



AMDG

PARISH EXTRA



NEWS, VIEWS AND INFORMATION FOR ST PETER'S,
ST JOSEPH'S AND THE STONYHURST COMMUNITY

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ISSUE Number Twelve

Christmas

EDITORIAL

What an extraordinary year 2020 has turned out to be! It has been a challenge to keep in touch with parishioners, especially during lockdown. Happily we are allowed to gather once more in St Peter's for communal worship, though with numbers restricted.

I have been impressed with the extraordinary lengths people have gone to in caring for each other and making sure everyone is safe and connected. Many have chosen a "buddy" and have been in contact with them on a daily basis. In some cases this has blossomed into a deep and lasting friendship. It shows that, as a community, we really do care.

Our Christmas Mass times are given opposite, with more information on the parish website. I am really looking forward to the Christmas Eve "drive-in" Mass. A new way for us to gather and pray.

Happy Christmas everyone!

Contact us on:
www.stpetersstonyhurst.org.uk

The schemes of mice and men

The poem *To a Mouse* by Robert Burns contains the line: "The best laid schemes of mice and men often go awry". In recalling the story of the nativity, we see how true this was in the case of Mary and Joseph. They had planned for their special baby to be born in Nazareth. I'm sure Joseph had constructed a sturdy crib,

while Mary, assisted by her mum Anna, would have made some beautiful clothes. These plans were frustrated by Caesar calling a census and them having to travel to Bethlehem to be registered. Instead of the crib, Jesus was laid in an animal feeding trough and instead of baby clothes, he was wrapped in bandages.

The Coronavirus has disrupted many of our own plans this year, and this Christmas will be no exception. It took Mary and Joseph some time to realise that the disruption to their dream was God's plan. Perhaps he is doing the same for me. Why not ask him?



Christmas Mass times

Thur 24 th Dec	Drive-In Mass at Stonyhurst 5.00pm Carols (sung in your car) 5.30pm Mass (remain in your car) (please bring your baby Jesus) Space limited by the size of the car park 10.00pm Mass of Christmas in St Peter's Carols played at 9.30 pm (we can't sing) Mass limited to the first 130 people
<i>There is NO Mass at MIDNIGHT this year.</i>	
Fri 25 th Dec	9.30am Mass in St Peter's Mass limited to the first 130 people
Sat 26 th Dec	Normal weekend schedule: 4.30pm Adoration, 5.15pm Benediction 5.30pm Mass in St Peter's
Sun 27 th Dec	9.30am and 11.00am Mass in St Peter's

Please take this Newsletter home with you at the end of Mass



BENEMERENTI AWARDS

The Benemerenti Medal is an honour awarded by the Pope to members of the clergy and laity for service to the Catholic Church. The medal was originally established as an award to soldiers in the Papal Army by Pope Pius VI. In 1925, the concept of awarding this medal as a mark of recognition to persons in service of the Church, civil and military, lay and clergy alike became acceptable.

The request went through the bishop, the Papal Nuncio and then forward to the Vatican. (Very few papal Benemerenti medals are given.)

Mr and Mrs Eccles: Agnes was born in Preston, educated at Lark Hill, and was the parish organist at St Gregory's RC Church in Deepdale, Preston (when she 15 years old!). She acted as consort to her father when he was made Mayor of Preston 1966-67. Before getting married, she worked for Barclays Bank and when she married Tom in 1967 she helped raised her family of three daughters. She then started to work part-time as a receptionist at Stonyhurst College before retiring in December 2007. When she joined Tom in the parish, there was no organist at St Peter's parish, and she was invited to take on the role of organist, both at St Peter's and at St Joseph's. The services have included Saturday Vigil Mass, the Sunday Masses, plus primary school term masses, parish weddings and funerals.

Tom was born in the parish (Stockbridge), and received all the sacraments in the Parish. He is an old boy both of the Parish Primary School, St Joseph's, but also of Preston Catholic College, the grammar school run by the Jesuits.

After school he attended St Mary's College Twickenham, and qualified as a teacher. Initially, he did supply work at St Joseph's in Hurst Green before working full time in Bamber Bridge, before returning to work permanently at St Joseph's in Hurst Green from December 1955. Many pupils remember his strong Catholic influence. He was asked by the Parish Priest Fr Noel Wilson SJ in 1968 to be a reader and to organise the reading rota. This was mostly at the chapel of St Joseph's but included the major services of Christmas and Holy Week held at St Peter's. This has continued for the past 51 years.

In addition, Tom is a Eucharistic Minister, and organises this rota together with the offertory procession and collection volunteers at Sunday Mass with a minimum of fuss.

As a couple: they established and ran the village Cubs and Brownies group, then followed that by setting up the St Joseph's Youth Group 30 years ago, which still runs today. These sorts of commitments in addition to bringing up their own three daughters meant that safe, supervised and supported activities were provided as an outlet for the local young peoples' relatively rural isolation.

They are a respected couple in the community and brought up their family in the Catholic faith; the whole community admire their steadfastness to the Parish, to each other and their faith.

As the Parish knows, Agnes fell ill in the Autumn, and sadly passed away in mid-November. She and Tom would have celebrated 53 years of marriage in December of this year. *May she rest in peace.*





Bernard Holden, born 1940, at Hacking Boat Farm Stonyhurst, attended St Joseph's School and has been a Parishioner all his life. When he married Dorothy (at St Peter's) and lived on Gallows Lane, he and his wife helped keep the Dutton Lea Chapel (Our Lady of the Wayside) clean and prepped for the Sunday Masses held there before it closed. Following his retirement, the family moved to Longridge, but Bernard continued his involvement as a volunteer and then supervisor to the cemetery maintenance team which looked after the cemetery. The evidence of a local Parishioner bears testimony as follows:

Mr. Holden's hard work and pride in the cemetery is mirrored in the ready help he receives from the other members of his 'team', who are always willing to do whatever is necessary under his guidance. The cheerful, happy rapport Mr. Holden has with these men is very evident, because they admire and respect him so much in his leadership capacity.

The people who visit the cemetery are comforted greatly by the beautiful and cared for surroundings in which their loved ones lie, all because of Mr. Holden's outstanding work there.

Mr. Holden is a very quiet and modest man, who would not expect any recognition of his services to the community of Hurst Green

The work is all year round but specially focussed on the growing seasons. This may mean a schedule of mowing every three weeks or so throughout the growing season. He plans to ensure pathways are cleared prior to funerals taking place; the roadside verge is mowed before 'Club Day' when members of the St Peter's Guild walk past with their banner on St Peter's feast day; before the All Souls' mass held in the cemetery chapel house, he will ensure the cemetery is spruced up; and if there are any fallen branches in a dangerous situation he will have noticed it and taken appropriate action. Bernard has been working as a volunteer for over 25 years, often by himself, and the feedback from both Parishioners and visitors of the excellent standards of the cemetery are a true testimony to his work and leadership. He and Dorothy will celebrate 55 years of marriage in January 2021!



ST JOSEPH'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL



The newly appointed Headteacher from St Joseph's Primary school Laura Orr, writes as follows:

At the start of the academic year, I began my first term at St Joseph's RC Primary school. Nestled in the heart of the beautiful Ribble Valley I began my first headship at both the oldest and smallest Jesuit school in the country. I immediately received a very warm welcome from a caring team, 100 beaming smiles from the children and support from both the parents and governors.

With the Catholic faith permeating all aspects of school life, the teachings of St Ignatius is our guide where we recognise that every aspect of our work can affirm the goodness and presence of God. Although this term has been far from 'normal' with the arrival of COVID-19, the community of Hurst Green have pulled together to serve others. We have collected for our local food bank and raised money for Mary's Meals and our PTA created a socially distant treasure hunt based on the '12 days of Christmas' around the village.

Each time I look out of the window I have to pinch myself that I work in such a beautiful environment. Every day is different with new challenges knocking at door! The strangest situation I have been in to date has to be my encounter with six 'lost sheep' approaching the school gates and being asked to herd them into the nearest field! I cannot find that task in the job description but what a fabulous way to spend a morning!

As a mum of three beautiful boys, I know the important part a school plays in the children's life. I see my role as the gardener – looking over my little seedlings, giving them help and support when needed but having the ability to stand back, allowing them to flourish on their own. I look forward to watching many children thrive at St Joseph's and promise to look out for any lost sheep!





Parish life and our great volunteers!

Parish life has many facets and responsibilities: with the shortage of clergy being the reality of Diocesan life, the involvement of the laity is key in running the Sacramental programme, the Eucharistic Ministers, Readers, Youth Club and so forth.

We rely on volunteers supporting our Parish Priest so that his job is made easier and we have the opportunity to put our faith into action.

New blood is always welcome. It allows us to refresh some of the regular activities, promote new ideas and ensure the delivery of some of the important routines.

So what is on offer?

We need volunteers in the following areas: (we have added the current Lead volunteer name)

Children's Liturgy (Sarah Hodgkinson)

St Joseph's 9.30am Mass set-up / cleaning (Mary Bailey)

Readers at St Peter's (Andrew Snape)

Pastoral Committee (Niall Macfarlane)

St Joseph's Cemetery grass cutting (Bernard Holden)

Eucharistic Ministers (Julie Macfarlane/Tom Eccles)

Music (Fr Tim)

Occasional assistant to Fr Tim at funerals (Mary Bailey and Linda Nutter)

Finance Committee (Les Bury)

Parish website (Peter Nicholson)

St Joseph's Youth Group (Darren Turner / Jessica Nutter)

Readers at St Joseph's (Tom Eccles)

Offertory collectors (Annie Nicholson, James Slater, Bill Holden)

If you feel that you can contribute in some way, please do not hesitate to speak to Fr Tim, or any of the people involved in the various roles within our Parish.

Thank you





RCIA 2019 - 2020

Seven people started the RCIA programme in 2019, and they were all due to be received into the church at Easter. One dropped out last Christmas but the other six were eventually received into the church after the first lockdown when we were allowed to come back to Mass again.

This is Andrea's story.

I am a Catholic!

Having trained at a Catholic teaching College, and, taught in Church Schools virtually all of my teaching career, attending Mass at St Peters seemed quite natural. I had been to many church services over time not only with my profession, but, with the children's education. However, St Peter's seemed the right place for me. At first, I did this alone, enjoying not only the content of the Mass, especially Father Tim's Homily, but the solitude also. There was, at long last, a small window of time for me! Time to Think. Time to reflect. Time to pray. Time to just be me, in a place where I felt more comfortable than any other church I had attended.

The family, either having left home, or, sufficiently independent, my husband and I remembered we were a couple! We had worked hard over the years to bring up a family of six children, pay the school fees, and deal with all that was thrown at us. So, the trip to Mass became something special that we did together. It was around this time that the RCIA programme was to begin. This seemed like a natural progression – a journey not necessarily of discovery but reaffirmation of what we had always believed in. Thursday evenings with a small group of like-minded people was a time we looked forward to each week. Our beliefs were and still are the focus of the core of our lives. To such an extent we booked to attend this year's retreat, where we were to be accepted into the Catholic Church sponsored by my friend Jo. However, our plans were to be scuppered. Not only was retreat cancelled due to COVID-19 and our acceptance postponed, but Jo had also returned to Cambridge as the college began virtual lessons. Furthermore, our three-week-old grandson was seriously ill in hospital diagnosed with sepsis. I was in constant contact with Father Tim and we all prayed for baby Harry's survival. In times of extreme difficulty Father Tim was there for me and supported my family. I am pleased to say that Harry is now a happy healthy 9-month-old, and was baptised along with his brother Reuben, by Father Tim and attends Mass with us and his mum.

We did finally become accepted into the Catholic Church, supported by our proxy sponsor, Michael Turner, who I take this opportunity to give grateful thanks to both Mr and Mrs Turner for their support and guidance. We continue to attend Mass at St Peter's each week. It has not been a hard journey, nor was it a difficult decision to make. It was just simply the right time for us. We are at home!

If you are interested in becoming a Catholic, please let Fr Tim know, and we shall arrange a new course as soon as it is safe to do so.





First Holy Communions 2020

A small group of children were preparing to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion for the first time this summer. Unfortunately, all our preparations were put on hold in the spring. Thankfully, in the early Autumn and through advent the children received the sacrament individually and in pairs, in very simple and prayerful celebrations.

Congratulations to Henry, Helena, Noah, Pippa, Michael, Billy-May, Luke and Jacob. Thank you for your patience. Hopefully we'll be able to celebrate together next summer.

The next group of children will start to prepare for the sacraments of Reconciliation and First Communion in spring next year. Please contact Sarah on 01254 826739 if you have a child in Year 3 or above who would like to participate.



The Covid Christmas Page

Make sure you don't spread it!



Q: What do you get if you eat Christmas decorations?

Q: What cheese will prevent a small horse from getting Covid ?

A: *Mascarpone*

Christmas presents might be late this year. Many of Santa's workers have to *Elf*-

Who will be watching the movie *Home Alone* this Christmas ?

Q: What do you call people who are afraid of Santa?

A: *Claustropho-*



Q: Will Santa's reindeer catch Covid ?

A; No, they have *herd* immunity!

Q: Why couldn't Mary and Joseph talk to Nazareth ?
A: There was no Zoom the

Q: What's wrong with German sausages?

A: *They go from
brad to worst!*

