

Parish of St Margaret Clitherow

4th Sunday of Advent (B)

21st December 2014



PASTORAL AREA TEAM

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Deacons: Rev. Robert Hewertson & Rev. Anthony Arrowsmith

LITURGICAL CALENDAR

Psalter Week 4
Readings Sunday - 4th Sunday of Advent (B)
Weekdays - 21st to 24th December
& Christmas Season

Today 4th Sunday of Advent (B)
Thursday Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord
Friday Feast of St. Stephen, First Martyr
Saturday Feast of St. John, Apostle & Evangelist
Sunday Feast of the Holy Family (B)



GOSPEL REFLECTION

In today's Gospel, we celebrate the extravagant love of God who freely chose Mary to be the mother of his beloved Son. God's choice of Mary made her "full of grace". If grace is God's gift, Mary was full of God's gifts. She didn't do anything to deserve it. Nobody deserves gifts. Nobody is entitled to favours. Gifts and favours reflect the generosity of the giver, not the worthiness of the receiver. The Gospel does not begin with what Mary does, rather it begins with what God does through Mary, when Mary is chosen to be the mother of God's Son. God's choice of her is not a reward for dedicated work or an answer to her prayers. God's choice is the result of God's freedom to choose Mary from amongst all women. When God chooses Mary, his choice makes her worthy, as his love has made her full of grace. This is reflected in the Magnificat:

*"My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
because he has looked on the lowliness of his handmaid.
Yes, from this day forward, all generations will call me blessed,
for the Almighty has done great things for me."*



The difference between ourselves and Mary is not that Mary was chosen while we are not; rather, it is that she fully responded to be chosen for her role while we sometimes remain hesitant and half-hearted in responding to what God calls us to do. God has chosen ALL of us. St. Paul himself wrote, "God chose us, chose us in Christ, to be holy and spotless and to live through love in his presence." Like Mary, we face God's choice of us and we are challenged to say 'yes', just as Mary did. If we could see ourselves as the result of God's choice, we might be more likely to say 'yes' to God every time. God has chosen every single person here today. He has a role for each one of us. He waits for our choice that puts our freedom at his service. God's word to Mary in today's Gospel is a word of supreme value: "Rejoice, highly favoured". Perhaps we don't really believe that God favours us. Maybe we have reached the stage where we don't think we are worth anything anyway. So today, as we make our final preparations for Christmas, let these words to Mary be our message too: "Rejoice, highly favoured, for I have chosen you to be holy and to live through life in my presence."

Psalms Response I will sing for ever of your love, O Lord.

Gospel Acclamation I am the handmaid of the Lord:
let what you have said be done to me.



**May the love and peace of Christ be with you this Christmas
and throughout the New Year**

Fr Paul, Fr Dave & Deacon Bob



LEIGH PASTORAL AREA

Parish of St Margaret Clitherow

St Ambrose Barlow
Astley
St Gabriel's
Higher Folds
Holy Family
Boothstown
Sacred Heart
Hindsford
St Richard's
Atherton

Parish of St Edmund Arrowsmith

Our Lady of the Rosary
Sacred Heart
St Joseph's
Twelve Apostles
Leigh

Archdiocesan Mission Statement



Taking to heart the last words of the Lord Jesus, we will go into the world to proclaim the Good News to the whole of creation.



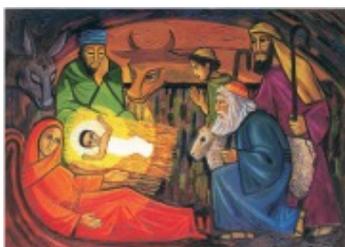
Fourth Week of Advent

Children's Advent Carol Service

The annual children's advent carol service takes place TODAY (Sunday) at 4.00 pm in St Ambrose Barlow Church. Take time out from your busy schedule to find some peace and joy as the children reflect on the true Christmas story. The service will be followed by seasonal refreshments in the church hall.

Festival Carol Service

Festival Carol Service today (Sunday) at 5.00 pm at Holy Family, followed by mince pies and mulled wine.



Christmas Mass Times

Christmas Eve

6.00 pm	St Gabriel's*, St Richard's St Joseph's & XII Apostles
8.00 pm	St Ambrose Barlow
11.30 pm	Holy Family
12.00 am	St Joseph's

Christmas Day

9.00 am	Holy Family*
9.30 am	St Richard's & Sacred Heart
10.00 am	St Joseph's
11.00 am	St Ambrose Barlow & Holy Family*
11.15 am	Our Lady of the Rosary

**Children are invited to bring a home-made birthday card for Jesus to Mass.*

A Christmas Table Prayer

Loving God,
on this Christmas Day
we give thanks that Jesus, your Son,
has come into our world
bringing us gifts of peace and joy.
Bless us as we sit down together
at this table for our Christmas meal.
Bless the food we share,
and help us to remember those who are hungry.
Be with our neighbours and our friends,
all who are lonely, sick or away from home.
We pray that our departed loved ones
may now sit at your table in heaven.
May the joy of this feast
give us strength and light,
now and in the days ahead.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Christmas Mass Intentions

During the Christmas Masses at St Richard's we will be praying for the following people:

John Hall, Charles & Margaret Hurst, James Hurst, Ronnie O'Hara, Terry & Audrey O'Keeffe, Eileen McNulty, Elsie & James Rafferty, Joseph & Dorothy Roberts, Joe Roberts Jnr, Pat Shaw, Danny Smith, Joshua & Winnifred Sandelands, Catherine, Emmett & Terry FitzMaurice.

Crib Offerings

This year's Crib Offerings will be for Christian children in need living in and around Bethlehem and Gaza.



Altar Servers

Altar Servers are invited to renew their commitment at Mass next Sunday – the nearest Sunday to the Feast of St Stephen, the patron saint of altar servers. New servers will be enrolled into the Guild of St Stephen.

Alternative New Year in Church

New Year's Eve Mass

If you would like to welcome in the New Year in church, there will be a Vigil Mass at 11.15 pm on New Year's Eve at Holy Family, followed by the chimes of Big Ben (live), a New Year Blessing, and a drink or two at the back of church.

New Year's Day Mass

The first day of the New Year is the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God. There will be one Mass for the Parish of St Margaret Clitherow at 12.00 noon at Holy Family. All welcome.

PARISH NOTES

Newsletter

Please ensure items for the newsletter are sent in by Wednesday evening. Thank you.

Clergy Addresses

Fr Paul Seddon

St Richard's Presbytery, Mayfield Street, Atherton, Manchester M46 0AQ

Fr Dave Heywood

Holy Family Presbytery, 208 Chaddock Lane, Boothstown, Worsley, Manchester M28 1DN

Finance

The monies for the five church communities of the Parish of St Margaret Clitherow are held in one account. So please make all cheques payable to **St Margaret Clitherow** (Please note the spelling of 'Clitherow'). Thank you.

Pastoral Area Website

www.leighpastoralarea.co.uk

Catholic School Websites

www.st-maryshigh.wigan.sch.uk
www.athertonsacredheart.wigan.sch.uk
www.boothstownhollyfamily.wigan.sch.uk
www.saintambrosebarlow.co.uk
www.saintgabrielsprimary.co.uk
www.saintrichards.wigan.sch.uk

PARISH NEWS

Annual CAFOD Fun Run

The 30th Annual CAFOD Fun Run takes place at Wavertree Park in Liverpool on Saturday 27th December at 1.00 pm. Entry £10 per family or £5 per individual. Full run is 7k, one lap mini run of 3k, plus an alternative route for walkers, wheelchairs and push-chairs. Festive stalls and live jazz music. Please arrive a little earlier to ease congestion at the registration desks.

200 Club

St Ambrose Barlow 200 Club is to start again soon. Steve Cooper will be collecting names this weekend. As usual the 200 Club costs £20 payable in one go, or four payments of £5, or £1 per week. For your money you will be entered into a monthly draw for £100 and £50 - January to April. Then at a free night out in the Parish Hall in April, you could win the £1000 jackpot. See Steve to join or give him a call on 01942 876487.

New Year's Eve Dance

Celebrate the arrival of 2015 with a New Year's Eve Dance with 'Gary Quinn' in the small hall at St Joseph's, Leigh. Tickets £8 (limited number available - it was a sell out last year!) Please bring your own drinks. Free tea, coffee and nibbles. Doors open 7.00 pm until late. For more details, call 01942 792293.

New Year's Eve Party

Back by popular demand, Eddie Robbins and the Jetsons, at St Joseph's Hall, Leigh. Welcome drink, Hot Pot Supper, Free Raffle. Tickets £15 available from Des Cooney (01942 674868) or Parish Office (01942 673517). Doors open at 7.00 pm.

Save your Stamps

Please save the stamps from any Christmas Cards you may receive and hand them in at St Ambrose Barlow to Mary Barton who will send them off in aid of various charities. Likewise if you have any old spectacles or any unwanted wool for knitting into woollen blanket squares for sending abroad.

Dates for your New Diary!

Wednesday 7th January at 7.45 pm: Bring and Buy Bingo at St Ambrose Barlow Hall. Proceeds towards the Senior Citizens Party in March.

Friday 16th January at 7.45 pm: Burns Night at St Ambrose Barlow - including supper and a "wee" dram - £6.50.

A Tweet a Day for Advent from Pope Francis



Sunday: The love of God is not generic. God looks with love upon every man and woman, calling them by name.

Monday: Advent is a journey towards Bethlehem. May we let ourselves be drawn by the light of God made man.

Tuesday: Christmas celebrations are often full of sound. It would be good for us to make room for silence, to hear the voice of Love.

Wednesday: The Lord is coming. May we await him with open hearts!

Thursday: Christ comes among us at Christmas: it is the perfect time for a personal encounter with the Lord.

Friday: Before the Nativity scene, may we pray in a particular way for those suffering persecution for the faith.

Saturday: In the face of the Child Jesus we contemplate the face of God. Come, let us adore him!



Congratulations to both Holy Family and St Gabriel's Catholic Primary Schools who were inspected by Ofsted this term. Both schools were graded 'Good' under the new framework.

Some highlights from St Gabriel's report: "Outstanding leadership ... Leaders, managers and governors ensure high aspirations for each pupil to achieve their best ... Increasingly, teaching is now outstanding ... Pupils are polite and respectful. Their behaviour is good and, at times, outstanding ... Pupils feel safe and happy in school because, they say, 'Staff take care of us' ... The curriculum is vibrant .. As a result pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding."

Highlights from Holy Family's report include: "An ethos of a caring environment within a Christian context is the hallmark of this school. Family by name, family by nature is the key ... The very effective headteacher and deputy headteacher work well together for the benefit of all the pupils ... Pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour make a strong contribution to their learning ... Teaching is good throughout the school. This leads pupils to make good progress and their attainment is rising. The curriculum is interesting and varied... Children have a good start in the early years classroom and thrive in a caring, supportive and stimulating environment."



Full of cold, got the flu?

Please think before coming to church if you're full of cold or flu. If you come to church when you're full of cold, it's highly likely that others will catch your cold or flu. This can be very serious for those parishioners, for example, whose immune systems are low due to treatment for cancer. So, if you're not well, perhaps stay at home and watch Mass on the internet (www.churchservices.tv) or pray quietly in your own way. It's not a sin to miss Mass if you're not well.



Meet Blaise!

While I still hope Jude will come home one day, I've recently adopted another kitten who was abandoned in Salford and desperately in need of a home as the winter weather arrived. She's one of the most friendly cats I've ever had, but ever so naughty! So be warned Holy Family... it's likely she will be climbing the Christmas Tree and knocking all the baubles off one by one. *Fr Dave*

LAST WEEK'S PARISH COLLECTIONS

Offertory Collection

£2188.25

Thank you so much for your generosity

SECOND COLLECTIONS

Today
Next Weekend

CAFOD Fun Run
No collection

PARISH MASS TIMES & INTENTIONS

WEEK BEGINNING 21st December	HOLY FAMILY	ST AMBROSE BARLOW	ST GABRIEL'S	ST RICHARD'S
SUNDAY	9.00 am Eileen Coates 11.00 am Christopher Tickle 5.00 pm Festival Carol Service	11.00 am Bernard Hughes	(Sat) 6.00 pm Edna Unsworth	(Sat) 6.00 pm Pat Shaw 9.30 am Alfred Jackson 6.30 pm Edna Bennett
MONDAY	<i>9.00 am Mass at St Joseph's, Leigh</i>			
TUESDAY		9.15 am James Houten		Mass at St. Ambrose Barlow
WEDNESDAY <i>Christmas Eve</i>	11.30 pm <i>(Midnight Mass)</i> Nora Murray Carmel Higgins Kevin Kennedy	8.00 pm William Skiffington Angela Valentine Eileen Bond Beryl Skiffington	6.00 pm Ann & Joe Thompson Linda Buckley	6.00 pm Christmas Mass Intentions <i>(See page 2)</i>
THURSDAY <i>Christmas Day</i>	9.00 am Children of Gaza 11.00 am Christopher Tickle The Knight Family	11.00 am Ronnie Kenwright Bob Roberts Ann Roberts		9.30 am Christmas Mass Intentions <i>(See page 2)</i>
FRIDAY	12.00 noon Frank & Margaret Fletcher			
SATURDAY	10.00 am Philip Ward		6.00 pm Seamus McNulty	6.00 pm A Special Intention
SUNDAY	9.00 am Kevin Freeman 11.00 am Patrick McCafferty	11.00 am Thomas Laing		9.30 am Keith Boulton 6.30 pm Bernadette Sproston

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

This Week

Saturday: 10.30 - 11.00 am at Holy Family
After 6.00 pm Mass at St Richard's
(or by appointment with one of the priests)

BAPTISMS

We welcome into the family of the Church
through the celebration of Baptism:
Louisa Beatrice Parks & Zane David Watson
May God bless them and their families

READINGS FOR NEXT WEEKEND

Feast of the Holy Family (B)

First Reading *Genesis 15:1-6, 21:1-3*
God promised Abraham that he would have a son and
countless descendants. Although it seemed unlikely, Abraham
trusted in God's Word.

Second Reading *Hebrews 11:11-12, 17-19*
From the beginning of the human race, we have examples of
people who remained faithful to God in good times and in bad.

Gospel Reading *Luke 22:22-40*
Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the Temple to present him
to God. For Simeon and Anna, Jesus was the long-awaited
promise of hope. For Mary and Joseph, their moment of
celebration was also a discovery of anxiety and pain to come.

LET US HOLD IN PRAYER

Those who have died, especially:
Irene Cheetham

All those we are remembering this Christmas

Those who are sick, especially:

Holy Family

**Connie Crilly
Kathy Kenyon
Dorothy Hampson
Claire Barlow**

**Emma Oldham
Rev Jim Melia
Pat O'Neill**

Sacred Heart & St Richard's

**Fred Lyth
Agnes Pilkington
Shirley Leggett
Bessie Hulme
Enid Scott
Eileen Sherrington
Eugenie Cheetham**

**Margaret Hurley
Arthur Lucas
Phil Tomkins
Ronnie Scott
Thomas McLoughlin
Irene McIntyre**

St Ambrose Barlow

**Norah Atkinson
Margaret Ross**

**Alan West
Claire Barlow**

St Gabriel's

Anne Broad

Pat Waring

*If you wish to add (or remove) someone from the prayer list,
please contact Fr Dave by phone or email.*

