

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
Fr David Elder & Rev Deacon D'Arcy Ryan,
Bonds Lane, Garstang, Lancs PR3 1ZB. Tel. 01995 602164. Fax 602548
email: ssmm.bonds@btinternet.com
Parish Website: www.ssmaryandmichaels-garstang.org.uk
email for website submissions: parish@ssmaryandmichaels-garstang.org.uk

20th / 21st DECEMBER 2014

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (YEAR B)

“The Virgin is with child and shall bear a son, and she will call him Emmanuel”



Mary, ‘betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David’ received an unexpected visitor at her home in Nazareth. The visitor was sent by God; the visitor was an angel! This was no ordinary day in the history of humanity, this was the most earth shattering day since humanity had evolved into *homo sapiens*.

At the moment when man had evolved into a human person, man was gifted by the Creator with God’s own likeness and image. *Homo sapiens* reflected the glory of God in a way that no other living being could. God had come to walk amongst the beauty of the world he had created in the person of men and women.

But this sacred presence was devastated by sin and evil. Men and women became damaged goods. God’s image and likeness amid creation remained, but somehow the pristine goodness of humanity had been tarnished.

From that moment, God determined to restore the beauty of humanity in spite of the seemingly self-destructive side of human nature. In spite of this ability, that we seem to have inherited, to ignore or work against God’s plans to populate our earth with people of love and goodwill, we continue to be at war with one another, we continue to seem to want to destroy the harmony and beauty of the work of our Creator God.

But God has never given up on us, his masterpieces. Two thousand years ago – very recent in the long history of humanity – God sent his messenger to a young woman engaged to Joseph of the House of David. God’s plan of restoration was even more unimaginable than his original plan of Creation. God had implanted his image and likeness in human beings. Now God made his very self into a human being, God’s only Son was conceived in the womb of Mary, in a small town called Nazareth. God had come to walk again in the person of an untarnished human person amidst all the beauty of God’s creation. Through Mary’s husband-to-be, the Son of God was to be born into the House of David – the Son of God with a real human ancestry! We are in the presence of such a mystery!

“Glory to God who is able to give you the strength...to proclaim Jesus Christ, the revelation of the mystery kept secret for endless ages.” *Rom 16:25*.
(Second reading of today’s Mass.)

New items and information

Preparing our church for Christmas

Cleaning – If you have just half-an-hour or so to spare on **Tuesday, 23rd December**, any time between 9 am and 12 noon, please feel free to join us in sprucing up our church in time for the decorating on Christmas Eve. Our appreciation will be unlimited! *Thank you.*

Greenery Needed – We will need lots of greenery – holly, laurel, leylandii etc to decorate the church. Would you bring greenery if you have it in your gardens to the presbytery back door by Tuesday, 23rd December.

Flower Arranging – Please come to help in Christmas Eve at 9 am. No previous experience necessary.

Decorating the Church – At 2 pm on Christmas Eve, families are invited to come to transform our church for Christmas! With lots of help, it will take us about 1 hour. We finish with mince pies, mulled wine and a short prayer for all who will come to our church over Christmas.

St Vincent de Paul Society –

- We would like to thank so many parishioners for helping at our Christmas Tea Party held on 13th December in the Parish Centre. The event became the Parish Christmas Tea Party and our thanks go out to Sheila Cooney and her team who provided a lovely spread of party food. Sheila and Anne Marie and Kath also worked very hard throughout the afternoon and helped clear up afterwards. The music was lovely and our thanks go out to Alan and Peter and singers. Our Youth Group was a cheerful presence and so helpful throughout. Our School Children, headed by Mrs Helen Bisby, provided Christmas gifts to take home. They are the Mini Vinnies, a newly formed group in year 5. Our Mini Vinnies also raised £110 for SVP through their National Christmas Jumper Day. Children paid £1 to wear their festive jumpers to school and this year the SVP benefitted from their fundraising. Finally, thanks to those who provided transport. *SVP Conference*
- **Appeal for warm clothing** – now that winter is here we have replaced the box at the back of church, so any unwanted jumpers, jackets, trousers, gloves, socks, duvets, etc will once more be gratefully received, and they will be taken to Caritas Care who work with ex-offenders and homeless people in Preston. *Thank you very much – your help is very much appreciated. SVP Conference.*

Friends of Chivuna – The minutes of the last meeting are now available.

Cake and Golf Ball Sale for Church Roof Fund – Matthew, Dan and Robert Tomlinson would like to thank everyone for buying their cakes and golf balls! Thanks to those who supplied cakes, and thank you to Brenda Price who raised money at Calder Vale also. A total of £70 was raised for the Church Roof Fund.

Mission Together Christmas Crib Collection 2014 – This year, at Bishop Michael’s request, the Christmas Crib collection will be going to the children’s branch of Missio, “Mission Together”.

Mission Boxes – These are now ready for collection this weekend, together with a mission calendar. Unfortunately, some of the boxes did not have a name on the label. If yours is one of these, please make sure that you enter your name before bringing it back next time. This is especially important if you have signed a gift-aid form. The total amount banked was £282.26. *Thank you.*

Parish Draw – December 1st Prize: I Murray; 2nd Prize: R & J Tomlinson. This weekend, special Christmas Prizes £100 and £35.

The Holy Father's Prayer Intention for December – “That the birth of the Redeemer may bring peace and hope to all people of good will.”

If you are thinking of making a retreat in 2015 the 2015 booklet “Retreats” which lists all the retreats in the UK and Ireland across the denominations, is now available in the sacristy for consultation.

Brave of Heart : A Weekend Retreat for Men - 23rd – 25th January, Cor et Lumen Christi, Wigton, CA7 9HU. To book, or for more information, visit www.coretlumenchristi.org, stcuthberts@coretlumenchristi.org, or telephone 01697 345 623.

Chorister Open Morning at Westminster Cathedral Choir School – If anyone is interested in sending their son, aged six or seven, to one of London's top academic preparatory schools, and to join the world's leading Catholic choir, there is a leaflet at the back of church telling you how.

Previously Published Items

Stars at Christmas – For some years our parishioners have had the opportunity to offer prayers for their loved ones over the Christmas period by hanging stars in church with our prayer on the back. Garstang Friends of Chivuna are making the stars available again this year when they will be offered for dedication after weekend Masses before Christmas. No charge is involved, but any voluntary donation (say 50p) will go to support Chivuna Health Centre in Zambia.

Once again, we have the Large Christmas Card at the back of church – a really good and inexpensive way to wish one another a happy Christmas, even without sending individual cards to everyone. Donations will be gratefully received, and this year these will go towards funding much-needed resources for our Youth Group who made the card. One of the wall boxes in the Narthex has been labelled for the purpose. *Thank you.*

Wednesday Word – To help us prepare for Mass on 28th December, the new copy of the Wednesday Word can be found at the back of church, on yellow paper.

Please pray for repose of the soul of Gerald Vandome, who died on Thursday, 18th December at the Corrmill Nursing Home. *May he rest in peace.*

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

We ask the Lord to encourage and give health to our sick and disabled parishioners, families and friends, including: Joan Fishwick, Richard (aged 14) (needs a bone marrow transplant), Sheila Murphy, Elaine Lamoury (Henry's sister-in-law), Rosemary Davies, Brian Hargreaves, Ellen, Brendan McGlone (14 year old with leukaemia), Anne Brockbank, Teresa Bonnar (Bowerswood), Rachael Flood (née Mears), Michael McCarthy (living in France), Dorothy Evans, Sheila Carrol, Lucy and Family, Kathryn, Susanne, Jessica Holmes, Molly and family, Ruth Fairey, Mark Noblet, Christopher Lawson, Anthonio Dilao, Bernadette O'Neill, Tom Horn, John Ashcroft, Margaret Shepherd, Tony Moran, Sharon Hodgson, Christine, Peter Holland, Ian Moran, Tony Winstanley, Wilf Rainford, Alyson, Michael Hendry, Christopher Simpson, Auntie Sophie, Christopher Brown, Simon Thompson, Michael Ryan, Sheila Cookson, Francisca Rainford, Alison Green and Tim Park. *(When people whose names are placed on this sick list have recovered their health, please let us know.)*

Mass Times & Intentions, Saturday 20th – Sunday 28th December 2014

Sat	20 th	6.00 pm (Vigil)	Ann Elizabeth Nugent
Sun	21 st	8.30 am	All Our Parishioners
		10.30 am	Cathie Cadden
Mon	22 nd	No Mass	
Tues	23 rd	7.00 pm	Dennis Brown
Wed	24 th	9.30 am	Freda Duckett

CHRISTMAS EVE

	Thursday 25 th	6.00 pm (Vigil)	Joe and Peggy Hodgson
		THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD	
		Midnight Mass	Reverend John Horn
		10.30 am	Watson & Knowles Families
Fri	26 th	12 noon	Marjorie Addison
Sat	27 th	No Morning Mass	
		6.00 pm (Vigil)	Ray Lewis
Sun	28 th	8.30 am	All Our Parishioners
		10.30 am	Connie Bilsborrow

Special Days this Week:

Wed	24 th	Christmas Eve
Thurs	25 th	The Nativity of the Lord
Fri	26 th	St Stephen
Sat	27 th	St John
Sun	28 th	The Holy Family

No Meetings this Week

Last Week's Attendance:

Sat	13 th	Celebration of God's Forgiveness:	Total: 96
		6.30 pm (Vigil)	Adults: 106 Children: 5
Sun	14 th	8.30 am	Adults: 51 Children: 10
		10.30 am	Adults: 111 Children: 31 Total: 314

Monies Received: Offertory (including Standing Orders): £1,105.13; Votive Lights: £39.30; Shop: £90; Jesus Statue: £65; Ashes Burial: £110; Roof Fund: £70; Postcards: £1; L' Arche (Christmas): £5. *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 Sts Mary & Michael's, and in January at St Thomas's. Shopper's Service (Pause for Thought) is at 12.15 pm every Thursday, at Garstang Methodist Church.