

SUNDAY PLUS

One in hope

Something different

By Michael George



Sixteen and thirteen years ago, the baptisms of my children took place during Sunday Masses. The whole regular Sunday Mass congregations were witnesses to their baptisms: my children were immediately and physically united with the whole parish as baptised members of Christ's Church. We were all together as one community or as one body, one in prayer, one in faith and one in hope.

I am reminded of my daughter's and my son's baptisms by the fact that today we celebrate the Baptism of the Lord. The sense of "oneness" and community enters my mind when reading St Paul's words in today's second reading. There need be no sense of competition when it comes to salvation; through God's grace salvation is possible for all.

In the Gospel, people were baptised by John; then they were awakened to the realisation that Christ was still to come. When my daughter was baptised, she was asleep as I carried her in my arms to the font. She awoke, startled but silent, when the priest, who was standing right beside us and was not wearing a microphone, raised his voice while speaking so that everybody could hear. She awoke with a jolt, even as a little baby realising that something different was taking place. Her baptism involved a literal awakening.

One in hope, may our hearts be awakened today, that we may build one another up and support one another, as together we seek to attain the salvation made possible by Christ.

Michael George has worked in Catholic schools in the south of England for 25 years, as teacher, Headteacher and chaplain.



Jesus is more than a friend. He is a teacher of truth and life who shows us the way that leads to happiness.

Pope Francis

Jubilee 2025

Church of St Prisca

St Prisca's church in Rome is approximately one mile from the Mamertime Prison, where St Peter, Paul and other early Christians were held captive. Notorious for its terrible conditions, as elsewhere, prisoners depended on food supplied by people whom they knew "on the outside". Was Prisca, a first-century young martyr

whom, as a thirteen-year-old, St Paul apparently baptised, one of those who helped to bribe the guards and feed those who would soon die for their faith? We don't know. Concrete information about Prisca is hard to find, especially as her death is surrounded by legends of miraculous – and perhaps unlikely – events such

as the Coliseum lions refusing to attack her. People wanted to show that power and brutality can be overcome by gentleness – and so the stories appeared. It seems that Prisca was possibly tortured and eventually beheaded. The church of St Prisca is considered one of Rome's most important Christian sites – hence its choice as a Jubilee Church.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: 18-25 January

At least once a year, Christians are reminded of Jesus' prayer for his disciples that "they may be one so that the world may believe" (see John 17:21). Hearts are touched and Christians come together

to pray for their unity. Congregations and parishes all over the world exchange preachers or arrange special ecumenical celebrations and prayer services. The event that touches off this special experience is the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

Traditionally the week of prayer is celebrated between 18-25 January. In the southern hemisphere, where January is a vacation time, churches often find other days to celebrate it,

for example around Pentecost, which is also a symbolic date for unity.

2025 marks the 1,700th anniversary of the first Christian Ecumenical Council, held in Nicaea, near Constantinople, in AD 325. This commemoration provides a unique opportunity to reflect on and celebrate the common faith of Christians, as expressed in the creed formulated during this council.

The World Council of Churches

Dearest Lord,
none of us can live without hope. Give hope to those who cannot find it and give them a reason for laughter. Amen.

Today:
Isaiah 42:1-4, 6-7
Titus 2:11-14; 3:4-7
Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

Monday:
Hebrews 1:1-6
Mark 1:14-20

Tuesday:
Hebrews 2:5-12
Mark 1:21-28

Wednesday:
Hebrews 2:14-18
Mark 1:29-39

Thursday:
Hebrews 3:7-14
Mark 1:40-45

Friday:
Hebrews 4:1-5, 11
Mark 2:1-12

Saturday:
Hebrews 4:12-16
Mark 2:13-17

Next Sunday:
Isaiah 62:1-5
1 Corinthians 12:4-11
John 2:1-11

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The Catholic Parish of St Mary & St John Fisher, Denton



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Parish Sister, Sr Dolores

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The Epiphany of the Lord & The Baptism of the Lord 5th January 2025 - 18th January 2025

Mass Times and 'offered for' dedications Two weeks commencing 5th January 2025

Sunday 5th	Saturday 4th	4pm SJF - Catherine Keogh 9.30am SJF - Ernie Stokes 11am StM - Parish
Monday 6th	No Mass	
Tuesday 7th	No Mass	
Wednesday 8th	No Mass	
Thursday 9th	No Mass	
Friday 10th	No Mass	
Saturday 11th	Mass	4pm SJF - Parish
Sunday 12th	Masses	9.30am SJF - Barry Hall 11am StM -
Monday 13th	Requiem Mass	10.30am StM - William Lister
Tuesday 14th	No Mass	
Wednesday 15th	Mass	9.30am StM - Graham Lancake
Thursday 16th	Requiem Mass	10am SJF - Barry Hall
Friday 17th	Mass	9.30am StM - Francis Wynne
Saturday 18th	Vigil Mass	4pm SJF - Mary Angela James

Sacrament of Reconciliation - 30 minutes prior to the start of Mass

Sanctuary Candles

There are no candle dedications allocated in the next two weeks.
Please pick up a form for w.c. 12th January

Mass Offerings -

Pat & Bill (Special Intention); Val (Special Intention); Bill Lister (LD); Frances Mulcahy (LD); Tom Lally (LD) x2; Forgotten Souls; Graham Lancake (LD) x 2; Mary Angela James (A); Maureen Lyons (A) Mass 3/1/25; Joan & Frank Wynne; Francis Wynne; Deceased Members of Keogh, Wynne & Conlan Families; Catherine Keogh (A) Mass 4/1/25; Barry Hall (LD);

(Please obtain permission from any living beneficiary of a Mass offering before sending it in.)

Recent deaths in our Parish

Please pray for the repose of the soul of **William (Bill) Lister**.
Our condolences go to his family and friends.
His funeral takes place at **St Mary's Monday 13th January at 10.30am**
May he rest in peace.

Please pray for the repose of the soul of **John (Barry) Hall**.
Our condolences go to his family and friends.
His funeral takes place at **St John Fisher Thursday 16th January at 10am**
May he rest in peace.

Please pray for the repose of the souls of **Pam Slater**
Tom Lally
Dr Joan Hill
Maureen Griffiths

Our condolences go to their family and friends.
May they rest in peace.

Thank you to everyone for all the support you've given us throughout the year and for the lovely cards and generous gifts.

We hope you and your families had a Happy and Holy Christmas and wish you Blessings in the New Year.

Fr Joe & Sister Dolores



Parish Administrator - Part Time

We are looking to recruit a suitable person to fill the role here in the Parish. The full job description and application is on the link below or see Fr Joe to find out more/get a copy. In brief it is 9 hours per week-Wednesday, Thursday & Friday 9.30am-12.30pm.

[Vacancies - Roman Catholic Diocese of Salford](#)

How do I arrange a Sacrament of the Sick Visit?

When you need to organise a visit for the Sacrament of the Sick, please see Fr Joe or telephone the office. If you cannot contact Father Joe and a visit is urgent please contact a neighbouring Parish Priest at Holy Family, St Josephs Reddish, or Sacred Heart Gorton.

Hospital Chaplaincy

If you or a relative needs a hospital visit at a hospital which is part of the **Manchester Foundation Trust** including **The Christie**, you must now request a visit directly from the Roman Catholic Priest Chaplain on: **0161 276 8792**
For **Tameside Hospital** contact **0161 922 6000** (main switchboard) and request a visit from the on call Roman Catholic priest.

Haughton Green Food Bank -Christmas Appeal

Thank you to all who donated extra items and cash for the food bank. Your support is very much appreciated. As the Food Bank needs donations all year round. - Any items can be left at the back of each church.

Long Life Milk, Cordial,
Instant Noodles, Savoury Rice,
Rice Pudding, Tinned Fruit,
Tinned meals - curry, chilli, stew & Bolognese,



Baptism Preparation Baptisms are arranged following completion of the Baptism Preparation course. Please see Fr Joe after Mass, to discuss details and collect registration forms.



Pilgrims of Hope Jubilee in our Diocese

Pope Francis has declared that the year **2025** will be a **Holy Year of Jubilee for the Catholic Church**, an event that takes place once every 25 years and offers the faithful an opportunity to renew their relationship with God, each other, and all of creation. Over the coming months, there will be plenty of opportunities for you to observe this special year of grace in our own diocese. To find out more about the Jubilee and how to get involved, please visit <https://dioceseofsalford.org.uk/news/jubilee-2025/>



There are a few copies of our guide to **Celebrating The Jubilee of Hope** booklet at the back of church. Please only take one if you can't access the web-site copy on the diocesan website www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/jubilee-booklet
[Pilgrims of Hope Jubilee Booklet](#)

Salford Diocese Information

Christmas Tree Recycling Our Laudato Si'

Centre is collecting used Christmas trees. Funds raised for local charities and chippings used at the centre Details: <https://dioceseofsalford.org.uk/christmas-tree-recycling-24>

Advice as energy bills continue to rise Caritas

Salford has put together some helpful advice on their website. <https://www.caritassalford.org.uk/fuel-poverty-challenges/> also details on the website page on how to arrange a session with their energy advice service team.

Pilgrims of Hope and A Popular History of the

Diocese of Salford -Two new books written by Monsignor John Allen are raising funds for Caritas Salford. www.caritassalford.org.uk/pilgrimbook and www.caritassalford.org.uk/

Loving God, walk with us in this Jubilee Year. May we, like the Magi, be wise in our choices and courageous in our faith. Shine through us that the light of hope may spread through the world. Amen.

Thank you to everyone that donated to my bake stall. It means so much to me and I am very excited to go and give back to the community. I made £200 and I am so grateful!! I wish everyone a great new year! Thank you - Olivia Kelly

SUNDAY PLUS

What can I give him?

The gift of perseverance

By Seonaid Alder



He who has a tongue does not get lost in the forest." Perhaps this Zambian proverb applied to the Magi as they arrived in Jerusalem and began looking for the king to whom the star was leading them. As they headed towards the palace, did they wonder why they were asking Herod about the birth of a new king, of whom he was unaware? A reigning monarch only wants to know about their own choice of successor. Surely the Magi realised that Herod wouldn't like their news and would lie about wanting to pay homage to the newborn king.

Perhaps the Magi knew more about stars and symbols than politics! They had done the right thing in asking where Jesus had been born but the wrong thing if they wanted to guarantee his safety. Their highly symbolic gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh were not the usual presents for a new baby – even for one who was a king. (An amusing cartoon suggests that their wives sneaked in afterwards and gave Mary and Joseph food and a bundle of nappies.)

As we celebrate the Epiphany, what could we offer the baby Jesus? It's easy to say that we bring ourselves and that in giving of ourselves we have given everything - but it's much more difficult in practice. It's so simple to make enthusiastic, grand gestures in the beginning and, little by little, chip away at the gift until there's not much left. Perhaps we could ask Jesus for the gift of perseverance?

Seonaid Alder is a retired secondary school teacher.

Holiness doesn't mean doing extraordinary things but doing ordinary things with love and faith.

Pope Francis

Gifts

By Camilla Harrison

Wedding invitations often ask for our "presence" and not our "presents", a pun in which there is both generosity and wisdom. Isaiah describes the time of glorious light for God's people, telling of the gifts of gold and incense, which are there again at the manger, but these are secondary to the joy of the beloved's presence.

Church marriage courses ask young couples to think about "love language". How do they show love? Through action, touch, words or gifts

of time? At the heart of it is, of course, a loving presence in their lives together.

Being mindful and fully present with God in his created world, seeing him in the glory of creation, tending it with reverence, connecting with God through prayer and our human love of each other – spending time in journeying towards him, as the Magi did. Perhaps these are the gifts we can offer.

Camilla Harrison was the head of an RE department at a comprehensive school for twenty years and the writer of two of the Family Walks series of books.

Jesus, I don't have gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh to offer you, but I can give you my heart. Take it and fill it with love for you and everyone I meet. Amen.