

Masses & Services this Week

Saturday 16th December	3.30pm Confessions 4.30pm Mass: (Rebecca Faulkner RIP)
Sunday 17th	8.00am Mass: (People of the Parish) Confessions 11.00am Children's Mass: (Anna Luker RIP) Confessions 4.00pm Carol Service
Monday 18th	9.10am Morning Prayer 9.30am Mass: (Marion Smith RIP) (Confessions) Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament 1.30pm Mass in school <i>Students for the Permanent Diaconite</i>
Tuesday 19th	9.00am Mass: (Kieran Corrigan & Alan Morement RIP) (Confessions)
Wednesday 20th	6.00pm Mass: (Kuriakose & Thomas RIP) Followed by Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament & Confessions <i>Our retired priests</i>
Thursday 21st	9.10am Morning Prayer 9.30am Mass: (Tony Faulkner RIP) Confessions <i>Fr. James Cahill</i>
Friday 22nd	9.10am Morning Prayer 9.30am Mass: (Pat & Mary Anne Burke RIP) Confessions
Saturday 23rd	9.00am Mass: (For deceased members of the Haacker & Porter Families RIP) (Confessions) 3.30pm Confessions 4.30pm Mass: (Deceased members of Brooks, Richerd, Judd & Williams Families RIP) <i>Fr. Damian Tomcyk</i>
Sunday 24th <i>4th Sunday of Advent</i>	8.00am Mass: (Benedicta D'Sousa RIP) Confessions 11.00am Mass: (People of the Parish) Confessions <i>See inside this newsletter for Christmas Masses!!</i>

PARISH OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION & SAINT NORBERT

17th December 2017 THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT (B) Psalter 3

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Parish School: Saint Norbert's Catholic Primary School, Tollgate (off Pennygate), Spalding,
PE11 1TJ Telephone: 01775 722889

Acting Head Teacher: Mrs. Jenna Withers

Nearest Catholic Comprehensive: Saint John Fisher Catholic High School, Park Lane,
Peterborough, PE1 5JN

Head Teacher: Mr. Sean Hayes Telephone: 01733 343646

Parish Pastoral Council: Judy Flynn 07774 260853

Parish Centre: **Contact the Parish Office: 01775 722056**

Safeguarding Parish Co-ordinator: Mrs. Mary Hurst: 01775 680598



The Third Sunday of Advent: As we light the rose candle on the Advent wreath, let us make ourselves ready to listen to the Baptist's words and so prepare for the great feast of Christmas!

A Reflection (by Breige O'Hare): The words "Have yourself a Merry little Christmas" are everywhere at this time of year. We are surrounded by adverts suggesting how we might achieve that perfect Christmas with open fires, well laid tables and tastefully wrapped, expensive gifts. Perhaps these adverts are for some an accurate reflection of the Christmas experience. However, many of us can feel pressurised by their unspoken demands and we allow ourselves to be squeezed into shapes designed for us by our advertisers.

In the midst of the flurry of needs and expectations, what would be your answer to the question put to John in today's gospel. "Who are you?...What are you then?" This is a complex question and not easy to answer. Perhaps examining how you spend your time and money give you clues about who you really are. Alternatively, might this tell as much about who you want to be? There can be a vast difference between who we are and who we want to be, especially at Christmas time. The key is to trust that we are enough, that God loved us so much that he came to live with us; that this God loves us as we are - without open fires and fine food, without Christmas clothes and expensive gifts. In God's version of Christmas - the real one - it is enough simply to be yourself.

So this week, enjoy the hustle and bustle of the season but focus also on life's simple pleasures. Spend time and not money doing something you enjoy with/for someone you care about. Use the pleasure you can take in these simple pleasures to remind you that without finery and expense, you are all you need to be. Who are you? Be yourself!

Lord, help us to use our time and money well this week so that our choices will be a reflection of who we really are and what we think is more important in our lives and in our relationships. Remind us of the value of life's simple pleasures.

back, chasing away the last chills of the night. His feet felt the cold water flowing over them. He stared down into the river flow, lost in thought about the one who was to come.

John's eyes were moist with emotion as he recalled the powerful revelation that God had bestowed on him that distant night ago. John remembered waking in the darkness to find the presence of God warm upon him.

The caress of the morning sun reminded him of the warmth that had filled him that night as the holy darkness resolved to dazzling clarity. Squinting into the astonishing brightness, John was filled with peace and understanding. He would announce the coming of the Light of Christ into this world. He would be the voice in the desert, crying out the good news of the one who was to come.

John stood up and turned to look up at the people on the river bank. The sunlight made a silhouette of the silent crowd looking back down on him. He knew they had their questions. Some were no doubt sent by the Pharisees to prod him with two-edged questions. He knew others thought he was a madman. John had seen their smirks before. He had heard their whispers and deriding laughter. Yet, John was filled with the power of God. The fiery spirit of God was upon him and in him and would soon stand before him in the waters of this very river.

From the water's edge he bellowed up at them: "Make straight the way of the Lord!" His words shattered the morning silence. John felt his heartbeat quicken as he stalked up the riverbank toward the crowd. He would make them believe!

(Deacon Richard Folger)

100 CLUB CHRISTMAS DRAW: 1st (£100) Peter Miller, 2nd (£50) Catherine Stokes, 3rd (£25) Pat Grimwood, 4th (£15) Ros Mullholland Gullick, 5th (£10) Pauline Cowan. Congratulations to all our prize winners and a happy Christmas to all our supporters. (Mike)

A reminder of our Christmas schedule. A question frequently asked is ‘Does the Christmas Mass cover for Sunday?’ Sadly, it doesn’t! So here is the schedule for the 4th Sunday of Advent and the Christmas Masses.

Saturday 23rd December	3.30pm Confessions 4.30pm Mass: (Deceased members of the Brooks, Richerd, Judd & Williams Families RIP)
Sunday 24th Christmas Eve	8.00am Mass: (Benedicta D’Sousa RIP) (Confessions) 11.00am Mass: (People of the Parish) (Confessions) 3.30pm Confessions 4.00pm Carols 4.30pm First Mass of Christmas (Donor’s Intention) 10.30pm Confessions 11.15pm Carols 12.00am Midnight Mass (People of the Parish)
Monday 25th Christmas Day	8.00am Mass: (November Dead List) 11.00am Mass: (Helen Beggs RIP)
Tuesday 26th St. Stephen’s Day	10.00am (Annual Mass for our Altar Servers)

Another Angle: ‘A Voice Cries in the Wilderness!’ From higher up on the bank of the Jordan River, the crowd of curious people looked down at him. He was like a wild man, wrapped in camel skin. He sat alone on a rock at the river’s edge. They stood a long time, watching and waiting.

John felt both warmth and cold. The morning sun was good on his

Lord, at a time of the year when we are surrounded by adverts suggesting that we are what we buy, help us to remember that we are loved by you for who we really are and not for what we own or what we do.

Lord help us to share any good fortune with those who have less than us. Challenge us to remember our responsibilities to our less fortunate brothers and sisters at all times of the year.

CAROL SERVICE this afternoon in church at 4.00pm—Please come along and join us in singing some festive carols in church.

Confessions available after all Masses this week—starting from today (Sunday).

Please pray for our sick and housebound parishioners: Pat Brooks, Maureen van der Voet, Eric Ormond, Allison Law, Pat Saville & family, Margaret Trivett, Audrey Cook, Marcello Viglianti, Maria Dowling, Rosetta Le Compte, Elvira Choma, Ros Mullholland-Gullick, Jean Fairbanks, Rosemarie & Peter Anderton, Norma Yaxley, Tony Ball, Jesus Moniente, Linda Lawless, Susan Bertolaso, Mollie Coaten, Mary Naughton, Norman Coleman, Sylvia Hayden, Katherine McLoughlin, Patrick King, The Taylor Family, Mons. Jonathan Moore, Pat Baxter, Rita Gensiorskyj, Manfred Haacker, June Burrell, Maurice Cranney, Helen Henry, Philip Chandler, Maria Sharples, Fr. Oliver Martin O.Praem, Brian Stout, Alison Merryman-Marx, Fr. Eamonn O’Hara, Fr. Dominic O’Connor, Canon Michael Bell, Fr. Tom Breslin & Maddie Scott.

Please also remember: Patrick Henry, Peter Gibbons, Angela West, Clare Plowman, John Cumming and all those whose anniversary occurs at this time. *May their souls, and all the souls of the faithful departed, rest in peace. Amen.*

PARISH FINANCE: Last weekend you gave: £646.31. The second collection for the new and poor parishes in our Diocese realised £116.85. Julia’s Fund: £23.50—Thank you for your continuing support and generosity.

Forthcoming 2nd Collections in December:

Christmas: Is your personal gift to Fr. Jim
30th/31st Julia's Fund

There is a voluntary collection for Julia's Fund every weekend for three weeks during Advent and a second collection will be taken on the last Sunday of the month in place of the usual collection for the Building Fund.

Counter's Rota: Fr. Jim would like to meet briefly with the Counters after Christmas. A new rota is being prepared, volunteers are always very welcome—if you could spare some time to count the weekly collection, please see Fr. Jim as soon as possible, please.

This week's counters: Joe & Anna; **next week:** Anita & Fr. Jim

CAR PARK: You will have noticed that signs have been erected stating that the car park is for permit holders only. Parishioners can use the car park when attending services—**and at other times, but we simply ask that you inform us that you are parking there, and you will be given a permit to display on your front window screen.** If in doubt, just ask!

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PRESENTATION: Well...Fr. Jim is 'lost for words' after watching the first Holy Communion Children perform 'The Christmas Stations' - it was amazing! Congratulations to Ruth, Sharon & Mannii; our thanks to Leda and Anne who have helped working with the children, and to Leda who accompanied the children on the organ. Out thanks to those who provided the amazing costumes, and last but not least the children who narrated, sang and acted so beautifully—they were truly magnificent. Thank you!

THANK YOU: Fr. Jim would like to thank Anthony Grunwell for the gift of a piano. At the moment, the piano is in the hall for our use.

The Parish Pastoral Council: We have received quite a number of requests to consider providing an additional Sunday Mass in the evening, This is not so easy as one might imagine. A priest is only permitted to say two Masses in any one day, and three if there is a

pastoral need. Some parishioners have to work various shifts over a weekend. Some parishioners tell me that if they cannot get a vigil Mass or a morning Mass they have to travel to Peterborough or Boston. The Boston Mass is very late (7.00pm) which means people arriving late home in dark and possibly icy conditions. Another family commented that Boston is the only church within our deanery to provide a Sunday evening Mass—and that that Mass is in Polish...meaning the only evening Mass they can attend is in Peterborough, and, again, there is a problem with travelling in winter conditions.

Taking all these matters into consideration, Fr. Jim shared with the PPC that he felt that there is sufficient evidence to suggest that there is a genuine pastoral need to be considered, and those present agreed. Fr. Jim has agreed to **trial a Sunday evening Mass** to establish if an additional Mass would be justifiable. With the shortage of priests available, we cannot justify another Mass for a 'sprinkling' of people—it has to be justified. Fr. Jim and Deacon Dennis would then report to the deanery clergy, whether we need to provide a Sunday evening Mass on a permanent basis.

The suggestion has been put forward that the Sunday evening Mass be celebrated at 6.00pm. The trial will commence on **Sunday, 7th January** and will conclude on **Palm Sunday, 25th March, UNLESS** it is considered before Palm Sunday that the additional Mass cannot be sustained.

The Chapel Working Party held its second meeting last week. The Diocese has asked us to identify a clear project/use for the Methodist Chapel and to present a business plan for the parish and the Diocese to consider. We would like to acknowledge the comments we have received so far, both written and verbal—thank you so much, your comments are really helpful to our discussions and we will obviously call a meeting so that we can have an open discussion to study the options available to us. In the meantime, if you do have any questions or comments at this stage, please feel free to contact Katherine (Saunders) in the parish office who is secretary to the working party.