The Roman Catholic Parishes of Old Hall Green, Puckeridge & Buntingford

(Established 1793: 2 Farm Ln, SG11 1DT) (Established 1914: 3 Station Rd, SG9 9HT)

website: https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/oldhallgreen **website:** https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/buntingford

Parochial Administrator: Fr Peter Harris

Postal Address: 3 Station Road, Buntingford Hertfordshire SG9 9HT
Email: buntingford@rcdow.org.uk
Safeguarding Representative: Michelle Siggers ✉ ohgpsg@safeguardrcdow.org.uk
Bishop's Stortford Parish Office: Monday to Friday 9:00 am to 3:00 pm ☎ 01279 654063

The 4th Sunday of Advent 24 December 2023

Mass Times for the Week commencing
23-31 December 2023
All Masses will take place in the parish church of St Richard of Chichester, Buntingford.



Saturday 23 December
Vigil Mass of the 4th Sunday of Advent
6.00pm: The People of the Parish

Sunday 24 December
NO MASS

Monday 25 December
9am Mass: The People of the Parish



Saturday 30 December
Vigil Mass 6th Day in the Octave of Christmas
6.00pm: The People of the Parish

Sunday 31 December
The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph
9.15am: The People of the Parish
11.00am: The People of the Parish



REFRESHMENTS AFTER MASS

Parishioners are warmly invited to the hall between the two Sunday Masses for refreshments served from 10.15am



He (the angel) went in and said to her (Mary), 'Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you.' She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, 'Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour (Lk 1:26-30).

In the Gospel of this Sunday, we hear Luke's great account of the angel Gabriel being sent by God to Mary. This event changed history, making way for God to come to earth as a human child, through Mary. In his catechesis of 18th November 2020, Pope Francis introduces us to Mary as a model for our prayer and calls us to model our prayer life on hers. Here are a few points that I found very appropriate not just for today but for our whole life as Christians.

Today we meet the Virgin Mary as the prayerful woman. Mary was a simple girl engaged to a man of the house of David, a young girl of Nazareth wrapped in silence, in continuous dialogue with God who would soon entrust her with a mission. She is already full of grace and immaculate from the moment she was conceived (we celebrated this Solemnity just a few weeks ago); but she knows nothing yet of her surprising and extraordinary vocation. She was docile, and with her availability, she prepared the great event of God coming into the world.

Her small and yet immense "Here I am" had been preceded throughout salvation history by many other "Here I am", by many who were open to God's will. There is no better way to pray than to place oneself like Mary in an attitude of openness, with a heart open to God: "Lord, what you want, when you want, and how you want". This is a heart open to God's will. We always want things before asking for them, and we want them right away. This restlessness harms us. And prayer knows how to calm restlessness, knows how to transform it into availability. When we are restless, I pray, and prayer opens my heart and makes me open to God's will. In those few moments of the Annunciation, the Virgin Mary knew how to reject fear, even while sensing that her "yes" would bring her tremendously difficult trials.

In the Virgin Mary, natural feminine intuition is exalted by her most singular union with God in prayer. This is why, reading the Gospel, we note that she seems to disappear at times, only to reappear in crucial moments: Mary was open to God's voice that guided her heart, that guided her steps where her presence was needed: a silent presence as a mother and as a disciple, the one who best learned Jesus' ways.

Everything that happened around her ended up being reflected on in the depths of her heart so that it might pass through the sieve of prayer and be transfigured by it: whether it be the giving birth in a stable, the flight into Egypt, the lost of Jesus for three days, until the events of the Passion. The Mother kept everything and brought it to her dialogue with God.

How beautiful it would be if we too could be a bit like our Mother! With a heart open to God's Word, with a silent heart, with an obedient heart, with a heart that knows how to receive God's Word and allows it to grow for the Church.

Fr Marco Lazzaron

A Prayer Offering to the Holy Child.

0 Dear, sweet Infant Jesus. I offer You: my will, that You strengthen it; my mind, that You inspire it; my memory, that You fill it; my wishes and desires, that You cleanse them. I sacrifice to You: my intentions, that You guide them; my trouble and my labour, that You bless them; all my inner and outer activities, that You make them sacred. All I am and all I have Is Yours. Your love for me is my hope and my trust. Hear me and grant that I may never leave You. Amen