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Saint Mary's Roman Catholic Church
Catlow Hall Street, Oswaldtwistle
Lancashire
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DIOCESE OF  SALFORD

Parish Priest: Rev. Fr. S D O'Brien
Tel: 01254-232433

Monday 7th December 2020
Second Week of Advent

Dear brothers and sisters,

If I asked you to name a celebrity chef what would your answer be? Delia Smith? Jamie Oliver? Fanny Cradock? Nigella Lawson or Rick Stein? My favourites were the Two Fat Ladies – Clarissa Dickson Wright and Jennifer Patterson.



I was fascinated by their witty dialogue, extravagant dishes and most of all their unashamed witness to the Catholic faith. From the Crucifix and picture of Our Lady in the kitchen through to the retelling of personal stories about their First Communion experiences, from the Pope to their saintly devotions and of course Jennifer's red papal slippers! No matter who our favourite television chef is they all have one phrase in common:

'Here's on I made earlier!'

For the show to run smoothly the TV chef has to be prepared. Very prepared! They have a limited amount of time to demonstrate the cooking of a dish from start to finish which may take over an hour and the BBC can only give them 30mins on air to present it all. Ingredients have to be prepared beforehand and examples of the dish, at various stages of the cooking process, have to be ready to show the audience in an instant.

The readings at Mass during this season of Advent, have all so far, called us to prepare. Prepare for what? The Second Coming when Jesus *will* return again as he promised. Like the cookery programme time slot which is limited, so is this world. We are familiar with the Gospel sayings, '*You do not know the hour*' or '*..like a thief in the night...*', they remind us that there are many things in the future that we cannot predict when, where and how they will happen but that does not mean we can't be ready for when they do come.

'And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake!' (Mk. 13:37)

'It is not those who say to me, "Lord, Lord", who will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the person who does the will of my Father in heaven.' (Mt. 7:21)

'Therefore, everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a sensible man who built his house on rock.' (Mt. 7:24)

'All Judaea and all the people of Jerusalem made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins.' (Mk. 1:5)

As we continue on our Advent journey let us take heed of the word of God and prepare ourselves for when Christ will come again. Let us be ready, alert and awake. Let us not only hear the words of Jesus but act on them. Let us have the humility and courage to come to the Sacrament of Confession and prepare our hearts to receive the Lord. For when the Master does return will we be able to show him the fruits of our faith ripened by our lives of holiness or will we have the weak excuse – I wasn't ready!

Confessions

Advent is a time of preparing to meet Our Lord and an important part of this is Confession. This sacrament was instituted by Christ so that we could tangibly feel and truly receive his mercy and forgiveness. There will be the opportunity for Confession at St. Mary's on the following dates:

Saturday 12th December 9am – 10am

Saturday 19th December 9am – 10am

Our Dean, Fr. Stamp at St. Annes' in Accrington, is also kindly offering Confession by appointment and can be contacted at simon.stamp@dioceseofsalford.org.uk

Stewards & Cleaners

If you would like to serve Our Lord as a volunteer steward then please email Jennifer Pickles (St. Mary's Steward Co-ordinator) at: jennifer.pickles@virginmedia.com or to volunteer as a cleaner please contact Karen Beard (Parish Housekeeper) at jakey9998@aol.com

Temporary Booking for the Holy Mass during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Ursula Heyes will be available on Wednesdays and Fridays, from 5pm – 6pm on (01254) 232 433 to take telephone bookings. The parish website www.saintmarysoswaldtwistle.co.uk has a link for online bookings. Sadly, some volunteers have had to return to work and therefore you will only be able to book online during the week (Monday to Friday). On behalf of the parish I would like to say thank you to all those involved with our parish booking system.

Sacramental Programme: Confession and Holy Communion

The Covid-19 pandemic has changed a lot of our usual routine events and this includes the sacramental programme. I feel very strongly that those young people who are actively engaged with the parish should be able to receive Our Lord and therefore, adapting to new circumstances, I'm beginning the new programme. If you live in the parish of St. Mary's and have a baptised Roman Catholic child who is seven years old + and you believe that they are ready to begin preparation for the Sacraments of Confession and Holy Communion then please do contact me before the end of December. The sacramental programme at St. Mary's is through the parish and not the schools. Mass attendance and full active participation in the life of the parish is just automatically assumed because Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament is both the '*object and means of our faith*' (St. Peter Julian Eymard). Without an active relationship with Our Lord, without regularly being in His Presence before the Blessed Sacrament, our faith can never grow nor can we truly know Him and Jesus wants us to know Him. Why? Because he has Good News for us!

God Bless and keep praying.

Our Lady of Oswaldtwistle, pray for us.

Saint Joseph, pray for us.

Fr. O'Brien