

Please note:

- Holy Water Fonts/Stoops are filled. Please use them.
- Christmas Greeting Cards from Fr. Hans, with Christmas programme are kept at the entrance. Please take one copy.

The fourth candle represents peace and is called the "Angel's Candle." The angels announced that Jesus came to bring peace--He came to bring people close to God and to each other again. This colour is also purple to represent the culmination of love through the Messiah.

From CAFOD: Your latest donation for Family Fast Day was £159. "We are incredibly grateful to you for thinking of us and helping. It's so heart-warming to know we have friends who are there for us when we need it most." Thank you again.

300 Club Draw 17th December: £50 A T (151). £25 D A (194), E P (83).

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.

A Prayer to Prepare My Heart for Christ's Coming

Father, just as You sent John the Baptist to prepare the way for Jesus, help me to clear the path in my heart, too. Show me the distractions in my life that block me from all-out worship of You this Advent.




Lord, I await Your coming! As I celebrate the first Advent --the first coming--I look toward the day where I will see You face to face. I imagine what it will be like. Give me a heart, Lord, that looks for Your coming on a daily basis.

Help me to live my life where I'm constantly seeking Your presence. My offering to You today is my righteous life for I know I am only clean because of Jesus.

Show me today how I need to be refined, purified, forgiven. Give me the strength to ask for forgiveness and to then change my way

~Sarah Martin, from "The Awe & Wonder of Advent: Day 18"



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Parish Hall Bookings: please contact 07586700914			
		Fourth Sunday of Advent 24th – 31st December 2023 The Nativity of the Lord	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.
Sunday 24.12	10.30am 5.45pm 6pm 10pm	Holy Mass - David Collins RIP Christmas Carols English Mass Holy Mass in the Syro- Malabar rite	The Pope's prayer intentions for December 2023. <i>For persons with disabilities.</i> 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.
Monday 25.12	10.30am	Christmas Day Mass - Tom Joseph thanksgiving The shepherds found Mary and Joseph and the infant in the manger.	
Tuesday 26.12	9.30am 10am	Silent Adoration Holy Mass - St. Stephen	
Wednesday 27.12	5.30pm 6pm	Silent Adoration Holy Mass - St. John, apostle and evangelist	
Thursday 28.12	9.30am 10am	Silent Adoration Holy Mass - The Holy Innocent. Martyrs	
Friday 29.12	9.30am 10am	Silent Adoration Holy Mass - St. Thomas of Canterbury (Becket)	
Saturday 30.12	9.30am 10am	Silent Adoration Holy Mass	
Sunday 31.12	6.30am 10.30am 4pm	Holy Mass in the Syro- Malabar rite English Mass - The Holy Family Holy Mass in the Syro- Malabar rite	


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



To all Parishioners and our Supporters, a wish of a very joyful and peaceful Christmas with God's Blessings from Fr. Hans.



 **Christmas Offerings**

This year, Father Hans is asking for the Christmas Offerings to go towards paying for the maintenance of the Hall. Please be generous. Thank you 

Fourth Sunday of Advent Background on the Gospel Reading Luke 1:26-38.

The angel Gabriel visits Mary to announce the birth of Jesus.

This Sunday we read the story of the angel Gabriel's announcement to Mary about the birth of Jesus. This story is found only in Luke's Gospel. On this fourth Sunday of Advent, the liturgy shifts our attention from John the Baptist to Mary, the mother of Jesus. Both John and Mary serve as important figures for our reflection during the season of Advent; they both played instrumental roles in preparing the way for Jesus. Last week we reflected on John the Baptist's announcement that the Savior was among us, although not yet recognized. This week we reflect upon Mary's example of faith and obedience to God, traits which permitted her to receive the angel's message that God's Son would be born as a human person, as one of us.

We are familiar with the story of the Annunciation, and it is fitting that we recall how God announced the birth of Jesus as we make our final preparations for our celebration of the Incarnation. The angel Gabriel visited Mary, a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph. Mary greeted the angel's news with awe and wonder and asked how it could be possible that she could give birth to a child. In his reply, the angel Gabriel announced the seemingly impossible reality: the child to be born would be conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and would be God's own Son. The angel reported to Mary another miracle; her relative Elizabeth was also pregnant despite having been thought to be unable to have a child. Mary's response to the angel, which is called her fiat, is an example of complete faith and obedience to God.

The story of the Annunciation calls to our attention God's wondrous action in human history. God chose a human person to give birth to his Son so that all humanity would know God's salvation. Mary, already full of God's grace, was able to cooperate in this great plan for our salvation. Thus, Jesus was born as one of us, fully human and also fully divine. This is the mystery we prepare to celebrate at Christmas, the mystery of the Incarnation. In the model of Mary, we pray that we will be people of faith who recognize God's saving plan for us and are able to respond with obedience.

Christmas Day Mass Gospel Reflection: John 1:1-18

John announces that in Jesus, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

There are four Masses that are celebrated for the Feast of Christmas and each is given its own set of readings to help us contemplate Christ's birth. The Gospel for the Vigil Mass on Christmas Eve is taken from the beginning of the Gospel of Matthew. The Mass at midnight proclaims the birth of Jesus through the Gospel of Luke. The Mass at dawn on Christmas morning continues the story of the birth of Jesus as found in Luke's Gospel, ending with the shepherds' visit to the infant Jesus. In each of these Gospel readings, we hear portions of the infancy narratives with which we are familiar.

The Gospel for the Christmas Mass during the day is taken from the beginning of John's Gospel, but this part of John's Gospel is not an infancy narrative like those found in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Instead, John's Gospel starts at the very beginning and presents the Creation story as the framework for announcing the Incarnation. John's opening words echo the first verse in the Book of Genesis. This framework invites us to view Jesus' birth from God's perspective. Each of the Gospels makes clear that Jesus' birth was the result of God's initiative. John's Gospel, however, emphasizes that Jesus' birth was the divine intention from the moment of Creation.

As we observe in today's reading, the Gospel of John includes highly philosophical and theological language. One example that particularly stands out in this Gospel is John's repeated references to "the Word" in the opening verse. This expression (logos in the Greek) borrows from a concept found in both Jewish and Greek thought. Jews used this phrase to describe God's action in the Creation story, for example, and in the Wisdom

literature. In Greek thought, the logos was understood as an intermediary between God and humanity. John and others in the early Church adopted this language to describe God's incarnation in Jesus. As the term was used to express the Trinitarian faith of Christians, the Word came to be equated with the Second Person of the Trinity. In this prologue to the Gospel of John, we also hear the main themes that will be developed in his Gospel. These are often presented as dualities: light and dark, truth and falsehood, life and death, and belief and unbelief. We also hear in this prologue a unique aspect of John's Gospel, the theme of testimony. John the Baptist was sent by God to testify to Jesus, the light. Others in this Gospel will also offer testimony about Jesus. The reader is invited to accept this testimony, which bears witness to Jesus, the Son of God. But even more directly, Jesus' action and words will testify to Jesus' identity as God's Incarnate Word.

Thinking about Jesus' birth in these theological and cosmological terms is particularly appropriate as we celebrate the Feast of Christmas in the darkness of winter. At this time, nature itself seems to remind us of the darkness of sin. Into this darkness, in the midst of our sinfulness, God comes to dwell among us. John's Gospel reminds us that through the Incarnation, God saves us from the darkness of sin and makes us his children.

The Year of Prayer... 2024 being the second year of preparation for Jubilee Year 2025. Reflections 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). Very often it happens that we do not pray, we don't feel like praying, or many times we pray like parrots, with the mouth, but our heart is not in it. This is the moment to say to the Spirit: "Come, come Holy Spirit, warm my heart. Come and teach me to pray, teach me to look to the Father, to look to the Son. Teach what the path of faith is like. Teach me how to love and, above all, teach me to have an attitude of hope." 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.

Diocesan Catechist Formation Courses. We have just finished our first pathway (Encounter Catechesis), with 20 catechists/potential catechists really enjoying the course and growing in confidence by the week. Our second pathway will begin at the end of January (Discipleship Catechesis) see below for more information. Discipleship Catechesis - this course is six sessions and is a crash course in the fundamentals of Catholic belief. It is aimed to give you a broad knowledge of Catholic theology and how to present it. Missionary Catechesis - this course is also four sessions and explores whys to advance your parish catechesis, to go beyond sacramental preparation and to adapt catechesis for those with special or additional needs. The cost for Discipleship Catechesis is £50 and Missionary Catechesis is £25, it is normal for parishes to cover the cost of Catechist training so please speak to your parish priest about funding. See our flyer [here](#). Encounter Catechesis will be starting on Wednesday 24th January - 7pm on Zoom. You can sign up or request more information here: [get in touch](#). For more information on the courses please email: adult.format@dioceseofnottingham.uk