



The Catholic Parishes of St Augustine of Canterbury, Meir St Filumena, Caverswall & St Mary, Cresswell

3rd December 2017

1st SUNDAY OF ADVENT – Year B

47/2017/ks

St Augustine's (for Parish Office): 146 Sandon Road, Meir, Stoke-on-Trent. ST3 7DF

St Filumena's: Blythe Bridge Road, Caverswall. ST11 9EA

St Mary's: Cresswell Old Lane, Cresswell. ST11 9RF

Parish email: augustineandmary@hotmail.com;

website: www.augustineandmary.org.uk or www.stfilumena.org.uk

Parish Priest: Fr Kazimierz Stefek *OSPPE* - tel. (office): 01782 313734

Assistant Priest: Fr Paweł Przybyszewski *OSPPE*

Parish Deacon (Meir/Cresswell): Rev Trevor Borthwick (retired) tel.: (home) 01782 388416

Parish Deacon (Caverswall): Rev Peter Bowyer - tel.: (home) 01782 393892

Administration and Social Events: Gabrielle Halliday - mobile: 07764 245344

Safeguarding representatives: (for Meir & Cresswell) Barbara Kitson - mobile: 07796 337075

(for Caverswall) Fiona Richardson - mobile: 07580 551894

SUNDAY REFLECTION

Today is the 1st Sunday of Advent and it marks the beginning of a new Liturgical Year. This is actually **Year B** of St. Mark. We do not begin at the beginning of St. Mark's Gospel, however – that will come next week. The opening Gospel passage of this Sunday is taken from near the end of the Gospel – just before St. Mark begins the account of Jesus' passion.

In the literal sense, the word '*advent*' means '*coming of someone*', and we wait for the coming of someone we love, but in the Christian liturgical sense it specifically implies to '*the coming of Christ*', and we eagerly and watchfully wait for the coming of Christ.

Now, considering '*the coming of Christ*', we find that it is a mystery, for Christ has already come in the past about 2000 years ago, Christ still comes today in the sacraments – very specifically through the Eucharist, and Christ will come in future at the end of the world. Thus in a general sense, the Advent Liturgy, simultaneously evokes the past of salvation history, while promising its eschatological fulfilment in the future and rendering both past and future present in the today of salvation. Obviously, it is not surprising that we begin the new Liturgical Year this Sunday, with the same theme of '*the coming of Christ*', where we ended it last Sunday. Specifically speaking, we have about 4 weeks of Advent and the 4 Sundays of Advent are supposed to primarily prepare us for the celebration of Christmas, but they have an even more important preparation in mind viz. the readiness of each one of us for the 2nd and final coming of Christ at the end of the world; and this we do by means of our constant and active involvement through properly welcoming Christ, and receiving him in our hearts who comes to us today in sacraments.

Today's Scripture Readings assure us that the Lord is coming. But an individual has to be alert and must be on watch. The First Reading from the "Book of the Prophet Isaiah" brings us face to face with a God who is Father and with the reality of our own sinfulness before Him. The Prophet Isaiah makes a prayer of yearning asking God to come and save us from sin. St. Paul in the Second Reading from his 1st Letter to the Corinthians stresses on the fidelity asking people to remain faithful to Jesus to the end. The Gospel Reading from St. Mark, invites all to a spiritual vigilance. We are told to be always watchful and ever alert so that the coming of the Lord does not find us unprepared, for no one knows the day or hour of his coming. The Gospel Reading of today teaches us that we are to be '*watching*' for the return of Jesus, not just '*waiting*' for it. Those who watch for it will keep themselves alert and self-controlled; those simply waiting may slip into sloppy business with other things and let their priorities slip! Are we just killing time '*waiting*' for Jesus to return, or are we really making time productive while '*prayerfully watching*' for his return? We are to understand the days in which we live. We have to be a sentry! We are to be on guard duty. We have to be alert at all times. We have to be watchful. So over these four weeks of Advent, let us watch with the Church for the Lord, that we may be better prepared to receive the Lord when He comes at Christmas, or indeed whenever He comes. And this is the Good News of today.

NEWS FROM THE PARISHES

Bible Study meets on Thursdays at 19:30 in the St Augustine's Presbytery. We spend time looking at the Mass Readings for the following Sunday – why not join us?

Journey in Faith – This course is for those who are interested in learning more about the Catholic Faith. Sessions are on Thursdays in term time at 19:30 in St. Augustine's Sacristy. Next session, Thursday 7th December

Children in non-Catholic Schools requiring preparation for the Sacraments and **non-Catholic children in Catholic Schools** wishing to become Catholics. Next session, Saturday 16th December, after 9:30 Mass in St. Augustine's Presbytery. For more information please contact Gabrielle Halliday on 07764 245344.

Preparation for the Sacrament of Baptism will take place at St. Augustine's on January 10th & 24th at 19:00. Parents and Godparents are invited. Please inform a member of clergy after Mass on Sunday if you wish to attend.

Padre Pio Prayer Group meets on the first Wednesday of the month at 14:30 in the St Augustine's sacristy.

50/50 Club Draw: winners in November: 1st Prize – P Malcolm; 2nd Prize – J Holland; 3rd Prize June Day. Well done! Congratulations! Collecting money now for 2018 – only £12 per number for 12 monthly draws – see Albert Griffin.

St Filumena - Tote winners for November: 1st Prize – June Jarville, 2nd Prize – Louise Eagle, 3rd Prize – Pat Bowen. Congratulations!

St Augustine's Pre-Christmas Cracker Evening, Friday 8th December 19:00, in the School Hall.

Starting at 19:00 with Ashley and his choir. We look forward to seeing you all there.

**** Last few tickets available! ****

Many thanks to those who have volunteered to make mince pies and mulled wine.

Further offers will be gratefully received!

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS: there is a collecting plate at all churches for donations, please.

Young at Heart: at St Francis Church Hall – next meeting Tuesday 5th December 14:00-16:00 Flower arranging. Christmas party Tuesday 19th December (need to book)

PLEASE PRAY

For those who are ill, especially: Hollie Tomkinson, Susan Brady, Ursula Grocott, Kathleen Smith, Sarah Stevenson, Dorothy Swift, Josie Coates, Arthur Rushton, Mrs. Burton, Cekeera Grocott, Olivia Killeen, Frederick Blaize, Jean Dawson, Michele Yon, Dorothy Vasey, Molly Blurton, Margaret Smith, Betty Walton, Margaret Stones, Marjorie Birks, Vincent Coleman, Dorothy Tantrum, Val Emery, Rosa Coronato, Edigio Coronato, Doris Kelly, Dorothy Sawyer, Christopher and Elizabeth Browne, Jane Preston, Molly Crowther, Chris Kelsall, Joyce Brown, Lynn Kent, Christopher & Clifford Browne, Deacon Trevor, Janice Austin, Fr Joseph Tynan, Albert Dawson, Joan Brindley, and Pat Shufflebotham.

For those who have died recently and those whose anniversary occurs around this time.

Parish Offertory for last weekend:

Catholic Youth Service

<u>Meir:</u>	£426.60 of which £250.00 was gift aided	£ 62.85
<u>Caverswall:</u>	£340.30 of which £200.70 was gift aided	£155.57
<u>Cresswell:</u>	£198.79 of which £177.20 was gift aided	£ 34.64

MANY THANKS FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

please gift aid, if possible

Next weekend there will be a Second Collection for the Poor Parishes of the Diocese

OUR PARISH SCHOOLS

St. Augustine's Catholic Academy – Sandon Road, Meir, ST3 7DF; tel. 01782 319504

Margaret Yates - Executive Principal, **Victoria Brickley** - Head of School

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St. Filumena's Catholic Academy – Blythe Bridge Road, Caverswall, ST11 9EA; tel. 01782 392367

Claire Tomlinson – Principal

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THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY



Few doctrines of the Catholic Church are as misunderstood as the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which Catholics celebrate every year on December 8th.

It's important to understand what the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception is and what it is not. Some people think the term refers to Christ's conception in Mary's womb without the intervention of a human father; but that is the Virgin Birth. Others think the Immaculate Conception means Mary was conceived "by the power of the Holy Spirit", in the way Jesus was, but that, too, is incorrect. The Immaculate Conception means that Mary, whose conception was brought about the normal way, was conceived without original sin or its stain - that's what "immaculate" means: without stain. The essence of original sin consists in the deprivation of sanctifying grace, and its stain is a corrupt nature. Mary was preserved from these defects by God's grace; from the first instant of

her existence she was in the state of sanctifying grace and was free from the corrupt nature original sin brings.

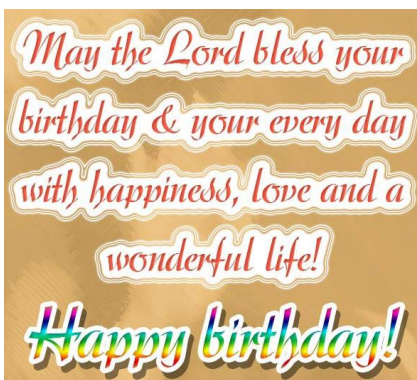
When discussing the Immaculate Conception, an implicit reference may be found in the angel's greeting to Mary. The angel Gabriel said: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you" [Luke 1:28]. The phrase "full of grace" is a translation of the Greek word *kecharitomene*. It therefore expresses a characteristic quality of Mary. The grace given to Mary is at once permanent and of a unique kind. *Kecharitomene* is a perfect passive participle of *charitoo*, meaning "to fill or endow with grace". Since this term is in the perfect tense, it indicates that Mary was graced in the past but with continuing effects in the present. So, the grace Mary enjoyed was not a result of the angel's visit. In fact, Catholics hold, it extended over the whole of her life, from conception onward. She was in a state of sanctifying grace from the first moment of her existence.

Even though Mary is unique in all humanity for being born without sin, She is held up by the Church as a model for all humanity in Her holiness and Her purity, in Her willingness to accept the Plan of God for Her. Every person is called to recognize and respond to God's call, to their own vocation, in order to carry out God's plan for their life and fulfil the mission prepared for them since before the beginning of time. Mary's "Fiat" in response of the Angel Gabriel's greeting is the response required of all Christians to God's Plan. The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception is a time to celebrate the great joy of God's gift to humanity in Mary, and to recognize with greater clarity, the truth that each and every human being has been created by God to fulfil a particular mission that he and only he can fulfil.

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BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS IN DECEMBER:

Angela Hartley, Ernst Häferer, Monica Lumia, Fr Paweł Przybyszewski,




Holy Mass for the birthday intentions of those listed above will be offered at St. Augustine's Church on Sunday, 31st December at 11:00.

**On your birthday, we pray that God continue pour out his blessings into your life and to the people you love.
HAPPY BIRTHDAY !**

MASS TIMES AND INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK

	St. Augustine's MEIR	St. Filumena's CAVERSWALL	St. Mary's CRESSWELL
2nd December Saturday			18:00 (<i>Sunday Vigil</i>) – Ted Shaw RIP
3rd December SUNDAY 1 st Sunday of Advent - Year B	11:00 – David Burgess RIP	9:00 – People of Parish	
4th December Monday <i>Advent Feria</i>	9:30 – All Deceased priests we have known	9:15 – Holy Souls	
5th December Tuesday <i>Feast of St Birinus, Bishop</i>	9:30 – Eric Woodhead RIP <i>Followed by Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Succour</i>		
6th December Wednesday <i>Advent Feria</i>	9:30 – Margaret Griffin RIP	9:15 –	
7th December Thursday <i>Memorial of St Ambrose, Bishop, Doctor of the Church</i>	9:30 – Holy Souls		
8th December Friday <i>Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary</i>	9:30 – 10:00 – Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament & Benediction 19:00 – Gerald Clayton RIP		
9th December Saturday <i>Advent Feria</i>	9:30 – Deceased members of Ridge Family		18:00 (<i>Sunday Vigil</i>) – Anthony Prime RIP
10th December SUNDAY 2 nd Sunday of Advent - Year B	11:00 – Hill & Murray Families RIP	9:00 – People of Parish	

 Confessions	<i>Friday:</i> 18:00 – 18:45 <i>Saturday:</i> 10:00 – 10:30	<i>Sunday before Mass</i> 8:15 – 8:45	<i>Saturday before Mass</i> 17:15 – 17:45
	and <i>BY REQUEST</i>		

MASS INTENTIONS – PLEASE HAND IN ENVELOPE TO A MEMBER OF THE CLERGY

When in the church
 talk only to God before the service;
 let God talk to you during the service;
 and talk to one another after the service but only outside the church!

Please send items for the Parish Newsletter by Thursday evening (e-mail: augustineandmary@hotmail.com)