

OUR LADY OF RANSOM

Fourth Sunday of Advent – Year B –
Divine Office Wk 4 – 19th / 20th December 2020



A **BIG** and **WARM** welcome with open arms to all our guests, visitors and regular parishioners. Please feel welcomed. This week, let me offer a few thoughts on the importance of honouring Mary, Mother of God.....

Mary offers turtle-doves at the Presentation, a sign of her poverty, a poverty which signifies there was little to come between her and God. She radically let go of her own agendas (eg. marriage preparations) to do as God asks. Wow!

Today, she shows herself to be a real contemplative – listening and focussed on the angel. Immediately after, she shows herself to be a woman of the world, active and practical – visiting and helping her cousin Elizabeth. A real active contemplative.

Which tells us she absolutely knew it was THY kingdom come; for many it is 'my' kingdom come. So much about me, myself and I. The opposite for Mary.

She will have known that, in all our unworthiness before God, it is God who makes us totally worthy- it is all gift. We don't earn God's love, we can't manipulate or manage God, we allow God in it by letting go of our own agendas. She knew that we are not good from our own merits, we're good because God is good and loves us first. God loves us *so we can* be good, *not if* we're good.

Her interior life must have been extraordinary. Consider; after today's Angel Gabriel revelation, she never needs to check with any authority, she goes forward with extraordinary faith. A faith which strengthens her against scandal, gossip and potential punishment through torture because she is made pregnant by 'another'.

So when we say 'Hail Mary', she's not half or quarter full of grace, but truly FULL of grace. Yes, we honour her, following her supreme example, by letting go of our own agendas, so her Son can come in, and bring us his peace and strength.

May I wish you all every blessing for a very happy and peaceful Christmas, and all peace and good for the New Year.

God Bless, Fr. Paul.

THIS WEEKEND

We welcome Sarah, Matt, Scott and Carol, our RCIA candidates, who will be received into the Church at 9.30am Mass. Please keep them in your prayers.



This week Fr Paul will say Mass for the following intentions:-

MASS INTENTIONS	
Saturday 19th Dec.	
5.30pm Mass	Parish Community Ints
Sunday 20th FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT	
9.30am Mass	Mike Barry RIP (Hilary Barry)
Monday 21st	
	Deceased of Legion of Mary RIP (Legion of Mary)
Tuesday 22nd	
	Mike Barry RIP (Hilary Barry)
Wednesday 23rd	
10am Mass	Jean Stone RIP (Mike Stone)
Thursday 24th CHRISTMAS EVE	
6pm Family Mass	Emma Louise Lucibello RIP
8pm Midnight Mass	Parish Community Ints
Friday 25th CHRISTMAS DAY	
8am Mass	Julie Ann Mear RIP (Mary Rickards)
10am Mass	Gabriella Prideaux RIP (Nicky Prideaux)
Saturday 26th St Stephen	
10.00am Mass	Frances Hidveghy RIP (Anniv) (Lotsi Hidveghy)
5.30pm Mass	Michael Barry RIP (Tom & Isobel Kennedy) & Parish Community Ints
Sunday 27th Dec. The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph	
9.30am Mass	Rosealeen Bogue RIP (Catherine Houghton)

<p>PARISH PRIEST Father Paul Fox 50 London Hill, Rayleigh Essex SS6 7HP 01268 742229 www.olorchurch.org email: rayleigh@dioceseofbrentwood.org</p>	<p><u>Public Mass times:</u> Saturdays 5.30pm Sundays 9.30am Wednesdays 10.00am Fridays 10.00am <i>Please be aware - Times and days of Masses are subject to change.</i></p>
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Our Parish is part of The Brentwood Diocesan Trust, Registered Charity Number 234092

SEA SUNDAY

Sunday 20th December is Sea Sunday, when the Church prays for all those who live and work at sea. Without them, we would not have most of the items we buy in the shops.

For an appeal from Bishop Paul Mason, and a video showing some of what Stella Maris does, please visit www.stellamaris.org.uk/sea-sunday.

Sea Sunday has been moved from July because of the pandemic and Stella Maris is particularly asking for donations by text or online. To donate and for more information, please visit: www.stellamaris.org.uk/donate or text "SEA" to 70460 to donate £5. Stella Maris is dependent on voluntary donations, so please give generously. Thankyou.

† † PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS...

Bill Hall (husband of Pat Hall who herself died just a few weeks ago) who died last week. Please keep Belinda and the family in your prayers

Also Bob Walker who died on Tuesday 24th November. His Requiem Mass (family and invited guests only) will be held at 11am on Tuesday, December 22, followed by burial at Hall Road Cemetery, Rochford. Please keep Joan and the family in your prayers.

May they rest in peace. † †

MANY THANKS FOR ALL THE MASS INTENTIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

Please note: At present we have a large number of outstanding Mass Intentions, which takes us to early March.



PLEASE PRAY

For all the sick members of our Parish and all our relatives and friends.

† ANNIVERSARIES †

Kindly pray for Jean Stone, Frances Tibbs, Lorraine Elmer, Mike Geeson, and Connie Brilus whose anniversaries occur about this time.



SVP THANK YOU

At the start of the pandemic, our Conference, like many others, was fearful of how to attract donations to support its work when the church was in lockdown and, subsequently, operating at limited capacity. Our concerns proved unfounded as thoughtful parishioners have passed to us generous donations, occasionally extremely so. We have truly been overwhelmed by the extent of their generosity for which we are profoundly grateful. We wish our donors and all parishioners a happy and blessed Christmas and share with you our hope for better times to come in 2021.

Should you need support, please contact **Colin Griffin** (tel. No. 01268 772322) or any other SVP member. Your call will be treated with complete confidentiality.

CONFESSIONS

The Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confessions) is available – but needs to be offered openly (ie. not in the traditional Confessional Box). If you wish for the Sacrament, please make a personal time by calling Fr. Paul. (The request itself is treated confidentially).

Fr Paul will be available in Church for pre-Christmas Reconciliation on Monday 21st Dec. between 5.30 – 7.30pm and on Wednesday 23rd Dec. between 10.30am and 12.30pm. No need to book – just turn up. If no-one is in the church, please call at the presbytery.

CHRISTMAS MASSES – PLEASE READ CAREFULLY



Thank you to all those who have already made a request – you should have received an email to confirm your requests.

Booked places are now as of this weekend **almost full**.

Christmas Eve Masses as follows:- please read carefully

Christmas Eve 6pm (Family Mass) is **virtually full**. Owing to the Covid restrictions on numbers, this is STRICTLY for families (including grandparents) with children. Adults with no children will be asked to attend one of the alternative Christmas Masses.

Christmas Eve 8pm (this will be the Mass of Midnight brought forward).

To book your place at either of the above Christmas Eve Masses (which seems to be the fairest way of operating) please email rayleigh@dioceseofbrentwood.org or put in writing a note to the Presbytery with the number of people in your party, their names, and a contact phone number and be clear which Mass you would like to come to.

Christmas Day Masses as follows:-

Christmas Day 8am

Christmas Day 10am

These Masses will operate as normal, on a first come, first served basis with the usual covid restrictions in place.

Public Masses:

Please **do not come** if you have symptoms, sniffles, sneezes, coughs, immunity issues etc.

Use common sense and think of others.

Remember to wear a mask and SANITISE hands on entering the church.

Social Distance regulations MUST be adhered to all times

Please follow only the directions of the Stewards.

The church will be both cleaned and sanitised regularly.

Wash your hands, cover your face, make space.



HANDS



FACE



SPACE

GRATEFUL THANKS

A lot of hard work goes on behind the scenes both in preparation for Christmas and throughout the year.

Sincere thanks to: Our music providers; readers, florists, ministers and ushers; those who maintain, clean and decorate the Church and those who put up the Christmas Tree and cribs. Special thanks this year to all our Stewards. Thanks to everyone who helps in any way.

CHRISTMAS OFFERINGS

1. The Crib offerings this year will be donated to the Brentwood Catholic Children's Society. Please keep the families and children they support in your prayers this Christmas.
2. **By tradition all offerings at the Christmas Masses are personal to our parish priest.**



OFFERTORY CONTRIBUTIONS

Please continue to support the parish financially with your weekly contributions – please email Fr Paul if you would like the parish bank account details to set up a standing order or to make a banc donation.

Thank you to those that have already made arrangements - ***Please make it clear whether it is an Offertory / Other donation on your payment reference and if you are already a gift-aider please quote your gift aid number.***

For Gift Aid enquiries the email address is olorgiftaid@hotmail.com
and the phone number is 01268 772998

At the bottom of the parish website there is a pink "gift aid it" logo which, if you click on it, takes you to another parish web page which goes into more detail and has some frequently asked questions.

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS...

All our sick and housebound parishioners at home or in hospital who cannot be present at our Christmas Masses but who are here with us in spirit.

✠ ✠ Also we remember parishioners and those connected to our parish whose funerals took place during the year... and their families...

Pat Taffurelli, Bob Hall, Katie Bundy, Frances Hidveghy, Mel Francke, Michael Mitchell, Maura Fallon, Carmela Miceli, Norman Hamilton, Rita Reale, Sheila Scully, Julia Allen, Terence Foreman, Kath Geeson, Maria O'Donnell, Dick McCamley, Joyce Harforth, Tinneke Robertson, Margaret Hand, Gordon Senior, Hugh Kirkland, Con Parker, Mike Barry, Patricia Hall, Peter Taffurelli, Laszlo Belogh, Teri Campbell, Doreen Derrick, Kathleen Kirkland, Bill Hall and Bob Walker ✠ ✠

(We hope that we have included everyone,
we apologise if we have missed anyone. Please let us know).

FOODBANK - THANKS

Hopeworx would like to say a big thank you to everyone who has contributed towards the Christmas Hampers this year.

We have been overwhelmed by the generosity of local authorities, charities, churches, supermarkets and individuals in donations of both food and finance. This has enabled us to provide 110 hampers this year which have been distributed to those in need via our partners in agencies, charities and churches. This is a 57% increase on last year.

As well as 2 bags full of Christmas goodies, this year we have been able to also provide a monetary donation with each hamper.

It is great to see what can be done when the community works together.



CHRISTMAS HAMPER COLLECTIONS

NEWSLETTERS

Just a few printed newsletters will be left on the shelf outside the presbytery. These are primarily designated for anyone who has no email access.

If you are able to print off newsletters yourselves and deliver to anyone who can't get out, that would be a great act of charity. Thank you.

If you, or anyone you know, would like to receive the newsletter by email each week, please in the first instance email a request to the parish office (rayleigh@dioceseofbrentwood.org) and ask to be added onto the distribution list.

The newsletter will be emailed by the Saturday morning.

OLOR REPOSITORY – Christmas Cards, Catholic Diaries, Church Art and Advent Calendars etc

Will be on sale in the Bethany room whenever possible when the church is open. Face Masks in Christmas Fabrics are also available.

ENTRY will be via the door at the front of the church, as usual, but payment and EXIT will be via the sacristy door. Payment will be by cash or cheque (made payable to OLOR or Our Lady of Ransom). Please remember to COVER YOUR FACE, SANITISE YOUR HANDS AND KEEP YOUR DISTANCE. Chairs are positioned around the tables to enable distancing and the number of people allowed in the room at any one time may be limited to ensure safety. Thank you in advance for your understanding in these difficult circumstances.

If there is no-one there to help you, please leave payment in the Church wall box marked Repository (by the front door).

CAFOD World Gifts

World Gifts, CAFOD's range of virtual gifts, make a real difference to families living in poverty across the world. While we have the coronavirus pandemic and lockdown here, we can still be good neighbours to our sisters and brothers overseas by giving World Gifts as Christmas presents to family and friends. The Keep Clean Kit gift for £6 and the Vegetable Garden gift for £10 are just two gifts that will help vulnerable families affected by the pandemic to protect and feed themselves. Let's spread joy and hope around the world this Christmas.

Visit cafod.org.uk/worldgifts.

2021 DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES

The Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes in 2021 is planned for Sunday 25 – Friday 30 July. However, because of Covid-19 it is not possible to know yet whether a pilgrimage will be practical or in what form. Therefore, any decisions and announcements regarding the Diocesan Pilgrimage, and our young people intending to travel with the BCYS, will be made in January. Until then, do keep the dates for the pilgrimage in your diaries.

MASS CARDS, SYMPATHY CARDS AND OTHER CARDS FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS...

- normally sold in the Repository - these can now be obtained at the presbytery. Please contact Fr. Paul to arrange a convenient time to come, choose, collect and pay for the cards.

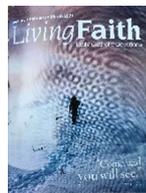


2021 Brentwood Diocesan Directories
are now available from the Presbytery- £2.80



MY DAY BY DAY

Booklets for
Advent and
January
are available
priced £1 each.



LIVING FAITH (Jan – March)

Popular booklet with a thought for
every day for the next three months.
Limited number available....
Voluntary donations for
the booklets welcome

If you would like to collect these from the Presbytery please contact Fr Paul.

If you usually purchase these but are unable to collect or arrange for one to be collected for you, then we can arrange delivery.

GIFT AID ENVELOPES ARE NOW AVAILABLE

Please contact Sandra our Gift Aid Co-ordinator (olorgiftaid@hotmail.com / 01268 772998) to arrange delivery/ collection of these.

Where possible it is easier if donations continue to be made by standing order quoting your gift aid number.

ASSOCIATION OF CHRISTIAN COUNSELLOR'S (ACC) COVID-19 CRISIS COUNSELLING SUPPORT SERVICE

ACC have set up a new service – a Covid 19 Crisis Counselling Support Service (CCSS) for NHS frontline staff, People working in a residential care home setting being directly impacted by caring for people who have Covid-19 and people who have been bereaved during the COVID-19 epidemic in the U.K. The crisis counselling support service offers up to ten sessions of counselling on a no fee basis.



To find out more please visit ACC's website www.acc-uk.org or if you don't have access to a computer, please ring 024 7644 9694.

ABUSE: Victim Support – Safe Spaces

Safe Spaces is a free and independent support service, providing a confidential, personal and safe space for anyone who has been, or feels, they have experienced abuse through their relationship with the Catholic Church of England and Wales.

Telephone 0300 303 1056

Email: safespaces@victimsupport.org.uk

LiveChat at www.SafeSpacesEnglandWales.org.uk



SOME USEFUL NUMBERS THAT MAY HELP YOU, YOUR FAMILIES OR NEIGHBOURS.



ABUSE AND OTHER HELPLINES – USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Police - call 999 – if you cannot respond due to danger, tap the mobile handset or cough, then when prompted press 55 (this takes you straight through to the police)

Freephone National Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0808 200 0247
www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk

Men's advice line 0808 801 0327 www.mensadviceline.org.uk

Rape Crisis 0808 9999 www.rapecrisis.org.uk

Respect phonenumber 0808 999 4040 www.respectphonenumber.org.uk

Karma Nirvana – a national honour based abuse helpline 0808 5999 247
support@karmanirvana.org.uk

Stay Safe East 0208 519 7241 (focus on people with disabilities) Text 07587 134122

NSPCC 0808 800 5000 Email help@nspcc.org.uk

Childline 0800 1111

Child Exploitation and Online Protection www.thinkuknow.co.uk

This site offers help for parents and children (at their level) from 4years old upwards.

Coronavirus-related scams / Fraud or Attempted Fraud

For the latest information go to <http://actionfraud.police.uk/news>

If you or someone you know is vulnerable and has been a victim of fraud, please call Essex Police on 101. Report fraud or attempted fraud by contacting Action Fraud at www.actionfraud.police.uk or call 0300 123 2040.

Suspicious emails NCSC (National Cyber Security Centre) report@phishing.gov.uk

SUPPORT -

Anxiety Call 08444 775774

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) Call 0845 390 6232
email – support@ocdaction.org.uk skype 0303 040 1112

ISOLATED DUE TO CORONAVIRUS - HOW TO OBTAIN HELP

The source of your support depends on which category of 'shielding' you fall into.

Category 1 - you have been contacted by the NHS and told to remain at home for 12 weeks. You are being supported directly from the government. If you were not contacted by the NHS and told this then you do not fall into this category.

Category 2 - anyone over the age of 70, plus anyone under the age of 70 with certain serious health conditions plus pregnant women - you are being supported by Essex County Council through their Essex Welfare Service. Please contact them on 0300 303 9988.

Category 3 - Everyone else.

You are supported by the **new helpline** set up by Rochford District Council in partnership with local faith groups, churches and voluntary organisations. If you have no friends or family close by and you need support during this crisis, or are feeling isolated, please call **01268 779999**.



Rochford District Community Response Hub Helpline

If you have no friends or family close by and you need support during this Coronavirus crisis, or are feeling isolated, please call **01268 -779999**

Rochford District Council, act, Rochford, Parish of Rayleigh, The Town of Rayleigh, The Town of Wickham, The Town of Wickham, The Town of Wickham

Be
Fraud
Smart!

[www.police.uk/
befraudsmart](http://www.police.uk/befraudsmart)



Essex Police Fraud Alert System

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11th December 2020

BEWARE OF VACCINATION SCAMS

With the rollout of the Covid-19 vaccine beginning this week, residents are warned of criminals seeking to exploit the pandemic further.

Fake Text Messages & Calls

Basildon has been one of the worst affected areas in Essex for Coronavirus and as a result, scammers have been targeting residents with fake text messages. Essex Trading Standards have warned that the messages ask residents to click a link in order to book their vaccination, before proceeding to take personal details and payment requests.

The Covid-19 vaccination is free and you will never be asked for payment.

In other parts of the country, people have also received phone calls to book non-existent 'vaccine appointments'. They are asked to confirm their booking by pressing a number on their phone which results in them being billed by their provider.

'VIP' vaccine tickets

Phishing scams continue to circulate, many now claiming to offer 'VIP' vaccination tickets that will allegedly put people at the head of the vaccination queue—for a price. Similar to the scams that have been seen throughout the pandemic, they will often ask you to click on a link or provide personal/banking details to pay for the ticket.



Remember—if it seems too good to be true, it probably is!

The vaccine is currently being offered to those most at risk, particularly the elderly.
Please pass this information on to anyone you think may be vulnerable to these scams.



If you or someone you know is vulnerable and has been a victim of fraud, please call Essex Police on 101
Report fraud or attempted fraud by contacting Action Fraud at actionfraud.police.uk or call 0300 123 2040

Keep up to date with fraud and
do **even more** Online at essex.police.uk



Be
Fraud
Smart!

essex.police.uk/
befraudsmart



Essex Police Fraud Alert System

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4th December 2020

RESIDENTS WARNED OF FAKE BT CALLS

Residents are warned to be alert to a spate of calls claiming to be BT outreach that result in a computer takeover by the criminals.

Essex Police is aware of reports by residents that have received a call claiming to be from BT and stating that there is either an issue with the broadband in the area, or that the residents internet access is due to be cut off unless they follow the callers instructions.

The criminals use this cover in order to request that the resident downloads a program that will allow them access to the computer—this will allow them to remotely control the computer, meaning they are able to change passwords and view banking information.

When dealing with companies over the phone remember to Take Five:

- **Stop** - Taking a moment to stop and think before parting with your money or information could keep you safe.
- **Challenge** - Could it be fake? It's ok to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you
- **Protect** - Contact your bank immediately if you think you've fallen for a scam and report it to Action Fraud



If you want to check whether the call is genuine, remember to call back after five minutes or, if possible, on a different phone. **Always** use a trusted number, and not a number provided by the caller. A number of reports have stated that the caller has provided another fake number designed to continue the scam.



If you believe criminals have accessed your computer, take it to a trusted computer expert and explain the situation.

Then report to Action Fraud at www.actionfraud.police.uk



If you or someone you know is vulnerable and has been a victim of fraud, please call Essex Police on 101
Report fraud or attempted fraud by contacting Action Fraud at actionfraud.police.uk or call 0300 123 2040

Keep up to date with fraud and
do **even more** Online  essex.police.uk 

CALL
ESSEX
POLICE

 **101**
IN AN EMERGENCY
ALWAYS CALL 999

CORONAVIRUS TIER 3

VERY HIGH ALERT

gov.uk/coronavirus

Around 1 in 3 people with Covid-19 have no symptoms so will be spreading the virus without realising. We must all take action to protect each other and our hospital capacity.

MEETING FRIENDS AND FAMILY  <p>No mixing of households indoors, or most outdoor places, apart from support bubbles. Maximum of six in some outdoor public spaces (e.g. parks, public gardens).</p>	BARS, PUBS AND RESTAURANTS  <p>Hospitality is closed, with the exception of sales by takeaway, drive-through or delivery.</p>	RETAIL  <p>Open.</p>	WORK AND BUSINESS  <p>Everyone who can work from home should do so.</p>
EDUCATION  <p>Early years settings, schools, colleges and universities open. Childcare, other supervised activities for children, and childcare bubbles permitted.</p>	INDOOR LEISURE  <p>Open. Group activities and classes should not take place.</p>	ACCOMMODATION  <p>Closed (with limited exceptions)</p>	PERSONAL CARE  <p>Open.</p>
OVERNIGHT STAYS  <p>We advise against overnight stays other than with household or support bubble.</p>	WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS  <p>15 guests for weddings, civil partnerships and wakes; 30 for funerals. Wedding receptions not permitted.</p>	ENTERTAINMENT  <p>Indoor venues closed.</p>	PLACES OF WORSHIP  <p>Open, but cannot interact with anyone outside household or support bubble.</p>
TRAVELLING  <p>Avoid travelling outside your area, other than where necessary such as for work or education. Further exemptions apply. Reduce the number of journeys where possible. Plan ahead and avoid busy times and routes on public transport. Avoid car sharing with those outside of your household or support bubble.</p>	EXERCISE  <p>Classes and organised adult sport can take place outdoors, but people should avoid higher-risk contact activity. Group exercise activities and sports indoors should not take place, unless with your household or bubble. Organised activities for elite athletes, under-18s and disabled people can continue.</p>	RESIDENTIAL CARE  <p>COVID-secure arrangements such as substantial screens, visiting pods, and window visits. Outdoor/airtight visits only (rollout of rapid testing will enable indoor visits including contact).</p>	LARGE EVENTS  <p>Events should not take place. Drive-in events permitted.</p>

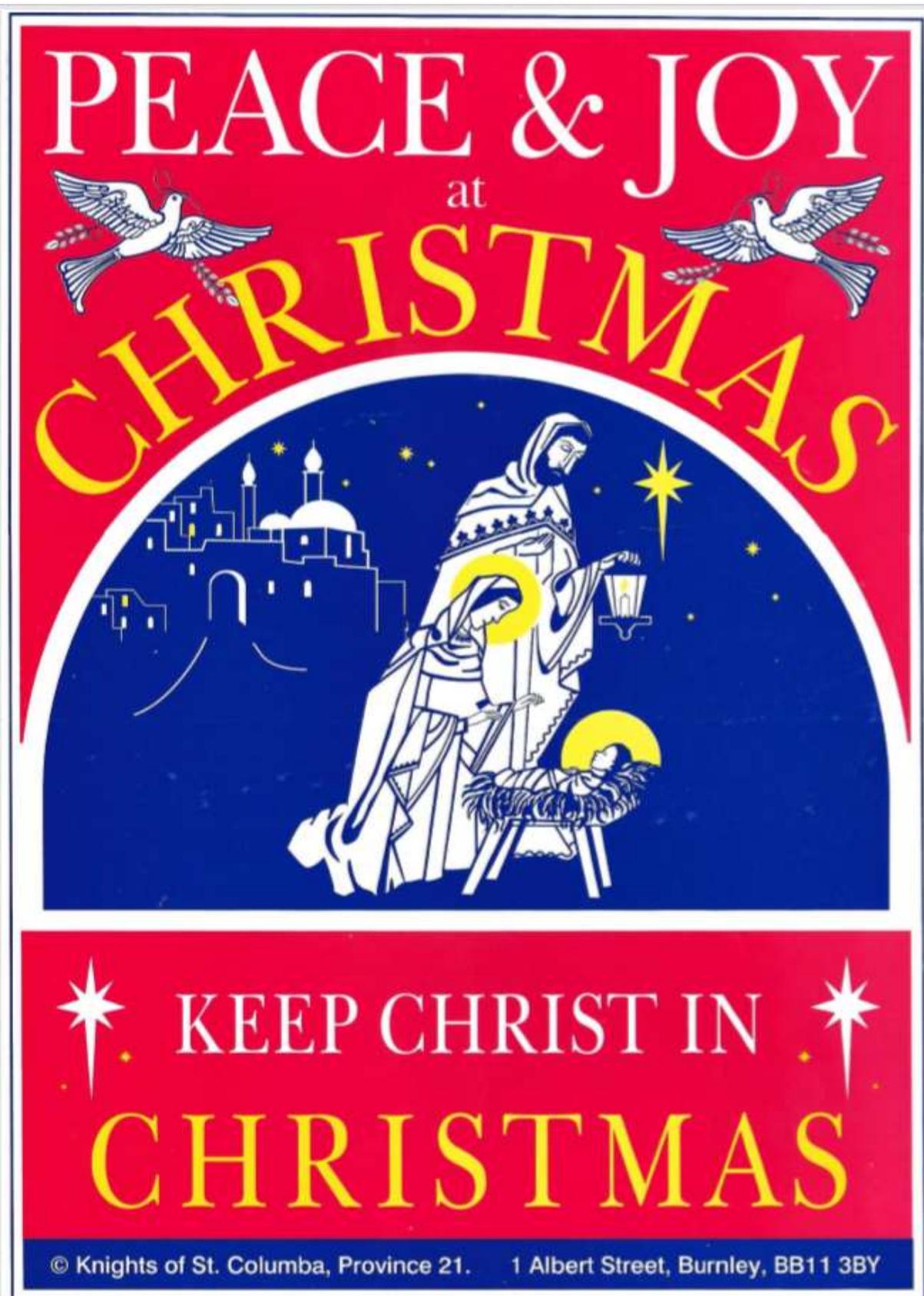
For support and more information visit:
gov.uk/coronavirus



KEEP CHRIST IN CHRISTMAS POSTERS

These have been kindly provided by the Knights of St. Columba.

Feel free to print this off and display at home.



READINGS AT MASS – FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

First reading – 2 Samuel 7:1-5,8-12,14,16

Your House and your sovereignty will always stand secure before me

Once David had settled into his house and the Lord had given him rest from all the enemies surrounding him, the king said to the prophet Nathan, 'Look, I am living in a house of cedar while the ark of God dwells in a tent.' Nathan said to the king, 'Go and do all that is in your mind, for the Lord is with you.'

But that very night the word of the Lord came to Nathan:

'Go and tell my servant David, "Thus the Lord speaks: Are you the man to build me a house to dwell in? I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, to be leader of my people Israel; I have been with you on all your expeditions; I have cut off all your enemies before you. I will give you fame as great as the fame of the greatest on earth. I will provide a place for my people Israel; I will plant them there and they shall dwell in that place and never be disturbed again; nor shall the wicked continue to oppress them as they did, in the days when I appointed judges over my people Israel; I will give them rest from all their enemies. The Lord will make you great; the Lord will make you a House. And when your days are ended and you are laid to rest with your ancestors, I will preserve the offspring of your body after you and make his sovereignty secure. I will be a father to him and he a son to me; if he does evil, I will punish him with the rod such as men use, with strokes such as mankind gives. Your House and your sovereignty will always stand secure before me and your throne be established for ever."

Psalm 88

I will sing for ever of your love, O Lord.

1. I will sing for ever of your love, O Lord;
through all ages my mouth will proclaim your truth.
Of this I am sure, that your love lasts for ever,
that your truth is firmly established as the heavens.
(R.)
 2. "I have made a covenant with my chosen one;
I have sworn to David my servant:
I will establish your dynasty for ever
And will set up your throne through all ages" *(R.)*
 3. He will say to me: "You are my father,
my God, the rock who saves me."
I will keep my love for him always;
For him my covenant shall endure. *(R.)*
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Second reading - Romans 16:25-27

The mystery is revealed that was kept secret for endless ages

Glory to him who is able to give you the strength to live according to the Good News I preach, and in which I proclaim Jesus Christ, the revelation of a mystery kept secret for endless ages, but now so clear that it must be broadcast to pagans everywhere to bring them to the obedience of faith. This is only what scripture has predicted, and it is all part of the way the eternal God wants things to be. He alone is wisdom; give glory therefore to him through Jesus Christ for ever and ever. Amen.

Alleluia, alleluia!
I am the handmaid of the Lord:
let what you have said be done to me.
Alleluia!



Gospel - Luke 1:26-38

'I am the handmaid of the Lord'

The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. He went in and said to her, 'Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you.' She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, 'Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour. Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?' 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you' the angel answered 'and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God. Know this too: your kinswoman Elizabeth has, in her old age, herself conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible to God.' 'I am the handmaid of the Lord,' said Mary 'let what you have said be done to me.' And the angel left her.

