



Parish of Holy Cross, Our Lady & Saint Paul

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|-------------------|---|--------------------------------|
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| Parish Deacon: | Bernard McConnell | 07724 643883 |
| Parish Sister: | Sr Pauline | 07710 717207 |
| Parish Secretary: | Lorraine Forshaw | 652 1074 / 07709 186201 |
| Web: | http://www.holycrossourladysaintpaul.org | |
| Livestream: | https://our-lady-birkenhead.click2stream.com/ | |
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21st December 2025 – 4th Sunday of Advent

CYCLE OF CATECHESIS – JUBILEE 2025. JESUS CHRIST OUR HOPE. II. THE LIFE OF JESUS. THE PARABLES 8. THE LABOURERS IN THE VINEYARD. “AND HE SAID TO THEM, ‘YOU TOO GO INTO MY VINEYARD’” (MT 20:4)

Dear brothers and sisters,

I would like to look at one of Jesus' parables again. Also in this case, it is a story that fosters our hope. Indeed, at times we have the impression that we cannot find meaning for our lives: we feel useless, inadequate, just like the labourers who wait in the marketplace, waiting for someone to hire them to work. But sometimes time passes, life goes by, and we do not feel acknowledged or appreciated. Perhaps we did not arrive in time, others appeared before us, or problems held us up elsewhere.

The metaphor of the marketplace is very appropriate for our times too, because the market is the place of business, where unfortunately even affection and dignity are bought and sold, in the attempt to earn something. And when we do not feel appreciated, acknowledged, we risk selling ourselves to the first bidder. Instead, the Lord reminds us that our life is worthy, and his wish is to help us discover this.

Also in the parable we are commenting on today, there are labourers awaiting someone who will hire them for the day. We are at Chapter 20 of the Gospel of Matthew, and here too we find a character whose behaviour is unusual, who surprises and challenges us. He is the owner of a vineyard, who comes out in person in search of his labourers. Evidently, he wants to establish a personal relationship with them.

As I was saying, it is a parable that gives hope, because it tells us that this landowner goes out several times to go and look for those who are waiting to give meaning to their lives. The landowner goes out immediately at dawn and then, every three hours, he returns in search of workers to send to his vineyard. Following this schedule, after going out at three o'clock in the afternoon, there would be no reason to go out again, because the working day ended at six.

OUR PARISH VISION & MISSION

We are a warm & welcoming community of faith rooted in the love of God revealed to us in Jesus Christ. Belonging is at the heart of what we do as members of the body of Christ. We believe worship is not just found in prayer; it's something expressed in everything we do.

| MASSES FOR WEEK | | | | |
|---|---|---------|--|----|
| Sunday | FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT | 9:30am | Alice & Arthur Cooke R.I.P. | SP |
| | | 11am | People of the Parish | OL |
| <i>Tea & Coffee are served after both Sunday Masses</i> | | | | |
| Monday | Weekday of Advent | 9am | Edward Henry Davey (Birthday Memorial) | OL |
| <i>Access to Our Lady's for weekday Mass is through the entrance to the right side of the church</i> | | | | |
| Tuesday | Weekday of Advent | 9:30am | Mary & Terry McGhee | OL |
| <i>Tea & Coffee are served in the Saint Joseph chapel after Mass on Tuesday morning. Everyone is welcome!</i> | | | | |
| Wednesday | CHRISTMAS EVE | 4:30pm | Michael Christopher Coughlan R.I.P. | SP |
| | | 6pm | Ray & Alan Martin Stevens R.I.P. | OL |
| | | 9pm | People of the Parish | OL |
| Thursday | THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD | 10:30am | Anna & Kevin Coughlan | OL |
| Friday | SAINT STEPHEN | 10am | Billy Boylan R.I.P. | OL |
| Saturday | SAINT JOHN | | | |
| Sunday | THE HOLY FAMILY | 9:30am | People of the Parish | SP |
| | | 11am | Reggie D'Souza R.I.P. (Birthday) | OL |
| Monday | Saint Thomas Becket | 10am | Rob Creer R.I.P. | OL |
| <i>Access to Our Lady's for weekday Mass is through the entrance to the right side of the church</i> | | | | |
| Tuesday | CHRISTMAS OCTAVE | 10am | Ian McKensie R.I.P. | OL |
| <i>Tea & Coffee are served in the Saint Joseph chapel after Mass on Tuesday morning. Everyone is welcome!</i> | | | | |
| Wednesday | CHRISTMAS OCTAVE | 12pm | Thanksgiving | OL |
| | | 3pm | Wedding of Laura & Phil | OL |
| Thursday | MARY THE MOTHER OF GOD | | | |
| Friday | <i>Saints Basil the Great & Gregory Nazianzen</i> | 10am | Michael Christopher Coughlan R.I.P. | SP |
| | | 12pm | Funeral Service for Jenny Ross | OL |
| Saturday | SATURDAY OF THE CHRISTMAS SEASON | | | |
| Sunday | SECOND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS | 9:30am | Patrick (Paddy) Lewis R.I.P. | SP |
| | | 11am | People of the Parish | OL |

SAINT JOSEPH LAMP

The lamp burns for the intentions Andrew O'Leary R.I.P. at Our Lady's and Claire Coughlan R.I.P. at Saint Paul's on 4th Sunday of Advent. Suzanne Stevens (60th Birthday) at Our Lady's and Anna Coughlan at Saint Paul's on Feast of the Holy Family. Envelopes for intentions are at the back of each church. A £5 donation is requested.

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

Those who are sick

Stuart & Jackie, Samuel Adodo, Lily Baker, Christopher Browne, Gerard Carey, Pat Cockran, Anna Coughlan, Teresa Denye, Chloe & Irene Fortune, Colin James, Clare McElroy, Canon Philip Moor, Joe Roper, Helen Ryan, Steven Sales, Deacon Terry Simms, Philip Smith, Eileen & Julia Ward, Sarah Williams & Pat Wise.

Those who have died

Jenny Ross

POPE'S PRAYER INTENTION FOR DECEMBER 2025

For Christians in areas of conflict. Let us pray that Christians living in areas of war or conflict, especially in the middle east, might be seeds of peace, reconciliation and hope.

JOB VACANCIES WITH THE SHREWSBURY YOUTH MISSION TEAM

Vacancies have arisen with SYMT for a Programme Coordinator, Youth Mission Team Member & admin assistant. All the details can be found on the Diocesan website <https://www.dioceseofshrewsbury.org/latest-vacancies/>

If you are interested, please send your CV to Pauline McCulloch recruitment@dioceseofshrewsbury.org, closing date is Friday 23rd January 2026.

PARISH

CARITAS - If you know someone in need of assistance, please contact Trish Spencer, Deputy CEO of Caritas Diocese of Shrewsbury at Wheatland Lane, Wallasey, CH44 7ED Tel: 0151 652 1281, email: info@caritasshrewsbury.org.uk

CHRISTMAS RAFFLE RESULTS - there are a few unclaimed prizes, please see the list at the back of church.

PIETY STALL - A selection of cards for Christmas & all occasions is available to buy at each church. Looking for alternative Christmas gifts? Why not look at our parish branded merchandise (pens £1, Mugs £6, bundle deal of one mug and two pens £7) or World Gifts from CAFOD? <https://worldgifts.cafod.org.uk/collections/all>

LEGACY FROM MRS MARY GAMBINO - Mary was a parishioner at Our Lady's for many years & we celebrated her funeral in the summer last year. Mary very kindly left a legacy to the parish in her will. After discussions with her family & with the Diocese we have put the £25000 sum into the restoration fund for the church to help with matched funding for grant bids we are putting together.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR CLEANING OUR LADY'S CHURCH - If you can help with the monthly cleaning a signup sheet is available in the porch to add your name for the next date which is Saturday 7th February 2026.

PARISHIONERS WHO ARE HOUSEBOUND – If you know of anyone who wishes to receive Holy Communion at home, please ask them to contact the Parish Office or help them to do so.

MARRIAGE HELP – Retrouvaille is not counselling or group therapy but it's a marriage support programme which helps couples to rediscover trust, hope and healing for their marriage. For further details please visit www.retrouvaille.org.uk or telephone 07887 296983.

PRACTICAL, CHARITABLE SUPPORT FOR LIFE – “Life Charity has been my safe haven during my stormy seas.” To keep up to date with news from the UK's only charity focused on real-time, practical support to enable women to continue their pregnancy in deeply challenging situations, visit: www.lifecharity.org.uk/join-us-on-social.

| <u>PARISH FINANCES</u> | |
|--|---|
| <u>14th December 2025</u> | |
| Offertory - £451.32 (Cash); £17.50 (Standing Orders) £5 (Card/Contactless/Web); Zambia/Caritas £11.80 | To donate online, please scan the QR code. |
| <i>Thank you for your continuing generosity.</i> |  |

STANDING ORDERS – You can set one up through your online banking or via the form which is available from the parish office. If you are a UK taxpayer, please gift aid these payments.

BONUS BALL SCHEME – The winner on Saturday 13th December was no. 59, as there was no winner there will be a rollover for next Saturday's draw. If you would like to join, the next payment will be due by 18th January for draw's commencing on 24th January 2026. A list of available numbers is at the back of each church.

CHARITY

WIRRAL FOODBANK – Thank you to everyone who has supported Wirral Foodbank's Reverse Advent calendar, it really does make a difference. Please do continue your support over Christmas and into the New Year, donations can be left outside the Saint Joseph chapel at Our Lady's or in the sacristy at Saint Paul's.

If you have collected the items for the reverse advent calendar, please leave them this week either in the sacristy at Saint Paul's or outside the Saint Joseph chapel in Our Lady's.

STAMPS & GLASSES – These are donated to the RNIB to support their work with those suffering sight loss. There is a box at the back of each church for any used stamps or glasses you have.

USED TABLET BLISTER PACKS TO SUPPORT THE MARIE CURIE CHARITY – can be donated at each church but please ensure that you do not include any other items.



*Wishing everyone a Happy
& a Holy Christmas.*

Fr Michael