

## The week ahead...

<b>Saturday 23 December</b> Saturday of Advent 3	<b>5:00pm</b>	Mass: <b>John Howarth and pro populo</b>
<b>Sunday 24 December</b> Fourth Sunday of Advent	<b>5:00pm</b> (Christmas Vigil)	Mass: <b>Betty Allison</b>
<b>Monday 25 December</b> Christmas Day	<b>10:00am</b> (Christmas morning)	Mass: <b>Pro populo</b>
<b>Tuesday 26 December</b> <i>St Stephen, First Martyr</i>	<b>9:30am</b>	Mass: <b>Bernard McGoay</b>
<b>Wednesday 27 December</b> <i>St John, Apostle and Evangelist</i>	<b>9:30am</b>	Mass: <b>Pat Curran</b>
<b>Thursday 28 December</b> <i>The Holy Innocents</i>	<b>9:30am</b>	Mass: <b>Teresa Parkin</b>
<b>Friday 29 December</b> <i>St Thomas Becket, Bishop</i>	<b>9:30am</b>	Mass: <b>Private Intention</b>
<b>Saturday 30 December</b> Sixth Day of Christmas Octave	<b>9:30am</b>	Mass: <b>Private Intention</b>
<b>Saturday 30 December</b> Vigil Mass for The Holy Family	<b>5:00pm</b>	Mass: <b>Freda &amp; Leslie Carter and deceased family members and pro populo</b>



### St Patrick's R.C. Church

*A Parish of the Finchale Partnership*

**Goatbeck Terrace, Langley Moor, Co. Durham, DH7 8JJ**

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## Fourth Sunday of Advent

## 24 December, 2017

### "...let what you have said be done to me."

AND SO we reach the final Sunday of the Advent season and are presented with a Gospel text which seems most appropriate for the Christmas feast in which Mary is invited to become the mother of Jesus Christ, saviour of all humanity. It is, of course, a Gospel we have heard numerous times at Mass, not just at this time of year but also on various feast days related to Mary. We must be careful that our familiarity with this Gospel doesn't prevent us from hearing it in a new and fruitful way. Sometimes it is a matter of seeing the familiar from a different perspective that opens up for us a new avenue of revelation previously unknown.

Consider the manner in which this famous drama unfolds. Mary, we hear, "was deeply disturbed" by the words of the angel Gabriel and was also confused by them. We must not forget that Mary was not an adult but a young girl, probably only about fourteen when these events took place, so it is hardly surprising that she was frightened and puzzled by what was happening. Though we venerate Mary for her fidelity and willingness to do the will of God, we should not imagine that the course of this encounter between Mary and the angel ran smoothly with Mary immediately acceding to God's request made via the archangel Gabriel.

Indeed, a close reading and reflection on the text reveals some interesting points. The angel Gabriel, like all angels, exists solely for the purpose of delivering a message from God. No doubt sensitive to Mary's distress and confusion, Gabriel seeks to reassure her several times during this exchange. Most interestingly, Mary only accepts the invitation to be the mother of Jesus after Gabriel tells her that her cousin Elizabeth is already pregnant despite being past childbearing age. Mary doesn't ask for reassurance or evidence from the angel, but God, in his loving concern, nonetheless puts Mary at ease by proving to her that God has done the miraculous through Elizabeth.

This raises some opportunities for our own reflection on how God reassures us on our faith journey. Whilst we may be reluctant to ask God to "send us a sign" the fact is that signs of God's loving presence and work in the world are placed before our eyes each and every day. Just as the angel Gabriel needed no prompting to reassure Mary of God's great power and mercy by telling her of Elizabeth's pregnancy, so too God shows his great love in myriad ways – all we need to do is open our eyes to his work in the world.

As we approach Christmas let us pray for God to open our eyes to his presence amongst us. Of course, each of us, be we Christian or not, see the same things happening in our day-to-day lives but only people of faith will understand many of these events, remarkable or mundane, to be the work of a loving and merciful God...

...the very same God miraculously born of a virgin in a manger in Bethlehem over two thousand years ago.

*Wishing you a blessed Christmas Season,*

*Fr Robert*

## Fourth Sunday of Advent



#### MINISTRIES

##### Saturday 23 December

**Eucharistic Ministers**  
Teresa & Malcolm Wass  
Andrew Aberdeen

#### Readers

Greg Mearman  
Pat Middleton

#### Children's Liturgy

Maria Griffiths  
Michelle Dennis

#### Welcomers

Halina Holman  
Janet Harrigan

#### MINISTRIES

##### Saturday 30 December

**Eucharistic Ministers**  
Pauline & Ambrose Burnside  
Judith Bulmer

#### Readers

Ann Canavan  
Angela Tosley

#### Children's Liturgy

(Resumes 06 January)

#### Welcomers

Paul & Anne Kelly

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Should you have any items for the bulletin or wish to have it emailed to you, please contact the parish via phone or email. Contact details are on the front of the bulletin. Items need to be submitted by **Thursday midday**.

#### We pray for our beloved deceased, including....



*We remember those who have gone before us*

Betty ALLISON  
Jim PATTERSON (Rec. Dec.)  
Joseph DOWDLE  
Ann PENFOLD  
James KING  
Sarah FOODY

*Please remember in your prayers people who are sick and housebound in the parish....*

*Rose Crick, Maureen McCrann,  
Doreen Carroll, Margaret Pouton,  
Pat Harrison,  
Olwyn Morris,  
Tom Taylorson,  
Sylvia Kelly and  
Mary Spears.*



#### LAST WEEKEND'S COLLECTION

Gift Aid: £182    Loose Plate: £251

**TOTAL: £433**

Mass Attendance: 136

DIOCESE OF HEXHAM AND NEWCASTLE  
CHARITY NUMBER 1143450



## What's going on...?

**Advent Alms:** The retiring collection last weekend for Advent Alms raised a total of £228.40. Proceeds from this collection go to St Cuthbert's Care, a very worthy cause.

**RIP Jim Patterson:** Sad news through earlier this week of the death of Jim Patterson who was resident at Brandon Lodge. Jim died last Sunday, 17 December. We extend our condolences to the family and pray for the repose of Jim's soul. Jim's funeral will be celebrated on **Tuesday, 02 January at 12:00noon at St Joseph's, Gilesgate.**

**Masses after Christmas:** As always, details of weekday Masses for the coming week are to be located on the back of the bulletin. If you normally don't check these times because of their usual predictability, I urge you to look at them this week because there are some changes! Each day after Christmas until next weekend there will be **one Mass only each day at 9:30am.** This includes next Saturday morning. There are some wonderful feast days between Christmas and the New Year that are well worth celebrating so, if you are able, please take advantage of the daily Masses in the coming week!

**Do you know this person?** For the past eighteen months or so we have had Olwyn MORRIS on our sick list, who is unknown to me. If you know Olwyn and can inform me of their state of health, please do so. If I hear nothing before the end of next week, I will remove Olwyn's name from the sick list for prayers until I hear more. Thank you.

### SCHOOL NEWS

#### The Third Week of Advent

This week, we talked about the ways in which we can bring joy into the world, to the benefit of others. We thought about the power of a smile and the importance of a kind word.

#### Advent Wreath

This week, Carys will lead us in the reflection and Jenson will light the fourth candle on our Advent wreath.

#### Carols before Mass (Christmas Vigil)

On Sunday evening, Edward, Maddy and Ruby will lead us in the reflections, during the carols before Mass.

#### Thank you

Thank you to all our parishioners, for your support throughout this term. We have appreciated your attendance at the celebrations we have shared. Particular thanks to Father Robert for his interest in and support of our school community. Thank you to Jennie Staff and to Mary Rowe for helping our children with their reading; to Richard Openshaw, Bill Wilkinson and Greg Mearman for supporting our celebrations with their musical talents and to Wilf Lavery and Malcolm Wass for their support of our school.

#### Christmas Break

The school term ended on Friday and the children return to school, following the Christmas break, on Tuesday 9 January, 2018.

#### Christmas Wishes

Wishing everyone a happy, holy and peaceful Christmas, from all the staff, children and families of St. Patrick's School.



**Christmas Crib:** Our Christmas crib is now up on display in front of the altar and will remain in place till the Feast of the Epiphany. Next to it is a bowl for donations. All donations will be sent to Friends of the Holy Land as directed by Bishop Séamus. This organisation helps support Christians living in Israel, Gaza, the West Bank and Jordan, who are often persecuted and live under conditions which have a negative effect on their health and standard of living. Go to [www.friendsoftheholylord.org.uk](http://www.friendsoftheholylord.org.uk) for more information.

**Thank You:** I want to thank all those who have contributed so much to the parish over the past twelve months. Naturally, every parishioner by their mere presence and active participation at Mass contributes in a very profound way to our community. Nonetheless, there are many people who give of their time in various ways to help make our church and our worship so beautiful. I want to thank in particular Wilf for his tireless work in the gardens and in the church and presbytery, to Jennie and her flower team, to Richard and the choir, to our church cleaning team, to Shirley who cleans the presbytery, the children's liturgy volunteers, altar servers and those who assist at Mass as readers, minister of the Eucharist and welcome. I thank too Joan and Jason for their work in the gardens, to those who assist with serving at our monthly gatherings after Mass, the Wednesday ladies, to our Finance Committee and Parish Pastoral Council members, to the Social Committee, to Gordon and Angela for their work with the pious goods stall, to Kevin Coad for his work as a counter and to Carol for her financial bookwork following on the hard work done over many years by Harry Curran. I also thank those who lead the various prayer groups in the parish, including Halina, Ann and Stella. THANK YOU!

### The Kids' Bulletin



Write the number of the person beside what they did in the Christmas Story.

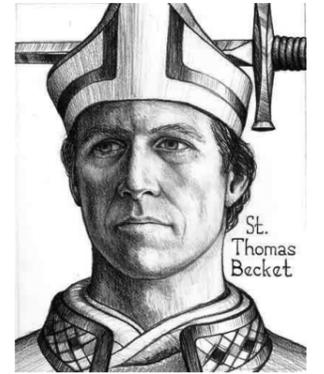
1. Saint Joseph \_\_Announced the joyful news of the Saviour's birth
2. Our Lady \_\_Commanded that everyone register in their hometown
3. The Shepherds \_\_Did not have room for the man and his wife
4. The Angels \_\_Took his wife to Bethlehem
5. The Innkeeper \_\_Pondered all these things in her heart
6. Baby Jesus \_\_Went to find the newborn Saviour
7. The Emperor \_\_Came to save the people from their sins



### SAINT OF THE WEEK

#### St Thomas Becket - 29 December

Thomas was born in London in 1118 and became a close friend of King Henry II. He was only a deacon when he was appointed chancellor of England. When he was ordained as archbishop of Canterbury, he underwent an abrupt conversion of life and began to defend the Church's rights against the king. He had to take refuge in a French monastery for six years, and when he returned to his diocese four knights, inspired by careless words from the king, assassinated him in his cathedral on 29 December, 1170. He was immediately acknowledged as a martyr and the king later did penance and endowed his shrine. He is remembered for his courage in defence of the rights of the Church.



(Information taken from *Universalis*)

### Christmas Mass Times

**Sunday, 24 December - 5:00pm**  
(Christmas Vigil)

**Monday, 25 December - 10:00am**  
(Christmas Day)

Then Mass each day from Tuesday to Saturday at **9:30am only** each day.

Christmas

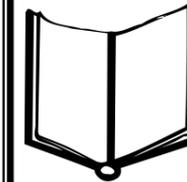


### ~ CHURCHES TOGETHER IN DH7 ~

#### BIBLE STUDIES

The Churches Together prayer group will meet on the **third Tuesday of each month** over winter in St Patrick's Presbytery, from **9:30am to 10:00am.**

Next meeting: **16 January.**



**ALL WELCOME!**

### DID YOU KNOW...?

**...that the fourth candle to be lit on the Advent wreath, the final one before the lighting of the white Christmas candle, is often referred to as the Angels' Candle?**

The fourth candle symbolises peace and invites us to reflect on the peace which the angel of the Lord brought to an anxious Joseph in a dream. May we too be agents of peace in a troubled world.



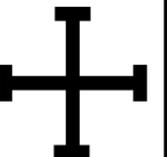
### "QUOTE OF THE WEEK"

"You [God] who first loved us did this, precisely this. You first loved us so that we might love you. And this was not because you needed to be loved by us, but because we could not be what you created us to be, except by loving you."

**William of Saint-Thierry**

(c.1080-1148)

French abbot, theologian and mystic  
*On Contemplating God*



**PLEASE PRAY FOR...** peace at this time. Though Christmas marks the breaking of God into history for our salvation, it is nonetheless a time of stress and anxiety for many people, primarily due to financial pressures, the tension that often marks family reunions or the loneliness of having no relatives or friends. Pray that each of us may be agents of peace and love.