



Saint Mary's Parish Lanark & Saint Isidore's Parish Biggar

4th Sunday of Advent
24th December 2023



A Conversation Throughout History

The most important conversation in history took place in a small house in Nazareth. It was a conversation between God himself, through the ministry of an Archangel, and a Virgin named Mary, from the house of David, espoused to a craftsman named Joseph. Most likely, Mary was recollected in prayer, perhaps meditating on a passage of Sacred Scripture referring to the Lord's promise of salvation. That is how Christian art has depicted the scene, in some of its most beautiful representations of our Lady. Or perhaps she was busy at her household tasks, in which case she would also have been praying. For everything in Mary's life was an occasion and a motive to carry on a constant dialogue with God.

Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you! (Lk 1:28). On hearing those words, Mary was greatly troubled at the saying, and considered in her mind what sort of greeting this might be (Lk 1:29). Not only the angel's sudden appearance, but also what he says causes her to be perplexed. Alarmed, she asks what the reason could be for such praise. In her humility, she sees herself as of little significance. Knowing the Scriptures well, she realises immediately that this heavenly messenger is transmitting to her an unheard of message. Who is she to deserve such praise? What has she done in her brief life? Certainly, she wants to serve God with all her heart and soul. But she considers her life to be very far from the heroic deeds that won praise for Deborah or Judith or Esther, women so renowned in the Bible. Still, she realises that this divine announcement is meant for her: Hail, full of grace!



St. Luke, in recounting the title given to Mary by Gabriel, full of grace, uses a Greek word that signifies that our Lady has been completely transformed and sanctified by God's grace. As the Church would later clarify, this had already occurred in the first moment of her conception, in consideration of the mission she was to carry out: to be the Mother of God in his human nature, while remaining always a Virgin.

The Archangel, aware of Mary's unease, seeks to calm her by explaining—now using her proper name—the reason for so exceptional a greeting: Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of Most High; and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his kingdom there will be no end (Lk 1:30-33).

Well aware of the messianic prophecies, on which she has often meditated, Mary understands that she is to be the Mother of the Messiah. In her reply there is not the least shadow of doubt or disbelief. Since her earliest childhood, her only concern has been to fulfil the divine will. But she wants to know how such a marvellous event will come about, since inspired by the Holy Spirit she has resolved to give herself to God with a virginal body and heart.

Gabriel then informs her of the divine way in which motherhood and virginity will unite in her womb: The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, your kinswoman Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible (Lk 1:35-37).

Mary doesn't hesitate: With all the strength of her will she responds to the invitation from heaven. She doesn't limit herself to simply giving permission; she pronounces a yes—fiat!—in which she commits her entire soul and heart, in full accord with God's will: Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it done unto me according to your word (Lk 1:38). And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us (Jn 1:14). As we contemplate once again this mystery of God's humility and the humility of his creature, we break forth in an exclamation of gratitude that can never end.

Weekly Parish Schedule

Daily Mass & Devotions from St Mary's are broadcast on the parish YouTube Channel.

Sunday 24th December

9.30am Confessions until 10.20am (St Mary's)

10.30am Holy Mass for the 4th Sunday of Advent (St Mary's)

12noon Holy Mass for the 4th Sunday of Advent (Holy Trinity)

12.35pm Tea/Coffee/Mince Pies (Holy Trinity)

5.00pm Vigil Mass of Christmas with Children's Choir (St Mary's)

9.00pm Midnight Mass of Christmas with St Mary's Choir (St Mary's)

Monday 25th December Christmas Day

10.30am Mass During the Day of Christmas (St Mary's)

12noon Mass During the Day of Christmas (Holy Trinity)

Tuesday 26th December

10.00am Holy Mass (St Catherine's)

11.40am Recitation of the Holy Rosary (St Mary's)

12noon Angelus and Holy Mass (St Mary's)

Wednesday 27th December

9.10am Recitation of the Holy Rosary (St Mary's)

9.30am Holy Mass (St Mary's)

Thursday 28th December

9.10am Recitation of the Holy Rosary (St Mary's)

9.30am Holy Mass (St Mary's)

Friday 29th December

9.10am Recitation of the Holy Rosary (St Mary's)

9.30am Holy Mass (St Mary's)

Saturday 30th December *St Mary's Church will close after 5pm Mass*

9.10am Recitation of the Holy Rosary (St Mary's)

9.30am Holy Mass (St Mary's)

4.30pm Recitation of the Holy Rosary (St Mary's)

5.00pm Holy Mass for the Solemnity of the Holy Family (St Mary's)

Sunday 31st December *St Mary's Church will close after 5pm Mass*

10.30am Holy Mass for the Solemnity of the Holy Family (St Mary's)

12noon Holy Mass for the Solemnity of the Holy Family (Holy Trinity)

5.00pm Holy Mass for the Solemnity of the Holy Family (St Mary's)

St Mary's Ministry Rota

Readers:

23rd/24th December

5.00pm R. McConnell

10.30am P. Roberts

6th/7th January

5.00pm R. McConnell

10.30am J. Russell

5.00pm S. Casserly

30th/31st December

5.00pm G. Abernethy

10.30am E. McCabe

5.00pm N. Donnelly

13th/14th January

5.00pm R. Kane

10.30am M. McCusker

5.00pm N. Donnelly

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion:

23rd/24th December

5.00pm T. Mullen

C. McClafferty

10.30am J. McAlavey

J. Wilson

6th/7th January

5.00pm P. Freel

R. Sinton

10.30am J. Littlejohn

M. Keenan

M. Kennan

30th/31st December

5.00pm J. McClafferty

J. McAlavey

10.30am C. Duddy

V. Hilland

13th/14th January

5.00pm A. Dempsey

C. Scott

10.30am J. Wilson

A. O'Neil

N. Kennan



Please Pray For The Following:



Recently Dead: Frank Pellow Plymouth

Jackie Grome; Robert Garvey; Cathy Gallagher; Maureen Boyle; Moira Healy; Rosemary McKeown (Shotts); Michael McGrady (Belfast); Rita Sloey (Wishaw); Vincent Schmidt (USA).

Months Minds & Anniversaries: Mary McCrossan; John Renton; William Kennedy; Tom, Kathleen, David, Steven & Joanne Flannigan (Victims of the Lockerbie Disaster); All Victims of the Lockerbie Disaster; Jim Ward; John Doolan; Nessie McEwan; Ella Caddle; Coulter Family; Kelly Family; McCafferty Family; Tommy Starrs; Catherine & Daniel Stewart.

Funeral Arrangements: Frank Pellow Requiem Mass: Thursday 4th January 9.30am, St Mary's

Christmas Remembrances: Bishop Frank Thomson; Bishop Joseph Devine; Fr Joseph Brannigan; Canon Willie Donnachie; All Deceased Members of The Vincentian Fathers; All Deceased Members of The Daughter's of Charity; Jim McShane; John & Mary McShane; Rosemary McShane MacIntyre; Frank McMahon; Annie & Arthur Lenagh; Hughie & Mary McShane; McShane Family; McGuire Family; Lenagh Family; McMahon Family; Kate & William Campbell; Bernie & Jim McEwan; Campbell Family; McCafferty Family; McEwan Family; James E. Reid; Gerry Wyllie; Wyllie Family; Deerin Family; Valentie Family; Bogan Family; Dunbar Family; McFarlane Family; Haney Family; Stewart Family; MacIntyre Family; Joseph & Betty McLeish; McLeish Family; Peter Brannen; Brannen Family; Edgar Family; Dan O'Neill; O'Neill Family; Thomas & Helen Lamb; Thomas Lamb Jnr; Lamb Family; McGuigan Family; William & Sarah Donnachie; Donnachie Family; Michael Pavilonis; Pavilonis Family; Paul & Cathie Millar; Paul & Nee Millar; Janice Millar; Millar Family; William Kay; Frank & Helen Carway; John & Frances Dickson; Michael, John & Annie Tierney; Charlie Lively; Lively Family; Laverty Family; Maher Family; May & Willie Reilly; Brian, Billy & Mary Heron; Mary, Jim & Michael McLaughlan; Mary, Bill & Stephen Murray; Anne & John Boyle; Karen Reilly; John Reilly Jnr; Maureen Logan; Thomas & Christina McNulty; Nora & John Byers; Mary Clark; Betty Hutchison; John Smith; Allan Steele; Cathy Travers; John Murray; Karen Murray; Tom & Sadie Palmer; Rona Palmer; Mary Jane & James Brennan; Agnes Jack; Anne Elder; James & Evelyn Brennan; John & Agnes Kennedy; Josephine & Willie Whitefield; Joseph McGuire; William & Martin McPhail; Harry & Jean McPhail; James & Mary McCrossan; Jim & Theresa Casagrande; Stuart McDougall; Margaret McCrossan; John Hughes; Jock, Sheena & John Craig; Sarah Savage; Arthur Kane; Joe McAllister; Peter & Susan Mulligan; Bridget Donnelly; Betty Dunlop; Mary, Tommy, May, Sadie, James & Jackie Martin; Connelly Family; Theresa & Roddy O'Connor; O'Connor Family; O'Neill Family; Michael Reilly; Reilly Family; John Doolan; Henry Doolan; Jane Doolan; Annie Skinner; Betty Sliman; Owen, Margaret & John Dempsey; Margaret, John & Bobby Dykes; Sandy McLean; Mary McLean; Catherine McLean; Jessie Clark; Frank Mackie; Susan Mackie; Leah & Albert Welsh; Graham Munro; Morton Family; Rodger McConnell; Bernard & Rose Scott; Alan & Beverley Milliken; John, Annie, Liam & Jane McConnell; Gerry Haetzman; Frank & Iza Devitt; Peter & Eleonora De-Schuster; Jerry & Josephine O'Leary; Jerry O'Leary Jnr; Jerry & Agnes O'Leary; John & Nora Docherty; Dan & Marion O'Donnell; Nan & Alex Hutton; Helen & Joseph McAreavy; John & Marion Renton; James & Mary Tait; Joe, Pat & Gerry McGarrigle; McGarrigle Family; Dean Family; Louise, Nan, Whitey & James Keenan; Betty & Moses Smith; James Stark; Moira & Alan Beattie; Martin Carway; Mary & Charlie Binnie; Bette & Davie Haggerty; Paul Donnachie; Donnachie Family; Sandy & Alex McLellan; Michael & Elizabeth McCue; Annie Cowe; Charles & Annie Coyle; Charles & Elizabeth Coyle; Dan & Marion O'Donnell; Arthur Christie; Sarah & Joseph Quinn; Jessica & John Christie; John Christie Jnr; Pat McTaggart; Mary McTaggart; Geraldine Murphy; Margaret McAllister; Kathleen Mangan; McAllister Family; Teresa Nelson; John Taggart; Michael McCulloch; Irene & Eddie O'Donnell; Dan McPhail; Stuart McDougall; Bert & Betty Sinton; Jimmy & Sarah McEwan; Anne Paisley; Anne Skeldon; Martha & Tam Smith; James McCardie; John Kerr; Matt & Peggy Reilly; Betty Thomson; Madge Reilly; Ann & Alasdair MacDonald; Bill & Annie Gebbie; Mary & Tommy Cavanagh; George Eddie; Steven, Mary, James & John Donnelly; Lisa McAlavey; John McAlavey; Blanche McAlavey; Susan Mays; Gerard Marys Snr; Gerard Mays Jnr; John O'Neill; Fox Family; Harvey Family; Agnes Brown Foley (nee McKendrick); John (Johnny) Foley; Joseph Foley; Agnes Foley (nee McGuinness); Sheila Jackson (nee Foley); Foley Family; Fr Joseph Brannigan; Frank, Maryann, Frank Jnr, James, John, Nan, Louise, James Jnr & Lisa Keenan; Angela O'Connell; Jack Hamilton; Ray Ward; Elle-May McNally; O'Connell Family; Stewart Family; Jenny & Wullie Todd; Robert Scott; Henry McKenzie; All Souls with no-one to Pray for Them; Martin Hilland; Frank Hilland; Kathleen Grieve; Bill Grieve; Anne Kinsella; Phil Kinsella; Joe Jackson; Frances Jackson; Coulter Family; Kelly Family; McCafferty Family; James, Clare & Evelyn O'Leary; Jimmy & Sadie Littlejohn; Arthur & John Talbot; Frances & Monica Cassidy; Rosina Baird; William & Florence Kennedy & Family; Francis Vincent Larkins; James Donoghue; Ron Meldrum; Jean & Jimmy Meldrum; Catherine & Daniel Stewart; Meg McConville; McConville Family; Eileen Prior; Janette Irvine; May Quinn; Geoff Coyle; Deceased Members of Choir of St Mary's; Kate Hanlon; Edward Hanlon; Archie Lindsay; Anne Lindsay; Mary Sheehy; Kate Nevin; Michael Nevin; Lisa & Robert Geddes Snr; Vera & Johnny Livingstone; McGonagle Family; Fox Family; Lawrence, Jessie & Nettie Hynds; Robert & Jenny Clarkson; Michael & Laura Treanor; James & Vera Hynds; Colin Slevin; James & Mae Graham; Walter Graham; James Graham Jnr; Annette Patrick; Thomas & Cecilia Cloonan; Mark Cloonan; Cloonan Family (Liverpool); Rotherham Family (Liverpool); James Callaghan; Anna Callaghan; Agnes & Alice Bamford; Callaghan Family (Sligo); Gerod & Hughie Connally; Vincent Schmidt (USA); Paul Halloran; Halloran Family; Helen & Robert Dennis & Families; Maureen Mathers; May & Veronica Quinn & Family; Fr Brannigan; Fr Hughes; Mayes & McMorran Family; Victor Doolan; Noone Family; Dowds Family; Farrell Family.



Holy Trinity Chapel

Lamington
Biggar
ML12 6HW



Parish Priest

Father John-Paul McShane

St Mary's Church
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St Mary's

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Charity No - SC011041

Bishop Toal's Christmas Message

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

At Christmas we enjoy singing Christmas Carols. We also enjoy listening to others singing them, particularly children and those in our parish and Diocesan Choirs. I express a special word of thanks, therefore, this Christmas to all our musicians and singers, and acknowledge the time and effort you put into preparing for the Carol Services, and most especially for the Christmas Liturgies.

In the Sacred Liturgy we celebrate the Mystery of the Incarnation, the Birth of Our Saviour, Christ the Lord, at Bethlehem. In recalling his birth, as we celebrate the Holy Eucharist we renew our faith in his living presence within and among us, and place our hope in life in Christ in its fullness in eternity. As Christians we desire to be "other Christs" as we journey through life and seek to show the love of Jesus in our relationships and activities. What we celebrate at Mass we strive to put into practice in who we are and in all that we do.



This year Christmas falls on a Monday. We have two important religious days – the 4th Sunday of Advent and Christmas – on top of one another. We have a fine opportunity to make it a particularly spiritual and holy Christmas by attending two Masses, from the time the Vigil on Saturday Evening to Christmas Day itself. We always have plenty to pray for and this Christmas will be a particularly good time to do so. St Paul offered us great words of encouragement last Sunday in his letter to the Thessalonians:

"Be happy at all times; pray constantly; and for all things give thanks to God, because this is what God expects you to do in Christ Jesus."

Our Christmas Carols often refer to Bethlehem, O Little Town of Bethlehem being especially well known and loved. Our thoughts and prayers at Christmas this year are particularly for the people of the Holy Land, Palestinians and Jews, and for a lasting peace to end the war and hatred. May the Angels' song as they appeared to the shepherds in the fields near Bethlehem ring true:

"Glory to God in the highest Heaven,
and peace to men who enjoy his favour".

I wish you all a holy, and peace-filled Christmas, and the blessing of God for 2024.

Yours in Christ

Bishop Joseph Toal

Christmas Coffee Morning and Raffle

The Christmas Coffee Morning and Raffle was another huge success raising £1400, along with sales from ginger wine of £120, and coffee morning donations of £130, resulting in a fabulous total of £1650. It was wonderful to see the Clubrooms filled with so many people of all age groups – thank you to everyone who supported this event.

The Social Committee would like to say a special thank you to all our helpers who assist with flowers, baking and helping at events. We are blessed to have such amazing parishioners who support St Mary's.

Happy Christmas!