

**Sunday 31st December 2023:**

**The Feast of the Holy Family**

After listening to today's Gospel, The Presentation in the Temple (Luke 2: 22-40), consider Fr Henry Wansbrough's reflection:-



The story of the Presentation of the child Jesus in the Temple is dominated by Simeon's welcome, 'a light to enlighten the gentiles and the glory of your people Israel', and by his warning to Mary, 'a sword will pierce your heart'. Simeon reiterates the angel's promise that the child would fulfil the destiny of Israel and Israel's task to the nations. Much like any family life, the promised future included the delights of the growing, developing child, and the background fear that the great destiny of each child may include sorrow and even heart-break. How much did Mary and Joseph know about the precious child they were nurturing? As he grew to independence did he become more loving and supportive? How did his contemporaries find him? Was he a leader? Did he stand out from the pack? Each of us has a private picture of Jesus - the child, the boy, the adolescent, the young man. All we know for sure is that 'the child grew to maturity', and that Mary 'pondered all these things in her heart', while keeping in mind Simeon's welcome and warning. What would Mary have felt and thought as she went home from the Temple?

**CHILDREN'S PRAYER**

*God of all, you love and care for us all. Help our families to be places of love, respect and support for each other and help us to value all people. Amen.*

**Welcome to our Parish Newsletter:**  
**St. Mary's & St. Aidan's R.C Churches**  
**Rev. Sean Hall**  
**Tel. 0191 268 4222**  
**[www.stmarysforesthall.co.uk](http://www.stmarysforesthall.co.uk)**  
**[www.staidansbenton.yolasite.com](http://www.staidansbenton.yolasite.com)**  
**Join us on Facebook - NE12Catholic**  
*To arrange Baptisms, please email [parishsecretary@mail.com](mailto:parishsecretary@mail.com)*



**Sunday 24th December 2023:**

**The Fourth Sunday of Advent**

After listening to today's Gospel, The Annunciation (Luke 1: 26-38), consider Fr Henry Wansbrough's reflection:-  
As we prepare for the birth of Jesus, the final Sunday of Advent always focuses on Mary. What was the young girl Mary doing when the message came? Kneeling in prayer? Feeding the sheep? Fetching water? Sweeping the mud floor? What was she thinking? Engaged to be married, surely about her approaching wedding to Joseph and about the children she would mother. Then came the message which she could accept or refuse, the message on which hung the future of the world: her child would be different from all others. How 'different'? Her thoughts were turned back to the promise to David. It had been read to her so often in the Bible, and now the words echoed in her mind as she listened to the angel say, 'His reign will have no end'. This would all be the work of the Spirit which she had so often heard about in Isaiah: 'the Holy Spirit will come upon you', the Spirit which was to come upon the Servant of the Lord, the Spirit of Emmanuel, 'God with us'. Her young body was to grow, nourish and develop this child. Then she would have the child in her arms to cherish and shape as both Son of God and her own son. What sort of person was Mary? Would you have liked to get to know her? What is God's plan for you?

**Dom Henry Wansbrough OSB**

## NEWS FROM OUR CHURCHES

**MERRY CHRISTMAS:** *“Wishing everyone in our parishes, their families and their friends a joyful, peaceful and blessed Christmas time!”*

**CHRISTMAS RAFFLES:** Thank you all for supporting our Christmas raffles and congratulations to winners!

**ST AIDAN’S JUSTICE & PEACE:** Two donations have recently been made to Heart NE - £250.00 and People’s Kitchen Ltd - £250.00.

### **COLLECTIONS: w/c 17th December 2023**

ST. AIDAN’S - Loose Plate: £235.00/ Envelopes: £76.00 / Hall Hire: £82.00  
Piety: £20.00 / Christmas Raffle: £122.00

ST. MARY’S - Loose Plate: £253.87 /Envelopes: £38 /Advent Alms: £31.50  
Xmas Raffle: £179.00 / Friday Coffee: £130.00 (Mary’s Meals)

*Thank you for your continued support and generosity.*

### **EVENTS FOR NEW DIARIES!**

**ST MARY’S MASS ROTAS:** Rotas for Eucharistic Ministers and Readers at St Mary’s in 2024 are available in the church hall. If you would prefer an electronic version, please email [parishsecretary@mail.com](mailto:parishsecretary@mail.com)  
Thank you for your continued support and service to our parish.

**DIOCESAN HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL EVENING:** Tues 23rd January 2024, 7pm at St Mary’s Comprehensive School, Benton Park Road.  
This year’s theme is Fragility of Freedom with guest speaker Mrs Deanna Van Der Velde. Booking is essential via [Interreligious.relations@diocesahn.org.uk](mailto:Interreligious.relations@diocesahn.org.uk) or 0191 243 3316.

### **ST MARY’S SOCIAL - FISH AND CHIP SUPPER**

Saturday 10th February, 6.15pm onwards (weekend before the start of Lent!) All welcome and a sign up sheet will be available in the new year. If you are able to help, please email [parishsecretary@mail.com](mailto:parishsecretary@mail.com)

**Weekend Masses will now be streamed via YouTube only.**

**Simply search ‘St Mary of the Rosary’ for our page.**

### **MASS INTENTIONS w/c 24th and 31st December 2023**

|                                 |                        |                      |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Sat. 23rd (St. Mary’s)          | 5.30pm                 | Olive & Josph Crowe  |
| Sun. 24th (St. Aidan’s)         | 9.15am                 | Expectant Mothers    |
| Sun. 24th (St. Mary’s)          | 11.00am                | Expectant Mothers    |
| Sun. 24th (St Mary’s)           | 4.30pm                 | Christmas Eve Vigil  |
| Sun. 24th (St Aidan’s)          | 6.30pm                 | Christmas Eve Vigil  |
| Mon. 25th (St Mary’s)           | 10.00am                | Nativity of the Lord |
| Tues. 26th (St. Mary’s)         | 10.00am                | Ena & John Duffy     |
| Wed. 27th (St. Aidan’s)         | 10.00am                | Priest’s Intention   |
| Thurs. 28th (St. Aidan’s)       | 10.00am                | People of the Parish |
| Fri. 29th (St. Mary’s)          | 10.00am                | People of the Parish |
| Sat. 30th (St. Mary’s)          | 5.30pm                 | Robert Flett         |
| Sun. 31st (St. Aidan’s)         | 9.15am                 | James Allan Scott    |
| Sun. 31st (St. Mary’s)          | 11.00am                | All Parish Families  |
| Mon. 1st Jan 2024 (St Mary’s)   | 10.00am                | Private Intention    |
| <i>Tues. 2nd</i>                | <i>*** NO MASS ***</i> |                      |
| <i>Wed. 3rd</i>                 | <i>*** NO MASS ***</i> |                      |
| Thurs. 4th (St. Aidan’s)        | 10.00am                | Priest’s Intention   |
| Fri. 5th (St. Mary’s)           | 10.00am                | Priest’s Intention   |
| <i>* Sat. 6th (St. Aidan’s)</i> | <i>11.00am</i>         | <i>Confession</i>    |
| Sat. 6th (St. Mary’s)           | 5.30pm                 | People of the Parish |
| Sun. 7th (St. Aidan’s)          | 9.15am                 | Feast of Epiphany    |
| Sun. 7th (St. Mary’s)           | 11.00am                | Feast of Epiphany    |

*For Mass Intentions, please see envelopes in our churches.*

**WE ASK THAT YOU PRAY FOR:** Those in our parishes who are sick; Those who have died recently; Margaret Proctor, Therese Thompson. And those of our parishes whose anniversary occurs at this time.

**KEEP IN TOUCH:** Contact us [parishsecretary@mail.com](mailto:parishsecretary@mail.com) / 0191 268 4222  
Access weekend mass live via YouTube, search St Mary of the Rosary  
Newsletters & Homilies can be viewed on [ww.stmarysforesthall.co.uk](http://ww.stmarysforesthall.co.uk)