



# Weekly Newsletter

**Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

## **St. Anne's Catholic Church**

Lynton Avenue Weeping Cross Stafford, ST17 0EA. Telephone: 01785 661012 - Website [www.st-anne-st.org.uk](http://www.st-anne-st.org.uk)

## **St. Patrick's Catholic Church**

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Email: [stannespatrick.stafford@rcaob.org.uk](mailto:stannespatrick.stafford@rcaob.org.uk)

**Parish Administrator:** Father Robert Devaney - **Parish Secretary:** Marie Badger

**Deacon:** Rev. Michael Horsnall

The parishes are part of the Archdiocese of Birmingham. Registered Charity No.234216

### **ST. ANNE'S PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Lynton Avenue, ST17 0EA

Telephone: 01785 663128 Fax: 01785 662987

Email: [office@st-annes-weepingcross.staffs.sch.uk](mailto:office@st-annes-weepingcross.staffs.sch.uk)

Head Teacher: Mr. M. Killeen

### **ST. PATRICK'S PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Marston Road, ST16 3BT

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Principal: Mr. M. Brandon

## **TIMES OF HOLY MASS AND LITURGIES THIS WEEK**

### **FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

Day	Date	Mass Time	Church	Liturgical Day	Mass Intention
Sat	19 <sup>th</sup>	1:00pm	St Patrick's	Vigil	Patty Tiernan RIP
		6:30pm	St Anne's	Vigil	June Reeve RIP
Sun	20 <sup>th</sup>	8:00am	St Patrick's	<b>Fourth Sunday of Advent (Gaudete)</b>	People of the Parish
		9:30am	St Anne's		Intentions of Winifred Meehan
Mon	21 <sup>st</sup>	9:30am	St Anne's		Advent Feria Bridie Toner RIP
Tue	22 <sup>nd</sup>	9:30am	St Patrick's		Advent Feria David Norton
Wed	23 <sup>rd</sup>	<b>12 Noon</b>	St Patrick's	<b>Funeral service for Dorothy Faulkner</b>	
Thu	24 <sup>th</sup>	4:00pm	St Patrick's	<b>CHRISTMAS EVE</b>	John & Jean Pettit
		5:00pm	St Anne's		June Reeve RIP
		7:00pm	St Patrick's		Michael Scott
		9:00pm	St Anne's		Intentions of Winifred Meehan
Fri	25 <sup>th</sup>	9:00am 10:00am	St Anne's St Patrick's	<b>CHRISTMAS DAY Solemnity of the Lord's Nativity</b>	Peggy Toner RIP Bob & Damian
Sat	26 <sup>th</sup>	1:00pm	St Patrick's	Vigil	Jack Devaney (Ann)
		6:30pm	St Anne's	Vigil	Pat Parsons RIP
Sun	27 <sup>th</sup>	8:00am	St Patrick's	<b>Feast of the Holy Family</b>	The McHugh Family
		9:30am	St Anne's		People of the Parish

### **SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM**

By Appointment

**Prayers for the sick:** St Patrick's: Phylis Bowers, Susan Prince, Tim Tiernan, Gregory McKinlay, Linda Reavy, Martha Porter, Cecylia Kotara St Anne's: Michael Glover, Patricia Walters, Thomas McCormick, Mary Terry, Bernard Lundberg, Cath Miles, Walter Rogers, Richard McMahon, Patsy Connelly Smith, Colin Wise.

**Prayers for the departed loved ones whose anniversaries occur at this time:** /St. Patrick's/ Stanislaw Gackowski, Winifred Cotton, Dom Krusul, Francis Ackland, Clifford Hewitt, Violet Melvin, Wasil Hrynecko, Joseph Meehan, Geoffrey Bowes-Lyon, Bridget Myatt, James McEwan, Egizia, Valentini, Nicholas Byrne, Austin Read, Norah Lennon and James Scullion /St Anne's/ Vincent Eardsley, Noel Joret, Esther Martin, Peter Rice, Delia Brough, Ronnie Thomason, Eliza Baldwin, Frances Curran, John Freeman, Elsie Papworth, Pepita Pinney, John Taylor, Joyce Muriel, Bernard Hadley, Robert Sartory, Catherine Hammond and Mary Rogers.

Income 13 <sup>th</sup> Dec	Source	Gift Aid	Non-Gift Aid	Standing Order	Total	Attendance
St Anne's	Offertory	£145.15	£141.50	£283.84	£570.49	Sat 41 Sun 36
St. Patrick's	Offertory	£56.00	£248.00	£146.23	£450.23	Sat 28 Sun 19

*On the Archdiocese website there is a standing order and Gift Aid form for parishioners so they can continue to give at this time. Please direct any such enquiries to:*

<https://www.birminghamdiocese.org.uk/pages/FAQS/category/finance-resources> Blessings Fr. Bob

**\*This email is from the archdiocese:** Just to let you know, there is a donate **BUTTON (TOP RIGHT)** on the home page of the diocesan website – [www.birminghamdiocese.org.uk](http://www.birminghamdiocese.org.uk)

**Parish Tote 150 Club November 2020 Winners.** £100 M J Murphy - 63, £50 T Lawrence – 129, £20 M Ross – 45, £10 C Price – 24, £10 S Bayliffe – 21, £10 M Picking – 105, £10 P O'Neill – 78, £10 G Thickett – 149, £10 W Meehan – 58, £10 M Harwood – 104, £10 E Arrowsmith – 84.

Thank you for your support. A reminder to those who pay yearly your monies are due in January. Further details from Marie on 01785 661012.

*A big thank you to those parishioners who have filled out new Standing Orders to help support the churches at this critical time. I am grateful to those who have continued to support their respective churches in this way for many years. If you can join them and make such a commitment for our offertory support; whether weekly, fortnightly, monthly or annually, it would make such a difference. You remain in control for as long as you want. Those who use gift aid envelopes will find new ones for this financial year, labelled and numbered at the back of each church. Some parishioners might like to know that the parish office (St Anne's) can always be used as a 'drop-off' for envelopes. Now that we have started public Masses once more, there will be large collection bins placed on entry and exit\**

*At this time though it makes a 'sink or swim' difference to your church. Without that money coming in, our ability to meet the ever mounting expenses (of maintenance, consumables, utilities and fabric upkeep, not to mention health and safety) will diminish. Also, for St Anne's, the regular income from Hall Hire has understandably dried up and this will make a massive difference. A significant amount of unavoidable remedial work is also planned shortly for St Anne's church roof, so the outgoings remain significant. We continue to pay Council Tax; Water; Electricity; Gas. We are all in uncharted territory, an uncertain future, but if you are able to please help in any amount you can afford.*

*Very many thanks*

### St Anne's Roof Appeal (Update)

**The remedial work to the lower roof has now been completed.** We are appealing for any donations St Anne's community can donate to this work; my humble appreciation to those who have already given so generously; we are gradually on our way - looking at a sum approaching £10,000. (We are well over a third of the way there). Next year we plan to try to remedy ongoing problems to the upper roof. Two special baskets are at the entrance and exit of the church dedicated to this special fund. Please accept my sincere and grateful thanks for any donations that you may be able to make. I am very conscious of the straitened times we are living through at present.

F.Bob

**Return to Public Masses:** Our Mass schedule has returned to what it was before Nov 5<sup>th</sup>.

We all know that the Christmas celebration period will seem very strange this year in its family context [three households] but our parishes intend to provide **Christmas Masses for Catholic Stafford**. We are offering Christmas vigil Masses in each parish church (one early, one later) and **LOOK BELOW:** Any parishioner who is 'able' may offer their assistance in cleaning a bench or chairs after the Mass they attend. (Many hands make light work). Thanks in advance.



**Our Recently Deceased:** Please remember in your prayers **Dorothy Faulkner**, former parishioner of St Patrick's, who died recently. Please also remember Dorothy's family in your prayers. May she rest in peace and rise in glory.

**CHRISTMAS MASSES:****Catholic Stafford**

<b>DEC</b>	<b>St Anne's</b>	<b>St Patrick's</b>	<b>St Austin's</b>
24 <sup>th</sup>	EVE	5:00pm	4:00pm
24 <sup>th</sup>	EVE	9:00pm	7:00pm
25 <sup>th</sup>	MORNING	9:00am	10:00am
			11:00am

Unfortunately, due to the workable 'maximum' capacity of each church and the impossibility of trying to estimate the numbers for each Mass, we are having a booking system. We have one dedicated mobile number specifically for our Christmas Masses (**07856918465**) Please either call or text leaving your name, contact no., the Mass you wish to book and the total number in your group (including yourself). The phone is checked every evening and any bookings recorded. This is the only way to book a Mass. No bookings can be made by email. *In order to provide opportunity for as many people as possible to attend at Christmas, we ask please that you attend just one Mass.*

Thank you to everyone who has already booked places for the Christmas Masses. Please assume that any bookings placed before December 11th are confirmed. The number of bookings has meant it is taking longer to respond. **The early Masses at 4.00pm, 5.00pm and 6:00pm are now fully booked, but** there is still some availability at the later Masses at 7.00pm, 8.00pm and 9.00pm and also on the 9.00am and 10.00am on Christmas Day. DUE TO THE LARGE NUMBERS, WE HAVE DECIDED TO ADD AN EXTRA MASS AT 2:00PM ON CHRISTMAS EVE AT ST AUSTIN'S. (IT WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE TO CHANGE TO THIS EARLIER MASS IF YOU HAVE BOOKED ALREADY TO ATTEND ONE OF THE OTHER MASSES).

This sort of arrangement goes against our way of doing things, doesn't it, but sadly, **TO KEEP WITHIN LAWFUL GUIDELINES, WE HAVE TO WATCH NUMBERS**. Be assured that if, during the coming weeks, if places are booked and demand is high, extra Masses may be put on Christmas Morning. With this in mind, it may mean that some may have to attend a different Mass – maybe a later one on Christmas Eve or even coming on Christmas Day. Also, it's a chance for us to remember that each day of the Christmas Octave week is really an extended Christmas Day! Very Many thanks for your understanding. (Very important end note: we three parishes are appealing for as many stewards and cleaners as possible over these two days of Masses, so please, please indicate, by phone, email, or text, what Masses you might attend, and also if you could help in a neighbouring parish). Many thanks to all who do so much, but we do need extra hands for Christmas.

All our churches will be open at least 30 minutes before each Mass begins and we would encourage people to arrive early. This enables the stewards to show you to your seats, avoiding last minute rushes. Details for the Track and Trace will have already been collected via the booking system.

**Friends of the Holy Land:** During the season of Advent we usually have Crib Donations for Friends of the Holy Land. This year has been particularly 'ruthless' for them in terms of lack of pilgrims (especially during this coming Christmas period when Bethlehem would normally be packed) and lack of sales for their wonderful artefacts etc. This year's Crib donations run from the First Sunday of Advent, and throughout the Christmas period, but of course our lockdown may interfere with this. Just drop off at the presbytery if you wish. However, you can donate through their website (where our Christian brothers and sisters' desperate situation is made evident). It is: <https://www.friendsoftheholylad.org.uk> They also take donations via internet banking. Their bank account details are Friends of the Holy Land Sort Code 600541 Account Number 24591211 Gift Aid forms are available in the porch. Any amount of assistance would be very welcome. Many thanks

**Women's Refuge (gifts for the Christmas Tree):** As usual, we will focus our gifts for the refuge but this year we will offer donations in form of cash or vouchers (supermarket). I have ordered two trees (smaller ones) for both churches and, rather than present bulky gifts [such as bedding, towels etc.] the Refuge would really appreciate vouchers because it eliminates the need for storage, which becomes more problematic in these times. We are now back in church from **3<sup>rd</sup> December and will include the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent**. Vouchers or cash in envelopes can always be left at the presbytery and I shall place them under the trees. Mark them either St Anne or St Patrick. Many Thanks

**Grateful Thanks:** Many thanks to both our parishes for all the good wishes and help I have received over the year, not to mention the Christmas cards and blessings. I hardly need mention how important it was to have such wonderful and selfless volunteers for stewarding and cleaning once our Mass schedule returned. As usual, so many have simply 'got on' with things and this is what helps parishes run so smoothly. We have certainly profoundly missed the full complement of parishioners at our regular Masses and look forward to welcoming back all those who have had to shield for many reasons. Hopefully, by the end of Spring '21 a degree of near "normal" routine may have returned. A big welcome also to our visitors attending Masses over Christmas and any new parishioners who may have moved into the area. **On behalf of Deacon Michael and myself: A Blessed and Happy Christmas and New Year to you all. Fr. Bob & Deacon Michael.**

## HOMILY FOR FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

You've probably noticed over recent decades how popular many types of computer games are, and we're not talking just about children's games here. There are quite a number of adult oriented and very complex interactive games that demand high skill levels; such as 'Quest' and so on. Essentially, the emphasis is on 'interactive' where we aren't just passive watchers to be entertained and informed. Each participant has a role to play, to interact and be proactive to the given events. I would suggest that our relationship and understanding we have with God is not only obviously 'two way' but very much 'interactive' in the fullest sense. Our very vocation, as created and called children of God, is to be proactive in our relationship with the Lord. We have previously spoken about the God who 'made us' in the Catechism, but we need to see God as the One who 'is making us'. It's a lifetime's work and it's a work of 'mercy'. God knows we need time and we need training and correcting constantly throughout our lives. And where we begin, in our proactive response to God's love and care, is where we listen and believe and say YES. Because it's our YES that allows God to fully work on us, in us and for us. Mary's YES at the Annunciation was the foundational positive proactive response "par excellence" wasn't it.

We are all called to co-operate with God, but it is Mary's enlisted co-operation that enables God to send us our divine saviour, Jesus. And it's also a great consolation for us as well, because if we ourselves believe that our proactive co-operation is needed for a unique role in human salvation, then we know that God is continuing to create us; to create the image of His Son in us.

A second overriding theme of our readings today involve the idea of "house". In today's first reading from Samuel David wanted to build a temple for God but he was put off this by the prophet Nathan. He explained to David that the house of God's presence must be of God's own making; 'The Lord will make you a house'. We use all sorts of imagery for holiness and commitment, don't we? And we see today the idea of dwelling places of God. David doesn't build a house for God, it falls to his son Solomon to complete the building of the Temple in Jerusalem. Interestingly, God's promise to David was to make David himself the HOUSE. His family line would be blessed forever, and this was achieved through the birth of Jesus. This image of the house is used for many aspects of our lives. Our political institutions are often named "houses". But "House of David" meant the entire chosen people of God rather than a building. For us as a faith community (which we are supposed to be) our house of God can be both our physical place of public worship and the house of our hearts. Can we be sometimes more caught up in the trappings of the architecture and lavish liturgy than the real meaning of our worship? What type of house can we make for God this Christmas, at the end of a year in which our own homes may have been places of refuge and safety but also places of restriction and confinement, away from family and friends? What did we learn about the things that make our houses good places to be? The lessons are there for us, aren't they? How can we be more fully the house of God as we offer ourselves to love and serve the Lord this Christmas? The first house of Jesus, after His nine months of dwelling in the womb of Mary, was a stable and He had to rely on the shelter offered by strangers.

All dwellings essentially represent security, and if we ponder just for a moment the mystery of the Incarnation, the amazing truth dawns on us that the Lord and Creator of the Universe, the author of all existence, chose to dwell in the womb of Mary. This implies something that only faith can fathom; that God wished for the security of the creature He formed out of nothing. A paradox? Not if we realise that the love of God that sustains us can only give us life if it finds a home and dwelling within our hearts. Mary's YES is our model.