

GOSPEL REFLECTION FOR FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

'Count Me In'

Our Nativity scenes show Mary smiling fondly at the newborn baby Jesus and Joseph looking protective and relaxed, as though bringing up the Son of God might be the most normal thing in the world. The couple look like they have slipped into the history books with the greatest of ease, but nothing could be further from the truth. Without the benefit of hindsight, things must have felt very different. Mary was taking terrible risks by saying 'yes' to God's plan, yet without her agreement the history of salvation would have looked very different. Joseph's agreement to God's plan was of equal importance. Without Joseph, Mary would have had no one to support her. Without Joseph, Mary may not even have been accepted. Without Joseph, Jesus would have had no family in which to grow up. It is a tribute Mary and Joseph's faith that they were prepared to accept what was being asked of them without the faintest idea of where God's plan might take them.

The interesting lesson to learn is that what might originally seemed to have been difficult demands on the couple turned out to be gifts of hope and joy and love, not in a 'happy ever after' kind of way, but in a 'lasting fulfilment' kind of way.

We too are part of God's plan. We too have a part to play in leaving the world a better place than we found it. The challenge is to discover what God is asking us to do, and to say 'Count me in' to his plan wherever that plan might take us.

For Expectant Mothers

The Gospel on the 4th Sunday of Advent focuses on the role of Mary in our salvation. Over the three year-cycle the gospel tells of the betrothal of Mary to Joseph, the Annunciation and the Visitation. The stories prepare us for the Birth of our Lord at Christmas. Traditionally, in this week we are asked to pray for all who are waiting for a birth, that they may be given patience and strength. We also pray for all who work in maternity units and with mothers, that they may always recognise and cherish the gift of life. We also pray for those who are trying for a baby, that they may not give up hope.

Bitesize

Say "Yes" to the seedlings and a giant forest cleaves the sky.



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.

Permanent Deacons: Revs Martin Sanderson & Richard Jones (deaconrick@gmail.com)

Parish Music team: Judy Reid, Kathleen Edmunds & Paul McIntee.

Parish Safeguarding Representatives: Paul McIntee

Sacred Heart & St Margaret Mary



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Sunday 21st December 2025 – 4th Sunday of Advent

[Sundays Year A, 4th Week of the Year, Weekdays Year II, Psalter Week 4]

MASSES in the PARISH

Saturday 20th December	Advent Feria	
18.00 <i>First MASS of Sunday</i>		Michael Mealy + (TP)
Sunday 21st December	FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT	
09.00 MASS		For the People of the Parish
11.00 <i>MASS Live streamed</i>		Anisha Cyriac + (CC)
Monday 22nd December	Advent Feria	
- No Mass		
Tuesday 23rd December	Advent Feria	
10.00 MASS		
Wednesday 24th December	Christmas Eve	
18.00 Carols before Mass		
18.30 MASS		
22.30 Midnight MASS		
Thursday 25th December	THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD	
10.00 MASS	(Solemnity with Octave)	
Friday 26th December	CHRISTMAS DAY	
11.00 MASS	(Holy Day of Obligation)	
Saturday 27th December	ST STEPHEN THE FIRST MARTYR	
18.00 <i>First MASS of Sunday</i>		
Sunday 28th December	ST JOHN (Apostle & Evangelist)	
09.00 MASS		For the People of the Parish
11.00 <i>MASS Live streamed</i>	THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY & JOSEPH	
		Anisha Cyriac + (CC)
		Manuel Batista (VB)

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION: Thursday after 10.00 Mass and Saturday at 17.30
EXPOSITION & BENEDICTION: Thursday after Mass

Rosary & Morning Prayer are said weekdays before Mass from 09:15.

Please note the 18.00 and 11.00 weekend Masses are normally sung.

*For Live Streamed Masses Search for **Dereham Catholic Church** on YouTube, or use the link on the parish website.*

The parish newsletter is available on the parish website from Friday each week.

Anniversaries this week: Florence Sayer, John Thomas Macdonald, Kit Blackburn, Terence Blakiston, Genevieve Smith, Dorothy Jones, Frederick Power, Emelienne McClure, Joseph Murphy, Ivy O'Shea, Charlie Secker, Mary Reeder, Charles Wilfred Hunt, Dorothy Pinner. *May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace.*

Hospital Visits: If you or any member of your family is admitted to the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital and would like to have a visit from a Catholic Priest, please inform a nurse on the ward and contact will be made through the Chaplaincy. If you are admitted to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in King's Lynn, please contact Fr. Peter Rollings at the Presbytery on 01553 772220. If you would like to receive the Sacrament of the Sick before going into hospital, please contact Fr. Jay either by phone or by email.

Sick & Housebound [with GDPR Permissions] – Please pray for: Shirley Liebenhals, Derek Williams, Patsy Gray, Colette Barrow-Nessian, William Dunne, Pauline Buckland, Katherine Vella, Pauline Organ, Pat Grout, George Mealy, Peggy Mealy, Richard Allison, Marion Ring-Davies, Patsy Thompson, Ann McWilliams, Margaret Glendon-Doyle, Mila Kaunaite, Elaine Wilkes, Anne Sibley, Terri Sanderson, Pat Sutton, Hillary Bushell, Ann Williams, Richard Grout, Peter Duffield, Kathleen Doyle.

Money Matters: Offerings for the week was as follows:
Sunday 14th December 2025 Plate: £348.58.

A New Bank for the New Year! Our new banking details are: The Sacred Heart Church, S/C 52-41-29, A/C 44725132. Please use these details for any new BACS payments. There is no need to alter your standing orders yet - your current standing orders will be forwarded automatically. Watch the newsletter for information in January. Any queries please send to treasurer@sacredheartdereham.org.uk. If a tax payer, please consider Gift Aid (forms at back of church, or contact Rex Baker: Telephone 01362 694801 or email rexbaker27@btinternet.com).



Upcoming Parish events:

Diary for week Sunday 21 st December - Saturday 27 th December 2025	
Monday: 1900 - 2030	AA Group Meeting - Emmaus Room
Tuesday: 1000	Baptism of Uma Joy Watchman - Emmaus Room
Thursday: 1430	Film Showing: `David` – Emmaus Room
Friday: 1100	Altar Servers Medals and then Pizza after Mass
Parish Garden Club – To volunteer, please contact Sonia on 07985 521578.	

Crib Offering 2025 - As last year, Crib Offering 2025 will be sent to Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, the Diocese twinned with the East Anglia as we show support, especially at this time.

Readers for Christmas Masses – We're looking for volunteers to read the Bible readings during our Christmas Masses. Please sign up on the sheet at the back of the church, for your preferred scheduled Mass. Thanks.

Parish Christmas Party - This year's Parish Christmas Party will be on Sunday 21st December at Yaxham Hall, at 1300 hours, to start eating at 13:30. The main event will continue until 18:00, followed by Karaoke until 21:00 for those who would like to stay longer. Tickets are £7.50 per adult and £2.50 per child. Alternatively, for every food dish brought to share, a complimentary ticket will be provided.

Funeral Service - 22 December 0930 at the St Faith's Crematorium. We include to pray for the eternal repose of the soul of +Sheila Searle.

Baptism - 23 Dec 25 - We rejoice as we welcome Uma Joy Watchman into the family of faith, who will be baptized on 23rd December 2025 at the 1000 Mass.

St Stephen's Day 26 Dec 25: Altar Servers' Mass and Pizza – During 1100 Mass Father Jay will be awarding 5 new Servers with medals. Then, after Mass, pizza!

Parish Prayerline - If you would like someone to pray for your personal intentions, Silvia, a parishioner, is kindly offering her time in prayer: sil17sill@hotmail.com.

Christmas Day Film Showing - 1430 at the Emmaus Room - On Christmas Day at 1430 in the Emmaus Room, we shall be showing the animated film David

Thank you to all our many parish volunteers and groups for their help each week throughout the year in supporting the running and daily spiritual life of the church.

