

Parish of St Margaret Clitherow

Mary, the Mother of God (A)

1st January 2017



DEANERY TEAM

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Deacons: Rev. Robert Hewertson and Rev. Anthony Arrowsmith

LITURGICAL CALENDAR

Psalter	Week 2
Readings	Sunday – Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God Weekdays – Weekdays of Christmas Time
Sunday	Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God
Monday	St. Basil the Great & St. Gregory Nazianzen
Next Sunday	Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord



LEIGH DEANERY

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.

GOSPEL REFLECTION

"The shepherds hurried away to Bethlehem and found Mary and Joseph and the baby lying in the manger." From the very start, the discovery of Jesus involves his mother. Mary was a human parent, and since she was human, Jesus must have looked something just like her. If she was such a young woman when Jesus was born – it is commonly held belief that she was about 14 when she was visited by an angel – perhaps, later in Jesus' life, strangers mistook them for brother and sister. Everything that was human and embraceable about Jesus had its origin in Mary. He must have picked up her way of living, her way of speaking and shared in her beliefs, especially as a young boy looking up to his parents. Mary, along with Joseph of course, was always a very central figure in Jesus' life. Very often, when Pope Francis celebrates Mass in St. Peter's, at the end he will go straight to the image of Mary and, after pausing in prayer, reaches out, almost timidly, to touch her cloak. It may seem strange to some of us, but maybe this is the best way to approach her. Mary is the mother of Jesus and our Mother too. She is there to bring us comfort, as any earthly mother or father should want to do for their children. As we lift our prayers to God, we often ask for Mary's prayers too, especially when we say the "Hail Mary". She is our Mother in Heaven who can intercede on our behalf and pray for us too. She is also our role model, the person we should copy perhaps more than anyone else. How do we, in our lives today, say "Yes" to the will of God in the way that she did? How would our salvation story continue if she did not say "Yes" to the message of the angel who asked her to become the Mother of God?

So today isn't just New Year's Day, or the rounding off of our Christmas feasting. It's the feast of Mary's motherhood. Salvation begins with her "Yes" to God, as she brings forth to the world the sacred body that will be stretched on the cross and raised from the tomb. Over the centuries, Catholic and Orthodox artists especially have produced wonderful works of art – mosaics, icons, paintings, hymns and chants – to express a love for Mary that is deeper than just affection. Admittedly, not all works of art of the same quality, and sometimes the product has not been worthy of the subject. And the origin of some of the feasts of Our Lady may seem nothing less than alarming, since they have been inaugurated to celebrate military victories on land and triumphs at sea. For whatever reason over the centuries Kings and rulers have often enlisted the prayers of Mary as they go to battle. For ourselves today she is a mother, a friend, a fellow disciple of Jesus and the perfect role model of how to live the Christian life. She is someone who, like the perfect mother, understands and accepts our limitations, who adopts us as her own because her own Son has incorporated us into his Body, which is the Church. As we begin this New Year, and celebrate Mary's feast, let us pray that we may follow in her footsteps more closely so that we may follow the light that is her Son, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death, Amen.

Psalm Response O God, be gracious and bless us.

Gospel Acclamation At various times and in the past and in various different ways, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets; but in our own time, the last days, he has spoken to us through his Son.



PARISH NEWS This Week

Happy New Year!

The two Fr. Pauls and Deacon Bob would like to wish everyone in the Parish a very Happy New Year. We hope and pray that 2017 will be a great year for all the people of the Parish. Let us pray that we may work even harder to bring the Gospel to others and encourage others and welcome them as new members of our Parish Family.

A Christmas Thank You

Many thanks from both Fr Pauls and Deacon Bob for all the kind words, prayers, cards, gifts and best wishes for Christmas. They are gratefully received and as always you are all in our prayers. Your generosity is second to none. We hope you continue to enjoy this wonderful Christmas season and know the peace of the new-born Saviour.

Ladies Group

The next Ladies Meeting will take place on **Tuesday, 3rd January** at 2.00pm in St Ambrose Barlow Church Hall. Raffle: Joan Butler & Maureen Craddock.

Padre Pio Prayer Group

The next meeting will be on **Saturday, 7th January**.

Sacred Heart 200 Club Date of Draw 25 December 2016

£200	369
£50	1095
£25	393
£10 winners	608, 492, 283, 887
£ 5 winners	919, 1075, 32, 631, 926

Thank you for your continued support.

St Richard's 500 Club

Please note that from January 2017 the **500 club** will be run by **Mr Michael Farrimond and Mr James Duffy**, and the Monthly Draw will take place during the Coffee Morning after 9.30am Mass at St. Richard's on the first Sunday of every month.

New members will be welcome from January.

St Margaret Clitherow (St Ambrose Barlow) 200 Club

This year's 200 Club will be starting soon. Entry costs £20 – payable weekly, monthly or in one up-front payment. Members are entered in a monthly draw in January, February, March and April for £100 and £50. In late April there will be a cabaret evening in the church hall (free to members) where a draw will be made for £1000 – with consolation prizes of £100, £50 and £25. If you would like to join the 200 Club please see Steve Cooper at the back of church after 11.00am Mass on Sunday, or give him a call on 07952 152371. Or see your usual agent.

"With You Always" Catechists Meeting

As we prepare for the up-coming "With You Always" preparation course, there will be a meeting of catechists for St. Ambrose Barlow and St. Richard's on **Tuesday February 7th at 7.00 pm**. The meeting will be held at St. Richard's Parish House.

Children's Liturgy Catechists

If anyone would like to help with the Children's Liturgy during Sunday morning Mass why not come along and speak to one of the catechists after Mass to find out what it is all about. It is a wonderful way of sharing God's Word with the children of the Parish. We always need more helpers. Thanks to so many of you who have been running the Children's Liturgy for so many years. If you think you can help then please speak to one of the priests or/and one of the catechists whenever you can.

RCIA

If there is anyone who is considering becoming a Catholic by making the 'journey of faith' this year please speak to one of the priests. A meeting will be arranged in the coming weeks for anyone who is interested.

Exposition at St. Richard's Church

A reminder that the next Wednesday morning Exposition in St. Richard's Church will take place on the first Wednesday of Lent, March 8th. During the work that is soon to be done at St. Richard's Church there will be occasions when we have Mass in the Parish House or even the Parish Centre whilst the new radiators and heating system are being fitted. More details nearer the time.

Parish Forum

The next meeting of the Parish Forum will take place in Sacred Heart Parish Centre, Hindsford, on **Tuesday January 17th at 7.30pm**. All welcome.

Save Stamps for Charity

If you would like to save stamps for charity they can be placed in the red box at the back of St Ambrose Church.

Newsletter

Please ensure that 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 Paul Grady

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. Please make all cheques payable to **St Margaret Clitherow** (Please note spelling 'Clitherow'). Thank you.

Deanery Website

www.leighdeanery.co.uk

Catholic School Websites

<http://stmaryschs.org.uk/>

www.athertonsacredheart.wigan.sch.uk

www.boothstownhollyfamily.wigan.sch.uk

www.saintambrosebarlow.co.uk

www.saintgabrielsprimary.co.uk

www.saintrichards.wigan.sch.uk

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Motown New Year Party / Concert Featuring Countdown to Midnight

At St Stephen's Church, Manchester Rd, Astley
On Saturday 7th January – 8.00pm, til late, with bar

Tickets: Adults £10.00, Children Free (Includes food)
available from 01942 879608 or email Phil:
p.dand2011@btinternet.com

Family Quiz Night

There will be a Quiz for all the family at St Ambrose Barlow Parish Hall on Friday 13th January 2017, from 7.00pm. Tickets cost £3 per person or £10 for a family ticket. Hotpot supper is included. Tea and coffee will be available, but please bring your own alcoholic and soft drinks. Tickets available from Steve Cooper.

St Joseph's Players Pantomime

St Joseph's Players will present their pantomime, "**Robinson Crusoe**" in St Joseph's Hall, Leigh from 18th January to 28th January 2017. Evenings at 7.15pm. Matinees, 21st, 22nd, 23rd from 2.00pm. Special Offer, 18th and 19th, all tickets £4. Tickets available from Stones Carpets, Chapel Street, Leigh (opposite Church).



Live Screenings at Cineworld

It has been quite a while since we last advertised the Live Screenings at Cineworld in Leigh. It was great to meet up with other parishioners to watch a live performance and enjoy each other's company. There are three good looking performances coming up in the New Year.

- RSC's "The Tempest" – Wednesday, January 11th at 7.00pm.
- National Theatre's "Amadeus" – Thursday, February 2nd at 7.00pm.
- National Theatre's "St. Joan" – Thursday, February 16th.

More details nearer the time.

Pope Francis: 'Urbi et Orbi' Christmas Message 2016

The Holy Father, Pope Francis, has delivered the fourth Christmas message of his pontificate *Urbi et Orbi* on the Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord, 25 December 2016. *Urbi et Orbi* means "for the city and for the world" and is a papal address and Apostolic Blessing not only for the city of Rome but for the entire world.

An extract from the Pope's Christmas message is given in the next column.

(See <http://www.catholic-ew.org.uk/Home/News/Urbi-et-Orbi> for the full text of his message.)



Pope Francis sent a Christmas message of "peace out to the ends of the earth to reach all peoples, especially those scarred by war and harsh conflicts that seem stronger than the yearning for peace." He particularly mentioned Syria and the city of Aleppo, the Holy Land, Iraq, Libya, Yemen, Nigeria, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eastern Ukraine, Colombia, Venezuela, Myanmar and the Korean Peninsula.

The Pope continued,

"Peace to those who have lost a person dear to them as a result of brutal acts of terrorism, and to those who have sown fear and death into the hearts of so many countries and cities. Peace – not merely the word, but a real and concrete peace – to our abandoned and excluded brothers and sisters, to those who suffer hunger and to all the victims of violence. Peace to exiles, migrants and refugees, to all those who in our day are subject to human trafficking. Peace to the peoples who suffer because of the economic ambitions of the few, because of the sheer greed and the idolatry of money, which leads to slavery. Peace to those affected by social and economic unrest, and to those who endure the consequences of earthquakes or other natural catastrophes."

"Peace to the children, on this special day on which God became a child, above all those deprived of the joys of childhood because of hunger, wars or the selfishness of adults."

"Peace on earth to men and women of goodwill, who work quietly and patiently each day, in their families and in society, to build a more humane and just world, sustained by the conviction that only with peace is there the possibility of a more prosperous future for all."

"Dear brothers and sisters, "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given": he is the "Prince of peace". Let us welcome him!

To you, dear brothers and sisters...I offer my greeting.

On this day of joy, we are all called to contemplate the Child Jesus, who gives hope once again to every person on the face of the earth. By his grace, let us with our voices and our actions give witness to solidarity and peace. Merry Christmas to all!"

LAST WEEK'S PARISH COLLECTIONS

Details to be provided next week.

SECOND COLLECTIONS

Today	No Collection (Crib Offerings)
Next Week	Monthly SVP Collection

'SVP' stands for 'St Vincent de Paul'. There is an SVP Group in most Catholic parishes whose sole purpose is to reach out to those who are struggling and in need in the community in which we live. The monthly SVP collection assists us in this ministry. Thank you for the support you give consistently throughout the year. It really does help to change lives.

