

We would like to say a BIG THANK YOU to Fr Michael for making and donating the cakes for last week's raffle. Also thank you to all those who provided additional prizes and to those who helped to sell the raffle tickets and of course to all of you who bought the tickets and donated money. We raised a wonderful **£427** in total, including the cash and Dona machine donations.

The winners have now all been notified and have even started tucking into the Christmas cakes (they were just too tempting to have to wait until Christmas).

The proceeds from the raffle will be used to help homeless people looked after at CIRDIC.

(CHURCHES IN READING DROP IN CENTRE)

The produce sale held over the parish weekend and the Christmas card exchange also raised over £600 and this was used to pay for the Christmas meal and gift parcels for homeless people (each parcel contains underwear, a hat, socks and sweets). All packaging used, was recyclable. The Thoughtful Living Group helped coordinate the buying and wrapping of the parcels which will be given out at the Christmas meal this Friday. In addition, parishioners helped make the Christmas puddings and mince pies for the Christmas meal too.

Your donations also paid for additional sugar, coffee, sweets, crisps, biscuits, toiletries and Christmas crackers (fully recyclable and filled by us with chocolate mints).

A big thank you for all your donations in kind - the parcels from the giving tree, clothes, underwear, toiletries and towels.

The food and presents were delivered to CIRDIC last Monday in readiness for their Christmas meal on Friday.

Thank you for your kindness and generosity.
You are an amazing parish!

Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham Registered Charity No 234216

Thought for the Week 4th Sunday in Advent (B) 24th December 2023

Do you ever wish we knew more about Mary? The Mother of God makes so few appearances in the Gospels that we aren't given much to go on. Maybe imitating her, using her as our role model would be easier if we knew more about her...but perhaps we can infer a certain amount from what we are told?

We are led to believe that Mary was meek, mild, obedient – immediately submitting to the Will of God. But I think she was also intelligent and questioning. She was 'disturbed' when Gabriel addressed her as 'highly favoured' by God. She questioned how she could possibly be pregnant whilst a virgin. Mary was also quite clearly caring, considerate, observant. Witness how she set off, with barely a thought for herself, to visit her newly pregnant cousin Elizabeth, how she approached her Son during the wedding feast at Cana to save the embarrassment of the hosts.

As a role model, Mary is a tough act to follow. As I contemplate the story of the Nativity of Our Lord or I meditate on the Mysteries of the Rosary, it occurs to me that Mary's strong faith must have been given even more impetus when she saw the reaction of Elizabeth during the Visitation; the arrival of the shepherds and then the Wise Men to visit ... just a baby boy? The prayer of Simeon at the Presentation of Our Lord. All these situations would have underscored Our Lady's unwavering faith that her Son was indeed who the angel said He would be.

The lesson we are usually encouraged to learn from Mary is that of accepting the Will of God. Perhaps we can also shore up our own faith by acknowledging the signs which point so clearly to the true identity of the Child in the manger whose momentous birth we celebrate in a few hours.



We ask you please, to pray for the following people who continue to ask for your prayers;

Thank you for your continued prayers for Robert Brooks who is back home whilst he awaits two more operations for Bile Duct Cancer.

Rosemary has asked for prayers as she prepares to undergo major surgery in the RBH later this month, for a safe and successful outcome.

Please pray for Kim, Paul and Joe Bunton (Joe has severe learning difficulties). Please pray that they get the help they need.

Please pray for Father Paul Rowan whose further recovery from cancer surgery is proving difficult.

Please pray for Peter Halter's sister Jean who has macular degeneration and for her great grandson Rogan who continues to need our prayers following his bone marrow transplant,

Please Pray for Jim Hardiman.

Please Pray for Maria McNamara's niece who is undergoing chemotherapy. Her name is Alison Flynn née McNamara.

Please pray for Reuben Muston aged 17 (Theresa and Mike Muston's grandson) who had Aplastic Anaemia. He still needs our prayers that he will continue to improve.

Please pray for Beth Selwood.

Please pray for Savanna Clark (aged 2 with eye trouble).

Please pray for Shirley Trollop.

Please pray for Isobel Messenger (Vera Bird's great granddaughter) she has now had her operation to improve her hearing.

Please pray for Simon Keen who is recovering from an operation.

Please pray for Mary Hagger.

Please pray for Vivien Kear (Krissie's friend) who has cancer.

Vera Bird has asked for our prayers for her Great, Great Grandson Harry.

Prayers please for Antonita's nephew Peppin who has long covid.

Please pray for the residents and staff at St Lukes and Abbeycrest nursing homes



Please remember in your prayers those whose anniversaries occur at this time including;

Simon Barrow, Bill Condon, Agnes Creighton, Alfred May, Barbara Small, Peter Ellison, Bridget Mullaniff, George Raynard, Sheila Wright, Abigail Gonzalez, Eamonn and Nancey Keogh, Nan and Laurance Maxwell, Paul Fay, Bride McGarry, Tessie McNamara, Gwen Payne, Fr. Robert O'Neill O.F.M, Agnes Roughneen, Mary Williams, Fr. Xavier O.F.MQ, Benjamin Roman Zambrano, Phyllis Baning-Gould, Robert Nicholson, Alfredus Warwick, Ann Wevlin, Maud Cooper, Gino Dell'Aqua, Ivy Edna Roberts, Charles Harris, Kathleen Harris, Mickey Harris, Bridget O'Loughlin, Frederick Everett, John Halter, Kenneth de Silva, Danny Jenkins(sr), John Owain Lewis, Iona Bakaes, Julia Welemars, John Forbes, Jack Oswald, Ivy Roberts, Philomena Rodrigues, Louise Coulehan.