

## Some prompts as we prepare for Confession and reconciliation

Why is it that it is often easier for us to confess our sins to God than to a brother? God is holy and sinless, He is a just judge of evil and the enemy of all disobedience. But a brother is sinful as we are. He knows from his own experience the dark night of secret sin. Why should we not find it easier to go to a brother than to the holy God? But if we do, we must ask ourselves whether we have not often been deceiving ourselves with our confession of sin to God, whether we have not rather been confessing our sins to ourselves and also granting ourselves absolution...

And is not the reason perhaps for our countless relapses and the feebleness of our Christian obedience to be found precisely in the fact that we are living on self-forgiveness and not a real forgiveness? Self-forgiveness can never lead to a breach with sin: this can be accomplished only by the judging and pardoning Word of God itself.

Who can give us the certainty that, in the confession and the forgiveness of our sins, we are not dealing with ourselves but with the living God? God gives us this certainty through our brother. Our brother breaks the circle of self-deception. A man who confesses his sins in the presence of a brother knows that he is no longer alone with himself; he experiences the presence of God in the reality of the other person.

*Dietrich Bonhoeffer*

Happy the pardoned, whose sin is cancelled, in whom God finds no evil, no deceit.

While I hid my sin, my bones grew weak from endless groaning.

Day and night, under the weight of your hand, my strength withered as in a summer drought.

Then I stopped hiding my sin and spoke out, 'God, I confess my wrong.' And you pardoned me.

No wonder the faithful pray to you in danger! Even a sudden flood will never touch them.

You, my shelter, you save me from ruin. You encircle me with songs of freedom.

*Psalm 32:2-7*

**Tues 21st December Parish Advent Reconciliation Service at 7pm**

*Details of other reconciliation services locally are posted in the porch and parish & deanery blogs*

### Walking Together and looking forward

There are many things people would like to see happen in our parish. None of them are difficult things - but all of them require people coming forward ready to help, if they are to take place.

Three of the things most often mentioned are

- **Children's Liturgy.** We already have a few volunteers but need three or four more to help meet our safeguarding requirements. It would simply involve helping watch over the group while the leaders lead the session.
- **Tea and coffee** after Sunday Mass, and after our Tuesday morning Mass. As mentioned last week, we need volunteers to staff sessions and to organise the project.
- **Parents and toddlers Group** It is hope to start a group meeting in the Newman Centre on Monday mornings. Before we start looking for people outside the parish to run a group, are there any parishioners who are qualified and who would be interested in a paid post?

Often those who would most benefit from these things are people who are not in a position to help run them, at least not at the moment. Anyone willing to take part for the good of others, as an act of Christian service to our community?

### Preparation for the Baptism of Children

The next course of preparation for parents who wish for their children to be baptised takes place after Christmas.

It begins at 12noon on Saturday 15th January, with a Zoom meeting for parents together with Fr Allen.

Those who wish to take part in this course should email Fr Allen as soon as possible to reserve a place.

**Parish Finances:** Gift aiding your offertory donations to the parish greatly help us we balance our parish finances. Gift Aided donations need to be made either by Standing Order or by Gift Aid envelopes, which ever is most convenient for you. *Forms for Gift-Aid Standing Orders and envelopes are available from Fr Allen.*



## St Nicholas Catholic Church, Boldmere

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**Parish Blog:** www.stnicholasboldmere.wordpress.com

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

**Parish Safeguarding:** Mary Rose (0121 354 4730)

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

Everything beyond a certain distance is dark, and yet everything is full of being around us.

This is the darkness, heavy with promises and threats, which the Christian will have to illuminate and animate with the divine presence.

*Pierre Teilhard de Chardin*



### The First Masses of Christmas

24th Dec: Mass at 3pm and 6pm

Mass at 9pm **NB ticketed**

25th Dec: Mass 9am and 11am

26th Dec: Mass 9am and 11am

It is far from clear what the situation will be with COVID come Christmas. However some members of the parish have expressed concern that if the church is overcrowded they will not feel safe to attend. As things stand, the 9pm Mass on Christmas Eve (only) will be ticketed and numbers kept to the safest level. Tickets can be booked at <https://bit.ly/3o2SO8B>

### Keeping us ALL safe

The current expectation of the Bishops' Conference is that those attending Mass wear face-masks and sanitise hands on entering church.

It is important that when gathering in numbers and in enclosed places we take such steps to protect those who are most vulnerable.

Do please continue to use the Lateral Flow tests to check your own infection status - not all who are infected and contagious show symptoms.

**Sadly** — because of the rise in COVID infection (including Omicron) locally, and in St Nicholas School in particular — the nativity dramas planned for our Christmas Eve 3 and 6pm Masses have been cancelled. **ALL children are invited to come dressed as their favourite nativity characters to what will still be specially child-friendly Masses**

### PARISH MASSES DURING THE COMING WEEK

Day	Time	Notes
Sa 18	6pm	For the parish
Su 19	9am	Patrick and Rebecca Keegan RIP
	11am	Nora and Frank Smith RIP (McGrath)
M 20	10am	Frank Fegan RIP (Fegan)
T 21	10am	Ints of Maureen and Arthur (R)
	12.30pm	Funeral Mass of Pat Bligh
W 22	10am	Pat Bligh RD (Burke)
Th 23		
Fr 24	3pm	Ted Brooks RIP (Leese)
	6pm	Christmas Eve Private intention
	9pm	For the parish
Sa 25	9am	Dec'd members of McGee and Drozd families
	11am	Teresa and John Farrelly RIP (Margaret)
Su 26	9am	Holy Family For the parish
	11am	Bridget Quinlisk RIP (Gill)

**Morning Prayer:** Zoom meeting Monday to Fridays at 8.30am

**Lectio:** Zoom meeting, Sund at 4pm; **Rosary:** Zoom meeting, Mon at 7pm

**Sacrament of Confession:** Friday evenings after 7pm Mass until 8pm; and 5-5.30pm on Saturday. (Also by appointment)

**Anointing of the Sick:** Last Friday of month at 11am

**Please pray for parishioners who are sick** including Christina Drozd, Jean Lawlor, Stephen Burke, Brenda Davies, Elizabeth Barker, Lyn Hunt; Joan James; Thomas Stevenson. Please pray for Pat Bligh who has died recently and whose funeral is here on Tuesday 21 Dec at 1230, for Cath Wakeham who has also died recently, and for Tom Hempenstall, Bernie Morton, Tess Lawrence, Teresa Keane, Christine O'Reilly, and all those whose anniversaries occur at this time. **Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, may they rest in peace.**

Who are we, Lord God, that you should come to us? Yet you have visited your people and redeemed us in your Son. As we prepare to celebrate his birth, make our hearts leap for joy at the sound of your Word, and move us by your Spirit to bless your wonderful works.

**The Introductory Rites** bring us together as one, as we prepare ourselves to listen to the Word of God and to celebrate the Eucharist worthily.

#### Opening Song

Word of wisdom, *Alleluia*,  
Come renew us. *Maranatha!*

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!*

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

#### The Penitential Act

##### The Collect

**The Liturgy of the Word** invites us to share in the ongoing dialogue between God and his people. A brief silence after the readings helps us take the word of God to heart and begin a prayerful response to what we have heard.

##### Micah 5:1-4

The Lord says this: But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, the least of the clans of Judah, out of you will be born for me the one who is to rule over Israel; his origin goes back to the distant past, to the days of old.

The Lord is therefore going to abandon them till the time when she who is to give birth gives birth.

Then the remnant of his brothers will come back to the sons of Israel. He will stand and feed his flock with the power of the Lord, with the majesty of the name of his God. They will live secure, for from then on he will extend his power to the ends of the land. He himself will be peace.

##### Psalm 79(80):2-3,15-16,18-19

O shepherd of Israel, hear us,  
shine forth from your cherubim throne.

O Lord, rouse up your might,  
O Lord, come to our help.

God of hosts, turn again, we implore,  
look down from heaven and see.

Visit this vine and protect it,  
the vine your right hand has planted.

May your hand be on the man you have chosen,  
the man you have given your strength.  
And we shall never forsake you again;  
give us life that we may call upon your name.

##### Hebrews 10:5-10

This is what Christ said, on coming into the world: "You who wanted no sacrifice or oblation, prepared a body for me. You took no pleasure in holocausts or sacrifices for sin; then I said, just as I was commanded in the scroll of the book, 'God, here I am! I am coming to obey your will.'"

Notice that he says first: You did not want what the Law lays down as the things to be offered, that is: the sacrifices, the oblations, the holocausts and the sacrifices for sin, and you took no pleasure in them; and then he says: Here I am! I am coming to obey your will. He is abolishing the first sort to replace it with the second. And this will was for us to be made holy by the offering of his body made once and for all by Jesus Christ.

##### Gospel Acclamation

*Alleluia, alleluia!* I am the handmaid of the Lord: let what you have said be done to me. *Alleluia!*

##### Luke 1:39-45

Mary set out and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said, 'Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? For the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.'

##### 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.

##### The Prayer of the Faithful

**The Liturgy of the Eucharist** re-presents the Sacrifice of Christ to the Father, and his gift of life renewed to the Church, for the service of his mission.

##### The Offertory

All that I am, all that I do,  
all that I'll ever have, I offer now to you.  
Take and sanctify these gifts for your honour, Lord.  
Knowing that I love and serve you is enough reward.  
All that I am, all that I do,  
all that I'll ever have I offer now to you.

All that I dream, all that I pray,  
all that I'll ever make, I give to you today.  
Take and sanctify these gifts for your honour, Lord.  
Knowing that I love and serve you is enough reward.  
All that I am, all that I do,  
all that I'll ever have I offer now to you.

Our next monthly collection for the **Bethany Food Bank** will be on 8 and 9 Jan (not the usual first Sunday of the month). In the meantime donations can be made to local foodbanks through local supermarkets.

**The Eucharistic Prayer** is a memorial of praise and thanksgiving for God's work of salvation. The Body and Blood of Christ are made present by the power of the Holy Spirit and we join with Christ in offering Sacrifice to the Father

##### The Preface Dialogue

*Priest:* The Lord be with you.

*People:* **And with your spirit.**

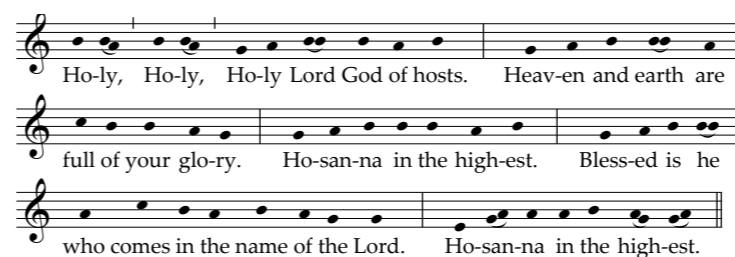
Lift up your hearts.

**We lift them up to the Lord.**

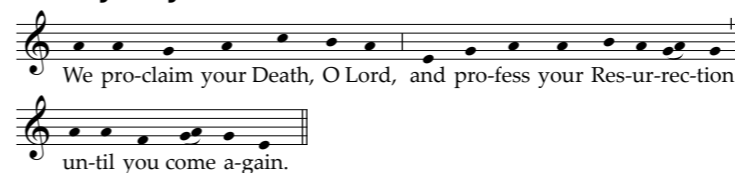
Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right and just.**

##### Sanctus



##### The mystery of faith.



**THE COMMUNION RITE:** The Lord offers reconciliation in and with the invitation to share in the food and drink that is his Body and Blood. Love and mercy are the condition and the fruit of communion in the Lord.

##### The Lord's Prayer

##### Invitation to Communion

##### Song of Thanksgiving

The Angel Gabriel from heaven came,  
his wings as drifted snow, his eyes as flame;  
'All hail,' said he, 'thou lowly maiden Mary,  
most highly favoured lady.' *Gloria!*

'For lo a blessed Mother thou shalt be,  
all generations laud and honour thee,

thy son shall be Emmanuel, by seers foretold;  
most highly favoured lady.' *Gloria!*

Then gentle Mary meekly bowed her head,  
'To me be as it pleaseth God,' she said,  
'My soul shall laud and magnify his holy name':  
most highly favoured lady. *Gloria!*

Of her, Emmanuel, the Christ was born  
in Bethlehem, all on a Christmas mom,  
and Christian folk throughout the world will  
ever say / 'Most highly favoured lady.' *Gloria!*

**The Concluding Rites** send us out to live the love of God. Our mission is to witness to Christ in the world and to bring the Gospel to the poor.

##### Blessing and Dismissal

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##### St Joseph

Amidst everything else that has been going on this year, you could be forgiven for not noticing that Pope Francis invited the Church to keep a Year of St Joseph in 2021.

That Year officially ended on 8<sup>th</sup> December, but it is of course good to ask St Joseph for his prayers at any time.

A Novena of Prayer was prepared for

use earlier this year, for the days leading up to St Joseph's Day. But this too can be used at any time.

A version has been prepared which begins this weekend, and ends the Sunday after Christmas Day - the feast of the Holy Family. It has been posted on our parish blog. The direct link to the post is <https://bit.ly/323jrBU>

The Novena is posted there to encourage Dads to pray to invoke St Joseph's prayer for them as they seek to fulfil their vocation as fathers, and to invoke his protection for their families.

It is a prayer others too might like to pray - especially on behalf of those Dads who are struggling at this time - as surely some will be.