

GRIDIRON

THE WEEKLY NEWSLETTER FOR
THE PARISH OF ST LAURENCE,
LONG EATON

in the Diocese of Derby and the See of Oswestry
www.st-laurence.net

Sunday 11th December 2022

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Gaudete Sunday

9.30am THE PARISH MASS

Presider and preacher: Father David

Welcome to our worship this Sunday. Baptised and communicant members of any Christian denomination are welcome to receive Holy Communion; if you'd prefer to receive a blessing, please carry a Mass booklet or hymn book with you when you come to the communion point. Gluten-free communion hosts are available – please let a sidesperson know if you require one. Large-print copies of the Order of Mass and children's Mass Booklets are also available. Refreshments are served after Mass in the Hall – please join us.

Thought for the week

In the winters of our despair and sterility, in our personal desert or the hopeless situation of our nation or family or community, the Lord of the wilderness summons us to absolute faith in his new deed.

Maria Boulding OSB, The Coming of God

Music at St Laurence's this morning

*Today's hymns are from **Hymns Old and New***

Introit	346	How lovely on the mountains
Offertory	316	Hark! a herald voice is calling
Sanctus	Sanctus 3	
Agnus Dei	Angus Dei 2	
Post Communion	669	The Saviour will come
Recessional	541	On Jordan's bank the Baptist's cry*

**The Angelus is recited after the first verse, the hymn recommencing after.*

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION
***A priest is usually available to hear confessions
forty-five minutes before Mass on weekdays,
from 8.30am on Sundays, or by appointment.***

Next Sunday 18th December 2022
THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
9.30am THE PARISH MASS
Presider and preacher: Father David

THIS WEEK at ST LAURENCE
Wednesday 10.00am Mass
Friday 12noon Mass
*Mass is also celebrated at Holy Trinity, Ilkeston,
on Tuesday at 9.30am and on Thursday at 7.00pm.*

COVID 19 – IT HASN'T GONE AWAY!
OUR RESPONSIBILITY OF CARE FOR EACH OTHER
PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

Following the further lifting of restrictions, but in light of the continuing risk of infection, here at St Laurence you are requested to be measured in your contact with others, who may still be anxious and very concerned. **The Sharing of the Peace** will continue in a 'socially-observant' manner – please don't move around the church. The priest will continue to sanitise his hands before distributing the host, and may choose to wear a face visor/covering during the administration.

Items for inclusion in The Gridiron ...
*should be sent to Father David by **Wednesday lunchtime**, please.*

PRAYERS, PLEASE ...

The Sick: Derek Booth priest, Judy Crisp, Elvena Dew, Steven Elliot, Renée Else, Grace Fouracres, Keith Hann, Kati Hart, Jane Hessey, Julie Hunt, Pauline Lawley, Charlie Needham, Angela Pown, Karl Schnöll, Ann Skeldon, Jill Turner, Jemima, John and Natalie.

The Recently Departed: Doreen Fletcher.

Anniversaries of death this week: Grace White, Margaret Smith (Mon), Ron Bishop (Tue), Margaret Botham, Lilian Hudson, Mary Lenton (Wed).

New Pilgrim Path Website of the Week:

This week's spiritual link from New Pilgrim Path:



Advent is not only a period of joy

Advent is not only a period of joy. It is also a time when those who are lonely feel lonelier than during other periods of the year... When Jesus was loneliest, he gave most. That realization should help to deepen my commitment to service and let my desire to give become independent of my actual experience of joy. These words -which will resonate with many at this time of year - are from a short reflection by renowned spiritual teacher, Henry Nouwen. Read the reflection at www.newpilgrimpath.ie.

New Pilgrim Path is a labour of love. Our small team of two people run it on a shoestring. We neither look for nor accept any form of financial support such as advertising and donations. Our only way of promoting the site is through word of mouth. If you find our website useful, please share the link: www.newpilgrimpath.ie. New Pilgrim Path introduces fellow Christians of all denominations to the great wealth of online spiritual resources that our small team has discovered and continues to discover. We provide links to, and a brief description of, a variety of resources we have explored and found valuable. In addition to our permanent pages, each week we feature a **Website of the Week**, **Poem of the Week** and **Music of the Week**. We hope these links will help visitors to encounter the person of Christ.

CHRISTMAS EVE AND DAY AT ST LAURENCE

Christmas Eve . Saturday 24th December

4.00pm The Crib Service

11.30pm THE MIDNIGHT MASS

(counts as Christmas and Sunday obligation)

CHRISTMAS DAY . Sunday 25th December

9.30am THE PARISH MASS

**THE PARISH CHURCH OF ST LAURENCE
DEACON AND MARTYR
LONG EATON**

Parish Priest

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to whom financial questions may be addressed

Father David's rest day this week is Saturday

A FORWARD IN FAITH PARISH IN THE SEE OF OSWESTRY AND



The Society
under the patronage of Saint Wilfrid and Saint Hilda

About today's Mass readings:

THE THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT, YEAR A

First Reading: Isaiah 35:1-6, 10

Like all the first readings in Advent, this passage is from the Isaian prophecies, rejoicing in the coming deliverance. Most of the Prophecies of Isaiah were written in a dark period of Israel's history, under the threat or the reality of defeat, devastation and deportation. The promises of a Deliverer became all the more important and life-sustaining. The prophets (there were three Isaiahs, not one) never wavered in their confidence that deliverance was sure. The prophecies prepare for the coming of the Lord, but it is the coming of the Lord God. On the one hand, there is not the clarity which would appear once Jesus had actually come: the prophecies do not make clear in what way or what form God would come to the rescue of his people. Would the promised Redeemer be God himself or a messenger or a herald of the end? At all events God would be at work. On the other hand, when Jesus came it was not immediately clear whether he was God, or whether God was at work in Jesus or whether Jesus was the final prophet. This only became clear on reflection in the light of the Spirit: 'the Word became flesh and dwelt (or, closer to the original, 'pitched his tent') among us.'

Second Reading: James 5:7-10

The Letter of James is full of comforting, homely images, like the farmer waiting patiently for the autumn and spring rains, or – less comforting – the Judge waiting at the gates. Whether it was written by James, a cousin of Jesus, who was the leader of the Christian community at Jerusalem immediately after the Resurrection and Ascension is harder to determine. It may be an assemblage of the oral Wisdom teaching of this important Christian leader, put together by one of his disciples. In any case, the Letter was written at a time when the eschatological fever of expectation had begun to wane, when Christians no longer felt that they were in the final generation of world history, and were prepared to settle down and wait for the coming of the Lord. Indeed, in contrast to the Paul's stress on the imminence of the Second Coming, for James the delay of the Second Coming is an incitement to patience. It will certainly happen, but there is plenty of opportunity beforehand for tolerance, both towards the annoying and tiresome people within the community (nothing new under the sun!) and towards those persecuting the community from outside.

Gospel Reading: Matthew 11:2-11

John the Baptist was expecting a Messiah of judgement, who would cut down the rotten tree and burn the useless chaff. From last Sunday's appearance of John in the wilderness, preaching the call to repentance we now move towards the end of his life when, in prison, he hears that Jesus is not doing this, he is puzzled and sends messengers to ask if Jesus is really the Messiah. Jesus sends back the message that he is fulfilling the prophet Isaiah – the passage which we hear in the first reading at Mass today. Jesus' concept of the task of the Messiah was healing, not punishment. He goes and seeks out those who need healing, both physical and moral. He does not wait for sinners to repent before gathering them in: he makes the first advance. Then he turns to praising the Baptist. It is a fascinating speculation whether Jesus was himself once a disciple of John the Baptist. After all, John says he did not recognise Jesus until he saw the Spirit coming down on him. He also says that Jesus, who came after him, has passed before him. This is a typical position of a rabbi, leading his disciples, and suggests that John had been Jesus' rabbi, then became his disciple. Jesus was fully man (as well as God incarnate), and even he needed to learn as all human beings do, and our teacher is God-in-Christ.

○ Sapientia!

On Saturday 17th December the countdown to Christmas takes a glorious turn with the ancient antiphons, beginning with ...

*O Sapientia, quæ ex ore Altissimi prodisti,
attingens a fine usque ad finem, fortiter suaviterque disponens omnia:
veni ad docendum nos viam prudentiæ.*

'O Wisdom, you come forth from the mouth of the Most High. You fill the universe and hold all things together in a strong yet gentle manner. O come to teach us the way of truth.'

As the great feast of Christmas approaches, its light begins to blot out the lights of the individual days, as planets are blotted out when they appear too close to the Sun. The great **○ Antiphons** at Vespers/Evening Prayer (and which are also interpolated into the Alleluia chant at Mass) are worth celebrating even if Vespers itself is not part of your daily pattern. They count down the last seven days before Christmas and tie together seven threads of hope, longing and doctrine which all find their culmination and final union in the moment of the Incarnation. Jesus is the Word and Wisdom of God. As Isaiah says, 'On him the spirit of the Lord rests, a spirit of wisdom and insight, a spirit of counsel and power.'

