donate.mydona.com/our-lady-of-grace-prestwich> As you make this donation you will be asked if you wish to register the card for Gift Aid. If you do this all subsequent donations made in the church with that card will be automatically gift aided.

January Quiz and Bingo Night

On Friday 17th January 2025 there will be a Parish Quiz and Bingo Night in the Parish Hall. Tickets are available after Mass and from the House - £2.

Columban Missionaries Appeal

Each year, the Diocese choose a Missionary order and allows them to make an appeal in the parishes. This year, the Columban Missionaries are making the appeal in Salford and we have been given the date of the 25th and 26th of January. That weekend a Columban Father will celebrate the Masses here and speak about their work in Asia, the Pacific and South America.

Herod's Pig and God's Sons

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we were only known for our gifts? Marvellous, if people only saw in us and spoke of us according to our strengths and good points - our talents and our best selves? How affirming would it be if all our faults and foibles were ignored and forgotten?

Funny, because when we think of the Magi, that *is* all we know of them: of their gifts and their giftedness: - That they were intelligent and ingenious in setting out and that they showed creativity and perseverance in reaching their goal from afar, from the East. In fact, the Gospel does not even say that they were kings. Neither does it tell us that they were three nor that, necessarily, they were men - just that they were wise persons in the plural - Magi - and that they brought gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. In the Eastern Churches, many hold that there were twelve Magi—we'd have to get a bigger crib! And Matthew himself, tells us elsewhere in his Gospel, that on Judgement Day—when all is ultimately revealed—the Queen of the South will rise up and come with her three gifts - “for there is something greater than Solomon here”. So it's not the Kings but their gifts and their giftedness that are recorded in the Word of God.

We shouldn't really be surprised at this, though, should we? According to that Word, the same is true of each of us, too. In many places in the Scriptures, that same Word says: God does not mark our guilt, keeps no record of wrong, has thrown our iniquities behind his back, and trampled all our sins to the bottom of the sea! God only sees our giftedness and our gifts - God only sees and loves in us, what God sees and loves in his own Son: who is God's gift to us. That is what today's Epiphany is really about - and all who are wise recognise it!

The Emperor, Caesar Augustus, said he'd rather be Herod's pig than Herod's son. A weak and insecure King, Herod didn't see the possibility for good, didn't see gifts and giftedness in others but only trouble and threat. He didn't only murder all the Hebrew boys but at least two of his own sons - lest his kingdom be lost or divided. Hence, it was better to be Herod's pig than his son.

And yet, so that God's kingdom might come in all its fullness, God gave us, in Christ, the gifts and giftedness we need to be like God - heirs to his kingdom. The mystery of God's gift of grace to us in Christ is revealed today - to the Magi and to us all: that each one of us is a child of the promise and a co-heir with Christ. Like the Magi, today, we behold the glory of God, shining on the face of Jesus - on a human face like ours - so that today and for ever, our faces may reflect that light in a way that means God only sees our goodness. And if that's all God can see in us - can't we try to see it too?