

People of the Word: John the Baptist

Today we focus on **John the Baptist**, the forerunner of the Lord.

St Luke's Gospel opens with a scene in the Temple in Jerusalem. Zechariah, a priest, is chosen by lot to go and offer the evening sacrifice to the Lord. As he does so, the angel Gabriel appears to him and tells him that his elderly wife, Elizabeth, will conceive and give birth to a son. The child will be filled with the Holy Spirit, Zechariah is told, even from his mother's womb. The child is known to us as John the Baptist.



THE
GOD
WHO
SPEAKS

John is the great prophet called to announce the coming of the Christ. As Gabriel foretold, even before his birth John was animated by the Spirit of God and leapt in his mother's womb when Mary, already carrying Jesus in her womb, visited Elizabeth's home. This was his first prophecy.



As an adult John lived out in the wilderness, proclaiming the coming of the Saviour, preaching repentance and baptising those who wanted to turn back to God. Then, one day, the Lord Himself came into the crowd. "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!" John announced. Reluctantly, and at the Lord's insistence, John baptised Jesus. In this act, Jesus made holy the waters of baptism and showed His solidarity with those who were sinful but wanted to turn back to God. As Jesus began His public ministry, John – knowing that his work was done – said, "He must increase; I must decrease". Not long afterwards, he was beheaded on King Herod's orders, having warned the king about his sinful relationship with Herodias, his brother's wife.

Questions for reflection:

- How do I prepare my heart for the ways in which Jesus comes to me?
- In what ways do I show the Lord a heartfelt repentance for my sins?

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MASSES THIS WEEK

Office: Psalter Week 3; Sundays: Year A; Weekdays: year 2, week 23

10am Mass is livestreamed each day and will be available for viewing later in the day on our YouTube channel. All information and links at www.saintclares.co.uk

See back page for information on attending Mass in the church.

Date	Time	Occasion	Intention/Details
Sunday 6 th	Vigil Mass	Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time	Tony Bannon RIP
	10am		Mary Bamber RIP
	Evening		People of the Parish
Monday	10am		Ints Stephen Brodie
Tuesday	10am	Birth of Our Lady	Judy Scott RIP
Wednesday	10am		Bill Ratcliffe RIP
Thursday	10am		Sr Catherine (jubilee)
Friday	10am		Maureen McCormack RIP
Saturday	10am	Holy Name of Mary	Ints Bernie Darwen
Sunday 13 th	Vigil Mass	Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time	Gerard Nelson RIP
	10am		Jack Clayton RIP
	Evening		People of the Parish

LATELY DEAD: Please pray for all who have died recently.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION: on request. Contact Fr Andrew to arrange.

ROSARY: Prayed after 10am Mass, Monday-Friday.

ANNIVERSARIES: Dunstan Melling, Claude Lawton, Winifred O'Reilly, Michael O'Callaghan, Brian Sidwell, Gerard Christian, Teresa Hodges, Laureen May, John Patten, John Dean, Teresa Lingard, Jane Martin, Anne Shaw.

POPE'S PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR SEPTEMBER: We pray that the planet's resources will not be plundered, but shared in a just and respectful manner.

Supporting your parish financially

To avoid use of cash, it is better, if possible, to support the parish using standing order/BACS. Contact us directly for the details. If you don't use online banking, we can send you a mandate which you can fill in and post to your bank. If you have been saving offertory envelopes, these may be pushed through the presbytery letterbox or handed in at the end of Mass, if you are able to attend at this time. Thank you for your support for our parish.

CHURCH CLOSURE THIS WEEK: The church is closed from Monday afternoon until Friday evening this week, for planned work. It will not be open for prayer Monday-Friday, and Tuesday-Friday Mass will be celebrated in the parish hall (strictly for those who have a confirmed place). Mass will be livestreamed as usual.

ATTENDING MASS: This is only possible by requesting a space and receiving confirmation that we can accommodate your request. See back page for details.

CONFESSIONS are available by request/appointment. Contact Fr Andrew.

PARISH SECRETARY: We welcome Stephen Milroy, who has just begun work as our new parish secretary. Stephen will be normally working in the parish office Tuesday-Friday mornings. He takes over the work done for the last ten years or so by Angela Waddingham, who retired from the role in March; he will also be the bookkeeper, work which Jean Hampson has carried out for more than 20 years. In due course we plan to publicly show our gratitude to Angela and Jean for their service. We wish Stephen well in his new role.

RWANDA THANKS: Michael Donlan's sponsored walk raised an amazing £3600 for the Rwanda Trust. He asks that thanks be passed on for the fantastic support he received from our parish. The situation in Rwanda remains very serious.

SPECIAL COLLECTION next weekend for Catholic Education Services. This contributes to the work done at national level to support our Catholic schools.

WEARING FACE COVERINGS IN CHURCH is now required by law. If you are attending Mass or visiting for private prayer, please bring a face covering with you.

SAINTS, SCHOLARS AND SPIRITUAL MASTERS: Free online talks organised by the Christian Heritage Centre at Stonyhurst, taking place Thursdays at 7:30pm over the coming months. To register: <https://christianheritagecentre.com/event/saints-scholars-spiritual-masters/> or by email to events@christianheritagecentre.com

CARING FOR OUR COMMON HOME: We celebrate the Season of Creation between 1 September to 4 October. CAFOD ask us particularly to pray the Novena to St Francis <https://cafod.org.uk/Pray/Prayer-resources/Novena-to-St-Francis>. It is a song of penitence and praise, guiding us to care for the earth and for our most vulnerable sisters and brothers, especially the Amazon peoples.

FOOD BANK: Non-perishable items may be left on the presbytery porch at any time. Please do not bring anything frozen or which needs to be kept in the fridge, nor any fresh fruit, vegetables or dairy products. Thank you for your generosity.

MAILING LIST: The newsletter and Sunday homily can be posted out to parishioners who do not have access to the internet. If you know of someone who would appreciate this, please let us know and we will arrange it.

Events this week (occasional/one-off events in bold type)

Day	Time	What?	Where?
Every day	Anytime	Food Bank Collection	House Porch
Sunday 6 th	3pm-4pm	Church open for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament	Church and YouTube
Saturday	12noon-1pm	Church open and livestream: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament	Church and YouTube
Sunday 13 th	3pm-4pm	Church open and livestream: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament	Church and YouTube

All events marked 'YouTube' are streamed live on our channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/StClaresChurch>

A prayer of spiritual communion

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 at least spiritually 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. Amen.

Attending Mass at St Clare's

Wherever possible, please decide on a **regular day/time** when you would like to attend Mass then contact us to see what's possible. We will get contact you to let you know when you can come. Please only come to Mass if you have received confirmation that we have sufficient space.

To arrange to come to Mass: Please contact us (preferably by email – if you don't use email, please phone us) and let us know the following information:

- Your name (and, if you are not using email, a phone number)
- The day(s) when you would be able to attend. If at the weekend, please let us know morning/evening. Monday-Friday Mass will continue to be at 10am.
- How many people from your household/support bubble will attend (you will sit together at Mass, so it's vital we know how many are in your group).

There is still no obligation to attend Mass on a Sunday at this time.