

GOSPEL REFLECTION.

This weekend we hear the story of the meeting between two cousins, Mary and Elizabeth. The two women joyfully shared their faith together. Mary, travelling with the Good News of the Gospel message, was the first apostle, the first evangelist, the first missionary, the first person to share the faith she had received through the message of the angel. And when she reached Elizabeth there was a stirring response. The child in Elizabeth's womb leapt for joy at the meeting.

A great deal is said today about spreading the faith, "new evangelisation". Pope Francis commented on this: "We evangelise not with grand words, or complicated concepts, but with the joy of the Gospel." The people who do this best are often those whom the world has treated badly or those who have found life very difficult at times. Many of them find their way back to Church, where Jesus meets us and answers our prayers, in response to the Psalm today, "Let your face shine on us and we shall be saved."

The meeting between Mary and Elizabeth was, perhaps, how the Church began, how the Gospel was first preached and how it continued to spread throughout the world. People cannot keep it to themselves. Good News simply has to be shared. There are lots of ways of doing this: singing carols and collecting for good causes, sending Christmas cards with the real message of Christmas, having Nativity Plays, inviting someone to come with you to Christmas Mass. Through such simple ways people can come to recognise that what we are celebrating this week is the BIRTH OF Jesus, the Saviour of the world, and the faith of his mother, Mary.

SVP CHRISTMAS TOY COLLECTION.

Many thanks to everyone who contributed to the Retiring Collection for the St. Vincent de Paul Society, who are organising a Christmas Toy Collection for the children in local hospitals. As a Parish we raised £429. Many thanks for your kindness. The SVP will now organise the purchasing of vouchers for children who will be in hospital over the Christmas period.

CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES.

Christmas Eve.

Sacred Heart at 5.00pm & St. Richard's at 7.00pm.

Christmas Day.

St. Richard's at 9.30am & Sacred Heart at 10.30am.

CHRISTMAS MASS INTENTIONS.

During the Christmas weekend, that is on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and Boxing Day, we will be celebrating all the Masses for the Christmas Mass Intentions. Very often, it is difficult for people to have Mass Intentions for their loved ones at this special time of the year. If you have any names of loved ones who you would like to add, please drop their names off at Church and we will add them to the Christmas Mass Intention list which will be displayed in both the churches in the Parish.

COVID RESTRICTIONS.

We are still living with the Pandemic so please continue to follow the guidelines and keep safe. Face coverings are still to be used in church. This may be difficult to enforce but, as we have seen on the TV News this week, they should now be worn indoors everywhere.

We will continue to provide an area in church which is reserved for those who perhaps feel vulnerable. That is, the pews remain at a certain distance.

We must continue to keep the building well ventilated. This means opening the windows during Mass and so we encourage you to wrap up warm in these colder days.

Ensure that people are not in the church for too long. Certain parts of the Mass will continue to be omitted for the present time.

We encourage you to attend Mass on Sunday 26th December INSTEAD of Christmas Day, to ensure we will have room for everyone.

Response to the Psalm....

"I will sing forever of your love, O Lord".