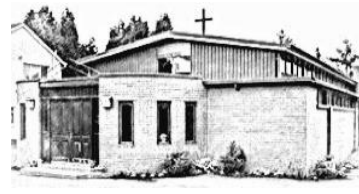




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## **Newsletter**

## **Fourth Sunday of Advent**

**December 24<sup>th</sup> 2023**

*My dear parishioners at St. Mary's and St. Paul's,*

We are drawing close to the great celebration of Christmas and I offer here Bishop Toal's message to the priests and people of the Diocese.

### **Dear Brothers and Sisters,**

At Christmas we enjoy singing carols. We also enjoy listening to others singing them, particularly children and those in our parish and diocesan choirs. I express a special word of thanks, therefore, this Christmas to all our musicians and singers, and acknowledge the time and effort you put into preparing for the Carol Services, and most especially the Christmas liturgies.

In the sacred liturgy we celebrate the Mystery of the Incarnation, the birth of our Saviour, Christ the Lord at Bethlehem. In recalling his birth, as we celebrate the Holy Eucharist, we renew our faith in his living presence within and among us, and place our hope in life, in Christ, in its fullness in eternity. As Christians we desire to be *'other Christs'* as we journey through life and seek to show the love of Jesus in our relationships and activities. What we celebrate at Mass we strive to put into practice in who we are and in all that we do.

This year Christmas falls on a Monday. We have two important religious days, the Fourth Sunday of Advent and Christmas Day – on top of one another. We have a fine opportunity to make it a particularly spiritual and holy Christmas by attending two Masses, from the time of the Vigil on Saturday to Christmas Day itself. We always have plenty to pray for and this Christmas will be a particularly good time to do so. St. Paul offered us great words of encouragement last Sunday in his Letter to the Thessalonians: *"Be happy at all times; pray constantly, and for all things give thanks to God, because this is what God expects you to do in Christ Jesus."*

Our Christmas Carols often refer to Bethlehem, *'O Little Town of Bethlehem'* being especially well known and loved. Our thoughts and prayers at Christmas this year are particularly for the people of the Holy Land, Palestinians and Jews, and for a lasting peace to end the war and hatred.

May the Angels' Song, as they appeared to the shepherds in the fields near Bethlehem, ring true: *"Glory to God in the highest Heaven and peace to men who enjoy his favour."*

I wish you all a holy and peace-filled Christmas, and the blessing of God for 2024.

Yours in Christ

+Joseph Toal

Bishop of Motherwell

**Congratulations and good wishes to Kerry McHugh and Stephen McNeil, who will be married on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> December in St. Brigid's Church, Killester, Dublin.**

*We wish them a long and happy married life together.*

**I offer here the times of the Liturgy for the coming weeks:**

**Saturday December 23<sup>rd</sup>: Vigil Mass at 5pm**

**Sunday December 24<sup>th</sup> (Morning): Mass at 9am and 10.30am**

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**Christmas Masses at St. Mary's**

**Christmas Eve, Sunday December 24<sup>th</sup>: Vigil at 4pm, First Mass of Christmas at 8pm**

**Christmas Day, Monday December 25<sup>th</sup>: Mass at 9am and 10.30am**

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**Tuesday, December 26<sup>th</sup>: Mass at St. Mary's at 10am**

*Rosary at 9.40am*

**Wednesday, December 27<sup>th</sup>: Mass at St. Mary's at 10am**

*Rosary at 9.40am*

***No public liturgy on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> and Friday 29<sup>th</sup>***

**Saturday, December 30<sup>th</sup>: Vigil Mass at 5pm**

**Sunday, December 31<sup>st</sup>: Mass at 9am and 10.30am**

**Monday January 1<sup>st</sup> 2024: Mass at St. Mary's at 10.30am**

**Tuesday January 2<sup>nd</sup>: Mass at St. Mary's at 10am**

*Rosary at 9.40am*

**Wednesday January 3<sup>rd</sup>: Mass at St. Mary's at 10am**

*Rosary at 9.40am*

**Thursday January 4<sup>th</sup>: Mass at St. Mary's at 10am**

*Rosary at 9.40am*

**Recently Deceased: Ann Boyd (Requiem on Monday 8<sup>th</sup> January), Danny Rafferty, Nadia Crolla, Jean Paterson, Richard Lynas, Maureen O'Keane, Sister Mary Bernardine, Pat Elvin (USA), Gloria Rodriguez,**

**Special Remembrance:** Margaret Duffin, Eilidh McHugh, Mary Dorman, Wullie Savage, Frank Lyons, Pat McFadden, Maureen and Brian Buttigieg, Mark Hughes, Thomas, Elizabeth and John Kane, Alice and Michael Sweeney, Hugh Morgan, Edward and Minnie Morgan, Catherine and Willie, Robertson, Margaret Stewart, Peter and Johanna McGeough, Mary Malone, James Canning, Mary Dale Malone, Margaret Feenie, Agnes Daly, Thomas and Esther Reid, Catherine Phairs, Margaret Duffy, Cathy and Paul Millar, Paul Millar Jnr., Janice Millar, Ina and Thomas Duffy, Mary and James Steven, John Nolan, Mary Findlay, Daniel and Catherine McKenna, Richard and Catherine, Purcell, Walter, Agnes, and Joan Stewart, Bobby and Barbara Jones, John Jones, Katy Jones, Winnie Maxwell, Peter and Betty Maxwell, John and Elizabeth Fulton, James Fulton, Nan McCluskey, Catherine Reilly, William Ward, Ian McNab, Jaime Donnelly, Anna and Elizabeth Donnelly, Mark Hughes, Thomas, Elizabeth and John Kane, John McParland, Les Graham, Margaret Phairs, Margaret Feenie, Gerard Falsey, Mary and John Dowds, Betty and Tommy Falsey, Rita and Gerard Kane, Elizabeth Fitzpatrick, Catherine Seagrave, Mary Ann Dorricott, Elizabeth Gallagher, James and Helen Lennon, Patrick and Joan Lennon, John and Elizabeth Fulton, James Fulton, deceased members of the O'Brien, Morgan and Currie Families, and all our deceased relatives and friends and the benefactors of St. Mary's and St. Paul's.