



Parish of Holy Cross, Our Lady & Saint Paul

Parish Priest: Fr Michael Coughlan 652 1074
Parish Deacon: Bernard McConnell 07724 643883
Parish Sister: Sr Pauline 652 5655
Parish Secretary: Lorraine Forshaw 652 1074 / 07709 186201
Web: <http://www.holycrossourladysaintpaul.org>
Livestream: <https://our-lady-birkenhead.click2stream.com/>
E-mail: info@holycrossourladysaintpaul.org

15th December 2024 – Third Sunday of Advent

CYCLE OF CATECHESIS. THE SPIRIT AND THE BRIDE. THE HOLY SPIRIT GUIDES THE PEOPLE OF GOD TOWARDS JESUS OUR HOPE. 6. "THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD IS UPON ME". THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

Today we reflect on the Holy Spirit who descends upon Jesus at the baptism in the Jordan, and spreads from Him into His body, which is the Church. In the Gospel of Mark, the scene of Jesus' baptism is described thus: "In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens opened and the Spirit descending upon him like a dove; and a voice came from heaven, 'Thou art my beloved Son; with thee I am well pleased'" (Mk 1:9-11). The entire Trinity met at that moment, on the banks of the Jordan! There is the Father, who is present with his voice; there is the Holy Spirit, who descends upon Jesus in the form of a dove; and there is he whom the Father proclaims to be his beloved Son, Jesus. It is a very important moment of Revelation, it is an important moment of salvation history. It will be good for us to reread this Gospel passage.

What happened that was so important at Jesus' baptism that led all the Evangelists to recount it? We find the answer in the words Jesus utters, shortly afterwards, in the synagogue of Nazareth, clearly referring to the event in the Jordan: "*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me*" (Lk 4:18). In the Jordan, God the Father "anointed with the Holy Spirit"; that is, he consecrated Jesus as King, Prophet and Priest. Indeed, in the Old Testament, kings, prophets and priests were anointed with perfumed oil. In the case of Christ, instead of physical oil, there is the spiritual oil that is the Holy Spirit; instead of the symbol there is the reality: there is the Spirit himself who descends upon Jesus. Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit ever since the first moment of his Incarnation. However, this was a "personal grace", incommunicable; now, instead, with this *anointment*, he receives the fullness of the gift of the Spirit, but for his mission which, as the head, he will communicate to his body, which is the Church, and to every one of us. This is why the Church is the new "regal people, prophetic people, and priestly people". The Hebrew term "Messiah" and the corresponding Greek "Christ" – *Christós*, both referring to Jesus, mean "anointed". He was anointed with the oil of joy, anointed with the Holy Spirit. Our very name of "Christians" was explained by the

Fathers in the literal sense: “Christian” means “anointed in imitation of Christ” (cf. Saint Cyril of Jerusalem, *Mystagogical Catechesis*, III, 1).

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 THE WEEK			
Sunday	THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT	9:30am People of the Parish	SP
		11am Margaret & Bob Smart	OL
<i>Tea & Coffee are served after both Sunday Masses</i>			
Monday	Ferial	12pm REQUIUM MASS FOR TERENCE HUGHES	OL
<i>Access to Our Lady's for weekday Mass is through the entrance to the right side of the church</i>			
Tuesday	Ferial	9:30am Eileen Boylan (Birthday)	OL
<i>Tea & Coffee are served in the Saint Joseph chapel after Mass on Tuesday mornings. Everyone welcome!</i>			
Wednesday	Ferial	9am Neila (Get well soon)	OL
Thursday	Ferial		
Friday	Ferial	9:30am John Quinlan	SP
Saturday	Ferial	12pm John Pearson R.I.P.	OL
Sunday	FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT	9:30am People of the Parish	SP
		11am Margaret & Bob Smart	OL

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

Those who are sick

Irene Fortune, Anna Coughlan, Canon Philip Moor, Lily Baker, Christopher Browne, Rob Creer, Eileen & Julia Ward, Philip Smith, Clare McElroy & Teresa Denye.

Those who have died

Michael Christopher Coughlan, Terence Hughes, Nigel Salisbury & Paddy Lewis.

POPE’S PRAYER INTENTION FOR DECEMBER 2024: *FOR PILGRIMS OF HOPE* – Let us pray that this Jubilee strengthens us in our faith, helping us to recognise the Risen Christ in the midst of our lives, transforming us into pilgrims of Christian hope.

SAINT JOSEPH LAMP the lamp burns for Andrew O’Leary at Our Lady’s and Mary & Terence McGhee R.I.P. at Saint Paul’s. Envelopes for intentions are at the back of each church. A £5 donation is requested.

PARISH

CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT – tomorrow Monday 16th December, 6:30pm at Our Lady's & Tuesday 17th December 2:30pm at Saint Paul's. Please do join our school communities as they lead us in these beautiful reflections as we draw toward the end of our Advent journey & prepare for the great festivities of Christmas.

WEEKLY RAFFLE – Congratulations to last week's winner with ticket no. 768. Many thanks for all your support and funds raised will go towards the Christmas Raffle; *donations for prizes would be greatly appreciated e.g. Wine, Spirits, Chocolates and Biscuits*. Please hand in to the helpers at the back of Our Lady's.

CHRISTMAS RAFFLE – will be held on Sunday 22nd December in the back of church and tea and coffee will be available. There will be multiple prizes with the *top prize being £50*. Tickets cost £1 for a strip of 5 and can be bought from today after Mass, why not buy tickets for family & friends as well?

DECORATING OUR LADY'S CHURCH FOR CHRISTMAS will also take place after 11am Mass next Sunday 22nd December (4th Sunday of Advent). Everyone is welcome to come & help!

CHRISTMAS PANTRY & GIFTS POP-UP STALL – will be held here in church by Our Lady's school on Wednesday 18th December 2:30 until 4:00pm.

SVP WIRRAL CHRISTMAS GROTTO – will be held on Saturday 21st December from 10am to 2pm at their centre at 15-19 Grange Road West, Birkenhead. A donation of £2 per child is requested to help to support families who may be struggling at this time of year. Parishioners are also invited to Christmas celebrations at the centre on Tuesday 17th, Wednesday 18th & Friday 19th between 12:30pm to 3pm. Saint Vincents are a centre that helps those struggling with homelessness, substance abuse, domestic violence & financial hardship in Birkenhead.

CONFIRMATION Any young person who is in Year 8 or above at school and wishes to enrol in this year's Confirmation programme please get an information flyer from the back of church. The sessions for this year's confirmation programme will continue Thursday 9th January) at 7pm in Our Lady's. If you know someone who would like to be confirmed but hasn't yet joined tell them to come & bring a friend or three!

MICHAEL CHRISTOPHER COUGHLAN R.I.P. – Thank you to everyone for your kind words & prayers after the death of my father Please do keep myself, Mum & my brother Kevin in your prayers.

CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES – Cards with the Mass times on for Christmas are available for you to take home this weekend. Take an extra one, give it to a friend & invite them to join us for Christmas.

CHRISTMAS CARDS AND GIFTS are now available at the Piety stall at each church.

CAFOD WORLD GIFTS – the catalogue is now available to take home at the back of churches. Don't forget to get your order in ASAP for standard postage, alternatively you could send one as an e-Gift.

CAFOD CHRISTMAS FUN RUN, WALK OR WHEEL will take place on Friday 27th December at Wavertree Athletics Centre, Wellington Road, Liverpool L15 4LE, 10 am registration, 11am start line. Further details on cafod.org.uk/news/events/liverpool-fun-run.

BECOMING A CATHOLIC – For anyone who has been baptised as a Catholic, as a member of another Christian community or never been baptised at all, we will be running the Catholicism course. Our next meeting is now in the New Year (Monday 6th January 2025) at 6pm in Our Lady's.

STRONGER TOGETHER COMMUNITY GROUP empowers members to address daily life challenges in a supportive environment. Tuesday mornings (9:30am-12pm) in Saint Joseph's parish centre, North Road. The group is facilitated by Caritas Diocese of Shrewsbury.

KNIGHTS OF SAINT COLUMBA - the order believes in charity, unity & fraternity, over many years they have helped priests, parishes & our Catholic schools & many projects internationally. Membership is open to Catholic men who are aged 18 & over. Please contact Tony Connolly on 07950 392193.

CATENIANS - The Birkenhead circle meets each month at Prenton Golf Club to enjoy each other's company and to support one another and our families. Membership is open to Catholic men who are aged 18 & over. If you would like to know more, please contact p.davenport.123@btinternet.com

EASY FUNDRAISING - thanks to your generosity in using Easy Fundraising, our latest payout is £24.38. As you are shopping for your Christmas presents online, don't forget to use the Easy Fundraising donation reminder so that the parish can collect even more free donations as you shop!

PARISH FINANCE - 8th December 2024

**Offertory £689.95 (cash); £17.50 (Standing Orders);
£305 (card/contactless); Zambia/Eye Fund/Caritas £11.26.**

Thank you for your continuing generosity.

To donate online,
please scan the
QR code.



STANDING ORDERS - You can set a standing order 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 - Congratulations to the double rollover winner in the draw held on 7th December with no 18.

CHARITY

CARITAS DIOCESE OF SHREWSBURY - there will be a collection **today** in support of Caritas. This will be in addition to the retiring collections at the Christmas Masses. Caritas work supporting many families in our area with Christmas being one of their busiest periods. Let us help them to continue their vital work through our financial support.

TESCO STRONGER STARTS: OUR LADY & SAINT EDWARD'S PRIMARY SCHOOL - each month Tesco in Bidston Moss supports three local charitable schemes. This month they are supporting OLSE Fitness for Fun, with the aim to promote cycling to & from school where possible. You can vote for this scheme of one of our parish primary schools by picking up the blue tokens & putting it in the box marked Our Lady & Saint Edward's. The charity with the most votes can receive up to £1500 toward their scheme. If you shop in Tesco, please vote for the project of one of our primary schools!

WIRRAL FOODBANK - Thank you for your continued support. Donations can be left at the back of Saint Paul's or outside the Saint Joseph chapel in Our Lady's.

STAMPS - The stamps are sent off to the RNIB to support their work with those suffering sight loss. There is a box at the back of church for any used stamps you have.

GLASSES - Please donate any old glasses to support the work of the Eye Fund. Boxes for donations are at the back of each church.

TABLET BLISTER PACKS - please donate used ones to support the Marie Curie charity.