

OUR LADY OF FATIMA PARISH

Saint Mary Immaculate Larkhall &
Our Lady & Saint John's Blackwood

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Our Lady & St John's
Carlisle Road
Blackwood, ML11 9RZ

**SOLEMNITY OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD
25TH DECEMBER 2021**

St Mary's
Raploch Road
Larkhall, ML9 1AN

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM BISHOP TOAL

In present circumstances it does feel difficult to look forward to Christmas as we are made aware of further restrictions due to the new variant of the coronavirus. Perhaps the ongoing crisis we are living through makes the happy, indeed joyful, celebration of Christmas all the more necessary as we celebrate the presence of God in our midst in the person of the Baby Jesus.

The birth of a child is a moment of great joy and of thanksgiving for the gift of life and the promise of how that life will grow and fulfil its potential through that person's time on earth. Just as the circumstances of Jesus' birth were challenging that can often be the case for others, but it is amazing how even the weakest, the most disadvantaged, do survive and find their place in the human family. Sadly not everybody does and the tragedies surrounding the loss of little children, and unborn babies, are among the hardest that parents and families face. As we acclaim the Child in the Manger as God, born as one of us, we commend to him those who have lost babies and all who are heart-broken over the loss of loved ones of all ages in recent times.

At Christmas we are invited to come to the manger ourselves in the spirit of the shepherds and wise men to do the Lord homage and present ourselves to him, seeking his grace and peace in our own lives. It is what we do constantly as we turn to God in prayer and come together to participate in the celebration of Holy Mass. Coming to the Christmas Crib is an extra beautiful expression of our faith in the Lord made flesh, who has truly dwelt among us. It is an added opportunity to express our desire to remain close to him always and to receive the fullest benefit of his presence within and among us. The words of the last two verses of *Away in a Manger* come to mind:

Be near me Lord Jesus.
I ask you to stay
close by me forever
and love me I pray.
Bless all the dear children
in thy tender care
and fit us for heaven
to live with thee there.

I wish you and your families a very Happy and Joyful Christmas and every blessing in 2022.

With my prayers and very best wishes,

Yours in Christ,

+ Joseph Toal

+ Joseph Toal
Bishop of Motherwell



THIS WEEK IN OUR LADY OF FATIMA

Friday 24th December

- 5.00pm Vigil Mass of Christmas (Our Lady & St John's)
8.30pm First Mass of Christmas (St Mary's)
12.00am Midnight Mass of Christmas (St Mary's)

Saturday 25th December

- 10.00am Dawn Mass of Christmas (St Mary's)
12noon Day Mass of Christmas (Our Lady & St John's)

Sunday 26th December

- 10.00am Holy Mass for the Feast of the Holy Family (St Mary's)
12noon Holy Mass for the Feast of the Holy Family (Our Lady & St John's)

Monday 27th December

- 12noon Holy Mass for the Feast of St John (Our Lady & St John's)

Tuesday 28th December

- 12noon Holy Mass for the Feast of the Holy Innocents (Our Lady & St John's)

Wednesday 29th December

- 12noon Holy Mass for 29th December (St Mary's)

Thursday 30th December

- 12noon Holy Mass for 30th December (Our Lady & St John's)

Friday 31st December

- 12noon Holy Mass for 31st December (St Mary's)
6.30pm Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament (Our Lady & St John's)
7.00pm Vespers concluding with Benediction (Our Lady & St John's)

Saturday 1st January

- 11.30am Recitation of the Holy Rosary (St Mary's)
12noon Holy Mass for the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God (St Mary's)
5.30pm Vigil Mass for the Solemnity of the Epiphany (St Mary's)

Sunday 2nd January

- 10.00am Holy Mass for the Solemnity of the Epiphany (St Mary's)
12noon Holy Mass for the Solemnity of the Epiphany (Our Lady & St John's)



FEAST DAYS THIS WEEK

24th December - In the evening we begin the Season of Christmas. This season is preceded only in importance by the celebration of the Paschal Mystery (the passion, death and resurrection of the Lord), the Church has no more ancient tradition that the celebration of the Christmas Season: from Jesus' humble birth in Bethlehem; the announcement of his birth to the shepherds by the angels; the revelation to the three kings and their subsequent adoration of the child; his Baptism in the River Jordan and the Father's declaration of Jesus as the 'Beloved Son' and the beginning of his public ministry. The other feasts of Christmastide (St Stephen, St John the Evangelist, the Holy Innocents, the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God) all have an intimate connection to the Lord manifesting himself to the human race.

26th December - Feast of the Holy Family - If we aspire to a deeper understanding of Jesus' life and mission, we must draw close to the mystery of the Holy Family of Nazareth to observe and listen. This feast offers us the opportunity to admire, put into practice the divine plan to make the family an intimate community of life and love; we learn that each Christian family is called to be a small 'domestic church' that must shine with the Gospel virtues.

27th December - Feast of St John - St John was the son of Zebedee and worked as a Galilean fisherman with his brother St James. He was called while mending his nets to follow Jesus and became 'the disciples whom Jesus loved'. Alone among the twelve, he stood at the foot of the cross and was entrusted to the Blessed Virgin Mary. He wrote the fourth Gospel, three Epistles and the Apocalypse, producing profound passages on such themes as the divinity of Christ and the centrality of love. Though tradition records his attempted martyrdom 'at the Latin gate' in Rome, St John lived to a great age, spent many years in exile on Patmos and died in Ephesus. He is the patron saint of love, loyalty, friendships, and authors.

FEAST DAYS THIS WEEK CONTINUED

28th December - Feast of the Holy Innocents - Theology and piety cannot mask the horror behind this feast: the senseless slaughter of innocent infants and the visceral cries of grief-stricken parents, all to satisfy one man's violent, unconscionable insecurity. The Holy Innocents were the young children of the neighbourhood of Bethlehem, all under the age of two, put to death by Herod in an attempt to kill the infant Jesus. These innocent, nameless victims are honoured as the first to shed their blood for Christ.

1st January - Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God - This is Our Lady's greatest title. As the mother of the second person of the Holy Trinity, Jesus Christ, she is the mother of God. She walks with us and guides us with motherly tenderness towards her Son and towards the future. She helps humanity by sustaining their hope in the One who is the Lord of history.

PARISH FINANCES

Collection & Donations:	£820.00
Standing Orders & Bank Transfers:	£160.00
Votive Candles:	£250.00
Stall:	£140.00
TOTAL:	£1,370.00

Many thanks for your very generous support

ST MARGARET'S ADOPTION SOCIETY

At the crib in both churches you will find a box for donations for the St Margaret's Adoption Society. It is customary for parishes in the west of Scotland to raise money for the work carried out by St Margaret's Adoption Society in helping boys and girls to find loving homes. They have to close a major funding gap which has been brought about by the pandemic and are seeking our support.

Please be as generous as you always are to the crib collection for the work carried out on our behalf by St Margaret's. The collection boxes will be at the crib until next weekend.

CHRISTMAS COLLECTION

Traditionally the Christmas Collection is when parishioners would make a monetary gift to the parish on top of their weekly contributions according to their own financial means. Please place your Christmas collection offering into the collection bag at the Offertory at whichever Mass you attend on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.

For those who contribute to the parish through standing order, **Christmas Collection envelopes** will be found at the back of the church from this weekend. Those who have envelopes will find the Christmas collection envelope in your pack of envelopes.

If you are a member of the Giftaid scheme then please fill out the details on the back of the Christmas collection envelope, your name will suffice. If you feel more comfortable placing the envelope through the chapel house door, then please do so.

Please hand your Christmas collection into the parish by 2nd January.

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM FR WYLLIE

Our parish celebration of the Nativity of the Lord this year is still shadowed by the uncertainty of covid but we give thanks to God that we are all able to celebrate this day by attending Mass and that we are able to participate in the Liturgy in a fuller way than last year. Our parish celebrations don't just happen, there is an enormous amount of planning, preparation and work goes into making the church and the liturgy so beautiful. I just want to take this opportunity to thank all those who have worked so hard in preparing our churches for this celebration of Christmas. Many thanks to the cleaners who faithfully and willingly clean both our churches each week but with extra care and attention for Christmas; to those who organise and arrange our beautiful floral arrangements; to those who decorated our churches, erected the cribs, polished up the brass and silverware for the celebration of Mass; the organists, musicians, cantors, readers, the extraordinary ministers, the altar servers, the sacristans; to those who run our parish stall allowing us to purchase Christmas cards and gifts and also to the teams of counters who astutely deal with our parish collections week in and week out. On a personal note I would like to thank all those parishioners who have handed in cards and gifts for myself and Baloo, your kindness, generosity and support toward me as your priest, both throughout the year and at Christmas, is very much appreciated and certainly never taken for granted. I will offer up Holy Mass for all of you and your intentions. I wish you and your families a very happy and blessed Christmas.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE FOLLOWING:

SICK - John Rosato (Australia), Pat Tierney, James Ferguson, Alice Cumming, Janet McIntosh, Annette Thomson, Kathleen Brannigan, Mandy Murray McVie, John Gowans, Kevin Feeney

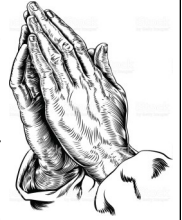
RIP - Alice Goodwin, Cathy Seagrave, Mrs O'Donnelly (Blantyre), Sue Polson (Edinburgh)

MONTHS MINDS & ANNIVERSARIES - Jerry Dunn, Esther Keane

CHRISTMAS REMEMBRANCES

At our Masses over the Christmas Season we pray for the following:

John Canning, Chris Canning, Grace Canning, William Canning, Brian Canning, Deceased members of the Gonnella & Brady Families, John & Jane McMurray, Philip & Ida Holton, Ken & Amelia Gough, Jim & Mary Dow, John McManus, John & Jane McMurray, Deceased members of the Reilly & Williams Families, Alice, Cornelius, Jimmy & Michael Weir, Martin Gibney, John Tamburrini, Christina McCluskey, Christina Weller, Margaret Hotchkiss, James Hotchkiss, Robert Kennedy Snr, Robert Kennedy Jnr, David Yardley Kennedy, Louis Baron Weller, John & Betty Connachan, Joseph & Margaret Cassidy, Maureen Crawley, John Creechan, Thomas & Catherine Kennedy, Michael & Annie Creechan, George & Cathie Gibney, Catherine Ann Bews, Margaret Love, Deceased members of the Creechan Family, Deceased members of the Kennedy Family, David O'Neill, Marie McLaughlin, Sharon Moncur, Bill & Betty Hutchens, Ian Hutchens, Mr & Mrs Archibald Carr, Mr & Mrs John Hutchens, Deceased members of the Hutchens, Carr, Burns, Munro, Green, Cook & Kent Families, John & Catherine Deerin, Gerard Wyllie, Hugh & Margaret Wyllie, Martin Wyllie, David James, George Wyllie, Annie Mulhearn, Very Reverend Kieran Canon O'Farrell, Frank Lyons, Ellen Mullen, Jim McShane, Paul McKenna, Very Reverend Giles Canon Goward, James Reynolds, Jim Somerville, Alan Rennie, Charlie McNally (Jnr), Charlie McNally (Snr), Johnnie McNally, Annie McNally, Very Reverend Henry Canon McGinn, Danny Cunningham, Margaret & James Girvan, Sadie Girvan, Margaret & Les Bennet, Rita & James Lyons, Susan Girvan, Grace Girvan, Thomas Wilson, Ian Quinn, Isabella Freeland, Robert Maguire, Frank McCorry, Charles & Monica McCorry, Deceased members of the McCorry Family, James & Catherine McLaren, Deceased members of the McLaren Family, Deceased members of the Taggart, Clark & Wedlock Families, Betty, Eddie, Wullie & Margaret McCabe, Deceased members of the Sweeney & McCabe Family, Margaret Curley Foix, Kathleen McGeogh, Bunty Kane, Milly Lynch, Margaret McGeogh, Frank Campbell, Pat O'Donnell, Jim Higgins, Mary Dawson, Alice Watters, Bert & Agnes Scott, Linda Taylor Park, Catherine Taylor, Andrew Taylor, Right Reverend Monsignor Thomas Fehily, Reverend Father Patrick J. Moss, Deceased members of the Shanks & Moodie Families, Deceased members of the Gowans, Williamson, Connachan & Connor Families, Michael Farrell, Helen Kennedy, John Kennedy, Peter Farrell, Bernadette Kennedy, Deceased members of the Campbell & Brennan Families, Deceased members of the Stewart, McGonagle & McLaughlin Families, Deceased members of the Maguire, Morrison & McStay Families, Eileen & Billy Douglas, Georgina & Philip Maguire, John & Mary Corr, John & Rose Reid, Jennifer Cochran, William Tait, Deceased members of the Kelly & Corr Family



Both churches will open half an hour before Mass and close after Mass has concluded.

WRAP UP CAMPAIGN

Many thanks to those parishioners who handed in donations of jackets and coats to help the homeless this winter. There was a tremendous response, so thank you very much. At this time of year when the weather is so cold and wet these garments will offer some comfort and relief to those who are sleeping rough on the streets. May God reward you for your kindness.

STANDING ORDERS

There are a few parishioners who still donate their Offertory Collection to the Our Lady & St John's account. If you haven't managed to change the mandate with your bank to the new parish bank account then please do so as soon as possible. The account details are:
Account Name: **Our Lady of Fatima Parish**
Sort Code: **800877** Account No.: **00499758**