

## GOSPEL REFLECTION FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT



### The Promise of a Lifetime

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. The problem is .... God somehow seems a rather remote and silent figure, and his promises don't always affect our lives in the way they ought. Instead of acting on his commands in the way Mary did, we hedge our bets. We don't forget about what God has asked us to do altogether, but we squash him 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.

### Bite Size

"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**

### Useful links:

Diocesan Website: <http://www.rcdea.org.uk>

Notre Dame High School, Norwich Website: <http://www.ndhs.org.uk>

## PARISH OF THE SACRED HEART AND ST MARGARET MARY

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## 20<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2015 - 4<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY OF ADVENT

### Sunday Masses - Page 90 of Parish Mass Book

Saturday	6.00 pm	Tony & Agnes Harmer
Sunday	9.00 am	People of the Parish
	11.00 am	Alec, Catherine & Jim MacDonald

### Music for Sunday Masses - Setting: Belmont Mass

**Entry** 6pm - *Angelus (said)*; Hymn 112 - O come, O come, Emmanuel ...

**Offertory** Hymn 113 - The Angel Gabriel from heaven came ...

**Communion** *Instrumental Interlude/Sacred silence ...*

**Recessional** 11am - *Angelus (said)*; Hymn 107 - The King of glory comes ...

## CONFESSION/RECONCILIATION - Saturday at 5.30 - 5.55 pm

### Weekday Mass Times (4th week of Advent)

*[Psalter Week 4]*

Mon.	10.00 am	The Faulkner Family - Advent Feria
Tues.	<b>No Mass today</b>	- Advent Feria
Weds.	10.00 am	Holy Souls (Philomena) - Advent Feria
Thurs.	<b>CHRISTMAS EVE - 6.00 pm 11.30 pm 12.00 midnight Mass</b>	Private Intention - <b>First Mass of Christmas Christmas Carols</b> Private Intention
Fri.	<b>CHRISTMAS DAY - 10.00 am</b>	People of the Parish
Sat.	<b>Boxing Day - 12.00 midday 6.00 pm</b>	John Perkins - <b>St Stephen</b> Mary Reeder - <b>The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary &amp; Joseph</b>

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

[Reg. Charity 278742]

**Anniversaries this week:** Priscilla Louise Reavey, Patricia Huizar, Florence Sayer, John Thomas Macdonald, Kit Blackburn, Terence Blakiston, Genevieve Smith, Dorothy Jones, Joseph Murphy, Ivy O'Shea, Charlie Secker and Mary Reeder. *May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed rest in peace.*

**Hospital Visits** – If you or family members are admitted to the Norfolk & Norwich Hospital (NNUH) or Queen Elizabeth II Hospital (QEII), King's Lynn, and would like a visit from the Roman Catholic Chaplain, please call either St John's Cathedral, Norwich (01603 624615) for visits to NNUH, or Fr Peter Rollings (01553 772220) for visits to QEII. If you would like to receive the Sacrament of Anointing of the sick before going to hospital, please contact Fr. Brendan on 01362 694066.

**Sick List - Please pray for:** Michelle Redmond, Joan Blakiston, David Peek, Michael Reavey, Sheila Christie, Robert Nicol, Doreen Kanssen, Shirley Liebenhals, Sarah Chaudri, Anne & Derek Williams, David & Anna Thompkins, Michelle Smith, Rita Smith, Rhonda Darby, Collette Barrow-Nessian and Eileen Brockleby.

**Money Matters** – The collection last weekend was £464.53 and the second collection for the Dependant Priests' Fund was £188.90. As I forgot to announce this at last Saturday's Mass, it was not taken up then. So this will be collected on Saturday evening this week. Sorry about the confusion. The collection at all the Christmas Masses is the traditional Christmas Offering to the Parish Priest. The Christmas and Easter Offering forms a major part of my personal income for the year. Thank you in advance for your generosity. Fr. B.

**Christmas Liturgy** – I should be most grateful if any Readers and Eucharistic Ministers who will be attending Christmas services could help with the Christmas Liturgy by volunteering for one of the readings or Communion slots on the list at the back of Church.

**Mass Times at Christmas** – Please note the times of Masses over Christmas. On December 26<sup>th</sup>, St Stephen's Day (Boxing Day), there is the Mass of St Stephen at which the Altar Servers renew their commitment and a new member is enrolled into the Guild of St Stephen. Altar Servers, please attend. It is at midday!

**Diary Dates for this week** –

- Tues. – Please note there is no Queen of Peace Prayer Group this week or next.
- Sat. - Saturday Club is on holiday until 9<sup>th</sup> January.

**St. Stephen's Day - December 26<sup>th</sup>** - St. Stephen's Day, better known to us as Boxing Day, is traditionally celebrated on December 26<sup>th</sup>. The old custom of giving to the poor is reflected in today's Christmas carol 'Good King Wenceslas' who gave gifts of bread and wine to a poor man on 'the feast of Stephen'. In short Boxing Day is a day of good will to those who are not so well off as we are.

**New Year Epiphany Candlelight Mass - January 3<sup>rd</sup> at 5pm** - For all young people and their families across the diocese. Followed by hot dogs, a bonfire and fireworks. There will be a collection of presents for children who are refugees (please bring wrapped presents and indicate whether suitable for a boy or girl or either, and approximate age). Held at The White House, 21 Uppgate, Poringland, Norwich. Organised by the Diocesan Youth Service.

**UCM Christmas Raffle & Stalls Update** - The Christmas stalls (cake stall and gift stall), plus the Christmas raffle, raised a magnificent £543.80 to go to our nominated charities. Congratulations to all who baked, bought, and donated in support of these events. The list of raffle winners has been posted on the notice board. A big "Thank You" to you all, and a happy Christmas!

**Mid-Norfolk Foodbank** – Anne Sibley advises that she now has vouchers for the Foodbank. If any parishioners are in need, or they know of anyone in need, they are invited to speak to Anne in complete confidence to see what help is available. Thanks also go to the people of the parish once again for their donations week by week; it is your generosity which helps to keep Mid Norfolk Foodbank functioning. Anne can be contacted on 07774275569.

**St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Lowestoft** – Head Teacher required from September 2016. please see Diocesan Website for more details: [www.rcdea.oreg.uk](http://www.rcdea.oreg.uk)

**The Spirit of Christmas** - The tragedy of Christmas is that we are left feeling we have failed as parents, or as a spouse, or as friends, if we have not managed to buy expensive presents, if we have missed somebody off the card list, or failed to create a Christmas day worthy of a centre fold in Harpers Bizarre. The media has turned Christmas into a frenzy of 'getting things right'. But despite 'consumerism gone mad', the nativity of Jesus is an event that still grips millions of people. The birth of Jesus heralds a new way of living for each and every new generation, and we are reminded of this significance every year at this time. Yes the decorations have to come down, but let's remind ourselves to live the Christmas message of giving and caring, each and every day of the year.



Merry  
Christmas

