PETERPOST

Parish of St. Peter and the Winchester Martyrs

Alresford • Stockbridge • Winchester

24th December 2023

Fourth Sunday of Advent - Year B

Learning from Mary how to be Filled with the Holy Spirit

Father Mark writes:

Years ago, a psychologist named Thomas Holmes developed a scale for measuring stress. He assigned numerical values to events that cause stress such as the loss of job or a loved one, moving to a new city, a new relationship, etc.

Dr. Holmes even included Christmas on his stress list. He decided that just a normal Christmas was worth a hefty 14 stress points. Some of you understand. You're up to 15 or 20 stress points right now, maybe higher.

I was reading this week that someone took Dr. Holmes' scale and applied it to Mary, reaching the following conclusions about the pressure Mary was under:

- ₱ Pregnancy 45 points
- ♦ Change In living conditions 25 points
- Marriage to Joseph 50 points
- ♦ No reservation at the inn 35 points
- ♦ Change in financial situation 40 points
- ♦ Birth of a child 35 points
- ♦ Change of sleeping habits 15 points
- ♦ Change in eating habits 15 points
- ♦ Uninvited guests 50 points

310 total stress points. WOW!

According to this scale, Mary's accumulated 310 points qualifies her for serious illness, perhaps even death. Dr. Holmes says 200 stress points usually cause illness. This, of course, does not even include the flight to Egypt. Later on, of course, she had the heart-piercing experience of watching her beloved son die as a common criminal on a cross. I'm not qualified to comment on the legitimacy of Dr Holmes' work but wider the point remains: Is this what it means to be favoured of God? Evidently being favoured of God does not protect you from life's bumps and bruises. And yet, Mary said "Yes!"

In fact, other than her son, Jesus, Mary said the most complete and total and utter "yes" to God that has ever been uttered. She **gave** herself to him **completely**, she **surrendered** herself to him **totally**, she **abandoned** herself **entirely**, and was "filled with the Holy Spirit".

I don't know how you imagine the Annunciation. Several artists have produced amazing interpretations of the events which unfolded in Nazareth over 2,000 years ago. In my mind, I have a picture of the Archangel Gabriel on one knee before Mary, proposing to her, just as a shy young man might propose to his hoped-for bride. I imagine him gazing into her eyes and gently reassuring her ("Do not be afraid") and laying before her God's intentions and hopes and "dreams" and waiting, somewhat vulnerably, for her response, with all the other angels putting their "ears against the door" to listen in.

Eve said 'no' to God in the garden of Eden; Mary said 'yes' to him in Nazareth. Eve didn't trust God, but Mary is the mother of all who believe. Mary has provided God with the decisive 'yes' but it was not an easy 'yes'. Mary had no model to follow. Nobody else had been the Mother of God and so she had nobody to copy, no example to learn from. She was, and remains, unique.



It was also a risky, dangerous 'yes' because of what was written in the Law of Moses, that those who were pregnant outside of marriage should be stoned to death. This was no stress-free path that she was about to undertake.

Mary never said, 'Let it be done to me according to your word.' But that is because she never spoke English, as hard as it might be for us to get our head round that fact! Mary is most likely to have answered, 'Amen!' To say 'Amen' is to give our full and complete consent to God. 'Yes' or 'Sí' or 'Oui' or 'Ja' tends to be a short word in most languages but it's a short word packed with a lot of power because with it we make a decision for our whole life. Mary said a joyful 'Yes' to God! She felt loved by God and her 'yes' was a 'yes to Love'.

Mary can teach us how to say a complete 'yes' to God and to Love. With Abram and Moses and Samuel and Mary and Jesus, we can offer ourselves joyfully and completely to God and say, 'Here I am, Lord'.

Can you imagine the Archangel Gabriel kneeling before you, sharing God's plans for you, his hopes, his "dreams", his desires? Can you imagine the angel waiting, somewhat vulnerably, for your response? Will you allow the Holy Spirit to fill you? Will you allow Christ to be born anew within you, thereby allowing God's plan to come together? Will you abandon yourself into the loving arms of the Father? Only you can answer the angel's question...

Let me finish by sharing a prayer to the Holy Spirit with you. It's one which my dear aunt shared with me when I was a teenager and which I prayed for a while before it became too difficult to pray honestly. I've returned to it in the last couple of years — I can't remember exactly when — and have set an alarm on my phone to remind me to pray it every day. I really do believe that if you are able to find a few quiet moments, to settle and remind yourself of God's love for you, and to offer this prayer daily, from the depth of your heart, your life will be changed forever. It doesn't promise you a stress-free life, but certainly one filled with much joy and countless blessings as another servant of the Lord.

Prayer to the Holy Spirit (by Cardinal Mercier)

O Holy Spirit, beloved of my soul, I adore you. Enlighten me, guide me, strengthen me, console me.

Tell me what I should do; give me your orders. I promise to submit myself to all that you desire of me and to accept all that you permit to happen to me. Let me only know your will. Amen.

At Christmas, we celebrate something beautiful:



God sent his Son Jesus, born of the Virgin. Born in a stable, wrapped in swaddling clothes, He died on the cross for us. Raised from the dead he sent the Holy Spirit to fill us with his Love and to be with us always.

I pray that you will be filled with the same Holy Spirit, bringing you God's love and peace, and overflowing into the hearts of your loved ones, this Christmas.

Please know that you are very welcome to join us at any of our Masses and services, especially if you're new or you've been 'away' for a little while and would like to take a first step back. Do just turn up (though I suggest nice and early to the 5:30pm Masses). Please bring friends and family too. May God bless you, and all your loved ones, this Christmas and always,

Fr Mark, Fr Benedict and the Parish of St. Peter and the Winchester Martyrs

Christmas Season Daily Messages

Our daily messages will continue to Epiphany (7th January this year) and so you can still sign up if you wish to receive these – a beautiful image, a short piece of Scripture, a brief reflection and maybe one or two other delights to help you through the day -

https://stpeterschurch7.flocknote.com/FilledwiththeSpi NB: Please let the Parish Office know if you have signed up but are not receiving the Daily Messages.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession)

"Do not be afraid of Confession! One who is in line to confess himself feels all these things – even shame – but then, when he finishes confessing, he leaves free, great, beautiful, forgiven...happy. And this is the beauty of Confession...Jesus is there...and He receives you with so much love." (Pope Francis)

The last opportunity this Advent to celebrate this beautiful sacrament (except in emergency) is this Saturday morning (9:30-10:30am) and afternoon (4:30-5pm), St. Peter's.

Changes to Masses in the Coming Week.

On Tuesday 26th December (St. Stephen's Day), Mass is 10am in St. Stephen's. (There is no Mass at St Peter's or at St Gregory's).

On Monday 1st January Mass at St Peter's is at 10am.

There is also a Mass at 10am at St Gregory's on Monday 1st January.

There is no Mass at St Gregory's on Friday 5th January.

The Baptism Celebration Mass is at 10.30am at St Peter's on Saturday 6th January and replaces the 9am Mass.

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (Year B) – 24th December 2023

Entrance Antiphon: Cf. Is 45:8

Drop down dew from above, you heavens, and let the clouds rain down the Just One; let the earth be opened and bring forth a Saviour.

First reading: Samuel 7:1-5,8-12,14,16

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 88:2-527,29. R. Cf. v.2

I will sing for ever of your love, O Lord.

Second reading: The Letter of St Paul to the Romans 16:25-27

Gospel Acclamation: Lk 1:26-38

R. Alleluia, alleluia!

I am the handmaid of the Lord: let what you have said be done to me.

R. Alleluia!

Gospel: Luke 1:26-38

Communion Antiphon: Is 7:14

Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son; and his name will be called Emmanuel.

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS. MARY & JOSEPH (Year B) – 31st December 2023

Entrance Antiphon: Lk 2:16
The shepherds went in haste and found Mary and Joseph and the infant lying in a manger.

First reading: Genesis 15:1-6,21:1-3

Responsorial Psalm: Ps 104:1-6,8-9. R. vv.7-8

He, the Lord, is our God.

He remembers his covenant for ever.

Second reading: The Letter to the Hebrews 11:8,11-12,17,19

Gospel Acclamation: Heb 1:1 2

R. Alleluia, alleluia!

At various times in the past and in various different ways, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets; but in our own time, the last days,

he has spoken to us through his Son.

R. Alleluia!

Gospel: Luke 2:22-40

Communion Antiphon: Ba 3:38 Our God has appeared on the earth, and lived among us.



PRAYER CORNER: Each week, this section will contain an intercession that I hope every parishioner will pray for during the coming week. In this way, we will all pray to the Lord for the parish's mission, because "if the Lord does not build... in vain do the builders labour" (Ps 127:1) Fr. Mark

This Week's Intention: Let us pray that our Christmas celebrations are both uplifting and spirit-filled, may they offer hope and bring joy to everyone who comes to honour the birth of Christ.



PLEASE PRAY FOR

the repose of the souls of those who have died recently:

Colin Poffley RIP Moira Horton RIP Jeanette Whitcher RIP

Funeral Notices:

Jeanette Whitcher RIP – Funeral Service at St Peter's Church, Winchester on Friday 5th January at 10.30am.

Please pray for their family and friends at this difficult time. May God grant them eternal rest.



Priests' Christmas Collection

Fr Mark and Fr Benedict are very grateful for all your Christmas gifts and for the Christmas collection which forms a large part of their annual salary. If you wish to donate to the Clergy Christmas Collection, you can donate via contactless or cash/cheque in the Christmas collection, but if you choose to donate via the web, please use the following link: *Christmas donations-2023*



CHRISTMAS MASS AND SERVICE TIMES

If you missed the **Christmas Mass Times** flyer in last week's newsletter - don't worry, we've attached them again! The times are also on the home page of the website, or you can use this direct link. Why not print off and circulate copies to family, friends and neighbours? Please know that you are very welcome to join us at any of our Masses and services, especially if you're new or you've been 'away' for a little while and would like to take a first step back. Do just turn up, though we suggest you arrive early for the popular Masses.

There are also flyers in the back of churches listing them, so you can take one home and attach to your fridge...



The Proclamation of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ

At the start of Midnight Mass at St Peter's, Deacon Martin will announce the birth of Jesus, with a solemn proclamation. (Take a look at the word sheet for Midnight Mass, to see the words of the proclamation).

The Roman Missal says "The announcement of the Nativity of the Lord from the Roman Martyrology draws upon Sacred Scripture to declare in a formal way the birth of Christ. It begins with creation and relates the birth of the Lord to the major events and personages of sacred and secular history. And so, we hear of the creation of mankind, the Flood, of Abraham, Moses and David - but also the 194th Olympiad, the foundation of the city of Rome, and the 42nd year of the reign of Caesar Octavian Augustus. In doing so, the proclamation reinforces the

central truth of the Incarnation: that Jesus Christ is truly divine and truly human, born at a specific point in human history.

We too have been born into a specific point in human history, just like Jesus; will we use the time given to us, to love Him, serve Him, and proclaim Him to all people?

Stewardship Sunday Thank You

Fr Mark would like to offer another enormous thank you to our amazing parishioners, who have responded so generously to our recent Stewardship Sunday invitation to pledge. Over 156 individuals, couples or families completed cards, with 91 of these committing for the first time to regular giving or offering to increase their monthly contributions and 57 pledging to maintain their contribution and/or commit to the parish through prayer and other ways.

For those of you who know how to set up or increase your monthly payments, please feel free to do so but, by the end of January we will be emailing out to all of you who are committing for the first time or increasing your payments, to thank you personally and to offer you "what to do next" guidelines. In the meantime, please find attached Gift Aid and Standing Order forms: GIFT AID DECLARATION and Standing-Order-Form Thank you again.

CWL Soup and Pud lunch

Our next Soup and Pud lunch will be on **Friday 5th January**, 12.00 to 1.30pm in the Pastoral Centre - to welcome in the New Year. Do come!



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Laudato Si Corner

At the time of writing, the <u>COP28</u> climate talks have not resulted in a healing of the deep international divisions on how to deal with fossil fuels which scientists say are by far the biggest source of the greenhouse gas emissions driving global warming. Whilst these divisions exist it appears increasingly likely that we are now fast moving towards the critical 1.5 degree Centigrade increase in global temperatures.

As Pope Francis stated in Laudate Deum..."The effects of climate change are borne by the most vulnerable people, whether at home or around the world" and "I have realised that our responses have not been adequate, while the world in which we live is collapsing and may be nearing the breaking point."



Filled with the Spirit

CrossKeys – Christmas 2023

Do you want to know the latest Parish news? — The latest issue of CrossKeys — the Parish's termly magazine is available here or you may find copies at the back of Church.

There is plenty to read. - It features a great round up from Fr. Mark on our Year of the Holy Spirit, as well as reports from all over the Parish on a wide range of activities, including Deacon Tony's ordination, World Youth Day in Lisbon, Alpha, and a whole lot more.

Vacancy for Part-time Admin Assistant for Winchester Basics Bank

Salary: £11.44 per hour for 16 hours per week -Tuesday and Friday 9 am - 2 pm at warehouse in Winnall, Monday, Wednesday and Thursday 9 am



- 11.00 am home working (some flexibility possible but 30min must be prior to 10am). During busy periods additional hours maybe required (by prior arrangement). Annual leave is 5 weeks pro rata plus Bank Holidays. For further information and an application form please email, Lesley Little, Chair at

chair@winchesterbasicsbank.co.uk. Closing date: 12th Jan 24

Useful Contacts

Clergy: Fr Mark Hogan (Parish Priest) (mhogan@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk) Fr Benedict Ndikum (Assistant Priest) (bndikum@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk)

Deacon Martin McElroy (<u>mmcelroy@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk</u>)
Deacon Tony Darlison (<u>tdarlison@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk</u>)

Director of Evangelisation and Leadership: Allegra Mutanda (<u>allegra@stpeterswinchester.org.uk</u>)
Pastoral Coordinator for Evangelisation: Jonathan Stephens (jstephens@stpeterswinchester.org.uk)

Parish Music Team Leader: - Alastair Ross (aross@stpeterswinchester.org.uk).

Housekeeper: Sarah Harfield (sharfield@stpeterswinchester.org.uk)

Finance and Property Administration: TBC ($\underline{accounts@stpeterswinchester.org.uk}$) Facilities and Resources Manager: Sean Reidy ($\underline{sean@stpeterswinchester.org.uk}$)

Parish Administration: Alison Young (office@stpeterswinchester.org.uk)

Sacristan: Laurie Howe Caretaker: Richard Phiri

Pastoral team – Baptism and First Holy Communion: Rosanne Walker (baptism@stpeterswinchester.org.uk), (FHC@stpeterswinchester.org.uk)

Pastoral team – Youth Ministry: Jo Donaldson (youthstuff@stpeterswinchester.org.uk)

Outreach Ministry Lead: Mike Elks (<u>mike@stpeterswinchester.org.uk</u>)

 $\textbf{Volunteer Director of Communications: Lisa Justice} \ (\underline{ ljustice@stpeterswinchester.org.uk})$

 $\textbf{PeterCares}: \underline{petercares@stpeterswinchester.org.uk} \ \textbf{Prayerline}: \underline{prayers@stpeterswinchester.org.uk}$

 $\textbf{Wedding information} - \underline{weddings@stpeterswinchester.org.uk}$

Newsletter (deadline for items Wednesday evening): newsletters@stpeterswinchester.org.uk Newsletter list: hello@stpeterswinchester.org.uk

St. Peter's School Office: 01962 852820 admin@st-peters.hants.sch.uk

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INTERIM PARISH RENTALS & BOOKINGS ADMINISTRATOR

The parish is looking for a suitably qualified Rentals & Bookings Administrator on a part-time, interim basis to cover the requirements relating to the administration of room and hall hires (commercial lettings), rental properties and the implementation of efficient systems for bookings and planned giving, for an expected period of three to six months. For a full job description and person specification, plus details of how to apply, please contact: recruitment@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

The deadline for applications is Tues 2nd Jan, 12 noon.

End of the Year Silent Retreat on the Isle of Wight - 28th Dec. - 1st Jan.

This Retreat wants to help us explore and deepen the joy that our faith in Christ brings us and prepare ourselves for the year to come. Led by the Verbum Dei Community. For more information, please contact: Sr Emiliana +44 7426 000213 or verbumdei.iow@gmail.com



St Peter's School has a vacancy for a Deputy Headteacher in September 2024.

St Peter's is a school built on strong Catholic ethos and values. We deliver high quality, rounded education, focussing not only on individual academic excellence, but also on each pupil's spiritual, moral, physical and emotional development. We have a strong leadership team; dedicated teaching and support staff; supportive governors, who all work well together with shared purpose. We are seeking a like-minded professional to complete our team for September 2024. For more details on the role, including the application form, please visit the school website at:

https://www.stpetershants.co.uk/vacancies/



Christmas Mass Times

Saturday 23rd December (4th Sunday of Advent)

† 5.30pm – Vigil Mass at St Peter's

Sunday 24th December (4th Sunday of Advent)

† 8.00am – Early Mass at St Peter's

† 9.00am – Mass at St Thomas More's

† 9.15am – Mass at St Stephen's

† 10.30am – Mass at St Peter's

† 11.00am – Mass at St Gregory's

Christmas Eve – Sunday 24th December

† 3.00pm – Children's Christmas Mass at St Peter's

† 5.00pm – Carols; 5.30pm First Mass of Christmas at St Stephen's

+ 5.30pm - Family Mass of Christmas at St Peter's

† 8.00pm – Carols & Readings followed by "Midnight Mass" at St Gregory's

† 10.30pm – Carols & Readings then "Midnight Mass" at St Peter's

Christmas Day – Monday 25th December

† 8.00am – Christmas Day Dawn Mass at St Peter's

+ 9.00am - Christmas Day Mass at St Thomas More's

† 9.15am – Christmas Day Mass at St Stephens's

† 10.30am – Christmas Day Mass at St Peter's

† 11.00am – Christmas Day Mass at St Gregory's

Boxing Day – Tuesday 26th December

† 10.00am – Feast of St Stephen Mass at St Stephen's

23 rd December 2023 – 6 th January 2024		
09.00 AM	Mass at St Peter's	Clare McKenna RIP
5.30 PM	Mass at St Peter's	Soul of Mary Lucy King
8.00 AM	Mass at St Peter's	Austin Emery RIP
9.00 AM	Mass at St Thomas More's	
9.15 AM	Mass at St Stephen's	Martin Gilligan RIP (4 th Anniversary)
10.30 AM	Mass at St Peter's	People of the Parish
11.00 AM	Mass at St Gregory's	
3.00 PM	Children's Christmas Mass at St	Peter's
5.00 PM	Carols followed by Mass at	People of Ukraine
	5.30pm at St Stephen's.	
5.30 PM	Family Mass at St Peter's	Intentions of Jo & Vera Kelly & Family
8.00 PM	Carols and Readings, followed b	y Mass at 8:30pm at St Gregory's.
10.30 PM	Midnight Mass at St Peter's	Soul of William Meader
8.00 AM	Dawn Mass at St Peter's	James Murphy's Recovery from Illness
9.00 AM	Mass at St Thomas More's	
	•	
		Eilish Currin RIP
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10.00 AM	Mass at St Stephen's	Peter McAulay RIP (1 st Anniversary)
10 00 AM	Mass at St Peter's	Ian Parker RIP
10.00 AM	Mass at St Peter's	Intentions of the Neil Family
10.00 AM	Mass at St Gregory's	
12.15 PM		Soul of Maureen Marsh
09.00 AM	Mass at St Peter's	Tom Cambridge RIP
5.30 PM	Mass at St Peter's	Annette Hazell RIP
8.00 AM	Mass at St Peter's	Pope Benedict XVI RIP (1st Anniversary)
9.00 AM	Mass at St Thomas More's	People of the Parish
9.15 AM	Mass at St Stephen's	People of Ukraine
10.30 AM	Mass at St Peter's	Intentions of Margalit Connolly
11.00 AM	Mass at St Gregory's	
5.30 PM	Mass at St Peter's	
10.00 AM	Mass at St Peter's	Special Baby Due for Sindisiwe Mlotshwa
10.00 AM	Mass at St Gregory's	
	Mass at St Gregory's	
12.15 PM	Mass at St Peter's	Soul of Maureen Marsh
10 00 AM	Mass at St Peter's	Souls of the deceased members of the Bristol family
10.00 AM	Mass at St Peter's	Bernard & Cherry Twomey RIP
	No Mass at St Gregory's	
12 15 554	O ,	Soul of Molly O'Price
		Soul of Molly O'Brien
TO'30 VIVI	Baptism Celebration Mass at St Peter's	
5.30 PM	Mass at St Peter's	All Souls in Purgatory
	Mass Tim 09.00 AM 5.30 PM 8.00 AM 9.00 AM 9.15 AM 10.30 AM 11.00 AM 5.00 PM 5.00 PM 6.00 AM 9.15 AM 10.30 AM 10.30 AM 10.30 AM 10.00 AM 10.00 AM 10.00 AM 10.00 AM 10.00 AM 5.30 PM 8.00 AM 10.00 AM 10.00 AM 11.00 AM 10.00 AM 10.00 AM 12.15 PM 10.30 AM 11.00 AM 10.00 AM 12.15 PM 10.00 AM 10.00 AM	Mass Times & Intentions 09.00 AM

Confessions every Saturday 9.30am till 10.30am and 4.30pm-5.00pm at St Peter's Church – booking not required.

Morning Prayer (livestream and open to public), every weekday 8.00am at St Peter's followed by Adoration till 9.00am.

To participate in any service online (including Morning Prayer & Adoration) or to see the recorded services, go to our <u>YouTube channel</u>

ALL SERVICES (INCLUDING MORNING PRAYER) FROM ST PETER'S ARE LIVESTREAMED.

Message from the Newsletter Team

Praying that you and your loved ones have a peaceful and joy-filled Christmas season.

Please note that the Pastoral Centre will be closed between Christmas and New Year, but our priests will respond to emergency calls.

