



# SAINT BRIDE'S PARISH, EAST KILBRIDE

Bulletin for the Fourth Sunday of Advent  
21<sup>th</sup> December 2025

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## YOU CAME DOWN FROM THE STARS...

**M**ost of us will have already put up a Christmas Tree or will do so over the next few days. But do you have Nativity Scene in your home? It is a question that is worth asking, after all, Christmas is about the Birth of Jesus, and without that singular event - that God's Son became one of us, born as baby in Bethlehem - there would be no reason for any of the other things we do at this time of year, despite what society would have us believe. Pope Francis used to say that every Catholic home should have a Nativity Scene to remind us of the true message and supreme value of Christmas.

On Monday evening last week, the Nativity Scene in Saint Peter's Square, Rome was officially inaugurated. Under construction for the past five weeks, it will be in place until the 11<sup>th</sup> of January, Feast of the Baptism of the Lord and end of the Christmas Season.



The Nativity Scene in Rome has been donated this year by the Diocese of Agro Nocerino-Sarnese in the South of Italy, and measures 60 feet by 40 feet. It features many traditional elements from the area, as well as a nod to the local saint, Alphonsus Liguori (+1787), founder of the Redemptorists.

The fact that Alphonsus is depicted in a side part of the Scene is significant, at least in Italy: he penned the most famous Christmas Carol in Italian. Every year at the end of the Papal Masses over the Christmas Season, the Carol is sung. It is called *Tu scendi dalle stelle* (You came down from the stars). Incidentally, this year Pope Leo will celebrate Mass at the Vatican on Christmas Eve at 9pm GMT and on then Christmas morning at 9am GMT - the Christmas morning Mass has not figured on the Papal schedule since the times of Saint John Paul II. Both Masses can be seen on [live.vaticanmedialive.com](http://live.vaticanmedialive.com), Youtube or EWTN on Sky.

### Where does the custom of having a Nativity Scene come from?

Nativity Scenes have been a popular Christmas decoration for centuries. Saint Francis of Assisi is credited with creating the first 'living' Nativity Scene on Christmas Eve in the year 1223 at Greccio, a town sixty miles northeast of Rome. Francis is said to have stopped in Greccio a fortnight before Christmas and, inspired by the local scenery that reminded him of the Holy Land, he enlisted the help of villagers to recreate the scene of Christ's birth. No statues were used; instead, it was acted out by locals. The following account of that 'living' Nativity Scene was written by Saint Bonaventure's (1221-1274), a contemporary and follower of Saint Francis:

**S**aint Francis' mind went back to Bethlehem and he remembered the night when he had knelt in the Cave of the Nativity. He built a stable in the woods near his hermitage, and he put a real manger in the stable and filled it with hay, and beside the manger he built a simple altar. He arranged that there should be a real ox and donkey there, and he asked the people to Mass at the hermitage on Christmas Eve. The wood became a Church and the stable the altar of the Church. Those who were nearest to the stable could see the manger and the gentle beasts, the priest vested, and Saint Francis as his deacon."

Saint Francis' recreation was so popular that soon every Church in Italy had its own Nativity Scene. Pope Francis his Apostolic Letter, *Admirabile Signum* (Enchanting Scene) explains the significance of the traditional Nativity Scene, urging people to revive the tradition, as a "simple means of portraying the beauty of our faith".

He explained the significance of each element of the Nativity Scene, even the "starry night", which he describes as symbolising God's caring for us through the dark times of life. The "ruined buildings" which traditionally appear in the background are a "visible sign of fallen humanity, of everything that inevitably falls into ruin, decays, and disappoints", he said. The symbolism of many of the figures around the Nativity Scene is important, including the shepherds who are "poor and lowly . . . which teaches that we cannot let ourselves be fooled by wealth and fleeting promises of happiness".

If you do not already have a Nativity Scene, there are still a few days to get one (our Stall has a few available). Light a candle by your Nativity Scene to highlight its importance. Try to give it a prominent place in your home these days, so that you, and all who come into the house, may be reminded of the rich yet simple meaning of Christmas. **Father McGachey**

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## MONDAY AND TUESDAY OF THIS WEEK

- Monday at 7am - the last of our *Rorate Coeli* Masses.
  - Monday and Tuesday at 9.15am - Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.
  - Monday and Tuesday at 9.30am - the Holy Rosary.
  - Monday and Tuesday - 10am - Holy Mass.
  - Monday at 7pm - Devotions in honour of Our Lady.
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## TUESDAY AFTER MASS - CHURCH CLEANING FOR CHRISTMAS

We would like to have a big Church clean on Tuesday morning, after 10am Mass. Men and women, young and old, are needed to help that day, and would be made most welcome. Please bring your own buckets, we will provide cloths and suitable detergents. Thank you for your assistance. Tea and Coffee and mince pies will be available in the Library for all the workers.

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## CHRISTMAS REMEMBRANCES

In some parishes it has been the tradition for the parish clergy to offer the Masses they say on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day for the dead relatives and friends of the parishioners who hand in their names. Both priests will do this at the five Christmas Masses here at Saint Bride's this year. Their names will also be included in a special Christmas Day edition of the Bulletin. These are called 'Christmas Remembrances'. If you like to have your loved ones remembered in this way, then please hand in their names to the Sacristy or the Chapel House, by the 7pm on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December.

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## THE STALL

New Christmas merchandise is on display, including Cribs, Christmas ornaments and Christmas Cards, Christmas Books etc. The **Western Calendar 2026** is on sale priced £3.95.

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## AFTER 21<sup>ST</sup> DECEMBER THE CHILDREN'S LITURGY

will be taking a break over Christmas and New Year, returning on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> January.

# THE CHRISTMAS SEASON - UPDATED VERSION

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## **WEDNESDAY 24<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER - CHRISTMAS EVE**

No 10am Mass on Christmas Eve morning

Vigil Mass of Christmas, with incense, organ and cantor, 4pm

Vigil Mass of Christmas, with incense, organ and cantor, 8pm

Midnight Mass of Christmas, with incense, with organ and cantor Midnight

## **THURSDAY 25<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER - CHRISTMAS DAY**

Dawn Mass of Christmas with incense, organ and cantor 9.30am

Day Mass of Christmas with incense, organ and cantor 11.30am

## **FRIDAY 26<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER**

There will be no Holy Mass today at Saint Bride's

## **SATURDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER - FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY**

No 10am Holy Mass today

Confessions at 4pm-4.20pm; Vigil Mass 4.30pm

## **SUNDAY 28<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER - FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY**

Holy Mass 9.30am and 11.30am

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If you organise Readers, Eucharistic Ministers and Pass keepers for the Collection, please help us by ensuring that all the Masses of Christmas Eve and Christmas Day are covered with enough volunteers. Please let us know in advance who will be helping.

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## **THE CHRISTMAS COLLECTION**

You should find with your bulletin today the traditional 'Christmas Collection' envelope. This was one of the old 'Quarterly Collections' of the past. The income from this Collection stays in the Parish and is used to help support the Parish's daily liturgical life, the costs of heating and lighting the Church, which are very considerable (combined, they were almost £2,200 in November), as well as looking after the general fabric of the Church properties and enhancing the Church furnishings.

We are fortunate in this Parish not to have a weekly Second Collection, as many other parishes do. Nor do we have Collections on Holidays of Obligation, as other parishes do. This the only time, apart from Easter, when we ask for a little extra help. But please, give only if you can afford to give, because of the cost-of-living crisis and the financial demands that we are all under at this time. If you are a member of the Giftaid scheme, then please mark as the envelope 'Giftaid' and add your yellow envelope number or write your name on the envelope. Thank you very much for your continued support of Saint Bride's. It is much appreciated and will help us face the new year with more confidence. Fathers McGachey and Martin.

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## CHRISTMAS COFFEE MORNING AND RAFFLE PRIZE WINNERS

Sincere thanks to all those who helped organise the Christmas Coffee Morning last Sunday for their hard work and preparations. Thank you to those who donated prizes including Failte Mo Chara for the signed football, and the many other donations that were generously given. Between the Raffle, the Christmas Coffee Morning and one-off cash donations, £5020 was raised.

The Prize winners were: MOIRA MCCUDDEN - ATOMISER, PETER HILLAN - 55 INCH TELEVISION, ERIN SMITH - SIGNED CELTIC FOOTBALL, MARTIN MCKELVIE - £150, MARGARET LEITCH - LADIES PAMPER HAMPER, FRANK - POLAR BEAR, MAUREEN DAVIDSON - TEDDY AND MUG, LAUREN MUIRHEAD - SURPRISE BAG, ANNE GUIDI - JOHNNIE WALKER WHISKEY, CHRISTMAS CAKE - CLAIRE SLOAN, CHRISTMAS HAMPER - FATHER MCGACHEY.

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## LOAVES AND FISHES FOOD BANK UPDATE

Our next collection will be next weekend. We are not looking for items this time round. Rather we will collect donations in the wooden boxes, situated at the entrances of the Church. Any monies collected will go towards fresh produce and warm clothing for families. Sincere thanks for the support you have given all year.

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## 200 CLUB - THIS WEEK'S WINNER IS MOIRA MACLENNAN

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## ALL INTIMATIONS - THE NAMES OF: MONTHS MINDS, ANNIVERSARIES AND REMEMBRANCES IN WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE CHRISTMAS DAY BULLETIN

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## BISHOP JOSEPH TOAL'S CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

**A**t Christmas this year we will end the Jubilee Year of 2025, so let us give thanks for the blessings received and the Spirit of Hope renewed. Through Advent that same Hope has been stirred up as we look forward with expectancy to the Celebration of Our Saviour's Birth, and to the Lord coming again in glory and majesty. The Advent liturgies have called on us to be ready and watching so that we "may inherit the great promise in which now we dare hope".

It was the 1700th Anniversary recently of the Council of Nicea, whose great proclamation of the Christian faith we profess at Sunday Mass. We will do also with special fervour at the Christmas Masses, emphasising the Lord's Incarnation, his birth at Bethlehem - "For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man".

Of course, we need to put our faith into action through our works of charity, our love for our neighbour, and Christmas is a time of generosity and sharing with those we love. Let us try also to extend our kindness to those who are more in need, both locally and further afield, recognising that the Lord asks us to do so in his name and with his compassion and self-giving.

I wish you all a very Happy and Blessed Christmas, praying especially that the Peace sung of by the Angels at Bethlehem may reign within and among us, and throughout the whole world. May the Lord bless you, your families and friends, and keep you strong in faith, hope, and charity. With my prayers and best wishes. + Joseph Toal, Bishop of Motherwell

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