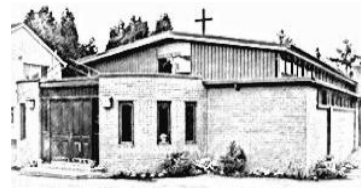




St. Mary's R. C. Church

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Newsletter

First Sunday of Advent

December 3rd 2023

Dear parishioners at St. Mary's and St. Paul's,

Let me wish you a very happy and fruitful Advent! Today in the life of the Church a new liturgical year begins, which is a new journey of faith for the pilgrim People of God. How wonderful is that! Somehow it always feels like a great privilege to be part of this, to have the opportunity, for one more year, to make this journey of faith as we reflect together on the great mystery of Christ our Saviour. And as always, we begin with Advent.

The word *Advent* means *arrival* or *presence* and in ancient times it was used to describe the arrival or presence of a king or queen or some other dignitary. We now use this word *Advent* to describe the visit of the Lord to humanity. Of course the first visit is the one we look forward to celebrating at Christmas, the birth of Jesus in the stable at Bethlehem; the second *arrival* or *presence* takes place in the present, in the power of the Spirit, as the Lord visits us constantly, each day, walking alongside us and being a consoling and life-giving presence; in the end there will be the final visit, which we proclaim each time that we recite the Creed: *“He will come to judge the living and the dead.”*

In describing the season of Advent, Pope Francis says, *“we are called to expand the horizons of our hearts, to be amazed by the life which presents itself each day with newness. In order to do this, we must learn not to depend on our own certainties, on our own established strategies, because the Lord comes at a time we do not imagine. He comes to bring us into a more beautiful and grand dimension.”* Let us pray for one another during this holy season of Advent, praying for a new Springtime in the life of the Christian Church here in Scotland and especially in our own parish.
Father O'Brien

This week we welcome Fr. Mark Connolly, a member of the Mill Hill Missionaries, who will share something with us about the good works carried out by the Mill Hill family throughout the world; we will have the opportunity to help their Mission in our special second collection.

An Invitation from the Parish Pastoral Council: the members of the Council ask that you consider the following Mission Statement: *“Our parish of St. Mary and St. Paul's Hamilton is a community of faith, where priest and people seek to work together to build up a life-giving Christian community that is characterised by prayer, hospitality and mission. We seek to be a welcoming and caring parish that gathers together at the Eucharist, to celebrate Christ's presence among us and, with his help and strength, to continue in loving and compassionate service to others.”* Does this reflect your own hopes and desires for our parish? Please consider this and give your feedback to the Parish Pastoral Council. *What you think and feel matters to us. Thank you.*

Lost keys; a set of house keys were found in the church last Sunday, please call at the sacristy to collect them.

I offer here the times of the Liturgy for the coming week:

Monday December 4th: Mass at St. Mary's at 10am

Rosary at 9.40am

Tuesday December 5th: Mass at St. Mary's at 10am

Rosary at 9.40am

Wednesday December 6th: Mass at St. Mary's at 10am

Rosary at 9.40am

Thursday December 7th: Mass at St. Mary's at 10am

Rosary at 9.40am

Coffee Morning and Christmas Card Sale this Sunday, 3rd December: the parish stall and Fairtrade are holding a joint coffee morning in the parish hall after the 10.30am Mass. Christmas Cards, Nativity Sets, Advent Calendars will be on sale. *Toast and home-baking will be served. Proceeds will be donated to the Hamilton Drop-In-Centre.*

An Invitation from St. Mary's Primary School: the pupils of St. Mary's Primary would like to perform a very special Nativity for the parishioners of St. Mary's and St. Paul's on **Friday 15th December at 10am in St. Mary's Primary;** if you would like to attend please write your name and contact number on the sheets at the back of the church.

Mass for Deceased Clergy of the Diocese: this annual Mass will take place in St. James' Church in Coatbridge on Wednesday 6th December at 7pm. At this Mass we remember especially the priests who have died during 2023: Canon Joseph Clements, Fr. Damian Gilhooley, and Fr. George Donaldson.

Final Mass in Celebration of the 75th Anniversary of the Diocese of Motherwell: this special liturgy will take place in Motherwell Cathedral on Thursday 14th December at 7pm, as this year marking the 75th Anniversary of Motherwell Diocese draws to a close. *All are welcome to attend.*

Thank you to all who came along to our special Mass for the Faithful Departed, offered especially for those who have died since last November. It was a prayerful occasion and afterwards quite a number of people came to the hall for some refreshments and fellowship. Thank you to Peter and the choir and to everyone who helped in the hall and those who did some home-baking. Thank you also for the many kind donations given along with your November Lists. In fact we reached the very generous total of £2,000 and this will be shared with Mary's Meals, Friends of the Holy Land and International Relief Fund; in remembering those who loved us, we have reached out in love to give others a chance at life. *Our departed relatives and friends would be proud of that! Thank you.*

CREDO: the parish faith-sharing group meets this Tuesday at 1pm in the parish meeting room; there is some tea and cake after the meeting; new members are always welcome.

Advent Faith-Sharing Group: Mr. Ronnie Boyd has offered to lead an evening group on the Wednesdays of Advent, December 6th, 13th and 20th, between 7-8pm in the parish meeting room. Please contact Ronnie on ircboyd@hotmail.co.uk if you would like to take part.

Recently Deceased: Nadia Crolla, James Fletcher, Peter Hall, Margaret Keating, Emilio Fernandez, Kate Rodgers, David Capaldi

Special Remembrance: Neil McMurray, Essie and David McDonald, George and Helen Connor, Michael Meechan, Ellen and Dan Gallagher, Lena and Peter Corrigan, James Keeney, Jim Carr and all our deceased relatives and friends and the benefactors of St. Mary's and St. Paul's.