

 Christmas Masses and Services 

Thursday 21 st December	4pm - 8pm	Confessions
Saturday 23 rd December	10.30am- 1pm	Confessions
Christmas Eve 24 th December	10am	English Mass
	6pm	English Mass followed by Christmas Carols
	10pm	Syro-Malabar Mass
25 th December - Christmas Day	10.30am	Holy Mass



Sunday 17th December - Third Sunday of Advent, Cycle B. Gaudete Sunday. The angel Gabriel visits Mary to announce the birth of Jesus.

Sunday 24th December - Fourth Sunday of Advent, Cycle B - Jesus tells John the Baptist of the signs of the kingdom that are being worked through him and praises John as more than a prophet.

Monday 25th December - The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas) Mass at Dawn - The shepherds found Mary and Joseph and the infant in the manger.

Please keep in your prayers all the sick and housebound people of the parish. We continue to pray for Ukraine and its people, for the people of Israel and Palestine and for all the war-torn countries in the world. Let's also pray for all the people that have been affected by climate change and have lost their home and livelihood.

 **Prayer for the Advent Wreath**

Lord, our God, we praise You for Your Son, Jesus Christ,
 for He is Emmanuel, the Hope of all people.
 He is the Wisdom that teaches and guides us.
 He is the Saviour of us all. O Lord,
 let your blessing come upon us
 we light the first (purple) candle of this wreath.
 May the wreath and its light be a sign
 of Christ's promise of salvation.
 May He come quickly and not delay.
 We ask this in His holy name.
 Amen.



	Mother of God Greencoat Road Leicester LE3 6NZ	Parish Priest: Fr Hans Puthiakulangara e-mail: hansps83@gmail.com mob: 07428658756
	 (0116) 287 5232  smogparish@gmail.com www.motherofgodleicester.co.uk	 NRCDT- Registered Charity

Our Schools: Christ the King Primary - 0116 2857261 - www.ckleicester.co.uk/
 English Martyrs' Secondary - 0116 2428880 - www.emschool.co.uk/

Parish Hall Bookings: please contact 07586700914

	Second Sunday of Advent	John the Baptist appears in Judea preaching repentance.
	10th - 17th December 2023	

Sunday 10.12	6.30am 10.30am 4pm	Mass in the Syro- Malabar rite Holy Mass - Andrew Njume & Titus Ebang Sone RIP Holy Mass in the Syro- Malabar rite	The Pope's prayer intentions for December 2023. <i>For persons with disabilities. We pray that people living with disabilities may be at the centre of attention in society, and that institutions may offer inclusive programs which value their active participation.</i>
Monday 11.12	10am	Mrs Eve McEaney RIP Funeral Mass	
Tuesday 12.12	9.30am 10am	Silent Adoration Holy Mass	
Wednesday 13.12	5.30pm 6pm	Silent Adoration Holy Mass - St. Lucy, virgin and martyr.	
Thursday 14.12	9.30am 10am	Silent Adoration Holy Mass - St. John of the Cross, priest & doctor	
Friday 15.12	9.30am 10am	Silent Adoration Holy Mass	
Saturday 16.12	9.30am 10am	Silent Adoration Holy Mass	
Sunday 17.12	6.30am 10.30am 4pm	Mass in the Syro- Malabar rite Holy Mass Mick & Kathleen Quinn RIP Mass in the Syro- Malabar rite	

SECOND COLLECTION TODAY FOR POOR AND NEEDY PRISHES.

Cycle of prayer: during Advent and Christmastide we pray for these intentions: Migrants and Refugees, Expectant Mothers.

THE FOUR WEEKS OF ADVENT. During the first two weeks of Advent, we light the first two purple candles. The Third Sunday of Advent is called Gaudete (Rejoice) Sunday. On this day we celebrate that our waiting for the birth of Jesus on Christmas day is almost over. Rose is a liturgical colour that is used to signify joy, so we light the single pink candle on the third Sunday of Advent. Then on the fourth Sunday of Advent, the final purple candle is lit to mark the final week of prayer and penance as we wait expectantly for the soon-coming birth of the King of Kings. In modern day adaptations, the white candle is placed in the middle of the wreath and lit on Christmas Eve. This candle is called the "Christ Candle" and represents the life of Christ. The colour white is for purity—because Christ is our sinless, pure Saviour.

The second candle represents **faith** and is called "Bethlehem's Candle." Micah had foretold that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, which is also the birthplace of King David. The second candle is also purple to symbolism preparation for the coming king.

Background on the Gospel Reading Mark 1:1-8.

John the Baptist preached repentance and baptized the people, in preparation for the one who would baptize with the Holy Spirit.

Today's Gospel is taken from the beginning of Mark. Unlike Luke and Matthew, Mark does not include any details of Jesus' birth. Instead, Mark begins with the appearance of John the Baptist in the desert. On this the Second Sunday of Advent, we are invited to reflect upon the role of John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Jesus and the salvation that he would bring to us.

Mark's description of the appearance of John the Baptist highlights John's continuity with the Jewish prophetic tradition. Mark combines quotations from the Old Testament books of Malachi, Isaiah, and Exodus. Mark's description of John as an ascetic, living in the desert, clothed in camel hair, and eating locusts and wild honey, is reminiscent of the description of the prophet Elijah found in Second Kings. The people of Judea and Jerusalem flock to him, listening to his message of repentance and forgiveness; they also come to him to be baptized. Mark's Gospel is clear, however, that John the Baptist's role is only to prepare the way for another who will come, one who is greater than John.

Many scholars believe that the Gospels reflect the tension that likely existed between followers of John the Baptist and disciples of Jesus. Each of the four Evangelists report on John's preaching and baptizing, and they each emphasize the importance of Jesus' baptism by John. The four Gospels also explain that John was sent to preach in preparation for another. In the Gospel of Luke, the question is raised as to whether John the Baptist was himself the Messiah. Just as in today's Gospel, however, John speaks quite explicitly that the Messiah was to come after him.

In today's Gospel we hear John the Baptist contrast his baptism of repentance with the baptism that Jesus will inaugurate. John says that he has baptized with water, but that the one who is to come will baptize with the Holy Spirit. John's baptism was not yet a Christian baptism, but a preparation for the Sacrament of Baptism through which sins are forgiven and the gift of the Holy Spirit is received.

A REFLECTION FROM POPE FRANCIS FOR THE YEAR OF PRAYER: To God who blesses, we too respond by blessing – God has taught us how to bless and we must bless – through the prayer of praise, of adoration, of thanksgiving. The Catechism writes: “The prayer of blessing is our response to God's gifts: because God blesses, the human heart can in return bless the One who is the source of every blessing” (n. 2626). The diocese is producing a monthly podcast for the Year of Prayer called Encounter Prayer. Each month a different type of prayer will be showcased; this first episode is given by Bishop Patrick who introduces the Year of Prayer, his hopes for it, and shares insights from his own prayer life. The Podcasts can be found on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google Podcasts, Amazon Music and Audible by searching Diocese of Nottingham; they are also on the diocesan website: www.dioceseofnottingham.uk/yearofprayer.

Mass Intentions. To request a Mass please use the envelopes found at the back of the church. Please state if the Mass is for a deceased person, birthday or any special intentions. Thank you. **Please note: If intention is for a living person, they must sign the envelope for permission to print their name on newsletter or intention will be listed as Private Intention and initials of intention.**

300 Club Draw 25th November: £50 J B (280). £25 K O'B (3), B F (163).

CAFOD World Gifts for Christmas. Choose an ethical charity gift this Christmas and make a life-changing difference to people living in poverty. World Gifts are CAFOD's range of virtual charity gifts that will delight your friends and family, but are also a great way of rediscovering what it really means to share the love, peace and joy of Christmas. Each gift you buy comes with a beautifully illustrated gift card for you to pass on to your loved one, which describes the difference it will make to communities living in developing countries. **Please see leaflets in church porch.**

The CAFOD 2023 online Advent calendar of daily prayer and reflection will offer an opportunity to pause, reflect, pray and take action as we prepare for Christmas. <https://cafod.org.uk/Pray/Advent-calendar>.

SCHOOL ADMISSIONS to Catholic Primary Academies (Reception Year). Children born between 01/09/2019 and 31/08/2020. The deadline for submitting your application for a school place is 15th January 2024. Application forms are available on your home Local Authority website. For every Catholic school you apply for if you wish your child to be considered and ranked under a faith criterion you should also complete a supplementary information form, and return this form to the school by the deadline, (forms are available from the LA and the school). You **MUST** also include the supporting evidence as required with this form, eg baptism certificate (photocopies acceptable). Failure to supply the required supporting evidence will mean your child is ranked in a lower criterion which may affect your chance of a place.

Retrouvaille: A Programme for Couples Struggling in their Marriages. Help Your Marriage - Do you feel alone? Are you frustrated or angry with each other? Do you argue ... or have you just stopped talking to each other? Does talking about it only make it worse? Retrouvaille is a programme to support couples who have difficulties in their marriage. It brings a positive focus, new hope and helps nourish and grow your marriage. Tens of thousands of couples headed for divorce have successfully saved their marriages by attending and using the tools provided. The programme helps spouses uncover or re-awaken the love, trust and commitment that originally brought them together. It helps them through difficult times whether they are disillusioned or in deep misery. There is no group therapy or group work. For confidential information about 'Retrouvaille' or to register for the next programme commencing with a Virtual weekend on 8 - 11 February 2024 or a Face to Face weekend in Welwyn Garden City on 14-16 June 2024, call or text 07887 296983 or 07973 380443 or email retrouvailleukinfo@gmail.com - or visit www.retrouvaille.org.uk

Prayer for peace in Israel and Gaza

Let us pray for the many people whose lives have been torn apart by conflict in Gaza and Israel.

We remember especially those who have died, those who are grieving, the injured and those now without food, shelter or medical supplies.

We pray also for those who have the power to bring peace.

May they be touched by a spirit of compassion and kindness.

Lord, hear us.

Our Lady of Palestine, pray for us.