



Our Lady Help of Christians

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

24th January, 2021

Fr. Harry Curtis, Parish Priest

(Also serving Sacred Heart, Blackbird Leys)

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Sunday, 24 th January Third Sunday in Ordinary Time Sunday of the Word of God <i>Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity</i>	Sat evening Vigil: 5.30 pm Sun morning: 11.00 am	<i>The People of the Parish</i> <i>Gill and Peter Nottingham</i> <i>(Intentions)</i>
Monday, 25 th January <i>Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul</i> <i>Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity</i>	No Mass Today	
Tuesday, 26 th January <i>Mem. of St. Timothy & St. Titus, Bishops</i>	9.15 am Mass	<i>Winnie Gildea</i>
Wednesday, 27 th January <i>Op. Mem. of Blessed Edward Oldcorne,</i> <i>or of St. Angela Merici</i>	No Mass Today	
Thursday, 28 th January <i>Memorial of St. Thomas Aquinas, Priest,</i> <i>Doctor of the Church</i>	No Mass Today	
Friday, 29 th January	6.00 pm Exposition & Benediction 7.00 pm Mass	<i>Lesley O'Connell (Intentions)</i>
Saturday, 30 th January	Sat evening Vigil: 5.30 pm	<i>The People of the Parish</i>
Sunday, 31 st January Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time	Sun morning: 11.00 am	<i>Mary and Danny Harrington</i> <i>(Intentions)</i>
Sacrament of Reconciliation: Friday, 6.00-6.45 pm		

Welcome to Our Lady Help of Christians for Mass today.

The Sanctuary Candle is burning this week for a Special Intention.

Our Lady's Candle is burning this week for deceased members of the Roberts Family.

St. Don Bosco's Candle is burning this week for the members of the Salesian Order.

Sunday of the Word of God. Pope Francis has decreed 24th January to be the Sunday of the Word of God. "Devoting a specific Sunday of the liturgical year to the word of God can enable the Church to experience anew how the risen Lord opens up for us the treasury of his word and enables us to proclaim its unfathomable riches before the world." (Pope Francis). So, ...

1 If you have brought a Bible/Missal/New Testament to Mass today I shall bless it during Mass.

2 During Mass today I shall also re-commission and ask God's blessing of our readers, whether they are able to be present physically at the Mass or not.

3 **Echoes of God: Journeying with the word of God.** Today we begin a journey through the whole Bible in a 7-week course written by David McLoughlin. These weekly reflections are perfect for us to read through and chew over at home during this period of lockdown. Each week takes a fundamental core teaching of Scripture and together the sessions help us get a sense of the Scriptures as a whole; to see the unfolding of God's liberating and creative love in the history of Israel and in the Church. Today, week one, we start with Exodus. The materials, which are very easy and enjoyable to read, are available to take away, but you can access the materials any time at <https://www.godwhospeaks.uk/thegod-who-speaks/focus/sunday-of-the-word-of-god/echoes-of-god-journeying-with-the-word-of-god/>

Prayer at the end of Mass:

Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy, hail, our life, our sweetness and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve: to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this vale of tears. Turn then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us, and after this our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus, O merciful, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary! *Pray for us, O holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ. Amen*

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Mass at Our Lady's. You are welcome to come to Our Lady's for Mass, but if **you wish to join us for Mass from your home**, we are now live and can be viewed at <https://www.mcncmedia.tv/camera/our-lady-help-of-christians>

Here is a prayer, **an Act of Spiritual Communion**, which you can say as you watch a Livestream Mass:

“My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You.”

Please pray for those we know who are sick, especially John Flanagan. If you or family members are ill and you would like to ask for prayers on this newsletter, let me know (in writing, please). Thank you.

Please pray for Helen Towey, Winnie Gildea, Fr. Patrick Joyce and all who have died recently, and for all those whose anniversaries occur at this time Mgr. Peter Dao-Duc-Diem, Canons Thomas Copsey and Kevin Good, Frs. Anthony Timlin, Vincent Joseph Royles, Richard Roche, James Heneghan, Charles Smith, Mortimer Loftus John Berry, and Deacon Michael Ainsworth, and also Joseph Hughes. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord. May they rest in peace.

The Annual Novena to St. John Bosco began last Friday and finishes on Sunday, 31st January, which would have been St John's feast day.

The Octave of Prayer for Christian Unity began last Monday and ends tomorrow, the feast of the Conversion of St Paul. This year the theme is based on *John 15:1-17: Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit.*

Lent. Three weeks on Wednesday will be the start of Lent. It's not too early to start thinking what you can do to make this season of grace fruitful.

Ashes for Ash Wednesday (17th February). Do you know where the ashes come from for Ash Wednesday? They are made by burning the palms that we waved on Palm Sunday to welcome the Lord into His City. Of course, last Palm Sunday we were under lockdown and the church was closed, so we didn't have any palms. Nevertheless, I am hoping that we can make our own ashes for Ash Wednesday. If you have palms from earlier Palm Sundays that we could use for this, please bring them to church over the next few weeks.

Feast of the Presentation (Candlemas), 2nd February. This will be a week on Tuesday. Mass will be at 9.15 am.

Missionary Parishes, Missionary Disciples. The Diocesan Evangelisation Team is hosting a Zoom meeting on Tuesday 26 January for those who wish to pray, share & reflect on how God is calling us to nurture missionary parishes and disciples in this challenging new context. There is a choice of two meetings repeated during the day (1-2pm and 7.30- 8.30pm). Contact natalie.orefice@rcaob.org.uk for log in details.

Next Sunday is Racial Justice Sunday. This year Racial Justice Sunday is more important than ever. The effects of the pandemic, the killing of George Floyd, and the powerful message on fraternity and equality by Pope Francis in *Fratelli Tutti* speak of the need to actively oppose racism and pursue racial justice with renewed vigour. We are all children of God. The Bishops' Conference has commissioned a series of videos to share the thoughts of Black Catholics about the events of the past year, how we can build a better society and the important role that our Church can play. These are available at: cbcew.org.uk/home/events/racial-justicesunday-2021.

Our Lady's needs your help. I should like to say a huge thank you to everyone who has continued to donate to our parish during the pandemic. Whether you have done this as a one-off or as a regular contribution, thank you. If you have not been able to make donations recently, but would like to do so it is possible by setting up a standing order or by giving on-line. If you need help with either of these please call me. I do appreciate that many may be struggling financially at this time. Please be assured there is no expectation to give.

COVID-19. We continue to be able to open the churches for communal Worship, but this may change if restrictions are tightened. The Government has asked us not to celebrate baptisms and weddings until further notice. I shall keep you up to date with any other changes required. We all know that there will be a few more difficult months ahead and it is important that we are sensible, and we do our best to protect each other. Please continue to be sensible and to make wise decisions concerning you and your family. For your protection and that of everyone else, when you come to church, please remember to wear a face-covering, to sanitise your hands on arrival and departure, to check in for the track and trace, and to keep your distance from others who are not in your "bubble. Thank you.

Holocaust Memorial Day is held on 27th January each year. It's a time for everyone to pause to remember the millions of people who have been murdered or whose lives have been changed beyond recognition during the Holocaust, and in subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur. The 27th January marks the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest Nazi death camp. The theme of this year's Holocaust Memorial Day is 'Be the light in the darkness'.

Tailpiece: Now that Christmas is over for another year I hope it is safe to tell this one: Two parents took their three-year-old daughter to church for the first time for the parish Christmas Carol Service. The church lights were lowered, and then the choir came down the aisle, carrying lighted candles. All was quiet until the little one started to sing in a loud voice, "Happy Birthday to you, happy birthday to you...."

May God bless you and all those who are dear to you
Fr. Harry