

GOSPEL REFLECTION FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT



Believing in Promises

It's easy for us to take promises with a pinch of salt. Whilst growing up, we've learned that promises are easily made and easily broken. We make promises of our own with varying degrees of commitment. In short, promises are not always made to be kept, and our faith in a promise is seriously undermined. No wonder the promises we read in the bible don't always make us jump for joy.

Does a promise made to us by God carry any more weight? If we were truly convinced that God was making us a promise then it probably would. There's a saying that goes, "We

question all our beliefs, except for the ones we really believe, and those we never think to question." It seems that belief is key in getting excited about a promise. Mary obviously had no doubts; this is illustrated in her promptness to act on God's commands. We might not confess to doubts, but if we really don't harbour any doubts, why then do we hedge our bets? Why do we squash God into a small corner of our busy lives and get on with other things?

Mary is a perfect role model for us all. She believed in God's promise. She acted on God's commands. She didn't push God into a small corner of her life God was her life. "Blessed is she," writes Luke in today's gospel, "who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled."

Today's gospel is an invitation for us to take God's promises to heart, to make them real in our minds, and act on them.

Bitesize – "Losers make promises they often break. Winners make commitments they always keep." ~*Denis Waitley*



PARISH PRAYER – Father, pour out your Spirit upon our parish. Grant us a new vision of your glory, a new faithfulness to your Word and a new consecration to your service, that your love might grow among us and your kingdom come, through Christ our Lord, Amen.

PARISH OF THE SACRED HEART AND ST. MARGARET MARY
[Registered Charity 278742]

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19TH DECEMBER 2021 – 4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT – Year C

[4th Week of Advent, Weekday Year II, Psalter Week 4]

Mass Times for the Week			Intentions
Sat. 18 Dec.	6.00 pm	4 th Sunday of Advent	Martin Mealy (PM)
Sun. 19 Dec.	9.00 am 11.00 am		Holy Souls The People of the Parish
Mon. 20 Dec.	10.00 am	Advent Feria	P. & H.'s Ints. (10/10)
	2.00 pm	Funeral Service for Bridie Moorcroft	
Tues. 21 Dec.	-	Advent Feria	No Mass today
Weds. 22 Dec.	10.00 am	Advent Feria	Elizabeth & Eamonn Geoghan (PM)
Thurs. 23 Dec.	10.00 am	Advent Feria	Seamus Mealy (PM)
Fri. 24 Dec.	6.00 pm 10.00 pm	CHRISTMAS EVE	Private Intention Private Intention
Sat. 25 Dec.	10.00 am	CHRISTMAS DAY	The People of the Parish
Sun. 26 Dec.	9.00 am 11.00 am	The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph	Bridie Moorcroft The People of the Parish

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament - from 9.25 a.m. – 9.55 a.m.
before each weekday Mass.

The Church is open daily until 5:00pm



Useful links: Diocesan Safeguarding – <https://www.rcdea.org.uk/safeguarding/>
 Diocesan Website – <http://www.rcdea.org.uk>
 Notre Dame High School, Norwich – <http://www.ndhs.org.uk>
 Daily Liturgy Website – www.universalis.com

ALL MASSES ARE LIVE STREAMED ON YouTube –

Search for **Dereham Catholic Church** on YouTube, or use the following link:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCR-qWs-B40VTvbezZ83MxQ/videos?view=2&flow=grid>

The parish newsletter (incl. back copies) is available to view on the parish website from Friday onward each week.

Anniversaries: John Hauzoter, Mary Rayner, Ethel Seabrook, Bridget Earthy, Fred English, Evelyn Flanagan, Pat Chapman, Gabriel Shelley, Frances Shaw, Margaret Doherty, Patrick Keatley, Agnes Harmer, Mary Lingwood, Priscilla Louise Reavey, Patricia Huizar, Florence Sayer, John Thomas Macdonald, Kit Blackburn, Terence Blakiston, Genevieve Smith, Dorothy Jones, Frederick Power, Joseph Murphy. *May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace.*

Hospital Visits: If you or any member of your family is admitted to the Norfolk and Norwich Hospital and would like to have a visit from a Catholic Priest, please inform a nurse on the ward and contact will be made through the Chaplaincy. If you are admitted to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in King's Lynn, please contact Fr. Peter Rollings at the Presbytery on 01553 772220. If you would like to receive the Sacrament of the Sick before going into hospital, please contact Fr. Brendan either by phone or by email.

Sick & Housebound [with GDPR Permissions] – **Please pray for:** Carol Whitesides, Shirley Liebenhals, Frances Saville King, Derek Williams, Greta Cummings, Patsy Gray, Allan Michael Howard, Collette Barrow-Nessian, Terri Sanderson, Ellen Harrington, Betty Reavey, Marion Ring-Davies.

Money Matters: Thank you for your offering of £182.00 towards the maintenance of our parish last weekend and for £175.65 for the Dependant Priests Fund.

The collection at the Christmas Masses is the traditional offering to the parish priest. Along with the Easter Offering this is a considerable portion of the parish priest's income.

For those who would like to make their regular offerings by Standing Order, the information you need is: Account name: **Catholic Church of Dereham**. The Sort Code is: **40-20-08** and the Account number is: **11311115**. If you are a tax payer, please also consider **Gift Aid**. This is a great way for the parish to get additional funds from the tax reclaim benefits scheme; with this scheme you do not need to commit to a fixed amount as it will just be based on your total annual contribution. Let Fr. Brendan know if you would like to sign up to Gift Aid.

Christmas Masses - Please note that there is no requirement to book seats for Christmas Masses.

First Communion Classes – Classes are on Christmas Holidays and will resume again on Saturday, 8th January 2022.

For Expectant Mothers - Traditionally, the fourth Sunday of Advent is a day on which we pray for expectant mothers everywhere. We must also remember to pray for expectant dads, and for would-be parents who are trying for a baby but haven't been successful just yet.

Afghanistan Crisis Appeal - CAFOD is combining efforts with the DEC to launch the Afghanistan Crisis Appeal. In Afghanistan, 8 million people are on the brink of famine because of drought, collapsing economy, food shortages, conflict, and COVID. CAFOD is

supporting sister Caritas agencies to reach communities most in need with food, clean water, and fuel. During Advent, when we open ourselves to the needs of others, let's do all that we can to save lives. You can donate on the CAFOD website: cafod.org.uk/AfghanistanAppeal and please pray for the people of Afghanistan.

Prayer of the heart: A Day of Recollection for Women led by the Dominican Sisters, Blackfriars, Cambridge, 15th January, 2022 10am-5pm. Suggested donation of £10.00. Bring a packed lunch. Tea and coffee provided. To register email Bonnie Lander Johnson: mflc.eastanglia@rcdea.org.uk

Headteacher required Easter 2022 – St John Henry Newman Catholic Primary School & Nursery, Peterborough - The Governors of St John Henry Newman are delighted to be seeking to appoint a Headteacher for this new school from September 2022. This is a tremendous opportunity for a Headteacher to establish grow and develop a new Catholic Primary School in the heart of Peterborough. For further details please visit www.st-johnhenrynewman.org.uk

Recommended Listening on BBC Radio 4:

- * **Christmas Eve 23.30: Midnight Mass from St John the Evangelist, Salford** - Live from the Cathedral of St John the Evangelist, Salford - A Midnight Mass for Christmas Eve. Celebrant and Preacher: The Right Reverend John Arnold, Bishop of Salford.
- * **Christmas Day at 9am: How far is it to Bethlehem?** - A service recorded by Christians in Bethlehem especially for Radio 4. Leader: The Rev'd Dr Jack Sara, President of Bethlehem Bible College and a leader of the Jerusalem Alliance Church, who was born and raised in the Old City of Jerusalem. The life of Jesus comes alive to visitors and residents of the Holy Land alike. Members of the Bethlehem Bible College tell the story of Christmas Day from the sites where they believe the events might well have taken place; the birth in a humble dwelling, the shepherds' vision of angels on the hillside. They also speak of the importance of reconciliation in the Holy Land, a major part of the ministry of Bethlehem Bible College. With music from Bethlehem Bible College and Christian traditions around the world.

Happy Christmas - Christmas is the one time we will all go to church and celebrate something that happened a long time ago; but that something that 'happened a very long time ago' is with us every day. We go to church to celebrate the wonderful Christmas message that God loves us so much that he sent his Son to be with us, to support us, to endure with us, to share life's struggles and to guide us. Our challenge is to move forward through life's joys and sorrows confident in God's love. Our challenge is to make it to next Christmas better and stronger than we are.

