



THE PARISH OF SAINT MARY, HALIFAX

Incorporating the churches of St Alban and St Mary

Parish Priest: Rev. Fr Joshua Hilton

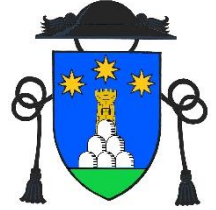
Deacons: Rev. John Walsh, Rev. Paul Coates

Presbytery: Clarence House, 2 Clarence Street, Halifax HX1 5DH

T: 01422 352141 E: office.stmary.halifax@dioceseofleeds.org.uk

Website: www.stmaryshalifax.com

St Mary's Primary Academy: 01422 362365



MASS SCHEDULE AND DEVOTIONS

Perpetual Novena:

Wednesday after 9:30am
Mass

Holy Rosary:

Saturday after 12:15pm
Mass

Devotions to the Sacred Heart:

First Friday of the month
after 9:30am Mass

Our Lady's Lamp this week burns for:

Timothy Hayes R.I.P.



Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament:

Saturday 11:00am –
12:00pm

at St Mary's

Confessions:

Saturday -

11:00am-12:00pm – St
Mary's

Sunday -

5:30pm–6:00pm – St
Alban's

or on Request

Marriages and Baptisms

by appointment

See the priest after Mass

SUNDAY 22 nd DECEMBER	4 th Sunday of Advent	9:30am 11:00am 4:00pm 6:00pm	St Mary's St Mary's St Mary's St Alban's	Bryan Greenwood Carmel Jayasuriya Polish Mass People of the Parish
MONDAY 23 rd	Advent Confessions	9:30am 10-11am	St Mary's St Mary's	Tanya Mithrush
TUESDAY 24 th	Confessions	10-11am	St Mary's	
CHRISTMAS EVE	Christmas Vigil Mass Christmas Vigil Mass (Carols from 11:30pm)	4:00pm 7:00pm 12 Midnight	St Mary's St Alban's St Mary's	Kevin "Meggy" Megson Barbra Ignatiou Fr Hilton's Intentions
WEDNESDAY 25 th	Christmas Day	10:00am 1:30pm	St Mary's St Mary's	Fred & Betty Budds Polish Mass
THURSDAY 26 th	St Steven's Day (Boxing Day)	10:00am 12:00 Noon	St Mary's St Mary's	Polish Mass Alice Williams B'day
FRIDAY 27 th	St John the Apostle	12:00 Noon	St Mary's	Niamh O'Connell
SATURDAY 28 th	The Holy Innocents No exposition or confessions	12:00 Noon	St Mary's	Deceased members of the Moska Family

READERS ROTA

THIS SUNDAY		NEXT SUNDAY	
9:30am	John Greenwood	9:30am	Isaac Mellor
11:00am	Malcolm Brown	11:00am	Wendy Balahura
6:00pm	Judith MacDonald	6:00pm	Richard Siebierski

PRAYER LIST: Sadie Mills, Tony Hintze Mary Staden Peter Staden, David Stanton, Gerard James, David Sutcliffe, Gladys Megson, John Wallis, William Long, Sonya Box, Julie Simpson, Charlotte Fitzpatrick, Peter Smith, Julie Hall, Larry Byrne, Kathleen Hannan, Nancy McGrath, Eleanor Foran, Rita Baxendale and all the sick and housebound of the parish, their families and those who care for them.

If you know of anyone in the parish who is ill or is housebound please let Fr Hilton or Deacon John know so that a visit can be arranged.

CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES

Are published on this bulletin, on the parish website, on the door of the church, on the banners on the railings and in the Halifax Courier. There's no need to call the presbytery ☺

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

Frank Martin (Anderton) who died recently and all those whose anniversaries occur around this time.

MASSES RECEIVED:

Paul Griffin x 4, Josie Brennan, Geoff Cowper, Wasył Lopuszniak, Anthony Gallagher, Ivor Holdbrow

COMMENCEMENT OF THE JUBILEE HOLY YEAR 2025

The Holy Father Pope Francis will open the Holy Door at St Peter's Basilica on Christmas Eve, marking the beginning of the Jubilee Year, the theme for which is *Pilgrims of Hope*. In every Diocese across the world, the beginning of the Jubilee Holy Year is to be marked by the celebration of Mass in each Cathedral on the 29th December 2024. Bishop Stock will celebrate the 11:00am Mass at Leeds Cathedral on that day. Everyone welcome.

CHRISTMAS OFFERINGS

The collection at the Christmas Masses is your personal gift to the parish priest which makes up a substantial part of our annual taxable income. You can still make your gift on the card machine and if you wish to make a bank transfer the details are:

Diocese of Leeds St Mary's Church | 40-27-15 | 21023225

Please mark your transfer as "Christmas offering"

PARISH CHRISTMAS RAFFLE 2024 - WINNING TICKETS

1st prize - no. 254 Mick Hayes, 2nd prize - no. 175 Shirley Smith, 3rd prize - no. 132 John Mullan, 4th prize - no. 337 Mick Hayes, 5th prize - no. 327 Sandra Moore and 6th prize no. 7 Mary Taylor

Thank you to Harveys of Halifax and to those parishioners who donated raffle prizes and to all parishioners, their families and friends who supported the raffle, which has raised £600 for parish funds.

S.V.P.

Date of next meeting - Tuesday, 7th January at 6 pm in St Alban's Parish Room

REJOICE IN HOPE

Next meeting of praise, worship and teaching will be in St Mary's at 7pm on Friday 10th January.

NEWS FROM THE CATHOLIC CLUB

Christmas opening hours: Christmas Eve 12-2pm, 7-11pm

Christmas Day 11am- 2pm, 7pm-Midnight

Boxing Day 12-2pm. Evening closed

New Year's Eve - Disco, karaoke and quizzes

New Year opening hours:

New Year's Eve 12-2pm, 7pm till late - Disco, karaoke and quizzes

New Year's Day 7 - 12 pm

RECENT FINANCIAL NEWS

Last week's loose collection was **£591.82** Total Approx. **£1402.32** (Inc. standing orders & card)

FROM YOUR PARISH PRIEST

Around this time of year I am often stopped, as I was in the post office the other day, by someone telling me that "this must be your busy time". It's always kindly meant but not particularly true, most of the year tends to be busy but Christmas somehow captures the imagination of those who tend not to be too Gospel greedy. The gentleman went on to tell me how he wasn't "really a religious person" ... but that he celebrates Christmas nonetheless because "it's just about being kind to others isn't it...?" I won't put down in writing what I wanted to reply.

If we take an honest look at the Biblical texts dealing with Christmas, we will find that they have precious little to do with sentimentality, or the embracing of a common morality, or the cultivation of a "let's all get along" attitude. In the second chapter of Matthew's Gospel, we read of the visit of the Magi, astrologers from "the east," probably from Babylon where a quasi-scientific star-gazing discipline was cultivated. They let it be known that they were in search of "the newborn king of the Jews," whose star they had observed at its rising. When this news was spread about, was it met with delight, enthusiasm, excitement, and sentimental feelings? Hardly. Matthew tells us: "When King Herod heard this, he was greatly troubled, and all Jerusalem with him."

Why would the arrival of a tiny baby, who would grow up to bear a message of love, have excited such negativity? We must remember that the child is described as a king, which means someone who comes to rule; more precisely, he is characterised as king of the Jews, and this was the very title that Herod claimed. Therefore, Herod, quite correctly, saw Him as a threat to his authority and position. But why would the entire capital be in an uproar? We must recall what the Bible consistently says about cities, that is, the way we human beings typically organize ourselves politically, socially, and culturally. Cain, the murderer of Abel, is the founder of cities; Babel, full of arrogance and imperialistic plans, is seen as a typical city; and Jesus Himself implied that the devil controls all the cities of the world. The trembling of all of Jerusalem at the birth of the baby king is a result of the demand that that king will eventually make, the change that His rule will bring about. Just to drive this point home, Matthew tells us that Herod, having been duped by the Magi, furiously lashed out, ordering the murder of every boy in Bethlehem under two years of age. Not exactly the reaction of someone who is just delighted that the Christmas season has arrived!

If we examine Luke's account of the birth of Jesus, we find very similar motifs. Luke sets up his story as the tale of two rival Emperors: Caesar, the king of the world, and Jesus, the baby king. While Caesar rules from his palace in Rome, Jesus has no place to lay His head; while Caesar exercises total power, Jesus is wrapped in swaddling clothes; while Caesar surrounds himself with wealthy and sophisticated courtiers, Jesus is surrounded by animals and shepherds of the field. And yet, the baby king is more powerful than Augustus—which is signalled by the presence of an army of angels in the skies over Bethlehem. All four of the Gospels play out as a struggle, culminating in the deadly business of the cross, between the worldly powers and the power of Christ. For Jesus is not simply a kindly prophet with a gentle message of forgiveness; he is God coming in person to assume command. He is the Lord. And the entire New Testament couldn't be clearer that His Lordship means that all those who follow a contrary rule—meaning, pretty much every one of us—are on notice.

Of course, the distinctive marks of Jesus' Lordship are love, compassion, forgiveness, and non-violence—but this is not the stuff of sentimentality and warm feelings. It is a provocation, a challenge, a call to conversion of the most radical and extreme kind.

God bless you all, *Fr Hilton*

Mass Offerings, Notices and News Items for the Parish Bulletin should be given to Fr Hilton or Deacon John by Wednesday evening. Notices and News Items but not Mass Intentions can be sent to John Coates (07842 066450 or jbcoates@btinternet.com) again by Wednesday evening. The Parish Safeguarding Representative is TBC
Leeds Diocese Charity Registration No. 249404