

ST. MARK'S PARISH

22nd December 2024 – 4th Sunday of Advent Year C

Parish Clergy: Rev Seán Bradley & Rev Nicholas Hodgson

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PARISH NEWS

WELCOME If you are just visiting our parish today or if this is the first time you have been to Mass for a while, welcome back! We hope our time together unites us in God's love.

CONGRATULATIONS to Chimbusomma daughter of Anthony and Oluebubechukwy, who was baptised in St Mark's church on 8-12-24. We welcome her as a child of God into our parish.

THANK YOU to everyone who worked so tirelessly ensuring the success and enjoyment of our Grown up's Christmas party on Saturday night and also our Children's Christmas Party on Sunday morning. Your efforts were very much appreciated by everyone who came, and a great time was had by all.

CAR PARK AT REAR OF CHURCH: the back gate of the church will be open for both the Christmas Vigil Mass @5pm and Christmas Day Mass @10am to provide more parking spaces and ease the congestion typically experienced in the front car park. It is also open for every Sunday Morning Mass throughout the year. Please note that it is for the most part a grassy surface so please mind your step when wet.

ARCHDIOCESAN DIRECTORY 2025 is now available at the back of the church priced at £3 each.

MASS FOR THE OPENING OF THE JUBILEE YEAR: Archbishop Cushley will solemnly open the Jubilee Year 2025 for the Archdiocese with Holy Mass and the blessing of the Jubilee Cross at St Mary's Cathedral, Edinburgh, at midday on Sunday 29 December. Follow 'Holy Year Scotland 2025' on Facebook and visit www.iubilaeum2025.va for more details about this special year.

CHARITY FUNDRAISING: December 100 club draw results and prizes are 1st: **Tony Hetherington** £30. 2nd: **Tony Flynn** £10 and 3rd: **Matthew Hope** £10. Congratulations to you all.

MASS DATES TIMES INTENTIONS

Saturday 21st December	Vigil	5:00pm	Christmas Card Novena of Masses
Sunday 22nd December		10:00am	Christmas Card Novena of Masses
Monday 23rd December		10:00am	Christmas Card Novena of Masses
Tuesday 24th Christmas Eve Vigil		5:00pm	Christmas Card Novena of Masses
Wednesday 25th Christmas Day		10:00am	Christmas Card Novena of Masses
Thursday 26th December			NO MASS
Friday 27th December			NO MASS
<i>Saturday 28th December</i>	<i>Vigil</i>	<i>5:00pm</i>	<i>People of the Parish</i>
<i>Sunday 29th December</i>		<i>10:00am</i>	<i>William Lightheart</i>
<u>CONFESSIONS</u> available before Sat Vigil 4.15-4.45pm and before Sun Mass 9.15-9.45am or upon request after any of the weekday Masses.			
<u>EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION:</u> Every Tuesday & Friday Morning 09.15am – 09.45am 1 st Thursday of Every Month 7pm-8pm			

LEAPING FOR JOY

As soon as Mary found out that her cousin Elizabeth was expecting a baby she set out to go and visit her in the hill country. And we know that as Mary greeted Elizabeth the child in Elizabeth's womb, the future John the Baptist, leapt for joy.

Bringing a child into the world at any time is beset with challenges, but for the two pregnant women in Judah there was much more at stake. Mary had already had to come to terms with the fact that her child was not Joseph's son, and Elizabeth's husband Zachary had been struck dumb for not believing that his child would be special. Yet the words Elizabeth chooses to use in greeting Mary are not words of sympathy but of joy and praise: "Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb." Mary and Elizabeth were open to the future and were able to trust in God's providence for them both, come what may. They saw the birth of their children not as a burden but as an opportunity to praise God for what he promised for their future.

Christmas is an invitation to us to allow God to be born in us once more, to become open to the endless possibilities that God can provide in our lives. Our ability to celebrate the heart of Christmas is linked with our ability to invite God fully into our lives, to ask God to be reborn in us and to work his wonders in whatever way he sees fit.

When we think of Christmas we don't remain in the past; we call God here and now into our lives and ask him to lead us in all the future adventures of life, for Christmas celebrates life itself. The manger scene is nice and comforting, but our liturgy today challenges us to go much further: to let the Christ-child be born in each of us and to bring good news to our waiting world.



On behalf of Fr. Nick and myself, I would like to take this opportunity to wish you and your families a very Peaceful, Blessed and Joyous Christmas.

May God bless you all,

Fr. Seán.

St. Mark's	ATTENDANCE	OFFERTORY	<i>Thank you, without your contributions the work of God's church would not be possible</i>
VIGIL	70	£282	
SUNDAY	150	£470	

LITURGY OF THE WORD

First reading [Micah 5:2-5a]

'From you shall come forth one who is to be ruler in Israel.'

Thus says the LORD: You, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.

Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labour has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. And he shall be their peace.

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Responsorial Psalm [Ps 80(79):2ac, 3b, 15-16. 18-19. R4]

Response: Bring us back, O God; let your face shine forth, and we shall be saved.

O shepherd of Israel, hear us,
enthroned on the cherubim, shine forth.
Rouse up your might and come to save us.

God of hosts, turn again, we implore;
look down from heaven and see.
Visit this vine and protect it,
the stock your right hand has planted,
the son you have claimed for yourself.

May your hand be on the man at your right hand,
the son of man you have confirmed as your own.
And we shall never forsake you again;
give us life that we may call upon your name.

Second Reading:[Hebrews 10:5-10]

'Behold, I have come to do your will.'

Brothers and sisters: When Christ came into the world, he said, 'Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, "Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book." '

When he said above, 'You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings' (these are offered according to the Law), then he added, 'Behold, I have come to do your will'. He does away with the first in order to establish the second. And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

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Alleluia, alleluia.

**Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord;
let it be to me according to your word.**

Alleluia.

Gospel: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke [1:39-45]

'Why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?'

In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.'

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