

Dear Parishioners

On this Sunday three years ago, Pope Francis said:

The Third Sunday of Advent is called Gaudete Sunday; that is, the Sunday of Joy. In the Mass the invitation rings out several times to rejoice. Why? Because the Lord is near. Christmas is near. The Christian message is called the 'Gospel' which means 'good news', an announcement of joy for all people; the Church is not a haven for sad people, the Church is a joyful home! And those who are sad find joy in her, they find in her true joy!

However, the joy of the Gospel is not just any joy. It consists in knowing one is welcomed and loved by God. As the prophet Isaiah reminds us in today's first reading at Mass, God is he who comes to save us and who seeks to help, especially those who are fearful of heart. His coming among us strengthens us, makes us steadfast, gives us courage, makes the desert and the waste land rejoice and blossom; that is, when our lives become arid. And when do our lives become arid? When they lack the water of God's Word and his Spirit of love. However great our limitations and dismay, we are not allowed to be sluggish and vacillating when faced with difficulty and our own weakness. On the contrary, we are invited to strengthen the weak hands, to make firm the feeble knees, to be strong and to fear not, because our God always shows us the greatness of his mercy. He gives us the strength to go forward. He is always with us in order to help us to go forward. He is a God who loves us so very much, he loves us and that is why he is with us, to help us, to strengthen us, help us go forward. Courage! Always forward! Thanks to his help, we can always begin again.

Someone might say to me: "No, Father, I did so many inexcusable things... I am a great sinner... I cannot begin from scratch!" You are wrong! You can begin from scratch! Why? Because he is waiting for you, he is close to you, he loves you, he is merciful, he forgives you, he gives you the strength to begin again from scratch! Everybody! And so we are able to open our eyes again, to overcome sadness and mourning to strike up a new song. And this true joy remains even amid trial, even amid suffering, for it is not a superficial joy; because it permeates the depths of those who entrust themselves to the Lord and confide in him.

Christian joy, like hope, is founded on God's fidelity, on the certainty that he always keeps his promises. The prophet Isaiah exhorts those who have lost their way and have lost heart to entrust themselves to the faithfulness of the Lord, for his salvation will not delay into bursting into their lives.

Gaudete, Fr John

Our Lady of the Valley Parish

Catholic Communities of Clitheroe, Sabden & Dunsop Bridge
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Email: smsj@btinternet.com Parish Priest: Mgr John Corcoran RD
Assistant Priest: Fr Kevin Murphy Pastor Emeritus Mgr John Chaloner

Third Sunday of Advent - December 11th 2016 St Michael & St John's, Clitheroe



Sunday

Mass at 9.30am followed by Coffee

Monday, Wednesday & Friday

Mass at 9am

Tuesday

Eucharistic Service at 9am

Thursday

Mass at 9am & 7.30pm

Saturday (17th December)

Mass at 8am Reconciliation 11am—11.45am
Exposition—11am—11.55am First Mass of Sunday 6pm

St Hubert's, Dunsop Bridge

Sunday—Mass at 10am

Parish Mass book p.88 Eucharistic Prayer p.18 Preface I of Advent p.65

Tuesday Mass at 9.15am

St Mary's Church, Sabden

Sunday—Mass at 11am

Tuesday Advent Reflection 7.30pm **Wednesday**—Mass at 9.15am

MASSES RECEIVED THIS WEEK

Anthony Green, Derrick Addy x 2, Philippa Mahon, Philomena Nolan,
Michael Doherty, Peter Wright, Jean Schofield, Fr Joseph Wareing SJ, Pat Horrocks,
Kenneth & Janet Barlow, Richard Embery, James Reid, Carol Turner x 4,
Sr Yvonne, Richard Swarbrick

SICK Joseph Kitching, Bert Bradley, Jane Crowther, Jean Schofield, Ian Chew, Fr Joseph Wareing SJ, Sean Bennett, Olive Bromley, John Dixon, Pat Horrocks
LATELY DEAD Anthony Green, Derek Addy, Philippa Mahon, Philomena Nolan, Michael Doherty.

ANNIVERSARIES Peter Wright, Kenneth & Janet Barlow, Richard Embery, James Reid, Joan & Hugh Kelly, Mary Cushion, Jayne Crombleholme

PARISH—Clitheroe, Dunsop and Sabden

OFFERTORY Clitheroe £745.74 Dunsop £147.00 Sabden £174.29

Clitheroe/Sabden Standing Orders £265

S.V.P. COLLECTION A big thankyou for the very generous November collection which now totals £773.11

GROUP ANNUAL MEAL Friday January 27th at the Newdrop and the cost is £27 for a three course meal including transport and tips. Menu's are available from the porch. **Please note there are only eight places left.**

COURSE Joint courses for Aspiring Deputies and Headteachers in Catholic Primary schools. A two day residential will take place on 19-20 January 2017 and for those aspiring to headship, a two day residential on 2-3 February. Interested in either course please contact one of the priests.

CAFOD Looking for Christmas presents with a difference—CAFOD World Gifts could be the answer! Delight your friends and family and make a huge difference to people around the world. See the new Christmas catalogues in all three of our church porches.

CARITAS Diocese of Salford and Salford Loaves and Fishes—Music and readings for Advent and Christmas in St John's Cathedral Sunday 11 December at 7.30pm. featuring the esteemed Notability Choir. Everyone welcome. Please help us to support the homeless this Christmas don't let's leave them out in the cold. Tickets £5 available by el 0161 737 8775/0161 817 2250 or www.tinyurl.com/caritaschristmas

LADIES GROUP Programme of events for 2017 is available from the porches

CAFOD Bishop John will give a talk on his recent visit to Central America. Venue—St John's, Ivy St, Burnley at 2pm on Saturday 21 January. Everyone is most welcome.

DIOCESAN SAFEGUARDING OFFICER The diocese is to recruit a suitable experienced and qualified practitioner to support the Safeguarding Co-ordinator. Please see the notice board for further details.

CLITHEROE

CHRISTMAS CARDS Are ready for delivery. They can be found at the front of church to the left of the Sacristy door on a table. Those parishioners who have kindly volunteered to help will find theirs batched up in an envelope with their name clearly marked. The others are in batches of streets/areas—take your pick—anyone who is willing to help.

CHRISTMAS FAIR Still one unclaimed raffle prizes ticket 1323 (Haircare voucher)

FR WAREING Please continue your prayers for Fr Wareing, he is quite exhausted and should not be visited for the moment.

ROSARY OF THE UNBORN will be said after Mass/Service each morning this week for all Pro-Life intentions. Our Lady of Guadalupe (feast day Mon 12 Dec) Pray for us

CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE Saturday 17 December 4.30pm (6pm Mass will follow as normal). Come and join choirs of St Michael & St John's church together with children from our Primary School for an hour of carols & readings.

The Defibrillator is now in position at the back of church to the right-hand side of the choir loft door.

PRAYER AND PRAISE There is no Prayer and Praise on Thursday 15 December because of the Carol Concert in the Social Centre, so please do support this event. The final Advent Prayer and Praise will be on Thursday 22 December at 8.10pm after the evening mass and will be a special Christmas Celebration!

MISSION CALENDARS are available from the porch—Please take one.

K.S.C. COUNCIL MEETING Tuesday 17th December at 7.30pm in the presbytery.

ROTA'S NEXT WEEKEND Sat Welcoming—M.Valovin Reader—A.Southworth Euch Ministers—A.Southworth & A.Rowley **Sun**—Welc—M.Rogers & C.Willman Reader—M.Donnelly Euch Min— A.Marsden, I.Parkes, E.Lambert Tea & Coffee—E.Davies & M.Valovin

ADVENT LUNCH and short service followed by lunch will be held each Tuesday during Advent at the United Reformed Church 12.30pm . All welcome

JOY TO THE WORLD a special Christmas service celebrated in music, with Ribble Valley Choir and Orchestra. Offering will be taken to support work of Christian Aid with Syrian refugees. Tonight—Sunday 11 December 6.30pm at Trinity Methodist Church.

K.S.C. ANNUAL FUN QUIZ

in our Parish Hall

Wednesday 28 December

7.30pm (doors open 7pm)

Admission £1

Please contact Betty 427029 or

Jean 427096 if you are coming

as we need to know for suppers

Proceeds to Mary's Meals

NEW YEARS EVE

in our Parish Hall—dancing

to the sound of

NORTHERN SOUL

8pm till late—Fantastic music

Tickets now available from
the Parish Centre 01200 423073

£10 inc Pie & Pea Supper

CAROL CONCERT how good is this! Free mince pies and mulled wine + Great Christmas music with The Church Music Group and The Slaidburn Silver Band. Celebrate the coming of Christmas with your Church family in our Parish Hall NEXT Thursday December 15th from 7pm. Entry is free.

MAYORS CHRISTMAS PARCELS Anyone over 80 years of age, living alone, who would like a parcel and hasn't previously had one, please contact Ann on 01200 422890

NEW ROTA'S for early 2017 will be available shortly. Should you wish to come off the rota please let Janet know by today (December 11th)

DUNSOP BRIDGE

CHRISTMAS DRAW Tickets are available for the Christmas Draw—please support by taking tickets to sell to your friends and family. The draw will take place at the Bingo tomorrow Monday 12th December in Newton Village Hall.

BINGO & SOCIAL EVENING—Hot Supper and Raffle in Newton Village Hall 7.30pm tomorrow Monday December 12th

SABDEN

BONUS BALL Congratulations to winning number 31 Two numbers have unexpectedly become available—if interested please see Donna Wharton.

FOODBANK DONATIONS can be left at the back of church. Donations at this time of year are so important to help others have food in their cupboards at Christmas.

CHRISTMAS FAIR a big thank you to all who helped make the fair such a success. A grand sum of £1456 was made which included the sales after Sunday Mass. It was a really special occasion. There are still three unclaimed draw prizes—please check the list in the porch.

ADVENT REFLECTION this Tuesday 13th December at 7.30pm.