



## ADVENT – A TIME OF GRACE

**I**n recent times, when celebration of baptisms, communions and confirmations were advised against, some people asked parishes could they have a 'blessing' instead. Priests are never quite sure what the other person is hoping for in this case or what they understand of 'blessing'. But in the case of delayed Baptism/Communion/Confirmation due to concerns over gatherings - the answer was 'no.' The Sacraments are very

different to a blessing and a blessing doesn't take the place of a Sacrament. Blessings are actually what's called a 'sacramental'; another example would be holy water. It prepares us to receive the grace of a sacrament.

And children are preparing. A friend's grandchild, like a lot, didn't quite make her First Confession (all postponed). Some weeks later, all serious she told her parents she was sorry for the times she hurt them. They passed it off with a 'yes - but we always forgive you, because we love you.' Frowning she said she knew that but needed to go to Jesus to say this.

### Next Sunday's Readings

Zephaniah 3:14-18

Psalms Isaiah 12:2-6

Philippians 4:4-7

Luke 3:10-18





However, I don't think John the Baptist had sacraments or blessing on his mind as he stood at the Jordan. It sounded more like a road-building project with levelling and filling-in going on. The Season of Advent we are upon is bit of a project as well. Like all building projects, we are up against a deadline. Advent was described by Sister Maria Boulding as a 'sacrament of everyone's longing'. Advent brings into sharp focus the advantages of learning to wait well and to exhibit patience whenever we can. We all know that things won't always go our way, that we will meet stresses and strains in life. But we are to enjoy the good things that come our way. Nobody wants to be patient - but it's a vital part of our daily living. Advent still has much to teach us.

## Advent Prayer

Maranatha ... Come Lord Jesus. Come as a gentle light of dawn into all of our lives troubled by fear and hurt and the anguish of the mind. ... Come Lord Jesus. Come as a gentle light of hope to all those who live in the twilight grey of addiction and depression ... Come Lord Jesus. Come as a gentle light of healing to all hearts broken by betrayal, wounded by abuse and haunted by the past ... Come Lord Jesus. Come as a gentle light of forgiveness to our world, darkened by violent words, human trafficking and domestic abuse ... Come Lord Jesus. Touch our eyes and our hearts so that we can see and feel Your kindness, Your compassion and Your tears in the faces of all who suffer. Come Lord Jesus. (Fr Francis Murray)

- Tom Cox

### Reflection

Are we doing our part to level out the sharp peaks of greed and mountain-sized injustice in the world?

### Lesson

God's justice working in us produces the rich harvest of freedom, peace and a joy which no one can take from us.

### Prayer

Thank you, Lord, for coming to me today through your word in Scripture and through your Body and Blood in the sacrifice of the Holy Mass.

### This Week (6-12 December)

- 6 M** St Nicholas, bishop
- 7 T** St Ambrose, bishop and doctor
- 8 W** THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BVM
- 9 T** St Peter Fourier; St Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin
- 10 F** St John Roberts, priest and martyr
- 11 S** St Damasus I, pope
- 12 S** THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT





The Parish of St Anthony's is part of the Diocese of Down and Connor and operates in accordance with the Diocesan Privacy Notice, copies of which are available in porch.



# St. Anthony's Parish, Belfast

**PARISH PRIEST:** Fr. Henry McCann (and Chaplain to the Ulster Hospital, Dundonald) 3 Willowfield Crescent, BT6 8HP. Tel. 028 90458158. [Mobile 07740603643](tel:02890458158), (preferred)  
**Email:** [h.mccann@downandconnor.org](mailto:h.mccann@downandconnor.org), [stanthonys@downandconnor.org](mailto:stanthonys@downandconnor.org), [henrymccann@hotmail.com](mailto:henrymccann@hotmail.com). **Website:** [www.saintanthony.co.uk](http://www.saintanthony.co.uk)  
**PUBLIC MASS TIMES—COVID-19 ERA (will be under assessment/review)**  
 Saturday Evening at 6.30pm. (English Parish Mass)  
 Sunday Morning (in Polish): 9am. & 6:30pm. (English Parish Mass): 11.30am  
 Weekdays: (Mon Private 9:30am), Tues & Thurs at 9.30am. Fri at 7.00pm.  
**All English Masses on Facebook.** Polish Weekday Masses: Tues & Thurs 7pm, Sat 9am  
 Confessions: By Arrangement. **Baptisms:** By Appointment  
 Local SVP Conference contact details: 028 90351561  
<https://www.svp.ie/stbernadettebelfast>



## 2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT—YEAR C

*The word of God came to John. [Luke 3:1-6]  
 In our chaos, Lord, oh, let us hear once again  
 the Baptist crying out to us.*

*"Prepare the way, make straight the paths.  
 Every valley filled and hills made low.  
 All flesh shall see the salvation of God."*

*God of constant newness, carve fresh roads into our wilderness:  
 into climate and racial emergency.  
 Let our whole life point to Jesus.  
 He is born here, is with us now.  
 Jesus, please turn our deserts into gardens.*

Anne Osdieck

## WE REMEMBER OUR DECEASED LOVED-ONES

**Recently Deceased:** Ann Hurrell, Mrs Collette Foster, (sister of Fathers David and Paddy White), Pat McBrearty (father of Fr Stephen)  
**Anniversaries:** Annie McPeake, James Murray, Patrick Joseph Greenan, Sally (Sarah) Watson, Peter Hughes (Sat 11th Dec at 6:30pm), Mary Guinness (Sun 12th Dec at 11:30am)  
 To arrange for anniversary masses please speak to Fr McCann

**COLLECTIONS:** Many thanks for your support. Bishop's Commissions (further donations) £24.50, Weekly Collection £415.59, Shrines £136.11  
**DONATE [Online Donate Button on Website](#)**

We would appreciate that if you send in a cheque to pay for a number of different donations, that you itemise what amount should go to each collection. Also include all empty envelopes in the one envelope

**Updated Diocesan Covid-Safe Measures for all Church based liturgies/activities** As well as the previous measures, the following updates are to be followed, summarised, (issued 26th October 2021):

**Social Distancing:** a minimum of one metre social distancing between members of different households.

**Face Coverings:** The wearing of face coverings while entering, leaving and moving around a church is mandatory (except when exempted). Face coverings should be recommended throughout celebrations, even when seated. If there is congregational singing, face coverings must be worn.

**Hand Sanitizers:** Suitable hand sanitizers should continue to be provided at the entrances to Churches and other parish buildings.

**Ventilation:** Churches should be well ventilated during and after any gathering.

**Movement around the Church:** Parishes should retain any guidance/direction designed to allow social distancing.

**Cleaning Routines:** Parishes should maintain current regime of cleaning between liturgical services.

**Holy Water Fonts, missalettes, newsletters etc.:** For the time being, holy water fonts should remain empty. Missalettes and newsletters/bulletins should not be used unless they are single use and are retained by the user or disposed of after use.

**Celebration of Mass:** Parishes should continue to observe the principle of simplicity in the Liturgy for the time being, and note that the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days remains suspended.

**Choirs and liturgical music groups** may recommence their ministry, and the number of members must be included in the safe maximum number determined in the risk assessment. Face coverings should be used and members observe 1 metre distancing. Choirs should sing at a reduced volume, and choose a repertoire that will not unnecessarily prolong the liturgy.

**Entrance and recessional processions** should be simple, confined to the celebrant, (deacon) and servers. There should be **no offertory procession and sign of peace remains suspended.** Those administering Holy Communion should continue to sanitize hands before and after distribution, to wear face coverings, and **communion in the hand should remain the norm,** or accommodation made for those who receive on the tongue, when hands should be sanitised immediately after each recipient.  
 (Full updated guidance can be found on the parish Facebook page and on the Parish Website)

**Ministers of the Word and Eucharist.** It is hoped to refresh/add to the groups of ministers of the Word and Eucharist in the Autumn. If you are interested in joining these groups, a course of instruction will soon take place, at which all ministers of Word and Eucharist are invited.

**Resources by the Northern Pastoral Network for Advent and Christmas** Booklet for use at home available in the Church porch.

**Prayer Online:** Come and join us at... [www.soulparentmission.com](http://www.soulparentmission.com) Who are we? We are a new interactive prayer website created by Jacinta Crockford DipTH, Spiritual Director living in Down and Connor. What's on offer? A variety of PDF meditations on Mother Teresa, St John Paul II, Ignatius Spirituality to name but a few. Lots of content to dive into! There you will find - Podcasts on Faith, Friendship & Knowledge; Rosaries, Prayers and Marian Consecration. Come and join us and be part of the prayer movement online! **Every Saturday at 4.30pm & 8.30pm (live)** I will be leading the Most Holy Rosary and prayer reflections with Eucharistic Adoration (8.30pm) on the Catholic Internet TV - [ShalomWorld.org](http://ShalomWorld.org) Just click on the following link to access this time of prayer. [www.swprayer.org](http://www.swprayer.org) Please be assured that I will be offering in prayer all the Diocese of Down and Connor, parishioners and their families during this live Rosary and Eucharistic Adoration.

**Advent Meditations with Joseph and Mary.** The Living Church office are offering two online programmes following the footsteps of Joseph and Mary as they travel towards Bethlehem. The programme runs for 4 weeks and provides 1 hour of prayer and reflection with scripture and participants will receive an accompanying prayer journal to use each day at home. Advent meditations with Joseph begins on Thursday 25th November at 7pm. Advent meditations with Mary begins on Sunday 28th November at 7pm. If you would like to join please e-mail [livingchurch@downandconnor.org](mailto:livingchurch@downandconnor.org) indicating which programme you are interested in.

**9 Day Rosary Novena for Ireland.** We are inviting you to join in a 9 Day Rosary Novena beginning Tuesday 30th November and ending on Wednesday 8th December. People all over Ireland will pray the Rosary together each evening at 9pm. On the final evening at 9pm on Radio Maria the Primate of All Ireland Archbishop Eamon Martin will lead the final Rosary live. If you are gathering to pray in groups we encourage you to gather safely adhering to local Covid 19 regulations.

**Youth 2000 Christmas.** Join us to celebrate Holy Mass this Advent Season. Mass, Confession, Adoration In St Comgall's Church, Antrim, 12th December at 3pm.

**Anam Cara Belfast,** the organisation that supports bereaved parents, is holding it's monthly Parent Evening for bereaved parents on Monday 13th December at 7:20pm in the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Belfast. This event is free and open to all bereaved parents regardless of the age your child died, the circumstances of their death, or whether their death was recent or not. \*Subject to change in accordance with government advice\* For more information see [anamcara.ie](http://anamcara.ie) or call our Information Line on 02895213120

**Together for Christmas.** Join St. Agnes' Choral Society as they get ready to begin the festive season with their carol concert, Together for Christmas, in St. Peter's Cathedral, Belfast. Strict covid protocols in place and you will be seated with your own group. Tickets can be booked via this link: [shorturl.at/fttG8](http://shorturl.at/fttG8)

**Stormont Rosary For Life** - Please join us for a special Candlelight Rosary for Life at Parliament Buildings, Stormont, (meeting at main gate entrance on Upper Newtownards Road) at 3.00pm on the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on Sunday 12th December. For more information contact Rosary Crusade for Ireland on 07845686437.

**The Synod on Synodality: Preparing our hearts and minds (Sun 5th Dec)** Pope Francis has called the entire People of God to journey together! This invitation isn't just for Bishops or Clergy it is an invitation to every Baptised person - all the People of God. The Synodal process invites each one of us - the People of God - to recall that we journey together as a community of faith. As we walk on our journey of faith we are called to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit and to one another.

On this second week of Advent, we reflect on John the Baptist; a voice calling in the wilderness. There are many people who feel that their voice is in the wilderness and isn't heard by the Church. This week let us prayerfully look around our Parish Community and reflect on whose voice may not be heard and how we might accompany people on their faith journey with the compassion, love, and mercy that Jesus asks of us. This week we encourage you to pray with this prayer:

**Lord, this Advent, give me a welcoming heart. Let me be open to the messengers of your word, especially to those whom at first glance I might resist, for they are your prophets today urging me to change my way of thinking and living.**

**Parish Safeguarding.** Can you please ensure that all Children and Vulnerable Adults are accompanied at all times when entering the Sacristy / Toilet facilities. If you have any queries regarding the Safeguarding Policy please contact a member of the Parish Safeguarding Committee. Many Thanks. Fr Henry McCann PP.