

Holy Family News

John the Baptist

Our Readings today take us out into the wilderness, to hear the call first of the Prophet Isaiah and then of John the Baptist. A call to peoples of old - but a call too to ourselves, inviting each of us to re-engage with ourselves, with each other and with our God.

For the first hearers of these messages, the wilderness was something both real and symbolic. The Jewish Nation was born out of a journey from Egypt, through the real wilderness into the Promised Land, and wherever the people stood it was not far for them to find those deserted places to seek out solitude and reflect on their roots, on the people they were. The symbol of the wilderness took those first hearers into the silence of their hearts, and challenged them there to find what was restless and ill at ease, and to search for healing and change.

Isaiah is commanded by God to comfort His people, to call them to find once more the unity with God and each other which they had lost, and to remind them of God's love which was so very near. John, then, at the start of St Mark's Gospel, is seen fulfilling the prophecies of Isaiah - a voice crying in the wilderness and speaking to the hearts of a people who recognised his words were true, and who desired that comfort of God - who wanted to be changed, to be healed, to find peace in their homes and hearts, and to feel God very near once more. They felt ready to begin their lives anew.

For us, too, our lives need the challenge of listening to God's call. We so easily fall into a comfortable way of doing things which needs little thought or reflection, we forget why some things were so much more important than others, and we shed the difficult things because we seem to be out



of time. Then we wonder why parts of our lives have become empty, we find ourselves lonely in the crowd, our days so busy with the tasks of existing - and we forget how to live. God's call is about re-connecting with what really matters - it is about finding good in ourselves and in each other and building relationships that are wholesome and life-giving. It is about re-discovering the God of Love who never left us, but who our eyes find it hard to see. It is about re-finding our humanity, sanctified by the God who took on our human form, and whose coming again we now await not with fear but with hope.

May the Baptist's call find a home in our lives this Advent, and may we once again seek God in our hearts, in our homes and in our communities. Come, Lord Jesus.



Today we light the second candle on our Advent Wreath

SACRAMENTAL PROGRAMME 2011/12

Remaining dates for 2011 are as follows:

(Please let Fr Martin or Denise know if you expect to have any problems getting here)

THIS WEDNESDAY (7th Dec)
Advent Reconciliation Service
6.00pm

with the people of the Parish
Please note the earlier time

Saturday 24th December
Parish Celebration of Christmas
7.00pm
(our main family celebration)

- * *New to Holy Family parish?*
- * *Know someone who is sick or in hospital (or the hospice)?*
- * *Like a visit from the priest?*
- * *Think the parish may be able to help you, or you us, in any way?*

Please speak to Fr Martin, after Mass or at any convenient time.

Mass times at Holy Family

Saturday (Vigil Mass): 6.30pm
Sunday Morning: 10.00am
with **Children's Liturgy**
(Tea and Coffee served after morning Mass)
Weekdays: See Calendar, below
Holydays: Eve 7.00pm
9.30am on the day

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday after Midday Mass, and 6.00-6.15pm,
or at any reasonable time on request.
(Rite II Reconciliation Services are celebrated in Advent and Lent)

Baptisms, Weddings & Funerals

by arrangement (6 months' notice required for weddings)

Weekday Calendar

Monday: No Service today

Tuesday - Morning Mass: 9.30am, Sacristy

Church cleaning afterwards

Advent Service (with Evening Prayer and Benediction): 7.00-7.30pm, Sacristy

Wednesday - Funeral Mass: 10.30am for the late Richard McDermott

May he rest in peace

Parish **Reconciliation Service:** 6.00pm

Music Rehearsal for Christmas afterwards, in Church

Thursday - Evening Mass: 7.00pm, Sacristy

Friday (day of abstinence) - Lunchtime Mass: 12.30pm, Sacristy

Saturday - Lunchtime Mass: 12.30pm, Sacristy

+
**ADVENT
SERVICE
ON
TUESDAY**

WE PRAY THIS WEEK

... for the following, for whom Masses will be offered - **the sick:** Olga, Hughie, Jiula, Miranda, Christine, Veronica and David, Maureen, Kathleen, Christine, Mary, Teresa, Winnie, Bill, Julie, Peggy, Anne-Marie, John, Denis, Marjorie, Denis, Margaret, Marie, Jane, Christine, Ernest, Elva, Sister Alphonsus, Kathleen, Margaret, Mary and Bridie, Helene and Ann Marie, -----

--- and **those who have died:** Richard McDermott, Ronald Ruddle, Eileen Statham, Barry Chinn, Anthony Bayliss, Sylvia Joyce, Clarisse Wrigley, Marie Terese Anastasi and all the Holy Souls. **We also pray** for a number of Special Intentions. **NEW FROM THIS WEEK:** prayers will be offered every Sunday in each parish of our Deanery for the people of one of the parishes. This week, prayers will be offered for ourselves, here at Holy Family. Please keep all the people of the Rochdale and Bury Deanery in your prayers also, as they pray for you.

HOLY FAMILY RC CHURCH

Presbytery:
28 Mornington Road, Kirkholt
Rochdale OL11 2DG

Parish Priest: Fr Martin A Collins GTCL
Telephone / Fax: (01706) 649230
E-mail: office@holyfamily-rochdale.co.uk
Web site: www.holyfamily-rochdale.co.uk

FREE SCHOOL BUS PASSES

In line, it has to be said, with many other Local Authorities, Rochdale is considering withdrawing free bus passes from pupils travelling more than three miles to school who could be accommodated at a school nearer home. (The only exceptions would be children in receipt of free school meals, who would still receive their pass). In the vast majority of cases, these passes enable families to choose to send their children to Faith schools like St Cuthbert's, rather than being forced to choose their local State school. The reality is that if these passes are withdrawn, some 440 pupils at St Cuthbert's will have to pay their bus fare - £361 per pupil per year at present rates - which could both deter new parents from choosing a Catholic secondary school and prevent some existing pupils from continuing. Please take a copy, if you wish, of a letter from Lord Alton ("Why a local Faith Tax is targeting Catholic parents and their children") which appears in today's "Universe", and please, if you would, **sign our petition** at the back of Church before you leave. **Thank you!**

ADVENT RECONCILIATION SERVICES

As announced recently, it has been necessary to change the time of our Advent Reconciliation Service. We hope this will not cause problems, but for your convenience all the Rochdale Reconciliation Services are listed below:

This Wednesday Dec 7th 6.00pm Holy Family
This Wednesday Dec 7th 7.30pm St Mary's
Tuesday Dec 13th 7.00pm St John's
Monday Dec 19th 7.00pm St Patrick's
Tuesday Dec 20th 7.30pm Sacred Heart

OFFERTORY Thank you for last week's collection of £355.85.

RETIRING COLLECTION

This week: SVP monthly collection.
No retiring collection next week.

SRCDT Registered Charity No 250037

www.salforddiocese.org.uk

MAY GOD BLESS YOU ALL

throughout this Advent season and always