

St Mary and St Michael's Catholic Church  
**GARSTANG AND CALDER VALE**

A Parish of the Lancaster Roman Catholic Diocesan Trustees Registered Charity, no.234331  
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**19<sup>th</sup> / 20<sup>th</sup> December & 26<sup>th</sup>/27<sup>th</sup> December 2015**  
**FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

**JUBILEE YEAR OF MERCY**

From Nazareth Mary would have had to walk about 75 miles to Elizabeth and Zechariah's house. Joseph didn't come with her; perhaps she hadn't told him yet that she was pregnant. Perhaps she needed to talk with her older cousin first. Perhaps she wasn't sure that what she had heard from the angel was actually true or not. The way to find out was to see whether what the angel had told her about Elizabeth expecting was true.

It was true!

The very first think that Elizabeth said, confirmed both that she herself was pregnant – as the child in her womb leapt for joy – and that she knew that Mary was pregnant too. Not only did she know this, but she also knew that Mary was to be the mother of the Lord!

What the angel had told Mary was fully confirmed! Now there was no doubt! Mary was to become the mother of the Lord!

In some ways this moment was more significant for Mary than the visit of the angel to her. She had probably been in shock at the angel's stupendous announcement. Perhaps she really hadn't shared this yet with her fiancé. Perhaps she needed this affirmation from Elizabeth for the truth to sink in. She really was "The mother of the Lord"! As she shared with Elizabeth, this woman of faith, the enormity of what was to happen, it all began to become a reality.

Elizabeth had had Zechariah, her husband, to share with. She had had to struggle to communicate with Zechariah because he couldn't speak. This experience of Zechariah's dumbness and her own knowledge that a child was growing in her womb had given her plenty of time to reflect on the amazing things that God was causing to happen.

She powerfully affirmed Mary's divine motherhood:

"Of all women, you are the most blessed,  
and blessed is the fruit of *your* womb!  
Why should I be *honoured*  
with a visit from the *Mother of my Lord*?"

When Mary returned to Nazareth and to Joseph, she had a new serenity and a certainty. She shared this with Joseph. Together they now prepared for the imminent birth of the Lord himself.

**New items and information**

**Christmas Flowers** – Flower arranging for Christmas will take place on Christmas Eve morning, in church, beginning at 9 am. We will be grateful of any help we can get – even if it is only sweeping up! Please contact Liz Billington on 640467 to let her know if you can help. **Also**, if you are able to help financially with the cost of the Christmas flowers, we will have a second collection after both Masses this weekend.  
*Thank you.*

**Leonard Cheshire Home, Oaklands**, are looking for a volunteer to drive one of their residents to Sunday morning Mass in one of their small vans, or if they didn't want to drive, to accompany the resident in the van and stay with him during Mass and accompany him back to Oaklands. If you think you could help in this way, please contact Cathy Openshaw, Volunteer Co-ordinator, email [Catherine.openshaw@leonardcheshire.org.uk](mailto:Catherine.openshaw@leonardcheshire.org.uk), or telephone 01995 602290.

**St Vincent de Paul Society Conference Appeal** – Winter is once more upon us, and we again are appealing for bedding and warm clothing for those in need. If you have bedding, winter clothing for men, women and children, then please deposit these items in the box you will find at the back of church from next week. Thank you for your generosity. If you have any queries, please ring Pat on Garstang 605793.

**Christmas Offerings** The Offertory Collection taken at the Christmas Masses is traditionally your gift to the clergy of the Parish.

**Previously Published Items**

**Lourdes – Possible Lourdes Pilgrimage 2016** – In order to look at the possibility of arranging a parish pilgrimage to Lourdes next year, it would be helpful to know the numbers of people who may be interested. Dates have not been finalised yet, but more information will be available after Christmas. If interested, please put your name on the list at the back of church. *Elizabeth Horn.*

**Stars at Christmas – 2015** – As we decorate our church at Christmas, we are reminded of the happy times we have shared with those we love, not only the people we are blessed still to have with us but our dear departed ones too. For many Christmases past, many of our parishioners have symbolised their prayers in the form of a star bearing the names of loved ones no longer with us so that it can be hung in church over Christmas to draw the prayers of us all. If you would like to participate in this custom you are welcome to do so. The stars are free, but should you wish to make a charitable donation, the poor people of Chivuna in Zambia will appreciate your benevolence. *Available after Masses on today & 20<sup>th</sup> December.*

**Why not join the Choir?** – The choir is an integral part of every Christian church. This is not just convention but has evolved over two thousand years because music, singing in particular, is an important part of worship. When we sing we pray in a way which enables us to savour the words we use, giving glory to God more effectively. The ambience of God's house results from many factors, but none is more powerful

than that of liturgical music. This requires a choir dedicated to producing a programme of music consonant with church tradition and liturgy. There is far more to this than simply plucking popular tunes out of the air! Good churches invariably have good choirs. If our parish is to remain good, it must sustain a good choir. Please think seriously about joining your choir. It is necessary to have some sort of voice, but despite so many claiming total lack of singing ability, there are very few people who honestly cannot sing. No ageism is involved; all ages are welcome and there are no “screen tests”! All we ask is commitment. These days we see so much half-heartedness and apathy in the Christian faith we should treasure; joining the choir could be the first step in remedying this. *Dr. Carter*

**Society for the Protection of Unborn Children** is holding its first-ever SPUC Lune Valley outdoor Christmas Carol Singing event which will take place on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> December in Market Square Lancaster.

**Wednesday Word** – To help us prepare for Mass on 20<sup>th</sup> December, the new copy of the Wednesday Word can be found at the back of church, on yellow paper.

**Please remember in your prayers:** May Boyle, Anne Sanderson’s mother. May died on Wednesday last in Scotland. May she rest in peace. Our prayers are with Anne and Rich.

**Please pray for those whose anniversaries occur at about this time:** Joan Norcross, Josephine Black, Helena Hodgson, Ann Nugent, Jack Singleton, Ada Rawlinson, Annie Cusack, Mary Grayston, Margaret Nixon, John Francis Green, Thomas Leo Horn, Dorise Mary Wilson, Keith Barton, Kathleen Boden, Thomas Wilcock, Rev John Michael Horn, Thomas Francis Horn and Louis Appleton Darbyshire. *May they rest in peace.*

**We ask the Lord to encourage and give health to our sick and disabled parishioners, families and friends, including:** Mrs Jean Parkinson (Jim’s wife), Ann and Jackson Wickes, Thomas Lowe (Bert’s brother), Ewan (an 11 year old boy undergoing treatment for a brain tumour), Phillip, John Fairey, Pat Hickey, Maurice Iddon, Sheila Murphy, Rosemary Davies, Anne Brockbank, Michael McCarthy (living in France), Dorothy Evans, Lucy and Family, Kathryn, Susanne, Jessica Holmes (4 years old with leukaemia), Mark Noblet, Anthonio Dilao, Bernadette O’Neill, Tom Horn, John Ashcroft, Margaret Shepherd, Sharon Hodgson, Christine, Peter Holland, Ian Moran, Tony Winstanley, Alyson, Michael Hendry, Christopher Simpson, Auntie Sophie, Christopher Brown, Simon Thompson, Sheila Cookson, Francisca Rainford and Alison Green. *(When people whose names are placed on this sick list have recovered their health, please let us know.)*



**Mass Times & Intentions, Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2015**

Sat	19 <sup>th</sup>	6.00 pm (Vigil)	William Southworth
Sun	20 <sup>th</sup>	10.00 am	Ann Elizabeth Nugent
Mon	21 <sup>st</sup>	<b>No Mass</b>	
Tues	22 <sup>nd</sup>	12 noon	David Hibberdine (Speedy Recover)
Wed	23 <sup>rd</sup>	7.00 pm	(For Vocations to the Priesthood) Hugh & André Ferguson
Thurs	24 <sup>th</sup>	9.30 am	John Gerald Ruane
		<b>Christmas Vigil</b>	
		6.00 pm	Agnes & Joseph Rossall
		11.30 pm	Carols before Midnight Mass
Fri	25 <sup>th</sup>	<b>Christmas Day</b>	
		12 midnight	Rev John Horn
		10.00 am	Thank you to St Martha for a Successful Operation
Sat	26 <sup>th</sup>	10.00 am	Father Gerald Muir
		06.00 pm (Vigil)	Mary Agnes Ibison
Sun	27 <sup>th</sup>	10.00 am	Gerald Whittaker

**Mass Times & Intentions, Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2016**

Saturday and Sunday as above.

Mon 28<sup>th</sup> to Thurs 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015 **No Mass**

Fri	1 <sup>st</sup> Jan	12.00 noon	
Sat	2 <sup>nd</sup>	(no morning Mass)	
		06.00 pm(Vigil)	
Sun	3 <sup>rd</sup>	10.00 am	

**Devotions and Celebrations this week:**

Wed	23 <sup>rd</sup>	6.45 pm	Rosary
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**Special Days next two Weeks:**

Sun	20 <sup>th</sup>	Fourth Sunday Of Advent	Sun 27 <sup>th</sup>	The Holy Family
Thurs	24 <sup>th</sup>	Christmas Eve	Mon 28 <sup>th</sup>	The Holy Innocents
Fri	25 <sup>th</sup>	Christmas Day	Tues 29 <sup>th</sup>	St Thomas Beckett
Sat	26 <sup>th</sup>	St Stephen	Fri 1 <sup>st</sup> Jan	Mary, Mother of God
			Sat 2 <sup>nd</sup>	St. Basil the Great & St Gregory
			Sun 3 <sup>rd</sup>	The Epiphany of the Lord

**Meetings this next two Weeks:**

None

**Last Week’s Attendance:**

Sat	14 <sup>th</sup>	6.00 pm (Vigil)	Adults: 90	Children: 5
Sun	15 <sup>th</sup>	10.00 am	Adults: 132	Children: 33 Total: 260

**Monies Received:**

Offertory (including Standing Orders): £966.50; Shop: £70; Votive Lights: £33.70; Funeral: £600; Memorial: £30. *Many thanks to you all.*

**Churches Together in Garstang & District**

Ecumenical Morning Prayer will be held at 07.45 am each Tuesday in December here at SS Mary & Michael’s. Shopper’s Service (Pause for Thought) is at 12.15 pm every Thursday, at Garstang Methodist Church.