

GOSPEL REFLECTION FOR THE 2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT



Change of Heart - We embark on a diet and the days of lettuce and low calorie drinks loom gloomily. We embark on a fitness regime and our subconscious whispers, "Fifteen more minutes under a warm duvet versus a jog round a freezing park I know what I'd choose!" In today's gospel, John the Baptist preaches "Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." The idea of 'repentance' fills us with about as much excitement as a cold shower on a winter's morning, but it doesn't have to be like that. Diets, fitness regimes and repentance all have one thing in common we emerge as new people at the end. Repentance doesn't mean throwing ourselves round in fits of Catholic guilt, it simply means having a change of heart, and becoming new and better individuals as a result. There are areas in all our lives that can be improved or turned around. The idea of repentance is actually quite exciting.

John's Advent call for a change of heart is for each and every one of us. We might think we are good enough as we are, but that's probably how the Pharisees and Sadducees in today's reading also felt. True enough they turned up for John's baptism, but had they really turned up in a spirit of repentance? John is clearly suspicious of their motivation, and challenges them to prove their commitment. Declaring our intention to change is all well and good, but our commitment must also 'bear fruit' ... show results.

At this time of year, every year, we are asked to change our lives. For the less optimistic amongst us, the idea reminds us of new year resolutions; easily made, easily broken and all a little bit pointless. John's message is a tough one. Changing our lives is far from easy. One of the problems of course is that when we try to change we usually rely solely on our own will power, which is notorious for letting us down. John the Baptist reminds us that when we are baptised in the name of Jesus we will receive the Holy Spirit, a divine power that will help us towards God when our will power fails. All we have to do is ask and keep on asking.

Change is not beyond any of us. John might have given the Pharisees and Sadducees a hard time but in truth the message is clear. "There is none so lost, they cannot be found, none so helpless that their life cannot be changed."

Bite Size

"When you blame others, you give up your power to change." ~ *Author Unknown*

**PARISH PRAYER - Father, pour out your Spirit upon our parish. Grant us a new vision of your glory, a new faithfulness to your Word, and a new consecration to your service; that your love might grow among us and your Kingdom come.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen**

Useful links: Diocesan Website: <http://www.rcdea.org.uk>
Notre Dame High School, Norwich: Website <http://www.ndhs.org.uk>

PARISH OF THE SACRED HEART AND ST MARGARET MARY [Reg. Charity 278742]

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4TH DECEMBER 2016 - 2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Sunday Masses - Page 85 of Parish Mass Book

Saturday	6.00 pm	Donor's Int.
Sunday	9.00 am	Donor's Int.
	11.00 am	Int. People of the Parish

Music for Sunday Masses - Setting: Dom Gregory Murray Mass

Entry 6pm - *Angelus (said)*; Hymn 92 - Hark! a herald voice is calling ...

Offertory Hymn 983 - Hills of the north, rejoice ...

Communion *Instrumental Interlude/Sacred silence ...*

Recessional 11am - *Angelus (said)*; Hymn 82 - Bright and clear as a trumpet blast ...

CONFESSION/RECONCILIATION: Saturday at 5.30pm, or on request / by appointment

Weekday Mass Times (2nd week of Advent) [*Psalter Week 2*]

Mon.	10.00 am	Advent Feria - Donor's Int.
Tues.	No Mass today	Advent Feria
	7.30 pm	Queen of Peace Prayer Group - in Emmaus Room
Weds.	No Mass today	St. Ambrose
Thurs.	10.00 am	THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BVM - Int. Mary McDonald
Fri.	10.00 am	Advent Feria - Donor's Int.
	5.45 pm	Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament & Silent Prayer
	6.15 pm	Evening Prayer (Vespers)
Sat.	10.30 am	Blessed Martyrs of East Anglia - Donor's Int.
	6.00 pm	3 rd Sunday of Advent - Donor's Int.

The Parish Newsletter (incl. back copies) is available to view on the parish website from Friday onward each week.

Anniversaries this week: Leonard Barnard, Dorothy Rayner, David Lines, Frederick Lambert, Felix Jackson, George Harmer, Phyllis Thurstance, Adrian Ring-Davies, Mary Butler, Fred Evans, Tony Lovelace, Susan Frosdick and Olive Maude Thompson. *May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace.*

Hospital Visits – If you or family members are admitted to the Norfolk & Norwich Hospital (NNUH) or Queen Elizabeth II Hospital (QEII), King's Lynn, and would like a visit from the Roman Catholic Chaplain, please call either St John's Cathedral, Norwich (01603 624615) for visits to NNUH, or Fr Peter Rollings (01553 772220) for visits to QEII. If you would like to receive the Sacrament of Anointing of the sick before going to hospital, please contact Fr. Brendan on 01362 694066.

Sick List - Please pray for: Joan Blakiston, David Peek, Robert Nicol, Shirley Liebenhals, Sarah Chaudri, Anne & Derek Williams, Michelle Smith, Rita Smith, Eileen Brockleby, Pat Howe, Kathleen (Jenny) Rudd, Ellen Flood, Margaret Leggett, Peter Brown, James Maxwell and Pamela & Catherine Evans.

Money Matters – The collection last weekend amounted to £410.91. Thank you all very much. Next Sunday, there will be a retiring collection for the Diocesan Dependent Priests' Fund.

Diary Dates for this week –

- Fri. 9th Dec. – Altar Servers meet – 7.15pm in Emmaus Room.
- Sat. 10th Dec. – Saturday Club meets - 11.00am in Emmaus Room, with children's 2nd rehearsal for the Nativity play on Sunday, 18th December.

Masses this week – Please note the changed Mass schedule this week. This is because I will be attending the Ministry to Priests Programme at Clare Priory.

Forty Hours Devotion at Sacred Heart and St. Margaret Mary - The Icon of Our Lady of Mercy will be coming to Dereham on 18th December for a week. The 40 Hours Devotion of Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament is expected to take place during the week. Please let me have your suggestions about how best to achieve this. Ours is the last parish in the Diocese to host the Icon.

SVP Christmas Time Appeal - The St Vincent de Paul Society have launched their Christmas Time Appeal, but they're not asking for money. Instead they're asking for parishioners to give a little of their time to help others by joining our parish SVP group. As you plan your Christmas celebrations, spare a thought for those who dread the festive season. For many it's a time of profound loneliness and solitude, while for others it means not being able to afford the family presents or delicious foods that the rest of us take for granted. But giving a little of your time to help those in need could help change that and it might be the best gift you've ever given. To find out more please contact Deacon Martin.


Countdown to Christmas – Each Sunday of Advent, Cat Williams, Ignite Team Leader from the Diocesan Youth Service, will be releasing a video blog about Advent. Check it out at www.facebook.com/igniteyea. There were a few technical issues that delayed

the first one but they are resolved now.

Pope Francis's Prayer Intention for December 2016 - It's estimated that there are in the region of 250,000 child soldiers—most between the ages of 15 and 18, but sometimes as young as 10 years old—thought to be fighting in conflicts around the world, and hundreds of thousands more are members of armed forces who could be sent into combat at any time. Child soldiers are often abducted and forced to serve. They are frequently coerced into committing atrocities including murder and rape, and they are themselves regularly exposed to abuse and deprived of basic subsistence needs. This month we join in Pope Francis's prayer intention, **"... that the scandal of child-soldiers may be eliminated the world over."**



Letter from our Rome Correspondent – “Hello from the Pontifical Bede College in Rome. Already Advent is with us, and somehow two months have elapsed since I returned here in September. The weeks disappear rapidly one after another, but the fullness of the days helps to remind me how every aspect of life here is directed towards preparation for ministry – prayer, house duties, academic education, the experience of living together. Last year I was so busy with trying to understand how everything worked that the different strands of the programme seemed isolated from each other, but this year – even though I'm even busier! – there is a stronger sense of their integration. My daily existence feels more prayerful even in the mundane tasks of kitchen duties or producing essays, which is surprising but in a good way. I hope that I can carry over this awareness into parish work, because without a sense of prayerfulness, the ordinary challenges of life can easily become stressful rather than bringing us closer to God and to other people. I recently attended the closing of the Holy Door at St Peter's when Pope Francis officially brought the Year of Mercy to an end. It feels remarkable to have been here in Rome both for the beginning and the close of this very blessed time, which has fermented in me a great deal of thought regarding how the Church helps us to experience God's forgiveness. This meditation on mercy also proves to me how much we need the kindness of the people around us – very much including clergy – to remind us how the human Jesus reaches out to us wherever we are. If, please God, I am one day ordained to the priesthood, I believe that witnessing this great event in the life of the Church will be a wonderful resource to draw upon. I'm looking forward to seeing everyone during my Christmas break, and wish you every blessing for Advent. With warmest regards and my prayers as always. *Mike Brookes*”

	CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES	
	◇ Sat. Dec. 24: Christmas Eve - 6.00 pm & 10.00 pm.	◇ Sun. Dec. 25: Christmas Day - 10.00 am.
	❖ The 10.00 pm Mass on Christmas Eve will be the 'Midnight Mass'.	