

## The 'Year of Prayer'

2023-24 has been designated the Year of Prayer by Pope Francis, with a particular emphasis on the *Our Father*. It will help us prepare for the Jubilee Year "Pilgrims of Hope". It presents our Church with a significant opportunity to revisit the basics of prayer, and for us to become even more a people of prayer.

Someone once said that 'prayer doesn't help our relationship with God, prayer IS our relationship with God!' So when we become more devoted to prayer, we are building up that Divine friendship. Being Pilgrims of Hope means that we should always be growing in our love of prayer on our journey of Faith. But the Year of Prayer also asks us to consider how we might help others to pray, so that they too can experience a personal encounter with the risen Jesus.

## Sunday Afternoon Advent Prayer

*All are welcome to take part in times of quiet prayer on the afternoons of the first 3 Sundays of Advent.*

Come to the church at 5.30pm for a time of quiet prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, 'fed' by the reading from Isaiah from today's Mass. After Benediction come to the Benedict Room for coffee and cake where we will watch a brief part of a resource being promoted by the Diocese for use in the *Year of Prayer* groups to explore the themes of Forgiveness, Healing and Mission. And then a chance to share thoughts on the scripture and the video. The whole thing should last about an hour...

## A legend from the Talmud \*

It is told that when the Almighty Lord proclaimed to Moses his eternal word, He in a vision showed to him likewise the treasures that lie stored in Paradise.

And at each one in turn the heavenly voice spake: "This the treasure is, that shall rejoice his soul who freely giveth alms, and here his portion is who dries the orphan's tear."

Thus one by one were all to him made known, until unnamed remained but one alone. then Moses said: "I pray thee, what is this?" And answer made the Lord Most High: It is the treasure of my mercy, freely given to those who else were treasureless in heaven."

\* The Talmud is a principal book of Jewish lore and law, compiled between 3rd and 6th Centuries.

## Pope Francis: Teaching on Prayer

In addition to regular materials related to the Year of Prayer being provided in the newsletter or through House Groups, there will be a weekly post on the parish Blog (address on Page 1, and if you 'follow' the Blog the post will be sent directly to your email box)

This post is taken largely from Pope Francis recent weekly Catechesis on Prayer, and is also linked to readings at Mass on that particular Sunday. This resource has been prepared by Fr Rob Taylerson, Spiritual Director at Oscott College.

## Retrouvaille – Do you need help in your marriage?

Retrouvaille has helped many couples find new hope, nourishment and growth in their marriages. If you want to uncover or reawaken the love, trust and commitment that brought you together and work through difficult times in your marriage contact Retrouvaille confidential for more information about our 2024 programmes. There is no group therapy or group work. Their next programme commences with a Virtual weekend on 8 - 11 February 2024 or there is a Face to Face weekend in Welwyn Garden City on 14-16 June 2024. Call or text 07887 296983 or 07973 380443, email [retrouvailleukinfo@gmail.com](mailto:retrouvailleukinfo@gmail.com) - or visit [www.retrouvaille.org.uk](http://www.retrouvaille.org.uk)

## How to get the MOST from the Sacrament of Penance

A Sacrament that finds its ultimate meaning not in our confession our sins but in our fresh experience of the power of God's love and mercy, which sets us free from sin...

### Why go to Confession?

Because we **need** to be loved better...

### When should we go to Confession ?

The Church says Catholics **must** go to confession when we have committed sin that utterly contradicts the life we are called to: sins such as murder, adultery, and the like.

Thankfully these sins are rare, and indeed we may never commit them. But all of us will be responsible for things we are sorry about. They may be major things, or – as these things go – relatively minor, but about which we feel know shame or sorrow. We can try to ignore these things; tell ourselves they don't matter; that other people do worse things. But when we turn our heart and mind to the Lord – for example when preparing at Christmas and Easter to celebrate his saving love – we hear again the call to repent of our sins and come closer to him to benefit more fully from his love, not least through the Sacrament of Penance.

In preparing for the Sacrament we are encouraged to spend time with a passage of scripture that helps us wonder at and renew confidence in God's healing love - and his love for each one of us. And when we come to celebrate the Sacrament, it is truly celebration for it is a true meeting with him, and enjoying the gift of salvation that frees us from sin and sorts us up for our next steps on the journey of life.



## St Nicholas Catholic Church, Boldmere

**Address:** 243 Jockey Rd., Boldmere, Sutton Coldfield, B73 5US

**Website:** [www.stnicholasboldmere.co.uk](http://www.stnicholasboldmere.co.uk)

**E-mail:** [stnicholas.boldmere@rcaob.org.uk](mailto:stnicholas.boldmere@rcaob.org.uk) **Telephone:** 0121 354 1763

**Parish Blog:** [www.stnicholasboldmere.wordpress.com](http://www.stnicholasboldmere.wordpress.com)

**Parish Priest:** Fr Allen Morris **Deacon:** Rev John Garvey

*Our Parish is part of the Archdiocese of Birmingham: Registered Charity No. 234216*

## DECEMBER 2023: PARISH MASSES

Day	Time	Notes
Sa 16	6pm	Third Sunday of Advent
Su 17	9am	
	11am	Decsd members of the Marsland family (W)
		Joseph and Anna Phan RIP (Nguyen)
		For the parish
M 18	10am	Dec'd of Barron and Delap families
T 19	10am	Elizabeth Middleton RIP (Harrington)
W 20	10am	ints Kathleen Dockery (Kenny)
Th 21		
F 22	7pm	Decsd family of Teresa Leese
Sa 23	6pm	4th Sunday of Advent
	10am	
		Les, Cecilia and dcsd of the Broom family (W)
		For the parish
Su 24	3pm	Christmas Day: Feast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ
	6pm	
	9pm	
		Janina Mikula Ints
		Private Intention
		For the parish
M 25	9am	For the parish
	11am	Bridget Broom RIP (Broom)

**Anointing of the Sick:** Next celebration is 26th January at 11am

**Sacrament of Confession:** Friday 18.30-18.55; 19.30 (after Mass), until 20.00; and Sat 5.30-5.45 — and by appointment

**Please pray for those who are sick** including Theresa Monteiro; Craig Brooks, Paul Craig, Fr Michael Ho, Brenda Davies; Stephen Burke; Lesley Devlin & Jean Lawlor. **Please pray** for Jeremy Foster; Michael Hodgetts, Tom Hempenstall, Bernie Morton, Tess Lawrence, Teresa Keane, Patricia Bligh, Christine O'Reilly, Peter Becque and all others whose anniversary at this time.

### RESOURCES FOR PRAYER.

1. Parish prayer on Zoom (links on parish website homepage)  
**Morning Prayer:** Mon to Sat at 8.30am; **Rosary** Mon at 7pm.
2. Readings of the day and much more at [Universalis.com](http://Universalis.com)

**WEEKDAY SOCIAL.** Tuesdays after 10am Mass. All are welcome.

**PARISH CAR PARK** Free parking for one hour is available for anyone at anytime in our carpark. Automatic free parking permits are issued to cover all parking on **Saturdays** from 5.30pm to 7.30pm; on **Sundays** from 8am to 2pm; on **Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays** from 9.30am to 11.30am and **Fridays** from 6.30pm to 8.30pm. *At other times, if on site for parish meetings and the like - to park for more than 1 hour, please scan the QR poster in the church or Benedict Room to extend your 'free' parking time.*

The Parish operates in accordance with Statutory **Safeguarding** Guidance and the National and Archdiocesan policies & procedures at all times. Our Parish Safeguarding Representative is Mary Rose. She can be contacted at: [sg.stnicholas.boldmere@rcaob.org.uk](mailto:sg.stnicholas.boldmere@rcaob.org.uk) Alternatively the Diocesan Safeguarding team can be contacted on 0121 230 6240 or [safeguarding@rcaob.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@rcaob.org.uk)

**ADVENT PENITENTIAL LITURGY FOR CATHOLIC SUTTON COLDFIELD.** *Tuesday 19th December, 7pm here at St Nicholas. (nb parking restrictions lifted between 6 and 10pm). Homily by Fr Michael Dolman - Rector of Oscott College, and participation of priests from all Catholic Sutton Coldfield parishes.*

Opportunities for individual confession (**in additional to regular parish provision**) are offered at **Holy Cross:** Advent Mondays 2-2.30pm; **Holy Trinity:** Tuesdays of Advent 10.30-11 am; **St Nicholas:** Wednesdays of Advent 9.15 to 9.50am



## Our Christmas Masses ...

Our 3pm and 6pm Masses on 24<sup>th</sup> December are prepared with our youngest children in mind.

Thank you to youngsters from the parish who will be telling the Christmas story at these Masses.

To help make these Masses even more memorable – and fun! – all children are invited to come to Mass dressed as their favourite characters from the Nativity story (Indeed everyone coming is invited to do the same. Make it a family thing!) Some simple guides to help prepare these costumes are available on our parish blog.

[www.stnicholasboldmere.wordpress.com](http://www.stnicholasboldmere.wordpress.com)

## Who might you bring to Mass at Christmas?

Perhaps you have an elderly or infirm neighbour who would welcome a lift to church on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day?

Maybe you have a friend or family neighbour who has drifted away from coming to Mass? They might respond positively to an invitation to come with you at Christmas...

What a great Christmas gift to share with others? And it is a gift that doesn't cost anything. And doesn't need wrapping up!

## The Introductory Rites

### Opening Song

Word we long for, *Alleluia*,  
Word we thirst for. *Maranatha!*

Key of David, *Alleluia*,  
Son of Mary, *Maranatha!*

Promised Saviour, *Alleluia*,  
True Messiah, *Maranatha!*

Cry of prophets, *Alleluia*,  
Hope of ages, *Maranatha!*

Light of nations, *Alleluia*,  
Light in darkness, *Maranatha!*

Risen Saviour, *Alleluia*,  
Lord of glory, *Maranatha!*

You we long for, *Alleluia*,  
You we thirst for, *Maranatha!*

Here among us, *Alleluia*,  
Living in us, *Maranatha!*

## The Liturgy of the Word

### Isaiah 61:1-2,10-11

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me,  
for the Lord has anointed me.  
He has sent me to bring good news to the poor,  
to bind up hearts that are broken;  
to proclaim liberty to captives,  
freedom to those in prison;  
to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord.

'I exult for joy in the Lord,  
my soul rejoices in my God,  
for he has clothed me in the garments of salvation,  
he has wrapped me in the cloak of integrity,  
like a bridegroom wearing his wreath,  
like a bride adorned in her jewels.

'For as the earth makes fresh things grow,  
as a garden makes seeds spring up,  
so will the Lord make both integrity and praise  
spring up in the sight of the nations.'

### Luke 1:46-50,53-54



My soul glorifies the Lord,  
my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour.  
He looks on his servant in her nothingness;  
henceforth all ages will call me blessed.

The Almighty works marvels for me.  
Holy his name!  
His mercy is from age to age,  
on those who fear him.

He fills the starving with good things,  
sends the rich away empty.  
He protects Israel, his servant,  
remembering his mercy.

## 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

Be happy at all times; pray constantly; and for all things give thanks to God, because this is what God expects you to do in Christ Jesus.

Never try to suppress the Spirit or treat the gift of prophecy with contempt; think before you do anything – hold on to what is good and avoid every form of evil.

May the God of peace make you perfect and holy; and may you all be kept safe and blameless, spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has called you and he will not fail you.

## Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! The spirit of the Lord has been given to me. He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor. Alleluia!

## John 1:6-8,19-28

A man came, sent by God. His name was John. He came as a witness, as a witness to speak for the light, so that everyone might believe through him. He was not the light, only a witness to speak for the light.

This is how John appeared as a witness. When the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' he not only declared, but he declared quite openly, 'I am not the Christ.' 'Well then,' they asked 'are you Elijah?' 'I am not' he said. 'Are you the Prophet?' He answered, 'No.' So they said to him, 'Who are you? We must take back an answer to those who sent us. What have you to say about yourself?' So John said, 'I am, as Isaiah prophesied: 'a voice that cries in the wilderness: Make a straight way for the Lord.'

Now these men had been sent by the Pharisees, and they put this further question to him, 'Why are you baptising if you are not the Christ, and not Elijah, and not the prophet?' John replied, 'I baptise with water; but there stands among you – unknown to you – the one who is coming after me; and I am not fit to undo his sandal-strap.' This happened at Bethany, on the far side of the Jordan, where John was baptising.

## Homily

### The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth,  
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died and was buried;  
he descended into hell;  
on the third day he rose again from the dead;  
he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand  
of God the Father almighty;  
from there he will come to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

## Prayer of the Faithful

All: Through our lives and by our prayers,  
your kingdom come.

## The Liturgy of the Eucharist

**The Offertory** *NB Our next collections for the Bethany Food Bank are today and 7th January.*

On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry  
announces that the Lord is nigh.  
come then and harken, for he brings  
glad tidings from the King of kings!

Then cleansed be every Christian breath:  
And furnished for so great a guest!  
Yes let us each our heart prepare  
for Christ to come and enter there.

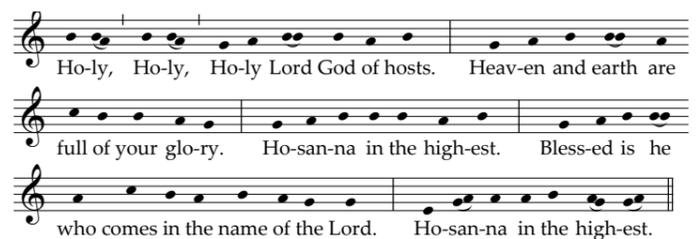
For thou art our salvation, Lord,  
our refuge and our great reward.  
Without thy grace our souls must fade,  
and wither like a flower decayed.

Stretch forth thy hand, to heal our sore,  
and make us rise to fall no more.  
Once more upon thy people shine  
and fill the world with love divine.

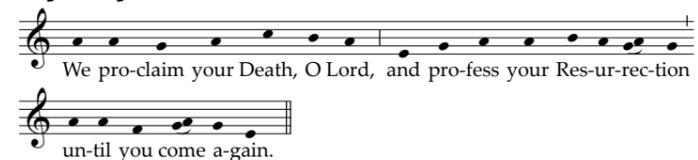
All praise, eternal Son to thee  
whose advent sets thy people free,  
whom, with the Father we adore,  
and Holy Ghost for evermore.

## The Eucharistic Prayer

### Sanctus



### Mystery of faith



## The Communion Rite

### The Lord's Prayer

### Communion thanksgiving

O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
and ransom captive Israel,  
that mourns in lonely exile here,  
until the Son of God appear.

*Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.*

O come, thou Dayspring, come and cheer  
our spirits by thine advent here;  
disperse the gloomy clouds of night,  
and death's dark shadows put to flight.

O come, thou Key of David, come  
and open wide our heavenly home;  
make safe the way that leads on high  
and close the path to misery.

## Prayer after Communion

## Concluding Rites

## KEEPING ADVENT AT HOME

In its present form the custom of displaying figures depicting the birth of Jesus Christ owes its origin to Saint Francis of Assisi who made the Christmas crèche or manger for Christmas eve of 1223.

Family cribs can be put up at any time in Advent, of course. But it is traditional to wait until after attending Christmas Mass before placing the figure of Jesus in the scene.

As in our parish church, many people like to populate their crib scene gradually during Advent. It can help focus us on Advent as a time of preparation, and also add a little fun to the whole thing. The last figures to be added are the wise men, arriving on January 6<sup>th</sup>, the feast of Epiphany.

The prayer of blessing offered here may be used at any time. Before saying the prayer you or another member of the family could read the story of the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. Luke 2:1-8

**G**od of every nation and people,  
from the very beginning of creation  
you have made manifest your love:  
when our need for a Saviour was great  
you sent your Son to be born of the Virgin Mary.  
To our lives he brings joy and peace,  
justice, mercy, and love.

Lord, bless all who look upon this manger;  
may it remind us of the humble birth of Jesus,  
and raise up our thought to him,  
who is God-with-us and Saviour of all,  
and who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.



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