

Every day, as long as this 'today' lasts,  
keep encouraging one another" (Heb 3:13)

**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent**  
**Readings p. 90**

**2 Samuel 7:1-5. 8-12. 14.16**

King David is concerned that the Lord should have a worthy dwelling place.

**Romans 16:25-27**

Paul praises God who gives us strength to live the Gospel. God is worthy of praise.

**St. Luke 1:26-38**

Through the action of the Holy Spirit, Mary becomes a worthy dwelling place for the Son of God.

*Listen!*

*You are to  
conceive and  
bear  
a son.*



**T**he situation into which Jesus was born was one of huge stigma with dangerous consequences. God's physical birth into this world was condemned socially; Jesus was marginalised from the moment of his conception. Imagine God choosing to be involved so intimately in this world and in such a shocking way. Even the town of Galilee is problematic for this news, as Galileans were considered by the religious leaders of the time to be 'second-class Jews'. So the fact that God would send his messenger there is controversial in itself. Galilean Jews were considered to be less faithful than others, so it is ironic that in this particular situation Mary's response is the exact opposite. God surprises. God stands with the marginalised. God is present in the most hidden places at times. On the first Sunday of Advent we were invited to 'keep awake'. As we approach the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ, what have you noticed this Advent? What has your waiting been like? How have you prepared? Where have you seen God present this Advent? Where have you seen God being born around you? In the most unexpected places? In the most marginalised? Is your heart more open to receive a new birth of God again?

**'Quiet me within, clothe my body in peacefulness, that your Word once again may take flesh – this time, within me – as once it did in holy Mary; long Advent days ago.'** (Edward Hays) Jane Mellett

**Today's Psalm**  
**Psalm 88**

Many people today are hesitant about saying forever. Situations change so rapidly that full, life-long commitment is not easily given. Today's psalm celebrates the unbroken fidelity of God's love.

*Of this I am sure, that your love lasts forever that your truth is firmly established as the heavens.*

In response to God's fidelity, the psalmist promises undying gratitude. Our response is: *I will sing forever of your love, O Lord.*

The verses selected for today's liturgy are taken from a long psalm lamenting a military defeat which dented the faith of many people. The psalmist is seeking to restore faith and hope by reminding people of the long-standing promise of God to David that his dynastic line would bring forth a king for all ages. The day of fulfilment draws closer when Gabriel announces to Mary that her son will sit on the throne of David.

For all who travel in darkness of spirit whose faith is tested, whose hope is wavering, may Christmas bring joy back to their lives and a song to their hearts.

Fr. Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap.

## St. Mary's Catholic Church, Euxton - Tel: (01257) 262665

Mass Intentions for w/c December 24 2017

**Sun: 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent**

9.00.am. Tony Hart

6.00.pm. **Vigil Mass of Christmas**

**Mon:**

9.30.am. **Christmas Morning Mass**

**Tues: No Mass Today**

**Wed: St. John Apostle**

9.30.am. Bernard Longton

**Thurs: The Holy Innocents**

9.30.am. Billy Strickland

**Fri: St. Thomas Becket**

70.pm; Hsouls

**The Holy Family**

8.30.am. **Parishioners**

10.30.am. Sam & Catherine Worthington

**0771 942 7926 (only for emergency use)**

### Confessions

At your request

### On Admittance to Hospital or Nursing Home

Staff need to be made aware by you: that you, or the member of your family, or the person you accompany, are Catholic, and require the services of the Catholic Chaplaincy.

### Cemetery

All visitors are asked to help keep the Cemetery tidy and to use the appropriate waste bins.

Fr. Kevin Snape (7/2); Fr. Dan Cadogan (11/2)

We pray for all sick, the specially the sick of the parish including Ryan Troop;

Catherine Thompson; Maureen Beardsworth; TThomas Halligan And Fr. Jonathan OSB

**We thank all our volunteers** who have beautifully decorated the church for our Christmas celebration and remind you that donations at the crib are traditionally for the Nugent Care Society which provides services for those in need throughout the Archdiocese.

**Congratulations** to our school children, teachers, class assistants, and wardrobe assistants, for a wonderful, and prayerful performance last Wednesday. Were you the parent who was asked by your child for a remote-control pink Barbie Corvette at Christmas only to find that every single toy shop on the planet had sold out by the end of November! The tragedy of Christmas is that we are left feeling we have failed as parents, or as a spouse, or as friends, if we have not managed to buy those must-have presents, if we have missed somebody off the card list, or failed to create a Christmas day worthy of a centre fold in Harpers Bizarre. The media has turned Christmas into a frenzy of 'getting things right'.

But despite 'consumerism gone mad', the nativity of Jesus is an event that still grips millions of people. The birth of Jesus heralds a new way of living for each and every new generation, and we are reminded of this significance every year at this time. Yes the decorations have to come down, but let's remind ourselves to live the Christmas message of giving and caring, each and every day of the year.

. **Stephen's Day** Tradition 26th December St. Stephen's Day, better known to us as Boxing Day, is traditionally celebrated on December 26th. The old custom of giving to the poor is reflected in today's Christmas carol 'Good King Wenceslas' who gave gifts of bread and wine to a poor man on 'the feast of Stephen'. In short Boxing Day is a day of good will to those who are not so well off as we are.

**Feast of the Holy Innocents** 28th December The feast of the Holy Innocents recalls the boys aged under two whom Herod killed in order to try and remove Jesus from the scene. This is very much a feast of our time.

On this day we also remember those innocent and defenceless children who still suffer today. We remember those children who suffer neglect, and abuse. We remember those children in poorer countries who suffer from hunger, poverty and poor health. We remember those children who are forced to fight or to work long hours for little or no money in hazardous conditions. We remember the children who are victims of war. On this day we remember that every child has a right to love, security, and basic needs.

**It's the season of 'waste'.** Be careful to separate all the uneaten vegetables and roast potatoes. They'll make a fabulous 'bubble and squeak'.

Choices are the hinges of destiny. (Edwin Markham)