

PARISH OF BLESSED JAMES BELL

*Serving St Benedict's, St Mary's & St Oswald's,
Warrington*



Newsletter

**Feast of the Holy Family (C)
26 December 2021**

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM THE ARCHBISHOP

Christmas is a special time, and at the heart of our celebrations is the fact that God became man for us. Two thousand years ago there wasn't a feast of Christmas yet there was still expectation as people longed for the coming of the Messiah to transform their lives. We don't always get what we expect at Christmas and two thousand years ago people didn't expect that the Messiah would be born in poverty, to a refugee family forced to leave their home to take part in a census for an occupying power. Homeless, with nowhere to stay they found refuge in a cold, dark stable with only the farm animals for company. Yet lives were about to be transformed.

I am sure celebrations were far from the minds of shepherds on a cold, bleak hillside and yet suddenly the angel of the Lord appeared to them, there was light, and glory shone around them – no wonder they were terrified. The first words of the angel to them were 'Do not be afraid...' as they went full of joy to Bethlehem to greet the new-born king. So many of us need those words of the angel today: 'Do not be afraid...' Weighed down with the cares of life we fear for the future, but Christmas gives us hope as we know that Christ is with us. The Prince of Peace comes to us to bring his peace and healing and to give us hope.

Christmas is a time for precious memories too. Memories of Christmases past - maybe recent or long ago. Memories of loved ones, just by thinking of them we are saying, 'we love you...you are still with us in

our hearts...' There may be tears too, 'Do not be afraid' of them, they are fine because they are a sign of love.

The message of peace and goodwill means it is a time for us to reach out to others, especially to those in need. So many people work in the weeks before Christmas to help those in greatest need. We see people giving up their time to feed the hungry, and to provide a place of refuge for those who are lonely. Those who work in our essential services are there for us too. During the pandemic we have renewed our spirit of care and generosity – we have reached out to others and offered them hope and readily give thanks to those who care.

For Christians the joy of Christmas is found in the Eucharist and the crib. We give thanks to God for the gift of his Son who cried out from the manger to remind us of the continuing plight of the homeless, refugees and those escaping terror. When we gather as far as restrictions allow us, we remember what it is to be a family no matter how few we are or how distant we are from each other. The Holy Family was only three people yet proved to be the source of a great love which has overflowed into our lives two millennia later. May our families have the child Jesus at their centre as a source of love and a true source of strength.

May this Christmas time be happy, blessed and peaceful.

Most Reverend Malcolm McMahon OP
Archbishop of Liverpool

General Information

- 1) **Fr Dave** is available by phone (01925 630127) or by email frdave@rcaolp.co.uk Address: St Benedict's Priory, Rhodes Street, Warrington WA2 7QE.
- 2) **Parish Office** will be open Wednesday, Thursday and Friday this week, 10.00 am – 3.00 pm. Tel: 01925 630127 or email: blessedjamesbell@rcaolp.co.uk
- 3) **Parish Website** www.blessedjamesbell.co.uk
- 4) **St Benedict's Church** will be open for private prayer: Wednesday, Thursday and Friday this week, 10.00 am – 3.00 pm.
- 5) **Sacrament of Reconciliation**
Confession is available on request or by appointment.
- 6) **Communion at Home** – If you are not able to come to Mass and would like to receive communion at home, please phone the Parish Office (630127).

MASS TIMES & INTENTIONS

	St Benedict's	St Oswald's
Sunday 26 December Feast of the Holy Family (C)	10.30 am Mass The Parishioners	(Sat) No Vigil Mass 8.30 am Mass Cecilia Ellison
Monday 27 December Feast of St John, Evangelist		<i>No Prayer Group</i>
Tuesday 28 December Feast of the Holy Innocents		11.00 am Mass Sr Helena
Wednesday 29 December Feast of St Thomas of Canterbury	11.00 am Mass Nadine Davies	
Thursday 30 December Octave of the Nativity		11.00 am Mass Les Conroy <i>No Novena</i>
Friday 31 December Octave of the Nativity	11.00 am Mass Josie Butterworth	
Saturday 1 January Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God <i>New Year's Day</i>	12.00 noon New Year's Day Mass World Peace	4.30 pm Vigil Mass Peter, Jo, Geraldine & Barbara Ellington
Sunday 2 January 2nd Sunday after Christmas	10.30 am Mass Kate Rigby	8.30 am Mass The Parishioners

AFGHANISTAN CRISIS APPEAL

Inevitably, once the troops pulled out of Afghanistan in August, ordinary men, women and children were going to suffer. To date – 8 million people are on the brink of famine because of drought, a collapsing economy, food shortages, conflict and Covid! CAFOD is supporting local agencies to reach those most in need of food, clean water and fuel. If you can help, please donate online to CAFOD's Afghanistan Appeal: www.cafod.org.uk/AfghanistanAppeal

NEW YEAR'S EVE & DAY

It's not possible to have our usual late-night Mass on New Year's Eve this year. However, there will be Mass on New Year's Eve at 11.00 am and on New Year's Day at 12.00 noon.

PRAYER FOR NEW YEAR'S EVE

Holy God,
as we enter this New Year,
we thank you for your presence with us
in all the years of our lives.
We have known joy, and also sorrow,
success and failure,
and through it all, you have been with us
– the companion of all our journeys.
Much of life is fleeting
and so we thank you for things that endure:
the love of faithful friends,
wisdom gained from experience,
the reliability of nature, and your steadfast love.
We thank you for this New Year which awaits us.
Take us by the hand and lead us on.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

LITURGICAL CALENDAR

(Divine Office – Psalter Week 1)

Today **Feast of the Holy Family (C)**
Readings 1 Samuel 1: 20-22, 24-28
 1 John 3: 1-2, 21-24
 Luke 2: 41-52

Weekdays Octave of the Nativity

LET US HOLD IN PRAYER

Those who are sick or homebound, especially:

St Benedict's

Vera Brindle, Jean Hendricks, Anne Hill, Mary Hinchliffe, Thomas Ireland, Susan Keating, Peter Milner, Sandra Richardson, Kate Rigby, Ernie Roocroft, Margaret Russell-Cruise, Pembolina Smith, Matilde Valentine, Paul Vernon, Stephen Whitlow, Stuart Williams, Dolores Woodall.

St Mary's

Luciano Bartolo, Hilda Creagan, Trina and Geoff Mouldsdale.

St Oswald's

Keith Bate, Catherine Carne, Peter Cox, Susan Disley, Betty Fiddler, Margaret Inkersol, Sam Johnson, Miriam Jones, Mary Massey, Mike McCarrick, Jo Roberts, Cathy Spencer, Claire Taylor, Margaret Watts.

Other Parishes

Alan Brompton, Catherine Donaldson, Clare Holloway, John Hughes (Vietnam), June Fallon, Pamela Watson (*nee* Park).

Those who have died recently, especially:

Carole Hart, Melanie Pollitt.

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