

People of the Word: Cain and Abel

Each week on the newsletter we are telling the whole story of the Bible through the characters we meet. Last week we heard of the Fall – humans turned from God and suffering entered our world. Today, the consequences become still clearer.



After the Fall, we see immediately its effects. Questioned by God, Adam and Eve begin to blame each other for what has happened. They are distanced from God and leave the garden of paradise which had been home. But God gives them hope and life must go on. Adam and Eve are blessed with sons, Cain and Abel.

But the effect of the Fall causes more suffering. Angry and downcast when he feels rejected by God, Cain murders his brother. Abel, who is innocent, is the first to be killed in the Bible. His blood 'cries to God' for vengeance (Genesis 4:10). Later, Scripture will teach that the Blood of Jesus, the real innocent victim who was killed for us, cries to God for our forgiveness (Hebrews 12:24).



Cain is punished by God for his sin, but when he complains that the punishment is too harsh, God shows mercy and grants him protection. Already the mercy of God is being shown, even in these very early events of the Old Testament.

Questions for reflection:

- Do I ever feel rejected or unwanted by God? Do I remember that Jesus' death proves God's love for me? He loves you much more than you know.
- Do I recognise my need of forgiveness from God? Do I seek His mercy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation? Do I trust in His merciful love for me?

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MASSES THIS WEEK – Mass book page 90

Office: Psalter Week 4; then of the Christmas Octave; Sundays: Year A

Date	Time	Occasion	Intention/Details
Saturday 21 st Dec	6pm (vigil)	The Fourth Sunday of Advent	Thanksgiving (TL)
	7pm (vigil)		<i>NeoCatechumenal Way</i>
Sunday 22 nd Dec	9:30am		Ints of Margaret Mulroy
	6pm		People of the Parish
Monday	9:15am	23 rd December	Special Intention (SS)
	5:15pm		<i>Mass in hospital chapel</i>
Tuesday	9:15am	24 th December	John & Veronica Baines RIP
	6pm	THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD	Tom Wilson RIP
Wednesday	Midnight		People of the Parish
	10am		Families of the Parish
Thursday	10am	St Stephen	George & Clara Oastler RIP
Friday	10am	St John	Frederick Newsham RIP
Saturday 28 th Dec	10am	The Holy Innocents	Andy Mercer RIP
	6pm (vigil)	The Holy Family	George Love RIP
	7pm (vigil)		<i>NeoCatechumenal Way</i>
Sunday 29 th Dec	9:30am		People of the Parish
	6pm		Balasamy and Jackab RIP

LATELY DEAD: Please pray for **Patricia Barnish**, whose Requiem took place here last week, **Alan Seed**, **Fr James Langan SJ** and all who have died recently.

EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Monday-Tuesday 7-8am, Saturday 10:30am-12noon, Sunday 4-5pm during Advent. From Friday 27th until after New Year, weekday Exposition will be 8-9am.

LITURGY OF THE HOURS: During Advent, we celebrate Morning Prayer weekdays at 7:45am, and sung Vespers and Benediction on Sundays at 4:30pm.

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

ROSARY: Prayed after 9:15am Mass and before 12noon Mass. These prayers are offered for the protection of human life from conception to natural end.

ST ANTHONY: December wall box donations will go to the Foxton Centre.

ANNIVERSARIES: Catherine Walker, Philip Salthouse, Yolande Schofield, Richard Burkhardt, Michael Frost, Reginald Brown, Tom Gill, Sheila Borrill, Jean Andrew

POPE'S PRAYER INTENTIONS: That every country determine to take necessary steps to make the future of the very young, especially those who suffer, a priority.

CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES: See back page, notice board or at www.saintclares.co.uk

O ANTIPHONS: These ancient antiphons are sung at Vespers 17th-23rd December. We will sing the antiphon for 22nd December at Vespers this Sunday (4:30pm), in its original plainchant. A beautiful expression of our hope in Jesus. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament today from 4pm and Vespers and Benediction at 4:30pm.

TUESDAY MASS: There will be an additional Mass on Tuesday (Christmas Eve) at 9:15am, for the last day of Advent. Evening Mass (of Christmas) is at 6pm.

MORNING PRAYER: 7:45am Monday and Tuesday this week, with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament 7-8am as usual. On Friday there will be Exposition 8-9am.

ALTAR SERVERS' MASS: Boxing Day, 10am, Mass for the feast of St Stephen, patron saint of altar servers. All servers are encouraged to attend this Mass.

CHRISTMAS OCTAVE: Please note, on weekdays between Christmas and the New Year, Mass will be celebrated every day at 10am. Sunday Masses will all be celebrated at the usual times. Mass on New Year's Day is at 12noon.

YOUR CRIB AT HOME: Please send us pictures of your crib at home, for us to put on our website and social media. We'd love to see them and share them!

VISITING THE CRIB: The crib will be open for visits from the evening Mass on 24th December through to the feast of the Baptism of the Lord (12th January); the church is open every day. Make some time to visit Bethlehem this Christmas!

NEWSLETTER: There will be no newsletter next Sunday, but a list of Mass intentions for the following week will be available next weekend.

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS: Donations in memory of a loved one are welcome. Please put their name(s) in an envelope marked 'Christmas flowers'. A list of intentions for prayer will be displayed in church during the Christmas season.

LARGE PRINT MASS AND HYMN BOOKS: A couple of copies of large print versions of the Mass and hymn books are available. Please ask the welcomers.

DIOCESAN DIRECTORIES 2020: On sale now in the narthex. Price £3.50. Please put money in the wallbox marked 'CTS, Books etc'.

CAREERS DAY IN SCHOOL: Friday 17th January at St Clare's Primary School. A careers day for the children. If you could represent a particular profession (or know someone who could) please contact school on 787037. Thank you.

EMAIL FROM ST CLARE'S? If you receive an unexpected email claiming to be from the parish, please check the sender's address and don't open any attachments unless you're sure it's come from us. There have been some scam emails recently.

LAST WEEK: At Mass: 419; Collection: £1,030.41; Thank you for your generosity.

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

Day	Time	What?	Where?
Sunday 22 nd	10:30am	After-Mass tea/coffee	Parish Hall
	4pm	Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament	Church
	4:30pm	Sung Vespers and Benediction	Church
Sunday 29 th	10:30am	After-Mass tea/coffee	Parish Hall

Christmas Mass times

Vigil: Christmas Eve 6pm

Midnight Mass, with carols from 11:30pm

Christmas morning: 10am

Boxing Day: Mass at 10am

With presentation of altar servers' medals

27th-28th December: Mass at 10am

28th-29th December: Feast of the Holy Family

Sunday Mass times as normal

30th-31st December: Mass at 10am

New Year's Day: Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

Mass at 12noon

During the Christmas season don't forget to make some time to **visit the crib**, which will be displayed in the side chapel from the first Mass of Christmas through to the feast of the Baptism of the Lord (12th January). The church is open every day for private prayer.

O come,
let us adore Him!



Feast of the Epiphany: Visit of the Three Kings

Saturday 4th January, 11:30am-1pm in the parish hall. Songs and catechesis for children, who will get a chance to meet the Wise Men and ask them questions! All are welcome. Make a note in your diary.