

BRINDLE St JOSEPH'S

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First Sunday of Advent

3rd December 2023

(Sunday cycle year B, weekday cycle year 2, psalter week 1)

DAY OF PRAYER FOR MIGRANTS



“Be on your guard, stay awake!”

Give Us Hearts

God of love and compassion, may we always recognize your spirit: in the refugee family seeking safety from violence; in the migrant worker bringing food to our tables; in the asylum-seekers seeking justice for their families; in the unaccompanied child travelling in a dangerous world.

Give us hearts that break open whenever our brothers and sisters turn to us. Give us hearts that no longer turn deaf to their voices in times of need. Give us eyes to recognize a moment for grace instead of a threat. Give us voices that fail to remain silent but which decide instead to advocate prophetically. Give us hands that reach out in welcome, but also in work, for a world of justice until all homelands are safe and secure.

(Fr Dan Hartnett SJ)

THIS WEEK

Sat 2 nd	10.00am	Confessions	BVM
	10.30am	Anne Bolton (Anointing of the Sick during Mass)	
	SECOND COLLECTION: CHRISTMAS FLOWERS		First Sunday of Advent
	6.00pm	Sheila Margaret Cowsley	
Sun 3 rd	9.30am	For the Parish	
Mon 4 th	No Mass today		Monday of Advent 1
Tue 5 th	9.30am	Dyonizy and Olga Hetko	St John Almond (memorial)
Wed 6 th	9.30am	EBC	Wednesday of Advent 1
	6.00pm	Advent Reflection (in the Parish Room)	
Thu 7 th	9.30am	Christine Jamieson	St Ambrose (memorial)
Fri 8 th	9.30am	Holy Souls	The Immaculate Conception of the BVM (solemnity)
Sat 9 th	10.30am	Abbot's intentions	Saturday of Advent 1
	6.00pm	Francis Elliott	Second Sunday of Advent
Sun 10 th	9.30am	For the Parish	

First Saturday of the Month: Confessions at 10.00am, Anointing of the Sick during 10.30am Mass

This week		Reader		Eucharistic Minister		Bookshop
Sat 2 nd		L Gardner		J Hothersall		L Gardner
Sun 3 rd		F Fordyce		L Rigbye		C Snape
Bidding prayers	L Lomax	Children's Liturgy	L Rigbye, J Kitchen	Collection counters	J & K Slater	
Next week		Reader		Eucharistic Minister		Bookshop
Sat 9 th		M Russell		P Cook		P Hothersall
Sun 10 th		L Rigbye		S Schofield		B Gore
Bidding prayers	The Music Group	Children's Liturgy	B Gorrell, A Fowler	Collection counters	C & K Snape	

Last weekend: attendance: 111, collection £342.42, Animate Youth Service: £77.75 – thank you!

Readings: Isaiah 63:16-17, 64:1,3-8, 1 Corinthians 1:3-9, Mark 13:33-37.

If we purchase something which later lets us down, we change it for another that won't let us down.

This is what peoples of old did with their *gods*. (note the small g)

One can imagine them taking a clay effigy of the god for rain, light a candle around it, burn some incense and begin an incantation for rain. The rain doesn't come so they ditch that god and go for another and adopt that god if the rain comes which of course it eventually will.

Even the Hebrews did this.

God had introduced himself to Moses as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. He miraculously led the enslaved Hebrews out of Egypt through the parting waters and on Mt Sinai he was giving Moses the Law which was to unite them uniquely as God's chosen people.

But he was a long time up there with God and the people grew restless and impatient. Moreover, they had not enjoyed their time in the desert and were hankering for the food and relative comfort they had enjoyed in Egypt. They persuaded Aaron, the second-in-command, to let them fashion a god *to go before them* and so they made themselves a golden calf to worship.

God was infuriated and would have wiped them off the face of the earth but for Moses' intercession to spare them.

It took these people many years to learn that gods of gold or clay do nothing for you however many incantations you throw at them, but no less important that the one true God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all that exists doesn't always give you what you want and when you want it.

This realization, we are told, came at about the time of our first reading (Isaiah) after their return to Israel from exile in Babylon in about 325AD.

They saw their exile as a punishment from God for past sins especially the major sin of idolatry. Their enemies were being used, as they saw it, by God as an instrument of punishment as a Father might punish his son not out of viciousness but in loving concern - for God does not wish to lose his people.

And so now they see God as a loving Father who was angry when they sinned and chose other gods or ignored him altogether. *You were angry when we were sinners...no one invoked your name...you hid your face from us and gave us up to the power of our sins.*

But now, instead of going after other gods, they are able to say: *And yet Lord you are our Father, we are the clay, you are the potter, we are the work of your hands.*

God cannot be controlled, fashioned or manipulated.

And so, unlike their ancestors at the foot of Mt Sinai, God's people had learnt to *wait* and to hope and to pray even if it means screaming at him to *tear or rent the heavens open and come to us!*

We see the same plea in our psalm *O lord, rouse up your might ... come to our help* put an end to this *waiting*.

In our 2nd reading, St Paul encourages the Corinthians to *wait*, drawing strength from the graces given to them through Christ Jesus, and in the Gospel Jesus tells his disciples to be on their guard and to stay awake while they *wait*.

God also *waits*, with supreme patience for his people, you and me, to put our faith and trust in him alone as we too wait...praying not to grow tired of waiting and find solace in drink, sex, drugs or any of the other false gods that have always been so easily available for a quick but always short-lived fix.

But **why** all this waiting?

Because we need all the time God gives us to become his people so that we can feel at home and at one with him in our eternal homeland which is Heaven.

To force us to become his people or to give us a lobotomy so that we can only do his will, would do away with his gift to us that sets us apart from all other creatures: free will...for we are free to accept or reject his choice for us in a loving relationship with him.

So, we too wait in faith and in prayer, crying out with our ancestors *Rend open the heavens and come to us in our need*

But haven't we heard a similar prayer from the cross: *O God my God, why have you forsaken me?*

We wait for him then but he also waits for us, you and me – moulding but not forcing us to become his people, the people of God.

In our waiting, we could not be in better company.

Reflections

The only thing harder than waiting on God, is wishing that you had. (Steven Furtick)

Sometimes when we are waiting for God to speak, He is waiting for us to listen. (Martha Bolton)

With Prayers,

Fr Raphael.

THIS WEEK'S COMMEMORATIONS

St John Almond (1565-1612) Born in Allerton near Liverpool and studied for the priesthood at the English College, Rome. He ministered back in England and was twice arrested. He refused to sign the oath of allegiance saying that he bore in his heart 'so much allegiance to King James as he or any other Christian could expect by law of the true church be it which it will, ours or yours'. He was martyred at Tyburn.

St Ambrose (339-97) Bishop of Milan. As a civilian he was governor to provinces of Milan and on the death of an Arian Bishop, he attended an assembly to pacify a dispute between the Catholics and Arians (a heretical belief that denied the trinitarian belief of Catholicism as expressed in the Nicene Creed) as they sought a successor.

Such were his gifts at mediation that the crowds clamoured for Ambrose to be bishop.

Ignoring his resistance on the grounds of unworthiness and that he wasn't even baptised, this was put right and within a week he was ordained bishop.

He took up a course in scripture and a study of the writings of the Fathers. He promoted monasticism, rebuked emperors who abused their powers and introduced the singing of hymns at Mass and was influential in the journey of St Augustine into the faith.

The Solemnity of the **Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary** is the belief that, through the gift of God's grace, she was conceived free from original sin and hence preserved immaculate, pure and worthy to be the Mother of God.

Thank you for all you did to welcome **BISHOP TOM** last weekend, He very much enjoyed himself.

THIS WEEKEND there will be a **SECOND COLLECTION** for Christmas flowers for the church.

There will be a **FOODBANK COLLECTION THIS WEEKEND** – our chance to make Christmas a bit more special for those less fortunate than ourselves.

Joseph and Niamh are collecting items for the **FOXTON CENTRE** again this Christmas. They'd welcome donations of tinned food, warm clothes (new or used), toys and gifts, toiletries, long-life milk and juice, rice, pasta and cereal bars. Contact their mum (Claire) on 07968254860 or drop off at 29 Bank Head Lane. Thank you!

The **AUTUMN APF RED BOX** collection amounted to £451.34. As ever, many thanks to contributors (including those who donate online) and collectors. The next collection will be in March/April next year. Calendars for 2024 will be available soon.

There is a **DEANERY SERVICE OF RECONCILIATION** at St Gregory's, Weld Bank, Chorley, PR7 3NW on Sunday 17th December at 3.00pm.

ADVENT REFLECTION – why not take time out of the busy-ness of life for an hour's prayer and reflection in the build up to Christmas every Wednesday at 6.00pm in the Parish Room? Each session starts with Vespers (the evening prayer of the Church) then we reflect on the readings for the coming Sunday and end with Compline (the night prayer of the Church). There's no heavy theology involved, just a bit of peace and quiet at the end of the day.

PLEASE PRAY for those who are sick or housebound including Rita Gorrell, Rose Higginson, Fr Jonathan Cotton OSB and Bill Warbrick, and for those whose anniversaries occur about this time. Please also pray for **Archbishop Malcolm McMahon** – Friday is the anniversary of his episcopal ordination.

100 CLUB: The winner for week 1 is number 63, Greg Gorrell. The new year for the club starts **THIS SUNDAY** so subs are due. You can pay for the full year (£50) or in blocks of 10 weeks (£10, 5 times over the year). Payment can be by cash, cheque (payable to Brindle Books) or, if you prefer, by bank transfer – see Lesley or Mick for the account details. Last year, despite losing a few members, we paid out £1,500 in prize money and raised £1,360 for church funds – thank you! New members are always welcome – again, please see Lesley or Mick or leave your name and contact details in the bookshop with your subs.

DURING ADVENT AND CHRISTMASTIDE we are asked to pray for Migrants and Refugees, Expectant Mothers.

Bidding Prayers for the First Sunday of Advent 2023 **Day of Prayer for Migrants**

Priest

Pope Francis reminds us that migration "Represents a challenge that is not easy..... but one which must be faced with compassion". With this in mind, we make our prayers to the Lord.

Reader

For Pope Francis. May he continue to guide and teach us how to welcome migrants and those who are forced away from their homes and homelands. Lord hear us...

For the world. We pray for those responsible for conflict around the world, that they seek ways to ensure that no-one is forced to flee their homes, and if they are, grant them safe passage to places of safety. Lord hear us...

We pray that our government treats migrants with fairness and compassion. Lord hear us...

We also pray that we are given the strength and foresight to truly help those in need, whether homeless, jobless or just struggling to make ends meet. Lord hear us...

For community workers. We pray for those who offer themselves selflessly to support migrants. Lord hear us...

For all in our parish, especially those who are sick, the elderly, the housebound and the bereaved. May we continue to offer help, support and prayers. Lord hear us...

We ask Mary our mother to unite these prayers with her own as we say: Hail Mary...

Let us pause to pray for our own intentions.

Priest

Pope Francis further emphasised the need for "fraternity, putting human dignity and real people, especially those most in need, in first place". Amen

PRAYER FOR THE SICK

Priest: As we thank God for the gift of his Son in Holy Communion, let us remember those of our Parish who are sick or housebound.

All: May the body and blood of your Son, which we now send to them through our Eucharistic Ministers, bring them consolation and peace. We ask this in the name of Jesus, Our Lord. Amen.