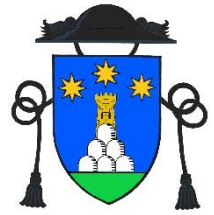




THE PARISH OF SAINT MARY, HALIFAX

Incorporating the churches of St Alban and St Mary

Parish Priest: Rev. Fr Joshua Hilton
 Deacon: Rev. John Walsh
 Presbytery: Clarence House, 2 Clarence Street, Halifax HX1 5DH
 T: 01422 352141 E: office.stmary.halifax@dioceseofleeds.org.uk
 Website: www.stmaryshalifax.com
 St Mary's Primary Academy: 01422 362365



MASS SCHEDULE AND DEVOTIONS

Perpetual Novena:

Wednesday after 9:30am Mass

Holy Rosary:

Saturday after 12:15pm Mass

Devotions to the Sacred Heart:

First Friday of the month after 9:30am Mass

Our Lady's Lamp this week burns for:

A private intention



Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament:

Saturday 11:00am – 12:00pm
at St Mary's

Confessions:

Saturday -
11:00am-12:00pm – St Mary's
Sunday -
5:30pm–6:00pm – St Alban's
or on Request

Marriages and Baptisms
by appointment

SUNDAY 17 th DECEMBER	3 rd Sunday of Advent Gaudete	9:30am 11:00am 4:00pm 6:00pm	St Mary's St Mary's St Mary's St Alban's	Fr John Britto Rose Marie Rothery Polish Mass People of the Parish
MONDAY 18 th	Advent	No Mass		
TUESDAY 19 th	Advent	No Mass		
WEDNESDAY 20 th	Advent	9:30am	St Mary's	Ramon Espares Sr.
THURSDAY 21 st	Advent	9:30am	St Alban's	Joe Reddeal
FRIDAY 22 nd	Advent	9:30am	St Mary's	Anne Smyth
SATURDAY 23 rd	Advent	12:15pm	St Mary's	Private Intention
SUNDAY 24 th	4 th Sunday of Advent	9:30am	St Mary's	Deceased members of the Moska Family
	Christmas Eve	4:00pm 7:00pm	St Mary's St Alban's	Wilfred, Winifred, Francis Coates Fr Hilton's Intentions
MONDAY 25 th	Christmas Day	9:30am 11:00am 1:30pm	St Mary's St Mary's St Mary's	Mgr Owens' Intentions Fred & Betty Budds Polish Mass
TUESDAY 26 th	St Stephen's Day	12:30pm	St Mary's	Alice Williams

PLEASE PRAY FOR all those who have died recently and for Fr James Noonan, Fr Geoffrey Parfitt, Fr Cyril Roddy, Fr Francis Carroll and all those whose anniversaries occur at this time.

MASSES RECEIVED: Grieci Family Intentions, Armstrong Family Intentions, Kathleen & Kenneth Wadsworth, Wasyl Lopuszniak, Tom Brennan, Ramon Espares Sr, Winnie Whelan, Christopher Colleran, Joe Reddeal.

PRAYER LIST Gerard James, Christine Blackburn, David Sutcliffe, Gladys Megson, John Wallis, Peter Fekete, William Long, Sonya Box, Julie Simpson, Charlotte Fitzpatrick, Peter Smith, Julie Hall, Moya Andrew, Suzanne Peaker, Larry Byrne, Kathleen Hannan, Nancy McGrath, Eleanor Foran, Patricia Reynolds and all the sick and housebound of the parish, their families and those who care for them. If you know of anyone in the Parish who is ill or is housebound please let Fr Hilton or Deacon John know so that a visitation can be arranged.

CHRISTMAS MASS OBLIGATION

Since so many people have been asking, I hope that the following is helpful: All Catholics are obliged to hear Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. This year Christmas, which is a Holy Day, falls on a Monday. Therefore, if you attend one of the vigil Masses of Christmas on Sunday (ie. 4pm or 7pm on Christmas Eve) your obligation is fulfilled for both Sunday and Christmas. If you are attending Christmas Mass on Monday morning, you are obliged to attend Mass on Sunday morning also. If you read it slowly, it makes sense.

CHRISTMAS OFFERINGS/COLLECTION

The collection taken at Christmas Masses, as on Easter Sunday, is your personal gift to your priest which makes up a significant part of the clergy's annual taxable income. This excludes standing orders which are retained for parish funds and are not included in the Christmas offering.

ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY

If you require the services of the SVP please call 07512 011 440.
If anyone would like to donate the Sort Code and Account Number are - 60-60-04 46086137

CHURCH CLEANING FOR CHRISTMAS

Could you come along and help to clean the church ready for Christmas?
Wednesday 20th December after 9:30 Mass is the time.
Cleaning materials will be provided, all you need is a pair of Marigolds.
Tea, coffee biscuits and some pleasant conversation will be available!

WEDNESDAY ROSARY ZOOM CODES

From 15th November the new codes are ID: 724 2604 2240 Password: 9ErJMm

HALIFAX CATHOLIC MEMORIAL CLUB

On Wednesday 20th December, the Dames singing group is holding a Christmas Sing-a-Long. Faith supper (contributions welcome) and raffle in aid of Macmillan Cancer Support.
Free admission - all welcome.
The Club is open over the Christmas period, including Christmas Eve (12-3, 7-midnight), and Christmas Day lunch.

COME AND SEE MONTHLY PRAYER GROUP

Mission Halifax invite you to a new monthly prayer group. Prayerful reflection, Adoration, praise & worship, and testimony, 7pm, Friday 12 January 2024. St Patrick's Church, Elland HX5 0PU. All welcome.

RECENT FINANCIAL NEWS - Last week's loose collection was: **£714.85**

Thank you to those who have switched to standing orders.

FROM YOUR PARISH PRIEST

We're nearly at the end of 2023. It may not be the greatest year that many of us have experienced, though perhaps not as bad as the last few before. But even this year, like all years, is supposed to be a reminder to us of something more important. An event so important that all our years are counted from it. In seven days' time we will celebrate the 2023rd anniversary of the birth of Christ.

(Yes, we are probably out by a few years because someone didn't add up properly somewhere along the line. And yes, even now, we can't be 100% certain how far we're out by. Just think how difficult it must have been to keep track of time in the ancient world.) But anyway...

The Word was made flesh, God became a man, Jesus Christ was born at a specific moment in human history. This is not mythology that happened once upon a time. This happened at a particular time and in a particular place: in Bethlehem, 2023(-ish) years ago. Why then? God could choose any time in the history of the world for His Son to be born. Why did He choose that one? The answer must be that there was something right about it. St John's Gospel tells us: "He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world knew him not. He came to his own home, and his own people received him not".

At this time in the Roman world, there was supposedly a great peace, but in reality there were constant uprisings and rebellions across the empire. It was a peace that forced on people all across Europe a culture that depended on slavery and infanticide. It was a peace founded on military might, and maintained through the constant threat of violent execution. And it's in the middle of this world that Christ chose to be born. I'm not sure I would want to be born into a world like that. Why did God think that was a good time for His Son to enter our world? We can be certain He didn't make a mistake. This was the opportune moment. The world may not have been perfect. But it was ready.

So many people think that they're not ready for Christ because they are not yet perfect. None of us are. But we can still be ready. If we wait until we are perfect to receive Christ, then we'll all be waiting a very long time. If God had waited for the world to be perfect before entering it, He would still be waiting. The Son of God entered our world as a human being because, even at its best, our world is still broken. Even when the whole world is seemingly at peace, it's obvious that the world — and all the human beings in it — need a Saviour.

And that is what we will be celebrating next week, that our saviour has arrived. We can breathe a sigh of relief because we know, that Jesus has entered our world to pick up the pieces of our broken lives, relationships and hearts. I always feel enormous pity for those who do not know God. It must be exhausting to think that you have no one to rely on but yourself and that you are in this complex and difficult world alone at the helm. Thankfully, the Lord has spared us that grim fate.

Jesus was born as a human being, has shared our condition, its ups and downs, its joys and its sorrows and most importantly, He has redeemed it. At the end of our lives, rather than oblivion, we have union with God made flesh to hope for. And all because of that dark cold night 2023 years ago. Whether the New Year is a good year or a bad year, it doesn't really matter, because whatever it is, it is the year of our Lord and He will be with us every step of the way.

God bless you all,
Fr Hilton

Mass Offerings, Notices and News Items for the Parish Bulletin should be given to Fr Hilton or Deacon John by Wednesday evening. Notices and News Items but not Mass Intentions can be sent to John Coates (07842 066450 or jbcoates@btinternet.com) again by Wednesday evening. The Parish Safeguarding Representative is Clare O'Neill (07792147620 psr.coneill@dioceseofleeds.org.uk)
Leeds Diocese Charity Registration No. 249404