



Parish of the Sacred Heart and Saint Margaret Mary, Aston

Parish Priest: Fr. Stephen Pimlott

Telephone (0121) 327 0235

sacredheartaston@hotmail.com

website www.sacredheartaston.com

Safeguarding Representatives:

Sacred Heart - Teresa O'Gorman 07585907706 & Sheila McKernan 0121 344 3028
Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham - Registered Charity No. 234216

ADVENT IV

22nd/23rd December

Day	Aston	Nechells	
Saturday	12.30 pm		Rachel Jackson Alice Redmond
SUNDAY	10.00 am	6.00 pm	Mary Joyce
Christmas Eve Vigil for Christmas	7.30 pm	9.30 am 7.00 pm	tba People of Parish Philomena Kennedy & family
CHRISTMAS DAY	10.00 am		Patrick McCarron
St. Stephen's Day	11.00 am		Servers Mass
St. John's Day	10.00 am	2.15 pm	Paul & Marie Cunniffe Funeral Mass for Alma Maddix
Holy Innocents Day	9.30 am 10.00 am	11.45 am	Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament O'Neill Family Eucharistic Service

HOLY FAMILY

29th/30th December

Day	Aston	Nechells	Intention
Saturday St. Thomas Becket	12.30 pm	6.00 pm	Annie Rooney & Tess Kehoe Fr. Petroc Howell
SUNDAY	10.00 am		People of Parish
Monday			No Mass
SOLEMNITY OF MARY MOTHER OF GOD	11.00 am		All mothers
Wednesday		9.30 am	Anne Collins
Thursday	10.00 am		Edward Farrell
Friday Day of Abstinence	9.30 am 10.00 am	11.45 am	Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament O'Neill family Eucharistic Service

EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

5th/6th January 2019

Day	Aston	Nechells	Intention
Saturday	12.30 pm	6.00 pm	Marron & Hurley Families People of the Parish
SUNDAY	10.00 am		William Greene

Please Pray for the sick; Mary Levell, Peter McKernan, William Parish, Michael O'Reilly, Julie Gallagher, Anne Robinson, Maura Greene, John Mullen, Jimmy Armstrong, Pat Davis, Bernadette Harnett, Lisa Brean, Michael O'Connor, Andy Walsh.

SICK LIST If you or someone you know wishes to be on the sick list which is on the newsletter and hence on the website, then get a form from Sheila McKernan or Fr. Stephen and when signed return it to them.

The collection last weekend came to £318.70

Next weekend we shall have our **December Fiver a month** collection

It is customary for the Christmas Collections to be a personal gift to the Parish Priest.

FIRST FRIDAYS OF FAITH The next meeting will be on Friday 4th January at 7.00 pm with tea & coffee ready for prompt start at 7.30 pm. We shall listen to a talk by Bishop Barron on the Eucharist and have discussion and a time of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.

SERVERS MASS St. Stephen is the Patron Saint of Servers, so servers and their families are especially invited to the Mass on Boxing Day here at 11 am.

THE GUILD OF St. STEPHEN MASS is on Saturday 9th February at Noon at St. Chad's with the Archbishop. I hope most of our servers and their families will be able to attend. Please see Francis Prom.

THE SACRED HEART WOMEN'S GROUP invite all children, their families and others to Christmas food and fun and drinks after the Mass on **The Feast of the Holy Family** (next Sunday) in the Undercroft.

CONFIRMATION this year will be on Tuesday 5th February with Bishop Pargeter at 7 pm. Please make a note of it and come and support our candidates.

MARRIAGE MASS Sunday 3rd February at 11 am at St. Chad's. Those celebrating particular milestone anniversaries this year (10,15,20 25, 30, 40,50,60 yrs) and those preparing to get married in 2019 are invited to this Mass

WORLD YOUTH DAY Our pilgrims will be leaving for Panama on Saturday 19th January. 10 young people from St. Vincent's, Sacred Heart & St. Joseph's are going. Please pray for them.

THE RENEWAL TEAM will meet after Sunday Mass every Sunday. Do come along, if you would like to join the team.

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The RCIA group will not meet on Thursday 20th or 27th December.

ENGLISH PRAYER TIME You are specially invited to come to the prayer time in Sacred Heart Presbytery on Monday nights 8 -10 pm. (not Christmas Eve though) when everything will be in English. You can check that it is happening by phoning Sr. Meena on 07957342742.

DAILY EXPOSITION There is normally exposition in the Presbytery every day 10 am – 5 pm and 8 pm – midnight. To check phone Sr. Meena on 07957342742.

THE KINGDOM WARRIORS meet on Tuesdays at 6.30 pm at St. Vincent's Church, Nechells Parkway. This a group for young adults (18+) and involves the study of the Bible.

Catholic Singles is an organisation which helps single Catholics of all ages (over 18 years) meet other single Catholics, either one to one or through social events. For further information visit www.catholicsingles.org.uk or tel. 0161 941 3498.

THE NEW CATHOLIC DIRECTORIES for 2019 are available £3.

ORDER OF MALTA PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES Friday 3rd May – Thursday 9th May 2019. The Order subsidises sick, disabled and older pilgrims. Please see notice in Church for details.

Please will you send one of the SPUC cards which will be presented to the Prime Minister to ask her not to give parliamentary time to decriminalising abortion.

Fr. HUDSON'S 115th Annual Fund Raising Ball 26th January. Tickets £40. See notice for further details or go to www.fatherhudsons.org.uk

A Day for Practising Catholics Aspiring for Leadership Positions in Catholic Schools across the Archdiocese of Birmingham 8.30am – 3.30pm on Saturday 19th January 2019 (no cost for this course) Don Bosco House, Coventry Road, Coleshill, B46 3EA. Please use this link to book a place on this course: <http://w.pfrms.co/2lttp>

ASTON & NECHELLS FOOD BANK looking for volunteers. See notice on board in Church or go to www.astonnechells.foodbank.org.uk

First reading Micah 5:1-4

The Lord says this:

But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, the least of the clans of Judah, out of you will be born for me the one who is to rule over Israel; his origin goes back to the distant past, to the days of old.

The Lord is therefore going to abandon them till the time when she who is to give birth gives birth. Then the remnant of his brothers will come back to the sons of Israel.

He will stand and feed his flock with the power of the Lord, with the majesty of the name of his God.

They will live secure, for from then on he will extend his power to the ends of the land. He himself will be peace.

Responsorial Psalm

Lord of hosts, bring us back; let your face shine on us and we shall be saved.

O shepherd of Israel, hear us,
shine forth from your cherubim throne.

O Lord, rouse up your might,
O Lord, come to our help.

God of hosts, turn again, we implore,
look down from heaven and see.

Visit this vine and protect it,
the vine your right hand has planted.

May your hand be on the man you have chosen,
the man you have given your strength.

And we shall never forsake you again;
give us life that we may call upon your name.

Second reading Hebrews 10:5-10

This is what Christ said, on coming into the world:

You who wanted no sacrifice or oblation,
prepared a body for me.

You took no pleasure in holocausts or sacrifices for sin;
then I said,

just as I was commanded in the scroll of the book,
'God, here I am! I am coming to obey your will.'

Notice that he says first: You did not want what the Law lays down as the things to be offered, that is: the sacrifices, the oblations, the holocausts and the sacrifices for sin, and you took no pleasure in them; and then he says: Here I am! I am coming to obey your will. He is abolishing the first sort to replace it with the second. And this will was for us to be made holy by the offering of his body made once and for all by Jesus Christ.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia!

I am the handmaid of the Lord:

let what you have said be done to me.

Alleluia!

Gospel Luke 3:39-44

Mary set out and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said, 'Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? For the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.'

Reflection

On this the last Sunday before Christmas, our Gospel reading prepares us to witness Christ's birth by showing us how Jesus was recognised as Israel's long-awaited Messiah even before his birth. The Gospel turns our attention from the ministry of John the Baptist to the events that preceded John the Baptist's birth. The story of John the Baptist and his parents, Elizabeth and Zechariah, are reported only in Luke's Gospel. Luke pairs the birth of John the Baptist and Jesus, establishing John's early connection to the Messiah.

Our Gospel reading recalls Mary's actions after the announcement of Jesus' birth by the angel Gabriel. Mary goes to visit Elizabeth, her cousin, who is also with child. Elizabeth greets Mary with full recognition of the roles that they and their unborn children will play in God's plan for salvation. If we were to continue to read the verses that follow in Luke's Gospel, we would hear Mary respond to Elizabeth's greeting with her song of praise, the Magnificat. Both women recall and echo God's history of showing favour upon the people of Israel. In Luke's Gospel the Holy Spirit helps reveal Jesus' identity as God to those who believe. Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit and sings Mary's praise because she bears the Lord. We sing these words of praise to Mary in the Hail Mary. Even John the Baptist, the unborn child in Elizabeth's womb, is said to recognise the presence of the Lord and leaps for joy.

It is appropriate in this season of Advent that we consider the role of Mary in God's plan of salvation. Elizabeth describes Mary as the first disciple, as the one who believed that God's word to her would be fulfilled. Mary's faith enabled her to recognise the work of God in her people's history and in her own life. Her openness to God allowed God to work through her so that salvation might come to everyone. Because of this, Mary is a model and symbol of the Church. May we be like Mary, open and cooperative in God's plan for salvation.

