



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

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MASS SCHEDULE AND DEVOTIONS

Children's Liturgy:

Every Sunday 11:00am

Perpetual Novena:

Wednesday after 9:30am
Mass

Holy Rosary:

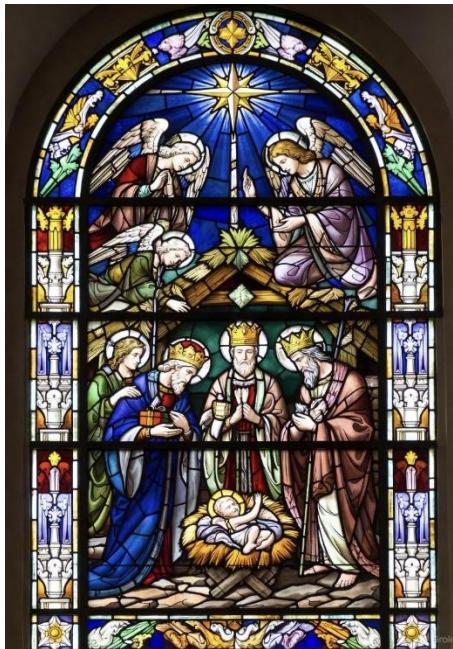
Saturday after 12:15pm
Mass

Devotions to the Sacred Heart:

First Friday of the month
after 9:30am Mass

Our Lady's Lamp this week burns for:

Veronica Smyth 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

The month of January is dedicated to: The Holy Name of Jesus

SUNDAY 4 th JANUARY 2026	2 nd Sunday of Christmas	9:30am 11:00am 6:00pm	St Mary's St Mary's St Alban's	Wanda Leicke B'Day Eileen Latthe R.I.P. People of the Parish
MONDAY 5 th	Christmas	No Mass		
TUESDAY 6 th HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION	THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD	7:00am 12:15pm 7:00pm	St Mary's St Mary's St Alban's	People of the Parish Anthony Gregson Ana & Javier Wedding Int.
WEDNESDAY 7 th	REQUIEM	10:30am	St Mary's	John Hupalo
	Christmas	2:15pm	School Hall	Mary Harding (YB)
THURSDAY 8 th	Christmas	9:30am	St Alban's	Patricia McHugh (LD)
FRIDAY 9 th	Christmas	9:30am	St Mary's	Maria Griffin
SATURDAY 10 th	Christmas	12:15pm	St Mary's	Wassyl Lopszniak
	Vigil Mass	4:00pm	St Mary's	Polish Mass

READERS ROTA

THIS SUNDAY

9:30am John Greenwood

11:00am Shaun Sandhu

6:00pm Rachel Fitzpatrick

NEXT SUNDAY

9:30am Isaac Mellor

11:00am Helen Brown

6:00pm Frances Millington

PRAYER LIST: Tony Hintze, Mary Staden, Peter Staden, Gerard James, David Sutcliffe, John Wallis, William Long, Julie Simpson, Charlotte Fitzpatrick, Peter Smith, Julie Hall, Sonya Box, Kathleen Hannan, Nancy McGrath, Eleanor Foran, Rita Baxendale, Michael McDonnell 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.

PLEASE PRAY FOR

Veronica Smyth and Anne Cox who have died recently.

MASSES RECEIVED

Tony Gregson, Nat Smyth, Elsie Ward, Marjorie & Gordon Ellis, Edith Toolan, Denis Smyth, Bryan & Sheila Greenwood, Micheal Byrne, Catherine O'Neill & John Hinch

200 CLUB NEWS

The results of the December draw are as follows:

1st prize £75 no. 17 Ann Peel
2nd prize £50 no. 48 Ann Griffin
3rd prize £25 no. 105 Janet Wild

PARISH CHRISTMAS RAFFLE

Thank you to Harveys of Halifax and to those parishioners who kindly donated prizes for the Parish Christmas raffle. The raffle raised £500 for the parish and this will go towards purchasing the statue of Our Lady of Walsingham which will be displayed in St Mary's Church.

THANK YOU

A huge thank you from me, Deacon John and Deacon Paul for all of the extremely generous Christmas gifts and cards that we have received. I mean it very sincerely when I say that the love and kindness you show the clergy means more to us than you will ever know. Your appreciation is both moving and humbling and we are very grateful indeed.

YEAR OF CATECHESIS

Please note that the Question & Answer session scheduled for the 24th of February is cancelled. The next Q&A session will take place on the 7th of April.
The next in our series of talks will be on **Tuesday 10th of February at 6:00pm** in St Alban's Hall and will be given by my brother Fr Benjamin Hilton. He will be speaking about The Communion of the Saints.

FAREWELL AND THANK YOU

To Mrs L. Paquim as she leaves as Deputy Head of St Mary's School to take up her new role as Headteacher of St Joseph's Catholic Primary Academy, Brighouse. Although Louise is leaving our school, she is still, of course, very much a member of the parish. We wish her all the very best and I ask that you keep her and all of our Catholic teachers in your prayers for the new term ahead.

Forthcoming Funerals

John Hupalo	7 th January 10:30am	St Mary's Church
Anne Mary Cox	22 nd January 11:15am	St Mary's Church
Veronica Smyth	27 th January 12:45pm	St Mary's Church

APOSTOLIC ADMINISTRATOR OF MIDDLESBROUGH DIOCESE

Just before Christmas, the Vatican announced that the Holy Father has appointed Bishop Stock as the Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Middlesbrough, upon the retirement of Bishop Terence Drainey. This means that, in effect, Bishop Stock is now governing two separate dioceses. The Holy See has asked him to explore with the clergy and laity of both of our dioceses, how we might work together and collaborate ever more closely in the future. Please do keep His Lordship in your prayers.

FROM YOUR PARISH PRIEST

“And so we are back to normal.” That’s a phrase I’ve heard a few times over the past few days. As Christmas decorations begin to come down, routines re-establish themselves and diaries fill up again, in many ways it’s understandable. Work resumes, school reopens and the demands of ordinary life return. There’s a but though. We shouldn’t be... we shouldn’t be back to normal. From the Church’s point of view, something important should still feel unfinished.

We are still very much in the Christmas season. Liturgically, Christmas does not end on the 25th of December, it begins. The Church gives us these days deliberately, the Feast of the Holy Family, Mary Mother of God, the Epiphany, the Baptism of the Lord, to allow the mystery we celebrated to sink in. Christmas is not meant to be rushed past or tidied away, it is meant to be lived out. If Christmas has indeed truly been celebrated, then “back to normal” cannot simply mean “back to how things were before.”

At Christmas we proclaim something extraordinary, that God has entered human history, not from a distance, but from within. He has taken flesh, shared our vulnerability and made our ordinary human lives the place where salvation unfolds. That is not a seasonal decoration that we can box up again until next year, it is a claim that changes everything. The danger, of course, is that Christmas becomes something we observe rather than something that changes us. We enjoy the beauty of the liturgy, the carols, the warmth of family gatherings, all good and important things but then quietly return to old habits, old anxieties and old ways of seeing the world. The Christmas season asks more of us than that.

The birth of Christ confronts us with a different way of living. God does not arrive in power or comfort but in humility. He chooses dependence rather than control, relationship rather than dominance, love rather than force. If that is how God chooses to act, then it must shape how we act too. That means Christmas should leave a mark on us. Perhaps it shows itself in a greater patience with others, especially when life feels busy again. Perhaps it means holding back from harsh words, choosing generosity where we might normally choose convenience, or refusing to let worry and fear dictate our decisions. These may seem like small changes but Christmas teaches us that God works precisely through the small and the ordinary.

As I said in my Christmas sermon, the shepherds did not return from Bethlehem to different jobs or different lives. They returned to the same fields but they were not the same people. They went back praising God, carrying something new within them. That is the model the Christmas season places before us. As the new year begins, it is tempting to think mainly in terms of resolutions and fresh starts. There is nothing wrong with that but Christian faith invites us to something deeper than self-improvement. It invites us to conversion. That means a gradual reshaping of the heart in response to what God has done.

We are not asked to produce change through sheer effort. We are asked to remain close to Christ, to allow His presence to influence how we see, judge and respond to the world around us. So perhaps the question for these first weeks of the year is a simple one. What difference has Christmas made? Not in theory but in practice. In how we pray? In how we speak? In how we treat one another? In how we carry the burdens of daily life?

If the answer is “not much,” then the Church gently reminds us that the season is not over yet. There is still time to let the mystery take root. And so, yes, we may be back to routines and responsibilities but if Christmas has truly been celebrated, we should not be back to “normal.” Because Emmanuel, God with us, has come and when God draws near, nothing is ever quite the same again.

God bless you all,
Fr Hilton