

Saints Days this Week... 2nd - 8th December

TUESDAY ~ St. Francis Xavier Was born in Spain in 1506. While studying in Paris, he met St. Ignatius of Loyola and became one of the first Jesuits, and went to Goa as a missionary. From there, he travelled extensively through south east Asia to Japan, winning many converts and leaving behind organised Christian communities.

FRIDAY – St. Nicholas Was bishop of Myra (Turkey) & died around the middle of the 4th century. Because of his help to the poor he is patron of pawnbrokers, whose insignia of 3 golden balls represent the 3 purses of gold he is said to have given to a man who could not afford dowries for his 3 daughters. Nicholas' reputation for generosity led to the custom of giving children gifts on his feast day, and thus to the Christmas figure of Santa Claus.

SATURDAY – St. Ambrose Was born in Trier around 337 to a Roman family. Trained in Rome, he became a Roman prefect. In spite of not being a Christian, Ambrose was coerced into becoming bishop of Milan in 374. He immediately gave his money to the poor & set about learning theology. He became a true shepherd to all his people & was a key figure in the conversion of St Augustine.

PARISH PRAYER GROUPS AND PRAYER TIMES

Monday Exposition & Rosary ~ St Wilfrid's, 7.30–8.30pm

St Bede's Prayer Group ~ Meets in church, Tuesday 7.30–9.00pm

Exposition & Reconciliation ~ Saturday at St Wilfrid's 11.00-11.50am

Prayer In Preparation for the General Election

Lord God, as we prepare for the General Election, we seek to better understand the issues and concerns that confront our Country, and how the Gospel compels us to respond as faithful citizens in our community. We ask for eyes that are free from blindness so that we might see each other as brothers and sisters, one and equal in dignity, especially those who are victims of abuse and violence, deceit and poverty. We ask for ears that will hear the cries of children unborn and those abandoned, Men and women oppressed because of race or creed, religion or gender. We ask for minds and hearts that are open to hearing the voice of leaders who will bring us closer to your Kingdom. We pray for discernment so that we may choose leaders who hear your Word, live your love, and keep in the ways of your truth as they follow in the steps of Jesus, the Lord, and guide us to your Kingdom of justice and peace.

Parish: www.stjohnvianney.co.uk

Preparing to hear God's word...

**Next Sunday's Readings:
Second Sunday Of Advent. Yr A
8th December 2019**

'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.'



First Reading – A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse. He will judge with righteousness. The wolf will lie down with the lamb. The Lord will gather his people.

Psalms 67 – *In his days, justice shall flourish and peace till the moon fails.*

Second Reading – Paul quotes from Isaiah who says that it is through the scriptures we might have a hope for the future. Jesus came to be a servant of the Jews (circumcised) but also opened up the way of salvation for all who would believe. These promises given to the patriarchs were solidly confirmed in Jesus' earthly ministry, His sinless life, His suffering, His crucifixion, His death, and His resurrection. Not one of these precious promises failed.

Gospel – John the Baptist is the voice in the desert calling all the people of Judea to repent and be baptised.

Isaiah 11: 1-10

A shoot springs from the Stock of Jesse, a scion thrusts from his roots: on him the spirit of the Lord rests, a spirit of wisdom and insight, a spirit of counsel and power, a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the Lord. (The fear of the Lord is his breath.) He does not judge by appearances, he gives no verdict on hearsay, but judges the wretched with integrity, and with equity gives a verdict for the poor of the land. His word is a rod that strikes the ruthless, his sentences bring death to the wicked. Integrity is the loincloth round his waist, faithfulness the belt about his hips. The wolf lives with the lamb and the panther lies down with the kid, calf and lion cub feed together with a little boy to lead them. The cow and the bear make friends, their young lie down together. The lion eats straw like the ox. The infant plays over the cobra's hole.: into the viper's lair the young child puts his hand. They do not hurt, no harm, on all my holy mountain, for the country is filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters swell the sea. That day, the root of Jesse shall stand as a signal to the peoples. It will be sought out by the nations and its home will be glorious.

As I settle to pray, I ask the Lord that I may open to His word today.

God chose to raise up as king the least likely son of an unlikely father. That way, when David became great, people couldn't say, "He comes from good stock!" They would have to acknowledge the hand of the Lord in this enterprise. Now, following in that tradition, Isaiah doesn't proclaim that the glories of King David's mighty kingdom will be reestablished. In fact, he doesn't mention David at all. Instead, he goes back one generation to the simple farmer, Jesse, and says that a shoot (a form of life so modest that it is likely to escape notice) will come out of the stump (an unattractive form that appears to be devoid of life) of Jesse (a man so modest that we hardly know him). It is from these modest beginnings that God will bring life to Israel once more.

But any Jew reading Isaiah's words would know who Jesse was—would know that Jesse was David's father—would remember the covenant that Yahweh established with and would know that Yahweh was being faithful to that covenant by bringing life out of the stump of Jesse.

Matthew 3: 1-12

In due course John the Baptist appeared; he preached in the wilderness of Judaea and this was his message: 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.' This was the man the prophet Isaiah spoke of when he said: A voice cries in the wilderness: Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight. This man John wore a garment made of camel-hair with a leather belt round his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem and all Judaea and the whole Jordan district made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins. But when he saw a number of Pharisee and Sadducees coming for baptism he said to them, 'Brood of vipers, who warned you to fly from the retribution that is coming? But if you are repentant, produce the right fruit, and do not presume to tell yourselves, "We have Abraham for our father", because, I tell you, God can raise children for Abraham from these stones. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees, so that any tree which fails to produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown on the fire. I baptise you in water for repentance, but the one who follows me is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to carry his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fan is in his hand; he will clear this threshing-floor and gather his wheat into the barn; but the chaff he will burn in a fire that will never go out.'

In order to draw closer to God and to turn back to him, we are called to enter into the wilderness of our hearts, and to turn away from the things of this life, the things that distract and separate us from Him and His love. Although often a barren and sometimes scary place, it is in the desert where we come to terms with our sin, to repent of them and be reconciled to God. To allow ourselves to be winnowed by the hand of the Lord such that he will rid us of the chaff, the rubbish in our lives.

Repent! is John's message. Change your hearts! We know we need to change, but we can't do it on our own. We must ask God's help, insistently. In Baptism we were reborn to eternal life and in our Baptismal promises we believe in God, we renounce sin, and we promise to serve God faithfully. Let us renew our commitment today.