



Sacred Heart of Jesus Parish Westhoughton

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Parish Priest: Rev Fr Christopher Dawson

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Salford Roman Catholic Diocesan Trustees Registered Charity Number 250037



DIOCESE OF SALFORD

Sunday 24th December 2023

4th Sunday of Advent

Year B

MASS TIMES THIS WEEK

Saturday: 6 pm

Sunday: 10 am

Christmas Mass Times

Sunday 24 December 6 pm

Monday 25 December 10 am

Tuesday - Friday 10 am

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Saturday 5.30-5.50 pm
and at call

THIS SUNDAY'S MASS

First Reading

2 Sam 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16

The kingdom of David will always stand secure before the Lord.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 88:2-3, 4-5, 27, 29

I will sing for ever of your love, O Lord.

Second Reading

Rom 16:25-27

The mystery, which was kept secret for endless ages, is now made clear.

Gospel

Luke 1:26-38

Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son.

Facebook: @SHJWParish

Suggested items for inclusion in future editions of the newsletter may be emailed to
SHJWesthoughtonNewsletter@outlook.com
Please submit by midday on Thursday.

A Christmas Message from Fr Christopher

It's been said that Christmas is for the children. In a sense it is. There is nothing quite as rejuvenating as watching young children's faces wrapped in the wonder of the Christmas story, the mounting delight as the long-awaited day arrives, the shrieks of glee when opening presents, or the open-handed way in which they offer gifts to others. Even the fluffed lines of a school nativity play help put children at the centre of our Christmases.

Yet Christmas is only the beginning of the story. It goes without saying that our Saviour grew up. Mary's child was to become a willing victim to the system which could not cope with him and so it crucified him on a tree.

In the years between these two events Mary and Joseph, with their wider circle of family and friends, shared their ups and downs and offered each other support and consolation when their peace was shattered.

So as we celebrate the birth of our Saviour this year, we should recall that he was just that – a saviour. We need to keep the whole Christmas scene before our eyes. Whereas each of us is born and dies, Jesus was born to die. He was sent by God to be the lamb who gave his life to take away our sins. This is just as much the message of Christmas as is any angelic choir or gift the magi might bring.

Our Christmas carols rightly focus on the joy that fills us because the Incarnation has occurred and on the heart-warming scenes of the Nativity. Yet if we are not to miss the whole point, we need to ask the simple questions the story throws up. Who was he? Why was he born? What did he say and do in life? How was he treated? What happened to him?

This is the rest of the story of Jesus and it is what we celebrate throughout the remainder of the year. By exploring 'what happened next' we discover the plan God had for each of us from the very beginning, and we learn how Jesus came to show us how we can know God and live life to the full. Jesus was the Saviour sent to redeem us, calling us to turn from passing pleasure to deeper joys, inviting us to die with him so that we might rise to greater things. Christmas, then, is not only about the birth of a baby, but the birth of a saviour, the Prince of Peace.

Christmas is not just for the children – the birth of the saviour is good news for each and every one of us. Thank you to everyone who has made my few first months as Parish Priest here a time of grace. I look forward greatly to exploring the rest of the story of Jesus in the coming year. It would be wonderful if you would join us.

Fr Christopher

CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES:

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Saturday 23 December, 6 pm

Sunday 24 December, 10 am

Christmas

Sunday 24 December 6 pm

Monday 25 December 10 am

Tuesday 26 – Friday 29 Dec. 10 am

Feast of Holy Family

Saturday 30 December 6 pm

Sunday 31 December 10 am

Mary, Mother of God

Monday 1 January 10 am

From Wednesday 3 January we return to our usual timetable.

Welcome to our parish: If you are new to Westhoughton, or are visiting us just for the weekend, you are very welcome! Please introduce yourself to Fr Christopher after Mass.

Thank you to everyone who has helped clean and decorate our Church to help us celebrate Christmas.

Card Payments. We now have a card payment machine, which you will find in the entrance foyer. You can use the machine to make credit or debit card donations to the parish, to pay for items from the piety stall or make donations to CAFOD, Caritas or any second collections we hold. The first time you use a new card it will ask you if you want to gift aid the donation – please say yes if you pay income tax as this increases your donation by 25% at no cost to you. You can use all major credit or debit cards, as well as Apple Pay and Google Pay.

St. Joseph's High School

60th Birthday Celebrations will continue on Friday 16th Feb at Rivington Barn. Tickets available by 'googling' Eventbrite St Joseph's Alumni or follow the link from St. Joseph's school Facebook page.

Sacred Heart Primary School

The school will reopen on Monday 8th January 2024. To all pupils and staff – have a wonderful break!

2025 'Pilgrims of Hope' Jubilee This Advent, Pope Francis invites people across the world to embark on a Year of Prayer in preparation for the 2025 "Pilgrims of Hope" Jubilee. Over the coming weeks and months, the Diocese of Salford will be sharing a range of resources and ideas to help us journey together through this Year of Prayer. Head to <https://www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/news/jubilee-2025/> to find out more.

Discover more about our Diocesan

Synod Over the coming weeks and months, the Diocese of Salford is carrying out the first key stage of our diocesan synod. But what is a synod? And



what does it mean for our diocese and the future of the Church in Greater Manchester and Lancashire? Scan the QR code to find out more.

Cafod Israeli-Palestinian Crisis

Appeal Donate at caford.org.uk/ipc or call 0303 303 3030 to support those affected and get funds to local trusted experts in Gaza and southern Israel who have been working alongside communities helping those most in need. Your donation will help support aid workers providing urgent humanitarian aid including food, water, and emergency shelter to those in need. Thank you for your prayers.

Reminder -Your travel to church

Survey as the Diocese of Salford works to reach its goal of net zero by 2038, we want to find out about the travel patterns of people in the diocese. The survey can be found at <https://forms.gle/skCHYCKnBzhDrvbn9>.

ECT Primary Pool 2024 Are you looking for a career in teaching? Do you know someone who is training for a career in primary education? ECT (Early Career Teachers) due to gain Qualified Teacher Status in Summer 2024 are being invited to apply for recommendation for interview to Catholic schools with vacancies for September 2024. Email education@dioceseofsalford.org.uk to find out more and apply.

Christian Heritage Centre Marriage

Preparation Courses The next marriage preparation course at the CHC will run over two consecutive Saturdays: 27 January and 3 February. The course offers a testimony to the sacramental married life, an overview of the key themes underpinning the Church's vision of marriage, relational exercises for the couples, time for discussion as couples and in groups. For more information and to book: <https://christianheritagecentre.com/events/marriage-preparation/>

Pilgrimage to Walsingham

The Diocese of Salford is now accepting bookings for our 2024 pilgrimage to Walsingham. If you would like to join next year's pilgrimage, bring along a group, or help as a volunteer, please fill out a booking form, available at <https://dioceseofsalford.org.uk/walsingham-2024>. You can get in touch by calling 0161 817 2214 or emailing walsingham@pilgrimage@dioceseofsalford.org.uk

Youth Pilgrimage to Walsingham

Salford Youth and Young Adults Ministry is delighted to once again

offer a dedicated youth pilgrimage to Walsingham, aimed for students in Years 7,8 and 9. This pilgrimage runs alongside the main diocesan pilgrimage and will leave on Friday 3 May and return on Saturday 4 May 2024. For further details please contact: youth@dioceseofsalford.org.uk

Baptism and Marriage preparation:

Please speak to Fr Christopher if you are a parent and would like to have your child baptised or if are hoping to get married either in this parish or elsewhere (a minimum of six months' notice is required for marriage).

Liturgy of Blessing for Engaged

Couples On Saturday 17 February, the Saturday nearest to St Valentine's Day, Bishop John invites those getting married in the churches of our Diocese, or who are being prepared in our parishes for marriages elsewhere, to come to a Liturgy of Blessing. In this celebration, we will seek God's blessing on them as they begin their married life. The Service will take place at St. Patrick's Church, Livesey St, Manchester at 2:30pm.

Salford Diocesan Lourdes Pilgrimage Centenary Year Fundraiser - The

Mercy Brothers Join us for a family-friendly night of musical entertainment with the fabulous 'Mercy Brothers' band on Friday 9 February, 8pm (doors 7.30pm), at The Hough End Centre, Mauldeth Road West, Chortlon-cum-Hardy, Manchester, M21 7SX. The band is made up of members of the clergy from around the diocese. Tickets are priced at £15 (over 16s) and free for under 16s. Money raised will go to the Centenary Pilgrimage Fund and in support of our sick pilgrims and medical team. To book please visit www.salfordlourdes.co.uk/fundraising or phone the pilgrimage office on 0161 817 2209.



Merry Christmas!