

## Saints Days this Week... 9<sup>th</sup> ~ 14<sup>th</sup> December

**MONDAY** – *The Immaculate Conception* A doctrine formally defined in 1854, acknowledging that Our Lady was conceived without *original sin*, that flaw in our nature that makes our will tend not to follow what it knows to be right.

**FRIDAY** – *St. Lucy* Was a virgin martyred around the year 303 in Syracuse. Devotion to her spread rapidly across practically the whole Church & her name is included in the Roman Canon (Eucharistic Prayer 1)

**SATURDAY** – *St. John of the Cross* Was born in Spain around 1542. He was co-founder with St. Teresa of Avila of the Discalced (bare-footed) Carmelites. He is the father of mystical theology. John's writings flowed from his own experience. He underwent many trials, including an impoverished youth & imprisonment at the hands of his fellow friars. John considered earthly sufferings an opportunity to be purged of love of self, that one might encounter God's love. One of his classic works is a commentary on the Song of Songs. St Therese of Lisieux frequently quoted John of the Cross. "At the evening of our life we will be judged on love," John said. He died in 1591 and was canonized in 1726 & declared a Doctor of the Church in 1926.

### 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](http://www.stjohnvianney.co.uk)

# Preparing to hear God's word...

**Next Sunday's Readings:  
Third Sunday Of Advent. Yr A  
15<sup>th</sup> December 2019**

*Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I say rejoice.  
Indeed, the Lord is near*



In the **First Reading** (Isaiah 35: 1-6,10) we hear of the joy of those who suffer. God promises through His prophet Isaiah, that He himself will come to set His people free. Jesus will bring His hope and joy to the poor and to those who suffer

**Psalms 145** *The Lord will save his people*

In the **Second Reading** (James 5; 7-10) we are challenged to be patient, for the Lord is coming. James encourages the community, especially the poor: Do not become bitter but be patient. The Lord will save you soon

*God our father, the earth rejoices in hope of the Saviour's coming and looks forward with longing to his return at the end of time. Prepare our hearts and remove the sadness that hinders us from feeling the joy and hope which his presence will bestow, for he is Lord for ever and ever.*

### **Isaiah 35: 1-6, 10**

Let the wilderness and the dry-lands exult, let the wasteland rejoice and bloom, let it bring forth flowers like the jonquil, let it rejoice and sing for joy. The glory of Lebanon is bestowed on it, the splendour of Carmel and Sharon: they shall see the glory of the Lord, the splendour of our God. Strengthen all weary hands, steady all trembling knees and say to all faint hearts, 'Courage!

Do not be afraid. 'Look, your God is coming, vengeance is coming, the retribution of God: he is coming to save you.'

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf unsealed, then the lame shall leap like a deer and the tongues of the dumb sing for joy; for those the Lord has ransomed shall return. They will come to Zion shouting for joy, everlasting joy on their faces: joy and gladness will go with them and sorrow and lament be ended.

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

Today is known as Gaudete Rejoice Sunday, taken from the first words in today's Entrance Antiphon. Isaiah prophesies the desert shall rejoice and blossom. We may ask ourselves why should we rejoice? The days are dark, cold and gloomy... The daily news in the papers and on the television do not always fill us with hope or joy... yes, why should I rejoice? I rejoice because I know that Jesus is coming for each one of us. He is coming for me! He is my hope and my light. By entering into our humanity He brings eternity to my reality.

The days may be dark and cold and the news may be full of gloom but in my life how do I radiate the joy, hope and light of today's readings to all whom I meet and encounter?

***Joy does not simply happen to us.***

***We have to choose joy and keep choosing it every day.***

Henri Nouwen

### **Matthew 11: 2-11**

John in his prison had heard what Christ was doing and he sent his disciples to ask him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or have we got to wait for someone else?' Jesus answered, 'Go back and tell John what you hear and see: the blind see again and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised to life and the Good News is proclaimed to the poor: and happy is the man who does not lose faith in me.' As the messengers were leaving Jesus began to talk to the people about John: 'What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swaying in the breeze? No? Then what did you go out to see? A man wearing fine clothes? Oh no, those who wear fine clothes are to be found in palaces. Then what did you go out for? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and much more than a prophet: he is the one who scripture says: Look I am going to send a messenger before you. I tell you solemnly, of all the children born of women, a greater than John the Baptist has never been seen: yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he is.'

I come to my place of prayer. I gently become aware of God's presence. When I am ready, I slowly read and re-read the Gospel.

In today's Gospel, John sends word to Jesus from prison, asking if Jesus is the Messiah for whom he has been waiting. Jesus responds by pointing to the miracles that He has worked and invites John and the other hearers to make up their own minds based on what they have seen and heard. In His next breath, however, Jesus praises John for his role in preparing the way for Jesus. Then Jesus says that all of those who work for the Kingdom of God will be as great as John and even greater.

John the Baptist was wondering about what Jesus was doing. He had been expecting a political Messiah and didn't understand the approach Jesus was taking. Jesus said to him, as he says to us, you have to have faith in me!

This time of Advent is offering me time and space, to ponder on my life of faith and commitment.

