

The Catholic Parish of Our Lady, Star of the Sea



3rd Week of Advent, Year B
Sunday Cycle B, Weekday Cycle II, Psalter Week III

“He came as a witness,
as a witness to speak for the light,
so that everyone might believe through him.”

John 1:6

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A Registered Charity (Charity Commission No. 278742)

Gospel Reflection

“This Sunday’s Gospel invites us to continue our reflection on the person and mission of John the Baptist. Today we depart from the Gospel of Mark and read a selection from the Gospel of John. The Gospel for today combines a brief passage from the prologue to John’s Gospel with a report about John the Baptist. As in Mark’s Gospel, the Gospel of John contains no birth narrative. Instead, John’s Gospel begins with a theological reflection that has come to be called the “prologue.” This prologue places the story of Jesus in its cosmological framework. It speaks of Jesus’ existence with God since the beginning of time. In John’s Gospel, Jesus is presented as the fulfilment of the Old Testament and the culmination of the Word, the light that is coming into the world’s darkness. Following this prologue, John reports on the ministry of John the Baptist. We learn about the attention that John the Baptist received from the Jewish authorities. Messengers from the Jewish priests, the Levites and the Pharisees question John about his identity and the meaning of the baptisms that he is performing. John’s Gospel uses these questions to establish the relationship between Jesus and John the Baptist. John the Baptist is not the Messiah, nor is he Elijah or the Prophet. In John’s denials, we hear echoes of the kind of messianic expectations that were common in first-century Palestine. The only affirmative response that John the Baptist gives is when he quotes the prophet Isaiah. Upon answering the next question, John announces that the saviour they seek is already among them, but as yet unrecognized. John’s response highlights for us an important Advent theme: Jesus has already come into the world as our saviour. During Advent, we pray that we will be able to recognize Jesus’ presence in our midst. Advent also reminds us that Jesus will come again to fulfil the promise of salvation. We pray that we will continue to be watchful as we anticipate that great day. The third Sunday of Advent is also called Gaudete Sunday. Gaudete, a Latin word which means “rejoice,” is taken from the entrance antiphon for Sunday’s Mass. This theme is echoed in today’s second reading from the first Letter to the Thessalonians. It is a reminder that Advent is a season of joy because our salvation is already at hand.”

Please do visit the “Wednesday Word” Website each week for short Reflections on the Sunday Readings: <http://www.wednesdayword.org/sunday-gospel.htm>

Memory Tree – Praying for Loved ones at Christmas

Throughout Advent there will be a Memory Christmas Tree at the back of the church (OLSS). There will be tags available to write the names of loved ones on who are no longer with us that can then be attached to the tree in their memory. There will also be a basket for donations located by the tree, donations going to the ‘School of Joy’ in Bethlehem www.schoolofjoy.org via the ‘Friends of the Holy Land’ www.friendsoftheholylan.org.uk

Christmas Masses

Christmas Eve: 24th - 5pm: Vigil Mass of the Nativity at Our Lady, Star of the Sea.

Christmas Eve: 24th - 9pm: Mass During the Night at Our Lady, Star of the Sea.

Christmas Day 25th - 8am: Mass of the Dawn at Our Lady, Star of the Sea.

Christmas Day 25th - 10am: Mass of the Day at Our Lady, Star of the Sea.

Tuesday 26th December ff. 10am: Masses each day of the Christmas Octave.

The Priest's wages and the Christmas/Easter Offering

Your Parish Priest (like all PPs in England and Wales) lives on a salary that is made up of two parts. The first part is the set monthly "stipend" that his parish pays him every month. The amount is decided by the diocese, and in East Anglia it's currently £469.27 per month (i.e. £5,631.24 per year). The second part consists of the Christmas and Easter offerings. Parish Priests receive, directly, all the money that is collected at the Masses of Christmas Day and Easter Sunday. However, because so many people now give directly to their parishes by bank standing orders (SOs), the bishops have decided that every PP should also receive, at Christmas and Easter, an amount equivalent to one quarter of a month's SO income. The parish treasurer simply works out how much that is, and then pays that amount to the PP. (This way of doing it means that the parish can still recoup the Gift Aid money that the government has agreed to pay on the SOs, as well as the Gift Aid on the cash collection which goes to the parish and not the priest). Your Parish Priest received a total of £1,701.59 last Christmas and £1,596.45 last Easter, which means his annual salary this last year was £8,929.28 (i.e. £744.11 per month), for which he is very grateful indeed. Thank you! Please remember, that just like everyone else, the parish priest must pay both Income Tax and National Insurance on all of this income, and anything else that he is paid through the parish. However, any and all personal gifts are exempt from inclusion in his annual tax return. Especially chocolate!

KSC Notes:

1. Young people of the Parish are invited to take part in the prize-winning KSC Christmas photo competition after Masses at St. N. 9am and OLSS 11am this Sunday. All that is needed is for them to have the use of a camera or camera phone to take the two best pictures they can of 1. A Crib & 2. A Crucifix (Jesus on a Cross). See Bro Chris Brooks after those Masses for a sheet of details and rules for the competition.
2. The final KSC Lottery charity draw of the year will take place during refreshments in the Stella Maris Hall after 11 am Mass this Sunday. Entries of £10 a ticket number are now being collected by Bro Chris Brooks for the KSC 2024 quarterly draw that commences on Easter Sunday.

The C.W.L. are currently selling raffle tickets for their Christmas Hampers.

Upcoming Second Collections for 2023

16th/17th December – Diocesan Dependant Priests' Fund.

Weekly Collection

Thank you for last week's collection which amounted to £c400.00 (Plus the regular standing orders of c.£477). Your continued financial support for your parish, the diocese and the wider Universal Church is much needed and very much appreciated.

We Pray for...

We pray for all in our Parish who are currently unwell and who are suffering from illness of one kind or another, praying especially for the housebound who are not able to join us for regular worship. We pray also for those who have recently passed away and for those whose anniversaries occur around this time; may they rest in peace. Names of the Sick and the Deceased may be written in the Parish Prayer Books and will be prayed for.

Mass & Service Times for the Coming Week: December 17th – December 23rd

- Saturday 16th - 17:00 - Our Lady's** (3rd Sunday of Advent, Year B)
Offered for: Daniel Burden & Louise Boden's Intention
- Sunday 17th - 09:00 - St Nicholas'** (3rd Sunday of Advent, Year B)
Offered for: People of the Parish
- Sunday 17th - 11:00 - Our Lady's** (3rd Sunday of Advent, Year B)
Offered for:
- Monday 18th - 09:00 - Our Lady's** (Ad.Feria)
Offered for:
- Tuesday 19th - 12:00 - Our Lady's** (Ad.Feria)
Offered for:
- Wednesday 20th - 09:00 - Our Lady's** (Ad.Feria)
Offered for:
- Thursday 21st - 08:30 - Our Lady's (Requiem Mass)** (Ad.Feria)
Offered for: Mary Cox (RIP)
- Friday 22nd - 09:00 - Our Lady's** (Ad.Feria)
Offered for:
- Saturday 23rd - 09:00 - Our Lady's** (Ad.Feria)
Offered for:
- Saturday 23rd - 17:00 - Our Lady's** (4th Sunday of Advent, Year B)
Offered for: Marie & Kathleen Walshe (RIP)
- Sunday 24th - 09:00 - St Nicholas'** (4th Sunday of Advent, Year B)
Offered for: James & Edna McNamee (RIP)
- Sunday 24th - 11:00 - Our Lady's** (4th Sunday of Advent, Year B)
Offered for: People of the Parish

Confessions: The Sacrament of Reconciliation will take place every week during Adoration and Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament (from 9:30 to c.10am) following the 9am Mass on Saturday Morning. One may also make an appointment with Fr Pádraig for confession at another suitable time.
Mass Intentions: If you would like to have a Mass offered for someone, living or deceased, or for a particular intention (exams, interview, etc.), please collect a pre-printed envelope from the back of the church. Details of your request, including the preferred date, can then be entered on the front of the envelope (legibly please) and then your offering may be placed inside before being given to Fr Pádraig.
