9 January 2022 Divine Office: Week 1

**OUR LADY OF LOURDES AND ST CECILIA**

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**Please keep in your prayers:**

**Keith Wareham; Leander; Father Tom and all at the Care Home where he is Chaplain;**

**and all families of those suffering at this time.**

**MASS INFORMATION CORRECT AT THE TIME OF PUBLISHING BUT MAY BE SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT SHORT NOTICE**

**Saturday January 8**

**9.30am (EF) HOLY MASS**

**5.30pm HOLY MASS OF SUNDAY : THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD**

**Sunday January 9**

**9am HOLY MASS : THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD**

**Monday January 10 9.30am HOLY MASS**

**Tuesday January 11 6.30pm HOLY MASS**

**Wednesday January 12 9.30am HOLY MASS St Ælred of Rievaulx (Opt Mem)**

                **Thursday January 13 9.30am HOLY MASS St Hilary of Poitiers, Doctor of the Church (Opt Mem)**

**Friday January 14 9.30am HOLY MASS**

**followed by Benediction**

**Saturday January 15**

**9.30am (EF) HOLY MASS**

**5.30pm HOLY MASS OF SUNDAY : THE SECOND SUNDAY OF THE YEAR**

**Sunday January 16**

**9am HOLY MASS**

**We shall keep enhanced hygiene, cleaning, and safety measures in place.**

**IT IS NOW MANDATORY TO WEAR MASKS IN CHURCH.**

**VATICAN NEWSLETTER** If anyone would like to see the Vatican News regularly, it is free, and you can subscribe here: https://www.vaticannews.va/en/newsletter-registration.html or just type “subscribe Vatican newsletter” into your search engine.

It has news of the Holy Father, what he is saying and thinking, and his short messages, for example, at the Angelus on Wednesdays. As well as Church news, international news of concern to the Church can also be found on the website.

This way is obviously much better than hearsay if we really want to know what is happening in the Church and how it affects us.

**PRAYERS FOR THE CHURCH** The Church often seems to be in serious crisis - disfigured by scandals, because we are all of us likely to sin; divided by theological, cultural, and political differences, because we live in the world; becoming less important in some places and judged irrelevant by a culture that believes people have outgrown religious faith. Yet the number of practising Catholics in the world increases each year as many people seek to be well-grounded spiritually and intellectually, and wish to be cared for pastorally.

It is true that the Church in 2,000 years has seen just about everything and continues in faith in God - the motto of Carthusian monks is Stat crux dum volvitur orbis (The cross stays steady while the world turns). Yet we know, and the Scriptures teach us, that the Church will always be subject to attack, sometimes through our own fault, sometimes through the work of Satan. The modern world with the far-spreading delusion that religion is no longer of any use makes faith and evangelisation difficult, and we must pray that the Church - that is, we who believe and sometimes struggle to believe - will continue to preach the truth about what it means to be a human being whom God created, loves, and wishes to be united with.

At another, previous difficult time in the history of Christianity Pope Leo XIII instituted prayers to be said at the end of Mass. They are usually called the Leonine Prayers, asking God and Our Lady, the first Christian, to look after us. They are brief, express faith and trust in God while fully recognising the dangers that surround us and trust in God. I think that it would be good to have them at the end of Mass on week-days. They finish with Most Sacred Heart of Jesus - have mercy on us. There are worse ways of raising our hearts and thoughts to God as we leave church.

**CHRISTMASTIDE** ends this **Sunday, January 9th**., with the feast of the Baptism of Our Lord. Sunday, January 16th., will be the 2nd. Sunday of the year, Year C.

**SYNOD** I know we have all been busy over the past month, but it would be good to have some of your remarks for the Synod. There are still some forms at the back of church if you could possibly take one and respond with your ideas - only 4 questions.

**FROM THE RIGHT TO LIFE** Thanks to your support this year, a major attempt to hijack the UK Government’s flagship Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill with an amendment to introduce abortion on demand, for any reason, up to birth failed, in a major pro-life victory.

This victory was followed by the defeat of another similar attempt to change the law later in the year - and followed the defeat of an attempt to change the law in a similar way in 2020.

After many years of the abortion lobby winning, now, thanks to the hard work of thousands of people around the country like you, the abortion lobby has been stopped from passing extreme changes to abortion legislation - and together we have been able to do it three times.

Now that we have shown the abortion lobby that together we can effectively stop them ending more lives through extreme changes to abortion legislation, we are now ready to move onto the next stage of the plan - moving from defensive wins, to passing pro-life legislation that will save many more lives.

**WEEKLY OFFERINGS** £185.20. Thanks to all who contributed. Other totals to be published later. *Mike*

With blessings on every one of our parish family.

Father Francis

**St Ælred of Rievaulx** (1109-67) [an] example [of] Ælred's reflections on how spiritual friendship leads us to Christ:

"It is no small consolation in this life to have someone who can unite with you in an intimate affection and the embrace of a holy love. Someone in whom your spirit can rest, to whom you can pour out your soul, to whose pleasant exchanges, as to soothing songs, you can fly in sorrow. To the dear breast of whose friendship, amidst the many troubles of the world, you can safely retire. A person who can shed tears with you in your worries, be happy with you when things go well, search out with you the answer to your problems, whom with the ties of charity you can lead into the depths of your heart. A person who, though absent in body, is yet present in spirit, where heart to heart you can talk to him, where the sweetness of the Spirit flows between you, where you so join yourself and cleave to him that soul mingles with soul and two become one.

"And so praying to Christ your friend, and longing to be heard by Christ for your friend's sake you reach out with devotion and desire to Christ himself. And suddenly and sensibly, as though touched by the gentleness of Christ close at hand, you begin to taste how sweet he is and to feel how lovely he is. Thus from that holy love with which you embrace your friend, you rise to that love by which you embrace Christ." (*The Times Book of Saints*)

**PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL (BIDDING PRAYERS)** Prayers are being written each week either by Mel (meljsar@gmail.com), Marie (marie@adrianfisherdesign.com), or Ali (alisoncain@gmail.com). If you wish to contribute a prayer or a subject to be covered, please email us by the Wednesday of each week or write it in the notebook at the back of the church. If anyone would like to join the rota for writing the prayers, please let us know too. Thank you, *Ali*

**ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**JACKLINE** Thank you for all your support for Jackline during 2021. Please look out for Boniface who will be ready to accept offerings in the New Year.  *Frances*

 **UNCOLLECTED CHRISTMAS CARDS** Do have a look and see if there are any cards for you at the back of church.  At least one, I know, is for someone who has drawn a lucky number in the parish sweepstake, but there are many others and perhaps the sender might be hurt if you don’t even have a look and it has to be cleared away. *Fr Francis*

 The decorated Christmas Tree entered for the Blandford Town Christmas Tree Competition was selected as the Mayors Choice, and in due time we will receive a Trophy. *Julie*

We have received the followig letter from Claire Stokoe, our Mayor’s secretary. Would anyone like us to take part in this, or have any ideas for us. I can find out more about what they expect. Unfortunately I cannot be there. *Fr Francis*

"We are planning our next Community Expo in the Corn Exchange for Saturday 26th Tto this email.

More details will be sent at a later date once we have an idea of what restrictions, if any could be in place."

**BOOKING THE HALL** The church hall is not for hire but, if you wish to book the hall for church matters and having cleared it with Father Francis, please enter the date and times on the Year Planner on the wall in the hall to avoid double-bookings. Thank you.

 **ARTSREACH** brings a powerful, intense and gripping production to the Blandford Corn Exchange: Multi Story Theatre – ‘Hefted’ **7.00pm Sunday 30th January 2022** in the **Blandford Corn Exchange**. *Marilyn Joslin* for Blandford Artsreach.

[As far as we know this production is still planned to go ahead, but the date may be changed later depending on Covid. [*Newsletter Editors*]

**We welcome contributions to this newsletter from parishioners; please send in links to websites, hard copy, email pictures, prose or poetry, whether to inform or to entertain....**

"I once identified what I called the Lord Longford Syndrome (God rest his soul), which consists in forgiving someone for something he has done to someone other than yourself. People get very annoyed at this attitude. It is hard enough, when you are bleeding, to be told to forgive the aggressor, but intolerable to see somebody else going ahead and forgiving him/her without so much as a by-your-leave."

- Alice Thomas Ellis, *God Has Not Changed*

(contributed by Avis)

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"O God, may all my thoughts and words speak of you. Fill with wind the sails I have hoisted for you, and carry me onward on my course. Breathe your Spirit into my faith and the way I confess it. Enable me to continue the preaching I have begun."

- St Hilary of Poitiers

(contributed by Hilary)

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"We are all here on earth to help others; what on earth the others are here for I don't know."

- W. H. Auden

(contributed by Avis)

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"Seek refuge in Mary because she is the city of refuge.  We know that Moses set up three cities of refuge for anyone who inadvertently killed his neighbour.  Now the Lord has established a refuge of mercy, Mary, even for those who deliberately commit evil.  Mary provides shelter and strength for the sinner."

- St Anthony of Padua

(contributed by Hilary)

**CANONISATION OF POPE JOHN PAUL I**

The Congregation for the Causes of Saints officially announces 4 September 2022 as the date for the beatification of Pope John Paul I. In October, Pope Francis approved a decree recognising a miracle attributed to the Italian Pope, who was head of the Church for 34 days.

The miracle approved in the cause of Pope John Paul I involves the healing of a young girl in Buenos Aires, Argentina, who suffered a case of “severe acute inflammatory encephalopathy, a malignant refractory epileptic illness, and septic shock.” Her situation was very serious, characterised by numerous daily seizures and a septic state of broncho-pneumonia.

The case was discussed by the Church's Medical Council which on 31 October 2019 unanimously established that it was a scientifically inexplicable recovery.

Immediately after the death of the Italian Pope on 28 September 1978, requests for his canonisation began to pour in from all parts of the world to the diocese where he was born. Through a grassroots initiative, a collection of signatures began, which soon became international, involving countries like Switzerland, France, Canada, and the United States. In 1990, the 226 bishops of the Brazilian Episcopal Conference also signed a petition requesting the introduction of the cause to Pope John Paul II.

John Paul I is the sixth pontiff from the 1900s for whom a cause for beatification and canonisation has been introduced. Of this group, four have already been proclaimed saints: Pius X, John XXIII, Paul VI and John Paul II.

Although his was one of the shortest papacies in history, Pope John Paul I, fondly remembered as the “smiling Pope,” left a lasting impression on the Church.

**CELEBRATING THE CHRISTMAS MASS** "during the Night," Pope Francis recalled how in the darkness, a light shines, an angel appears, announcing to the shepherds, “To you is born this day a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord." Telling them how to find the "God who has come down to earth," the angel directs them to the child wrapped in swaddling bands.

In his homily the Pope noted the contrast emphasised in the Gospel, between the grandeur of worldly powers when Caesar Augustus orders the census of the world, with the small town of Bethlehem where we see the scene of the newly born, poor child found in the manger. The message of the Nativity is that "God does not rise up in grandeur, but lowers Himself into littleness", the Pope explained, showing that littleness is the path God shows to draw near to us, to save us, to bring us back to what truly matters. The Pope pointed out that the challenge of Christmas is to ask whether “we can accept God’s way of doing things,” when our human tendency is to seek worldly grandeur. While “God lowers Himself…we try to become great,” he said, recalling the birth of Jesus in the midst of the shepherds and the poor. “God does not seek power and might; He asks for tender love and interior littleness.” The Pope encouraged us to ask Jesus for “the grace of littleness,” by inviting Him into our daily lives, our families, our communities, so that we can offer one another the same love He shows in coming to dwell among us, to serve and unite. He added, "amid our ordinary lived experience, he wants to do extraordinary things. His is a message of immense hope.”

**Trust and have an open heart** As we invite Jesus into the little aspects of our lives, we also need to invite Him into our own living experience of littleness, the Pope explained, meaning our own weaknesses, troubles, wounds; and to realize that Jesus reminds us, especially on this night, that He loves us just as we are, is close to us, and asks for our trust and an open heart. Recognizing this, we too are called to embrace “Jesus in the little ones of today,” by loving Him in the least of our brothers and sisters, the poor, forgotten, and needy, as in them He makes Himself known.

**Everything united with Jesus at the centre** The Pope recalled that Jesus was born close to the poor and forgotten, and by doing so elevates the excluded by first revealing Himself to them, rather than to those who are important in the eyes of the world. He recalled the dignity of all who work, especially in humble jobs, and the need for the dignity of every human person to be respected. So, the Pope said, we must work to ensure “no more deaths in the workplace!” The Pope recalled that at the Christmas scene, we also glimpse the Magi coming to worship the Lord, the learned and rich, showing how Jesus brings together the rich and the poor in Bethlehem. “Everything is unified when Jesus is at the centre: not our ideas about Jesus, but Jesus himself, the living One.”