

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

**January 1st 2023
Solemnity of Mary,
the Mother of God**

Numbers 6 22-27

St John describes his vision of a woman clothed with the sun, standing on the moon. In mythological terms he recounts the birth of Jesus.

1 Galatians 4.4-7

The destiny of the whole human race depends on Christ.

St. Luke 2.16-21

Elizabeth, in the power of the Holy Spirit, declares that Mary is

"Yes, blessed is
she who
believed that
the promise of
the Lord"



**Today's Psalm
Psalm 44**

This psalm for a royal wedding acquired a new level of meaning when Christ brought all things to fulfillment. Paul considered the Church as the bride of Christ. The psalm celebrates how Christ will take the Church, holy and spotless, to be his heavenly bride. Today's preface speaks of Mary taken up to heaven as the beginning and pattern of the Church in its perfection.

Mary was hailed by Elizabeth as the mother of the Lord. At the wedding of Christ and the Church, Mary's role is that of Queen Mother.

On your right stands the queen in gold of Ophir.

In ancient royalties the Queen Mother was far more influential than the king's bride-queen. We can hear Mary whisper advice to the bride to be.

Listen, O daughter, give ear to my words;

Forget your own people and your father's house.

She reminds us that our final home is in heaven. God has made her 'a sign of favour to the Church at its beginning, and the promise of its perfection as the bride of Christ, radiant in beauty'

Fr. Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap.

Mary's destiny had been revealed to her by the Angel Gabriel. Joseph too had been foretold in a dream of the virgin birth. But just in case there were any malingering doubts, to have a gang of excited shepherds gate-crash the stable re-telling the news that the angels had brought to them out on the hills must have been wonderfully reassuring for the new parents. Mary certainly had plenty to ponder. For Mary there was a fast unravelling realisation that she was part of God's plan. The birth of the new baby represented a new and exciting beginning, not only for Mary, but for us all.

The first day of the year is the day the Church sets aside for honouring Mary. Mary represents true discipleship. Mary exhibits a life of hearing, seeing, and telling of God's marvellous deeds. Mary inspires us to consider deeply the significance of events in our own lives. How much in our lives is valuable and how much is not? Do we journey through life oblivious to the world around us, or do we resolve to make some kind of impact? If to date we have moved blinkered through life, wasting the opportunities that God has scattered in our path, now is the time to make a fresh start. Now is the time to make a fresh start based not on the values of our celebrity driven society, but on the model of Mary's selfless love.

If Mary had made a new year's resolution in that stable all those years ago, it probably would have been to make herself an instrument for God's will. As for our own resolutions, we could live another year of frustration and disappointment, or we could resolve to make Mary our model, and look harder for God's direction in our lives.

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

Mass Intentions for w/c Jan 1st 2023

Sun.: Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God

8.30.pm.: Joseph Miller

10.30.am.: Parisoners

Mon.: No Public Mass

Tues: No Public Mass

Wed: No Public Mass

Thur.: Vigil of The Epiphany of the Lord

7.opm.: In the Parish Hall

Fri.: The Epiphany of the Lord

Sun.: The Baptism of the Lord

8.30.am.: Parisoners

10.30.am.: Stephen Roberts

0771 942 7926 (only for emergency use)

Email stmary.euxton@rcaol.org.uk

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.

Mass Intentions Received

The soul of Stephen Roberts;

John Edmondson Ld;

Margaret Carney Ld; Jean Telford;

Sid & Nellie Gerard; Special Intention RK

We pray for Pope Benedict who has died

We pray for the Sick, especially the sick of the parish including Ryan Troop; Catherine Thompson; Maureen Beardsworth; Desmond Corman; Thomas Halligan

World Day of Peace is on January 1st, but transferred in many parishes to Sunday January 15th which is celebrated as Peace Sunday. The Holy Father's 2023 Message for World Peace Day is: "No one can be saved alone. Cobatting Covid-19 together, embarking together on paths of peace."

The name of Jesus means 'saviour'. 'We read in the Bible how the Angel Gabriel revealed the name to Mary. "You shall call His name Jesus." And to Joseph the angel not only revealed the name but explained its meaning "You shall call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." So on this day we are reminded that Jesus' very name tells us of the greatest gift we are ever to receive 'Salvation'!

Epiphany (Friday 6th) A Beginner's Guide to Guiding Stars

God reaches out far and wide to announce the birth of his Son. He reaches out to simple shepherds in the fields around Bethlehem, and to great intellectuals from the East. He reaches out to those of different religions, to politicians and to scientists. The revelation that a saviour has been born is bigger than anybody. The story of the Magi, who followed the star and sidestepped the evil Herod, is tempting in its appeal to romanticise, but if we are to learn anything we have to focus on the nature of God's revelation. It mightn't feel much as though God is reaching out to us. The stable with its shepherds and kings might seem very far away as we take down our Christmas decorations and recycle our Christmas cards. There's a sense of 'back to normal', and for most of us that means a hum drum cycle of boring jobs and making ends meet. Today's story tells us that it doesn't have to be that way. To follow the star is to make a conscious decision to cut out everything that is unimportant. The rules are simple. We have to make the right choices on a daily basis no matter what the consequences. In the light of poor decisions, we must learn to ask forgiveness and move away from regret. We must find time in a world full of distractions to listen to our inner voice. Most importantly we have to ask God to guide us as he guided the Magi.

Most of us get through life relying on the knowledge we already have. Today's challenge is to look for something new. Knowing where to look for our own guiding star is up to us, but one thing is for sure, if we are not looking for revelation, we will never find it. Bitesize

We spend January 1 walking through our lives, room by room, drawing up a list of work to be done, cracks to be patched. Maybe this year, to balance the list, we ought to walk through the rooms of our lives... not looking for flaws, but for potential. Ellen Goodman