



CATHOLIC PARISH OF ST JOHN PAUL II, ECCLES

Services usually held at: Holy Cross, Patricroft and St Mary's, Eccles
Parish Office: Holy Cross Presbytery, 370 Liverpool Road, Patricroft, M30 8QD

2nd
Sunday
of
Advent
Morning
Prayer
Week 2

JOHN THE BAPTIST

Our Readings today take us out into the wilderness, to hear the call, first of the Prophet Isaiah and then of John the Baptist. A call to peoples of old—but a call too to ourselves, inviting each of us to re-engage with ourselves, with each other and with our God.

For the first hearers of these messages, the wilderness was something both real and symbolic. The Jewish nation was born out of a journey from Egypt, through the real wilderness into the Promised Land, and wherever the people stood it was not far for them to find those deserted places to seek out solitude and reflect upon their roots, upon the people they were. The symbol of the wilderness took those first hearers into the silence of their hearts, and challenged them there to find what was restless and ill at ease, and to search for healing and change.

Isaiah is commanded by God to comfort His people, to call them to find once more the unity with God and each other which they had lost, and to remind them of God's love, which was so very near. John, then, at the start of St Mark's Gospel, is seen fulfilling the prophecies of Isaiah—a "voice" crying in the wilderness and speaking to the hearts of a people who recognised that his words were true, and who really desired that comfort from God—a people who wanted to be changed, to be healed, to find peace in their homes and hearts, and to feel God very near once more. They felt ready to begin their lives anew.

For us, today, a new "wilderness" surrounds us—in its own way every bit as hostile as the wildernesses of old, and every bit as

inviting for our prayerful reflection and our cry for healing. In times of comfort, we can feel in Advent the need to be challenged by God's call—but this year, perhaps, in a strange way the pandemic makes it easier for us to step back and examine our priorities, re-evaluate the ways in which we live, and focus anew on our service of neighbour (near and far) and on our love for God in the faces of those who are struggling and of those who serve. Maybe we could find new ways to connect with what really matters, to find good in ourselves and in each other and to build relationships—all be they socially distanced—that are wholesome and life-giving. We can pray for the Grace to re-discover the God of Love who never left us, and to experience anew the depths of our humanity, sanctified by the same God who took on our human form, and whose coming again we now await not with fear but with hope.

May the Baptist's call find a home in our lives this Advent, and may we once again seek God in our hearts, in our homes and in our fragile and shaken communities. Come, Lord Jesus.

CHURCH ATTENDANCE in TIER 3 REGULATIONS

Most of you are used to the regulations we have in place for your safety and that of other people, but please do not be offended by a few gentle reminders:

- Please be guided by the stewards who are asked to fill the church **from the front**. At the end of Mass they will empty the church **from the back**.
- Please do not engage in conversation with anyone outside of your household/support bubble whilst inside church **or in the church grounds**.
- Please do not ask the stewards to take anything from you. If you have anything to hand in, please leave it in the basket provided or push it through the letterbox at Holy Cross. (There is a green letterbox by the church door if you prefer not to walk to the presbytery). *
- If you wish to light a candle, please signal to a steward **after Mass** (not before), and they will light it for you. *

All of this is to prevent anything—papers, money, candle-lighters etc—being handed from one person to another, which would pose a danger of transmission of the virus.

Thank you for your understanding and cooperation in all the protocols which are in place to keep you safe, along with the stewards, and all of our parish family. Please check the [Coronavirus Page](#) of our website for fuller details.

CELEBRATIONS OF FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

Our weekday Masses, all open to our regular congregations and livestreamed, will also be made available for **pre-arranged** First Communions this week, though with family guests limited to just 2 from the same household bubble. Weekday arrangements are being made through our schools, and some additional arrangements are being made directly for children in non-Catholic schools. (All families who wish to wait until larger gatherings can be accommodated are welcome to do so). All this week's weekday Masses will be held at 10.00am, apart from Thursday, moved to 2.00pm for reasons beyond our control. Please note that regulations require Masses to be kept as short as is reasonably and prayerfully possible, so these First Communion Masses will not be significantly lengthened.

PARISH ADVENT CHALLENGE

Not exactly a "challenge" this year, because we recognise that so many of our own parishioners are experiencing financial hardship because of the effects of the pandemic and we do not wish to pressure anyone. However, for those who are able and wish to support [CAFOD's World Gifts](#) initiative in the way we usually do, we will collect towards the various "Gifts of Water" that provide such vital support for communities in the developing world.

PRAYER REQUESTS

Please keep the following people kindly in your prayers:

The sick: Karen Mary, Kathleen, Pat, Maura, Doreen, Helen, Shirley, Bridget, Sara, Chamina, Tara, Mary, Carole, Phil, Carol, Sarah, John, Vincent de Paul, Alan and Mary, Molly, Anne, Patrick, David, Peter, Kevin, Helen, Lynn, Pam and Derek, Pauline, Shannon, John, Chris, Ann, Patrick, Clifford, Mrs Wood, Frances, Marian, Bridget, Iris, Pauline, Sharon, Fr Mullin, John, Joan, Paul, Peter, Maureen, Pat, Patrick, David, Sister Maureen, Yvonne, Terry, Betty, Betty, Kathleen, Colette, Stanley, Win, Catherine, James, Alan, Betty, Evelyn, Elizabeth, Anne, Mary, Joan, Amanda, Pat, Billy, David, Evie, Mary, Chamari, Sheila, Monica, Clare, John, Eileen, Kathleen, Joyce, Margaret, Christine, Jean, Margaret, Deborah, Patrick, Fr Connelly, Jean, Vincent, Maureen, Eleanor, Margaret, Robert, Ken, Catorina, Michaela, Tony, Bernard, Elaine, Ellen, Glenes, Sheila, Caroline, Lynne, Joe, Jackie, Gemma, Sheila, Martin, Joanne, Joan, Janice, Bill, John, Kenneth, Vera, Lilly, Gerald, May, Louise, Matthew, Evelyn, Margaret, Anthony, Debbie, Mary, Peter, Theresa, Sylvia, Maureen, Johnny, Robin and Steven, Sister Regina, Nicola, Nijole, Ken, Stephen, Arthur, Kevin.

Lately Dead: Thelma Boughton, Tracy Smith, Kathleen Tennant, Geoffrey Busby, Polly Fernandes, Sheila Walton, Robert Yates, Eric Welby (funeral on Wednesday), Eileen Johnson, Liam O'Neill.

Anniversaries: Norman Reed (Saturday's daytime Mass), Molly and George Blinkhorn, Sonny Shannon, Lucy Kennedy (Birthday Anniversary), Liam Conlan, Charles Geaney, Kevin Smith (Birthday Anniversary), Ray Dixon, Fred Arden (100th Birthday Anniversary), Jack Fagan.

Remembrance: Winnie and Patrick Roddy, Kevin Martin Smith, Paula McLernon Wilson, Austin and Doris Smith, Edward Davenport, Helen Shannon, John and Mary Cromey, Patrick Cromey, Edna Smith, Kathleen Royle, George Boland, Ellen Teresa Foster, Joseph Killeen Foster, Baby Grace Platt, Helps family, all the Faithful Departed.

We also pray: for Anthony (80th Birthday), Sheila (Birthday wishes), for world peace, for an end to racism in all its forms and for our schools. We pray for world leaders, for God's guidance and support throughout the Covid-19 crisis and for all those suffering from the disease, for the housebound and those in hospital, nursing and residential homes, for NHS and Care Home workers and for a number of special intentions.

CURRENT SUNDAY MASS TIMES

Saturday (Vigil Mass): Livestreamed only at 5.00pm
Sunday Morning: Recorded Mass from Holy Cross available online. See details below

*Children's Liturgies are currently suspended
Refreshments after Masses are also currently suspended*

Weekdays: See Weekday Calendar below
Holydays: As announced beforehand

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Confessions are currently only available
by prior arrangement
and out of doors as Fr Martin cannot meet you face to face

BAPTISMS, WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS

by arrangement
At least 6 months' notice is required for weddings, and
a time of preparation is also required before Baptism.
Please refer to the website for further information

Calendar for This Week – Church opening marked in Red

We stream all **weekday Masses** on our [Facebook Live](#) page, on [YouTube Live](#) and directly on our [Live](#) webpage

Monday: 10.00am Mass at Holy Cross (with First Communions) open to the public.

Tuesday: 10.00am Mass at Holy Cross (with First Communions) open to the public.

Wednesday: 10.00am Mass at Holy Cross (with First Communions) open to the public.

Thursday: **2.00pm** Mass at Holy Cross (with First Communions) open to the public. (Please note later time)

Friday: **10.00am** Mass at Holy Cross (with First Communions) open to the public. (Please note earlier time)

Holy Cross Church also open for private prayer from **6.00-7.00pm** (but there will be **no evening Mass this week**).

Saturday (daytime): We will stream 11.00am **Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament** followed by **12 noon Mass**

Saturday (evening): **5.00pm Vigil Mass** at Holy Cross open to the public, also livestreamed, with a higher quality video of the recording available on our [YouTube channel](#), and on the [Live](#) page of our website from 9.00am Sunday morning.

Sunday (Morning): 9.30am and **11.15am** Masses at **Holy Cross**, open to the public. (These Masses will not be livestreamed)

Sunday (Afternoon): 2.30-3.30pm 15 minute Advent Service at Holy Cross followed by Private Prayer time, open to the public.

We will keep St Mary's Church closed for the time being, pending installation of the new heating system.

CHRISTMAS MASSES (Provisional)

Christmas Eve: 5.30pm Holy Cross
Christmas Day: * 9.30 St Mary's (Church or Hall as necessary)
11.15 Holy Cross
26th December: 12 Noon Holy Cross
5.00pm Holy Cross (Vigil for Sunday)
Sunday 27th: * 9.30am (Venue to be confirmed)
11.15am Holy Cross
Monday 28th: 10.00am Holy Cross
Tuesday 29th: 10.00am Holy Cross
Wednesday 30th: 10.00am Holy Cross
Thursday 31st: 10.00am Holy Cross
Friday 1st January: 7.00pm Holy Cross

This is in line with the [Bishop's pastoral letter](#) two weeks ago in which he commends to us the ancient practice of celebrating the Christmas Octave—8 days on which we can **equally** celebrate Christmas.

To avoid overcrowding a booking system will be implemented, online and by phone, and an email will be sent around all our contacts as soon as this is online (next weekend at the latest).

* *Some venues will be confirmed when we know the installation progress of the new heating system at St Mary's. We will not be using the cold church, and we cannot realistically use the Hall on a regular basis.*

COLLECTIONS

Last week's donations in church totalled £96.12. Thank you.

5th/6th December 2020



This week we pray for: the intentions of the parishioners of Our Lady of the Assumption, Middleton, with Canon Tadhg Mullins their parish priest. We pray for their parish primary schools and Cardinal Langley High School, and for the Sisters of Charity of St Paul and the Sisters of the Cross and Passion. May they prepare a way for the Lord.

PARISH CHRISTMAS DINNER

This has unfortunately had to be cancelled because of the restrictions we still face as a consequence of the pandemic, but something will be arranged at a later date.

St MARY'S HEATING

The works to replace the heating system at St Mary's are now out to tender, with bids to be received this week. We will keep you informed. Please bear with us and with all those from St Mary's who will find this time especially difficult.

CHRISTMAS CARDS AVAILABLE to ORDER

See our samples, prices and suggested payment methods [HERE](#). Orders can be placed with the parish office, and will be delivered to you at home or, if necessary, sent out by post. If you would like to order HCPT Christmas Cards from Ellen, these are also now available from the parish office.

PARISH CONTACT DETAILS

(Please note that email addresses below can NOT be clicked as links)

Parish Priest: Fr Martin A Collins GTCL
Telephone: 0161 789 4424
Mobile: 07502 633383
Email: martin.collins@dioceseofsalford.org.uk
or via contact form on the parish website.

Parish Secretary: Mrs Marie Twemlow
Telephone: 0161 789 4424 (Mon & Tue, 10am-4pm)
Sec. Email: secretary@ourparishcommunity.co.uk
Office Email: office@ourparishcommunity.co.uk

Parish Website: www.ourparishcommunity.co.uk
Facebook: [@ourparishcommunity](https://www.facebook.com/ourparishcommunity)

Parish Sister: Sr Jenny (Franciscan Missionary of St Joseph)
Telephone: 0161 789 4424 (Wednesday 10am-4pm)
0161 707 9537 all other times
Email: srjenny@ourparishcommunity.co.uk

Parish Halls Hire: Enquiries to Steve Jackson
Telephone: 07580 571839
Email: hall@ourparishcommunity.co.uk

Holy Cross RC Church
370 Liverpool Road
Patricroft
M30 8QD

St Mary's RC Church
Oxford Street
Eccles
M30 0LU

Parish Safeguarding Reps: Katrina Foster/Tara Higgins/Ged Dale
Email: safeguarding@ourparishcommunity.co.uk

Schools:
Holy Cross and All Saints: 0161 789 4386
St Gilbert's: 0161 789 5035
St Mary's: 0161 789 4532
St Patrick's High School: 0161 921 2300

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Stay with us, Lord, on our Journey