



## The Holy Family 27 December 2020

As an example for us to follow, the Holy Family can seem a little too perfect: when we consider the more “dramatic” events of the Christmas and Easter story, it can seem so far removed from us. And yet, as today’s Gospel reminds us, there were also the so-called “hidden years” - the many years of family life in Nazareth, spent in ordinary things. During that time, we hear how Jesus grew and matured, and in the glimpse of that family life we see our example. Our celebration of this feast announces that there is a lasting value in the ideals of family life, and the relationship between husband, wife, parents and children. Whatever the changing details of each age, honour, understanding and love always remain the recipe for the perfect, and holy, human family. It is love that we put on over all the other clothes of changing cultures and places, to guarantee the life of the family in imitation of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

**Marriage Matters: Give Way and Love Gently:** When Mary and Joseph had done everything that the Law required, they went back home. Little is said about them as a couple. Did Mary ‘give way to her husband, as you should in the Lord’? Did Joseph ‘love his wife and treat her with gentleness’? Did they choose daily to love each other over and above everything else? Do we?

**Think Vocations:** Because of the permanence of the Sacrament of Marriage, we have the best setting for bringing children into the world. The marriage vows are lived out each day that the Lord sends to us. We pray for the people who are to be married in our parish this year. May the Holy Family bless all the families in our parish with a love for God, for his Church and for the sacred priesthood.

**Diocesan Prayer Cycle:** On this Feast of the Holy Family let us pray for the people of the parish of St Margaret Clitherow, Rochdale, and for Fr Francis Wadsworth. We pray for their parish primary school, for St Cuthbert’s High School, and for the patients, staff and chaplaincy at Springhill Hospice. May the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph be the bedrock of their parish life.

**Prayer During the Pandemic:** O God, our refuge and our shield, even when we walk in the shadow of death you are there at our side. Be with your people in this time of danger: bring strength to the afflicted and protection to those untouched by disease. Give us love and courage that we may trust in your power to save and reach out to all who need our care. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Act of Spiritual Communion:** My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love you above all things, and I desire to receive you into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive you sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace you as if you were already there and unite myself wholly to you. Never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.

Masses / Services This Week
<b>Due to Fr Michael and Fr Mark continuing to self-isolate, the Masses this weekend will be reduced in number and celebrated without anyone in church.</b>
<b>Sunday</b> – The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph Masses live-streamed Sat 6.30pm & Sun 11am
<b>Monday</b> – The Holy Innocents – <i>Bank Holiday</i> No Mass today
<b>Government guidelines require people attending places of worship to wear a face mask (unless exempt for some reason)</b>
<b>Tuesday</b> – St Thomas Becket Mass at SL & live-streamed 12noon
<b>Wednesday</b> – Sixth Day within the Octave Mass at SL & live-streamed 12noon
<b>Thursday</b> – Seventh Day within Octave or St Sylvester I Mass at SsPP 12noon
<b>Friday</b> – <b>Holy Mary, Mother of God (Solemnity) – New Year’s Day</b> Mass at SL & live-streamed 12noon
<b>Saturday</b> – St Basil the Great & St Gregory Nazianzen Mass at SsPP 12noon
<b>Sunday</b> – Second Sunday of Christmas Masses at SL & live-streamed Sat 6.30pm & Sun 9.30am Masses at SsPP Sun 8am & Sun 11am
<b>Live-streaming is via our Facebook page: Our Lady of Hope Parish, Salford</b> ( <a href="https://www.facebook.com/ourladyofhopesalford/">https://www.facebook.com/ourladyofhopesalford/</a> )

**Sick:** All those who are suffering from the coronavirus and others who are sick at this time, including, Robert Livesey, Nuala Corridan, Tomas Cusack, John Ainsworth, Emily Martin (a sick child), Marie Campbell, David Pickup, Sue Remmer. Sr Therese Murphy, Pat Griffin

**Latently Dead:** All who have died of the coronavirus and others who have died recently: Yvonne Keenan, Tony Richards

**Anniversaries:** Frances McGrath

**Masses Received:** Gabrielle Ward, Martin & Kathleen McKeon, John O’Brien, Michael & May O’Brien, Alan Roberts, Jane Ratchford, Julie Webster, Frances McGrath (A), Cath & Terry McDermott, Roy, Beatrice & Tom Ravenscroft, Sheelagh & Nick Byrne, Tony Whitacker, Brian Hudson, Graham Hadfield, Josephine Warburton and Deceased Members of the Warburton & O’Donnell families, Sheila Hazeldine (BR)

**National Prayer Cycle:** During Advent and Christmastide we are asked to pray for Migrants & Refugees and Expectant Mothers

**Fathers Michael and Mark wish you all  
A Happy and Holy New Year**

**St Luke**, Swinton Park Rd, Irlams o’th’ Height, M6 7WR Tel: 0161 736 2696  
**Ss Peter and Paul**, Park Road, Pendleton, Salford M6 8JR  
**Parish Priest:** Canon Michael Cooke VG **Assistant Priest:** Father Mark Paver  
**Email:** [priests@ourladyofhope.org.uk](mailto:priests@ourladyofhope.org.uk) **www.ourladyofhope.org.uk**  
*Diocese of Salford Registered Charity 250037*

**Bank Details** (for Standing Orders or BACS)  
TSDT Our Lady of Hope  
50317403 20 55 34  
**Cheques:** Payable to Our Lady of Hope

### Christmastide

The Church gives us the various feasts of the Christmas Season (Christmas Day itself, The Holy Family, The Epiphany and the Baptism of the Lord) to help us explore in different ways the significance of this historical event and the wonder of the gift that is given.

Let us make full use of the Christmas season, to pray about and reflect upon the mystery of the Incarnation.

**God is with Us - Christmas at Home Resource:** The Department for Formation has created a resource pack for the Christmas Season, downloadable from [www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/christmas-at-home](http://www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/christmas-at-home)

**Thank you:** A huge thank you to everyone who stepped in to assist in any way with the celebration of the Christmas Masses – keyholders, sacristans, live-streamers – as well, of course, as Fr John and Fr Peter who came to say the Masses. Thank you also to those who managed the booking system for those Masses and our teams of faithful stewards who have been serving us well for the past six months or so. It has certainly been a very different Christmas this year!

**Sea Sunday:** Thank you for last week's special collection which raised £146.58 towards the work of Stella Maris (formerly the Apostleship of the Sea).

**Memorial Mass:** On 31 December at 2pm Bishop John will celebrate a Mass, livestreamed from Salford Cathedral, to remember all of the lives that have been lost this year. You can join it through [www.churchservices.tv/salfordcathedral](http://www.churchservices.tv/salfordcathedral)

### 1 January – New Year's Day Solemnity of Holy Mary, Mother of God

We begin our New Year with this feast of Mary. It is an integral part of the Christmas story that Mary responded to God's invitation to become the mother of his son. She enabled God's plan of salvation to be implemented. All the other celebrations focussing on Mary and all the qualities we attribute to her flow from this special role which she was willing to undertake. The gospel tells us that, at the visit of the shepherds, Mary "treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart." She became a faithful disciple of her son, was present at the foot of the cross, and was a witness to his resurrection.

**Our Lady of Hope, Pray for Us**

**Next Week's Newsletter: Jan McIntyre**  
Please send notices before Wednesday  
Email: [newsletter@ourladyofhope.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@ourladyofhope.org.uk)

### Christmas 2020 Reflection

*I had written this reflection to share at the Christmas Masses which I was then unable to celebrate with you due to having to self-isolate. In these strange times, I hope that it will be of some comfort to you. Fr Michael.*

How are we to speak about celebrating the birth of Christ in the context of the pandemic we have experienced this year? We certainly need some occasion of joy and hope to lift our spirits but there are those in our world who will think we are deluded if we look for that joy and hope in the birth of a baby in Bethlehem 2000 years ago. Thankfully, although this is the starting point, it isn't the end of the story and so I suggest that we take a quick scoot through the Scriptures to remind ourselves how the story unfolds.

The Gospel writers don't tell us very much directly about the birth of Christ and they come at it from different angles; they are much more concerned with its significance (God coming into our world). Each of the Gospels tells us about the teaching of Jesus – at the heart of which is a command to love God and one another. The Gospels also tell us about the miracles Jesus worked – showing that he had both the desire and the ability to transform us and creation. But the most important part of the Gospel story comes at the end of each one – the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus. Christ's death and rising to new life was the very purpose for which he was born in this stable in Bethlehem. He had come into our world to be the long-awaited Messiah, the bringer of our salvation; all of that from this baby in a manger. And the story is not quite over because, when he ascended back into heaven, Jesus promised to be with us always and he accomplished that by sending the Holy Spirit and forming the Church – and it is our task, as members of that Church, to continue spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ to the world around us, whatever the circumstances we find ourselves in.

So today, as we do indeed give thanks to God for the birth of his Son, let us pledge ourselves to spend the year ahead deepening our understanding and our appreciation of the significance of this event, as outlined for us in the Gospels. Let us also renew our commitment to bringing that Good News of Jesus Christ into the lives of others as a message of joy and hope. After all, it is that Gospel message in all its fullness that makes sense of us celebrating the birth of Christ in the context of the pandemic we have experienced this year.

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