

4th Sunday of Advent - 24th December 2023



Approaching Christmas

As we approach Christmas, the church encourages us to reflect on the Annunciation. The Annunciation can be seen as the singular event that changed the world, for it is during this episode, that Mary consents to God's will, and Christ is conceived within her. As disciples of Jesus, striving to follow him, we can learn a great deal from prayerfully imitating Mary in our own lives.

Mary had an incredible faith and trust in God, to be able to accept his will for her life. It is important to note, that Mary wasn't told how her life would precisely unfold. She didn't know she would give birth to Jesus in a manger, or about her flight to Egypt, or that Jesus would go missing in the temple, or that she would stand by as he was crucified. Instead, all she knew, was that she would conceive the Son of God. Many times, we seek to know God's entire will for our lives, but we can learn from Mary, to readily say "yes" to the current step of the plan that he is calling us to, and, like Mary, ponder God's will in our hearts, by spending time in prayer.

God too is calling us to a very specific and important mission. St. John Henry Newman says that we should all recognise that *"God has created me to do him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which he has not committed to another. I have my mission."* We can live out this mission, by devoting some of our time and talents for our communities, our parish, and the entire Church. Let us seek Mary's intercession, and trust in the Lord's call for our lives, and readily follow him!

Fr Tom McHale

(except Monday)

01207 - 502320

Deacon Chris Callan

Fr John Bagnall

(except Wednesday)

01207 - 502196

Deacon Shaun McGee

General Notices Around the Partnership

Christmas Wishes:

Fr. John, Fr. Tom, and Deacons Shaun and Chris would like to wish all our parishioners a very happy and holy Christmas season and a blessed and joyous New Year! We have a wonderful and vibrant Catholic Community here in the Consett area, and indeed throughout the Pontop Partnership, and we feel very blessed to serve you. As we always do at this time of year, we would like to thank all the people --most of them volunteers-- who do so much to help us in various ways. You all know who you are, and God will reward you better than we ever can. Many, many thanks!

Partnership - Sacrament of Reconciliation: St Patrick's, Consett; Saturday after 10am Mass. Our Lady and St Joseph's Brooms on Saturday's before the 5.30pm Vigil Mass 4.45pm-5.15pm. Hospital Chaplain: Fr Paul Tully, tel: 01388 818544/ 0191 3332183. Please telephone the chaplain if you have someone in hospital who would like a visit.

Mass Intentions: Just to remind parishioners that Mass intentions need to be requested at least '3 months' beforehand, and at present there are no spaces available until after the new year in St Mary's, Brooms and St Pius with very few available in St Patrick's.

Partnership Pilgrimage to Lourdes 2024: We are planning a Pilgrimage to Lourdes for 2nd - 7th September for 5 nights full board staying at the Hotel Padoue, flying from Stansted Airport. Expression of interest forms are available from the Parish offices of St Patrick's Consett and St Mary's Blackhill. A meeting will be held early in the New Year to finalise arrangements.

Friends of the Holyland: This Christmas season, more than ever, Palestinian Christians in Bethlehem and Nazareth are experiencing economic hardship through the collapse of Tourism. This is entirely due to the current security situation. Livelihoods have been decimated and basic essentials are in short supply. Our thoughts and prayers are directed towards their spiritual needs. We can help with much needed financial assistance to buy basic foodstuffs and other family essentials.

A special retiring collection will be taken after masses over the Christmas period and you are asked to remember our Christian brothers and sisters as they struggle to survive in the land where Christ once walked.'

Around The Diocese

Come And See: Priestly Vocation Discernment Evenings 2024 for men aged 18+ who think God might be calling them to serve, Meetings begin on Tuesday 9th January 2024 between 6-8pm. More information on the notice board.

"CAFOD Israeli-Palestinian Crisis Appeal: Donate to CAFOD's Israeli-Palestinian Crisis Appeal at cafod.org.uk/ipc or call 0303 303 3030 to support those affected and get funds to local trusted experts in Gaza and southern Israel who have been working alongside communities helping those most in need. Your donation will help support aid workers providing urgent

humanitarian aid including food, water and emergency shelter to those in need. Thank you for your prayers.”

Little Sisters of the Poor - Job Vacancies: Exciting opportunities are now available at St Joseph’s Care Home (Little Sisters of the Poor, Newcastle) for care assistants and nurses. Hours available: Care Assistant: Shifts are 8am-3pm, 3pm-9pm Nurse: Shifts are 8am-4pm, 1pm-9pm. Excellent rates of pay For more information please contact Lee-Marie Thornley on 07856256095 or email lee.marie@lsplondon.co.uk

Holy Island SVP Camp: Are you interested in your child having a holiday in 2024? Let them join us for a week on Holy Island. They’ll stay in our Centre and be looked after by DBS checked and trained helpers who will ensure they have a safe, fun time. Girls and boys can be aged 9-12. A week’s all-inclusive holiday costs a donation of £150 and can be paid in instalments. In some circumstances children may be able to receive partial or full funding to attend. If you’re interested, or know of a child who could benefit from such a holiday, please visit our website for further details at: <https://www.svp.org.uk/microsite/holy-island>

YMT led Confirmation Retreat at the Emmaus Village -January 26 – 28 2024: There are still places for your Confirmation group to join other Confirmation candidates across the Diocese in exploring our faith, the Church, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In this YMT led Confirmation Retreat, there will be time for fun, faith, and food during these days of retreat. If you are a catechist and want to book your group, please contact nsalked@ymt.org before January 19, 2024.

Vacancies – Opportunities to work at the Emmaus Village: The Emmaus Village, home for the Youth Ministry Team, hosts all the residential retreats led by YMT for our Diocesan Primary and Secondary Schools. We are looking for an Assistant Catering Coordinator and Kitchen Technician, who will help our catering team deliver this valuable service to all the groups that come to the Emmaus Village. If you or someone you know, wants to be part of the YMT team, please contact admin@ymt.org or click the link www.ymt.org/vacancies .

St Mary’s News

Collections: This week – Friends of the Holy Land

Lately Deceased: Maria Corr and Sarah Jackson. Please pray for them and their families at this sad time.

Legion of Mary: Will say the Rosary and Legion Prayers on Tuesday Evenings at 6pm.

Communion Visits: If anyone is aware of someone who is housebound since the lockdown, and who would like to receive Communion at home, please contact Fr. Tom to arrange this.

Sanctuary Candle: If you would like the candle to burn in memory of a loved one please contact the Parish Office.

This week the candle will burn In Loving Memory of ‘Mary and Arthur Hutton’.

Christmas Tree Lights: will be lit for all our family and friends who we are remembering at this time, past and present.

In Need of Support: If you are in need of support from the SVP Society please put your name and telephone number in a sealed envelope marked SVP and place it through St Mary's presbytery door. A member of the SVP will contact you or phone 07821601684.

Flower Donations: Thank you to the Wednesday Coffee Morning for the donation of £100 for Christmas flowers and to all who have donated.

SVP Sudan: Last months collection realised £600 which will be sent Directly to the baby feeding centres in the Sudan and South Sudan. Many thanks for your continued support.

300 Club Winners December Big Draw: 200 - (130) T McAllister, £100 - (87) J McGuigan, £50 - (109) T Kelly, £25 - (128) J Devaney. Thank you for your support in 2023. 2024 sub will be collected in January.

Welcome Thursday: The church hall will be open from 10.30am on Thursday's for anyone to pop in for a coffee after Mass. Lunch is also served from 12 noon.

St Patrick's News

Collections: This week – Friends of the Holy Land

Divine Mercy Devotions: The Divine Mercy Devotions are held every Thursday at 3pm.

Lately Deceased: Veronica Elizabeth (Vera) Renwick. Please pray for her and her Family at this sad time.

Our Lady and St Joseph's News

Collections: This week – Friends of the Holy Land

People's Kitchen: Thank you for your continued donations of coppers and small change which is forwarded to the People's Kitchen in Newcastle. Your donations can be deposited in the named tin at the back of church. A thank you letter from the charity can be viewed on the noticeboard at the back of church

St Pius News

Collections: This week – Friends of the Holy Land

Holy Rosary Hour: The next one will be held on Monday 29th January 2024 at 6pm

Benediction and Evening Prayer: Wednesday evenings 5.45pm - 6.45pm

Children's Liturgy: is held on the first Sunday of every month.

100 Club Winners December Draw: £60 - (70) Thomas Elliott, £40 - (17) C Jackson, £20 - (62) Linda Dodds, £10 - (48) Margaret Hill.

Our Lady of the Rosary News

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ANNIVERSARIES

St Mary's: Mary Young, Charles Johnson, Margaret Jane Jordan, Cecilia Campbell, Agnes McCourt, Dennis Morris, Theresa Margaret Ayton, Joan Allison, Teresa Green, Christina Cartmell, Mary Adams, George Thompson, Cecilia Doran, Evelyn Mulholland, Helen Armstrong, Hugh Toner, Mary Cecilia Reddington, Margaret Featherstone, Billy McGurk, Maria Rosa Parisi, John Kearney, Michael Green, Kevin Rowan, Elizabeth Cullerton, Stephen Haney, Catherine Malone, John Brian Simpson.

Our Lady of the Rosary: Maureen McDonald, Winnie Williams, Jack McNally, Peter Jopling, Father John, Rose McNally, Jim McKie (jnr), Jim Robinson.

St. Patrick's: Molly Williamson, Catherine Boyle, John Donnelly, James Brown, Robbie Vallely, Cathy Lumb, Kathleen Page, John Rogan, David Cameron, Finbarr Taylor, Rose Jackson, Catherine McDonald, Teresa Winifred Rogan, Edward Patrick Murray, Doreen Donaghy, Maureen McCrory, Freda McNicholas, Terence O' Rourke, Eric Cheeseman, Laura McCann, Michael Shaw, Peter Crinnion, Michelle Johnson, Jack McNally.

St Pius: David Calford, John Corrigan, Gerard Cumiskey, Alan Hill, Jean Kennedy, Mary Lydon, Sharon Murphy, Vera Murray, Joan Peacock, John Robson, John Townson.

Our Lady & St Joseph's: Mary Wilks, Wilf Herdman, Kathleen Grogan, David R. Fountain, Thomas A. Williamson, Rose Jackson, Kathleen Walker, Maureen Coates, Sr Mary Anthony, Robert Foreman, Jim Dodd, Teresa Tate

THOSE WHO ARE SICK IN OUR PARISHES

We keep in our prayers

St Mary's: Paul Wass, Ryan McBeath, Kieran Richard Atkinson, Amelia Burns, Ethan White, James Thomas English, David Sizmy, Eileen Fannon, Mary Barnes, Arron Armstrong, Freya Simpson, Maddy Kennedy, Mark Adams, Jack Nugent, Donna Philips, Tom Slane, Julianne Kennedy, Eileen Haughey, David Oliver, Jimmy McGuigan, Catherine Hester, Sarah June Quinn, Thomas Eccles, Simon Quinn, Philip Robinson, Audrey Johnson, Ged Hester, Terry Curran, Peter Doherty, Jakob English, Catelyn Howe, Ann Hester, Fiona Bell, Cecelia Moore, David Urwin, Austin Lawrie, Mary Guy, Joan Sewell, Mary Kilty.

Our Lady of the Rosary: James Baker.

St. Patrick's: Eileen Fish, Margaret Heslop, Anna Bradley, Martin Rogan, Cheryl Reily, Judith Hindmarsh, Geraldine Donnelly, Andrew Bates, Patrick Lynch, Jean Walls, Sienna Jane McNestry, Austin McDonald

St Pius: Ivy Agnew, Joseph Agnew, Gerry Akers, Marie Atherton, Martin Daly, Rita Daly, Keith Elliott, Derek Hicks, Paul Hunt, Joan McGee, Danny Morton, Robert Nixon Jr, Jade Telford, Bob Parkin, Muriel Steele.

Our Lady and St Joseph's: Sue Robertson.

Partnership Prayer

Risen Christ, from your abundant grace,
pour out afresh your Holy Spirit upon our Diocese.
As we build on the deep foundations of faith
laid by the countless saints of these Northern lands,
by Aidan and Cuthbert, Hilda and Bede
may our Partnerships continue the mission
of building your Kingdom on the earth: to give living witness to your love,
and to your compassion and hope for our world.
We pray in trustful confidence that your power working in us
can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine.
Who live and reign forever and ever. Amen

Prayer for Spiritual Communion

My Jesus I believe that you are present in the most Holy Sacrament, I love you above all things and I desire to receive you into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace you as if you were already there and unite myself wholly to you, never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.'

Prayer For Ukraine

O God in this time of violence. We call you to draw near.
Draw near to the people of Ukraine.
Draw near to the terrified children.
Draw near to the terrified parents.
Draw near to those who have nowhere to go.
Draw near to the elderly, the infirm,
the disabled, the displaced, the orphans.
Draw near to the care givers and aid workers.
Draw near to the helpers.
Draw near. Draw near. Draw near.
In this time of violence-Draw near.
Jesus taught us that the diabolical evil of violence
is answered with the weapons of God, with prayer and fasting.
May the Queen of Peace preserve the world from the madness of war.