
Franciscan of the Week: Mother Angelica

Mother Angelica is best known as the foundress of EWTN, a global Catholic television network. She was born in Ohio in 1923 and educated by nuns, whom she disliked for their severity. But she herself was called to religious life, and joined the Poor Clares. In 1981 she visited a TV studio and was inspired to set up EWTN, which today reaches over 260 million households around the world. Quite an achievement! You can watch EWTN, which covers major events live (including Christmas Mass at the Vatican and the Urbi et Orbi blessing of the Pope on Christmas morning) online at www.ewtn.com or Sky channel 588.



FOCUS ON... the Star of Bethlehem

Anyone who knows the Christmas story knows that the Wise Men followed a star which led them to the infant Lord. In the Old Testament, the pagan prophet Balaam is inspired by the true God and foresees a future ruler given by God and announced by a star: "I see Him – but not in the present; I behold Him – but not close at hand: a star from Jacob takes the leadership, a sceptre arises from Israel" (Numbers 24:17). Many centuries later, the wise men – also pagans – saw this star and followed it until it led them to the leader, the King, who was born. In a couple of days' time we will be invited to follow in their footsteps and make the journey to Bethlehem, to visit the crib, to pay our homage to Jesus as we celebrate His birth. Will you follow the star to Bethlehem this Christmas?



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MASSES THIS WEEK – Mass book page 90

Office: Wk 4, then of the Christmas Octave; Sundays: Year C; Weekdays: Year 1

Date	Time	Occasion	Intention/Details
Saturday 22 nd Dec.	6pm (vigil)	FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT	Ken Penswick RIP
	7pm (vigil)		<i>NeoCatechumenal Way</i>
Sunday 23 rd Dec.	9:30am		Fr John Donlan RIP
	6pm		Thanksgiving for recovery
Monday	9:15am	THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD	Dorothy Lawrenson RIP
	6pm		Jennie & Tom Wilson RIP
Tuesday	Midnight		People of the Parish
	10am		Frederick Newsham RIP
Wednesday	10am	St Stephen	Ints of Canon Loughran
Thursday	10am	St John	Rachel Kinsella (sick)
Friday	10am	The Holy Innocents	Jack Burton RIP
Saturday 29 th Dec.	10am	St Thomas Becket	Frank Rogerson RIP
	6pm (vigil)	THE HOLY FAMILY	Jeff Poole RIP
	7pm (vigil)		<i>NeoCatechumenal Way</i>
Sunday 30 th Dec.	9:30am		Martin Brown RIP
	6pm		People of the Parish

LATELY DEAD: Please remember in your prayers **Frank Machin**, whose Requiem will take place here last week, **Ken Penswick**, **Martin Brown**, **Gerry O'Neill** and all who have died recently.

EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Mon 7am-8am (Morning Prayer at 7:45am); Wed-Fri 8-9am; Sat 10:30am-12noon.
Sundays 4-5pm during Advent, including sung Vespers and Benediction at 4:30pm.

CONFESSIONS: Saturday 11am-12noon and on request.

ROSARY: Prayed after 9:15am Mass and before 12noon Mass. Mondays: Joyful; Wednesdays: Glorious; Thursdays: Luminous; Fridays: Sorrowful mysteries.

ST ANTHONY: December wall box donations go to the crib appeal.

ANNIVERSARIES: Philip Salthouse, Yolande Schofield, Richard Burkhardt, Michael Frost, Reginald Brown, Tom Gill, Sheila Borrill, Jean Andrew, Annie Rawcliffe, Michael Swift, Lois Swarbrick, Jean Hull, Mark Cartmell, Madge Collard, Mary Judge, Joan Foster, Cesare Innocenzi, Thomas Rutter.

POPE'S PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR DECEMBER: That people, who are involved in service and transmission of faith, may find, in their dialogue with culture, a language suited to the conditions of the present time.

CHRISTMAS MASSES: As Bishop Paul encouraged us, let's make Mass the centre of our Christmas celebrations. There is a vigil at 6pm, then Mass at Midnight (with carols and readings from 11:30pm), and Mass on Christmas morning at 10am.

ST STEPHEN'S DAY: All altar servers are encouraged to serve at Mass on St Stephen's Day (Boxing Day), 10am. Guild medals will be presented to eligible servers.

STATIONS OF THE CRIB: An opportunity to journey with Mary, Joseph and the infant Jesus through reflections, prayers and carols. Next Sunday at 3pm.

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS: Donations are welcome for flowers to decorate the church at Christmas. If your donation is in memory of someone, please write their name on the envelope. A list of prayer intentions will be displayed over Christmas.

MORNING PRAYER AND EXPOSITION: This week, as normal on Monday (7-8am, with Morning Prayer at 7:45am) then Wednesday-Friday, Exposition 8-9am.

NEW YEAR'S DAY: Mass for the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God (1st January) will be celebrated at 12noon. The best way to start the new year: give it to God!

EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS: There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex for Christmas Masses. Readers' rotas for Christmas are prepared and will be sent out shortly.

CHILDREN'S EPIPHANY CELEBRATION: Saturday 5th January, for children to explore the Epiphany and even meet the three kings! In the parish hall, 10:30-11:30am.

LADY MILENA GRENFELL-BAINES: Holocaust survivor Lady Milena will give a talk on her experience on Monday 14th January at 7pm. A chance to discover her story and consider the plight of refugees past and present. Organised by ACN. A donation of £5 is requested from those who attend, for ACN Iraq appeal.

CTS BOOK CLUB: Next meeting on Sunday 27th January. The booklet will be *Lectio Divina* by Jean Khoury. Copies now available from Fr Andrew.

200 CLUB WINNERS: £160 Emma Gornall; £96 W&R Cunningham, £64 Mrs Carden. A list of all the winners for the Christmas special draw is displayed in the narthex.

DIOCESAN DIRECTORY: 2019 edition available in the narthex, priced £3.50. Please put money in the wall box marked 'CTS, books etc'.

ST FRANCIS AND THE CRIB: One of the articles in our parish magazine, 'Portiuncula'. Pick up a free copy from the narthex or parish hall.

ASSISI PILGRIMAGE: We still have a small number of places available for this pilgrimage (27th May-1st June 2019). Twin/double rooms only. Speak to Fr Andrew.

IMAGINING THE NATIVITY: Beautiful audio reflections on the nativity, produced by Jesuit Ministries. Free download: www.pathwaystogod.org/imagining-nativity

LAST SUNDAY: At Mass: 415; Collection: £896.42; Thank you for your generosity.

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

Day	Time	What?	Where?
Sunday 23 rd	10:30am	After-Mass tea/coffee	Parish Hall
	4pm	Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament	Church
	4:30pm	Sung Vespers and Benediction	Church
Sunday 30 th	3pm	Stations of the Crib	Church

Advance Diary Dates

Friday 4th January: First Friday Holy Hour, 7pm

Sunday 6th January: Solemnity of the Epiphany – blessing of chalk

Wednesday 16th January: Whole school Mass, 9:15am

Further afield...

HEALTH AND SALVATION RETREAT/HOLIDAY for healthcare professionals. At Boarbank Hall (near Grange-over-Sands), 7th-12th January 2019. Workshops, prayer, free time and social events, with a range of acclaimed speakers. For more details, or to book, email Sr Margaret Atkins (margaret@boarbankhall.org.uk) or call 015395 32288.

A thought for the next few days...

“The mystery of Christmas, which is light and joy, challenges and unsettles us, because it is at once a *mystery of hope and of sadness*. It has a *taste of sadness*, inasmuch as love is not accepted, and life discarded. Such was the case with Joseph and Mary, who met with closed doors, and placed Jesus in a manger, “because there was no place for them in the inn”. Jesus was born rejected by some and regarded by many others with indifference. Today too, that same indifference can exist, whenever Christmas becomes a holiday with ourselves at the centre rather than Jesus;



when the lights of shop windows push the light of God into the shadows; when we are enthused about gifts but indifferent to our neighbours in need. This worldliness has kidnapped Christmas; we need to liberate it!”

Pope Francis, Homily for Midnight Mass 2016