

WELCOME TO CHRIST THE KING! We would like to extend a warm welcome to all our parishioners and visitors attending public Mass. Whether you are just passing through or looking for a spiritual home, we pray you find Christ the King inviting and spiritually uplifting. If you are attending Mass on a regular basis, we encourage you to register with the parish. Please call our parish office and start the conversation! To our visitors, we hope you enjoy your stay here in Amesbury. Our church is always open to you, your family, and friends. pax et bonum (peace and all good)

PARISH CONTRIBUTIONS AND GENEROSITY A big thank you for all your generous donations, which are greatly appreciated. If anyone would like to transfer to standing order or bank transfer, this would help to simplify our banking procedure. The Parish bank details are: Name: Christ the King Church, Amesbury, Bank: NatWest Account number 66286638 and Sort code-52-10-03. If you wish to remember the Parish in your Will, further information is available from the Parish Office.

CONFIRMATION - If you have a child that has just completed Year 8 (going into Yr 9 or above in September) and you wish to enrol them in the next programme, the deadline is February 2024.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY at Christ the King is at 11am Mass. The liturgy is for children in Year 3 and below, please note children younger than school age need to be accompanied by an adult.

PRAY FOR VOCATIONS Please do all you can to encourage priestly and religious vocations. Your prayers and support make a difference.

IN MEMORIAM Please remember in your prayers those who recently died and for all the deceased members of our family and parish, the souls in purgatory and those who died in service of our country. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord. Amen.

Please pray for God's grace for those who are ill: Please also pray for an increase in vocations, especially in our diocese and our country.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION - If you have a Child that has just completed Year 2 (going into Yr 3 or above in September) and you wish to enrol them in the next programme, the deadline is November 2023.

CONFESSIONS/SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION In the Sacrament of Penance, the love and mercy of the Lord Jesus is made manifest in the forgiveness of sins, thereby reconciling the penitent with God and with his Church. Confession is every Saturday from 5.00pm-5.40pm or by appointment.

RED BOXES 2023: Through our Red Boxes and donations to Missio and the Mill Hill Missionaries we are helping the Universal Church in reaching out to others in their desperate need. It is time for you to return the Red Mission Boxes to the Church in the coming weeks. Please make sure your name and address is written on the sticker at the bottom of the box. Please leave the box in the sacristy – not in the church porch – and you can pick it up again a week later. Thank You! God bless you!

POPE'S INTENTION FOR DECEMBER For persons with disabilities. We pray that people living with disabilities may be at the centre of attention in society, and that institutions may offer inclusive programmes which value their active participation.

REST IN PEACE May those who have died enter into the mercy of God and the joy of the Kingdom.

"O GOD OF HOSTS, RESTORE US; LIGHT UP YOUR FACE AND WE SHALL BE SAVED." (Ps 80:8). Welcome to the 2nd Sunday of Advent. During this season, there is an element of penance in the sense of preparing, quieting and disciplining our hearts for the full joy of Christmas. Thus, on Thursday, Dec. 14th at 7:00pm there will be the Deanery Advent Penitential service at St Gregory's, Salisbury for you to receive this Sacrament of Healing! I

welcome you to come and receive this sacrament no matter how long it has been since your last confession. This sacrament is a gift from God so that we can turn back to Him, away from sin, and be healed. A reminder that sin is an offence against God. As we hear in the Catechism of the Catholic Church, "Sin is before all else an offence against God, a rupture of communion with him. At the same time it damages communion with the Church. For this reason conversion entails both God's forgiveness and reconciliation with the Church, which are expressed and accomplished liturgically by the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation" (CCC 1440). An examination of conscience is helpful because in humility, the penitent acknowledges the sin. This help opens one's eye to see where amendments in one's life needs to come. Contrition is necessary for the penitent to receive the fruits from this sacrament. A reminder that contrition is, "sorrow of the soul and detestation for the sin committed, together with the resolution not to sin again" (CCC 1451). Please remember that there are many helpful fruits of going to the Sacrament of Reconciliation! Having gone to confession, your soul will be cleansed. God is there when you need Him and confession is that step to seek forgiveness for your sins and strengthen your connection with God. The most important part of confession is not the number of sins you confess, but having sorrow for your sins and resolve to not commit them again. Acknowledging this, you rely on God's guidance and are more open to His will in your life, which leads to greater fulfilment. Going to this sacrament does not mean you are instantly a perfect person, but a help in life for your growth. For instance, having experienced true forgiveness from our Lord in the sacrament, knowing that you are forgiven, you are then better able to practise that forgiveness with others in your life. Sin weighs on the heart, but confessing them lets you come to terms with your sins and actions, helping you to avoid them in the future. Being entirely honest with the priest and yourself, helps make the sacrament effective. So many people mention that hearing the words "I absolve you from your sins" offers a great relief. Walking out from confession, many have experienced a feeling of lightness and liberation, now being closer to God. Turn away from sin and live in God! As St. Augustine said, "The beginning of good works is the confession of evil works". **"Go to your confessor; open your heart to him; display to him all the recesses of your soul; take the advice that he will give you with the utmost humility and simplicity. For God, Who has an infinite love for obedience, frequently renders profitable the counsels we take from others, but especially from those who are the guides of our souls."** St. Francis de Sales

MASS SCHEDULE STARTING FROM 9TH DECEMBER 2023

SATURDAY 9TH DECEMBER MASS AT 6.00PM ANN COCKRELL, RIP

SUNDAY 10TH DECEMBER MASS AT 11.00AM FOR JO CHAMBERS FAMILY'S SPECIAL INTENTIONS

MONDAY 11TH DECEMBER ADORATION AT 9.00AM AND MASS AT 10.00AM PATRICK MONAGHAN (HEALING)

TUESDAY 12TH DECEMBER ADORATION AT 9.00AM AND MASS AT 10.00AM CAROL DRENNAN (HEALTH AND WELL-BEING))

WEDNESDAY 13TH DECEMBER ADORATION AT 9.00AM AND MASS AT 10.00AM GAY SAVAGE (HEALING AND STRENGTH)

THURSDAY 14TH DECEMBER ADORATION AT 9.00AM AND MASS AT 10.00AM GAY TARRANT (INTENTIONS)

FRIDAY 15TH DECEMBER ADORATION AT 9.00AM AND MASS AT 10.00AM JO CHAMBERS (BIRTHDAY INTENTIONS)

SATURDAY 16TH DECEMBER MASS AT 6.00PM FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE PARISH

SUNDAY 17TH DECEMBER MASS AT 11.00AM PRIVATE INTENTION



THE CATHOLIC CHURCH OF CHRIST THE KING

THE PRESBYTERY, 4 LORDS CROFT, AMESBURY, WILTS., SP47EP

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WELCOME TO CHRIST THE KING

We welcome visitors, family and friends to our Mass today.
We are glad you are joining us today.

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT- (YEAR-B)-2023

FROM THE DESK OF FATHER SAJI-ARE YOU A COMFORTER? I know that you are not a feather-filled, bulky blanket that creates great warmth on top of a bed, but can we use that image to ask the question that comes to the forefront on the second week of Advent? Are we individuals and a community that can offer comfort to those who need it? The scripture gives us some descriptive words to help us know if we're capable of doing what Jesus has given us as a mission. Can we be gentle with others? One can only be gentle when one has a particularly great measure of compassion. If we don't have that, our gentleness comes across as the fake characteristic that it is. Gentleness flows from an understanding of frailty and brokenness. Each of us has felt that way in our lives and understand how much difference a gentle touch our word can mean at that moment. We can appreciate the gift of a quiet and respectful setting, not so filled with words or actions. Can you be gentle and not take your emotional reactions to that person out on them? Can you save those for another time when you have some time to take care of yourself?

We are a comforting people. We need to be able to make crooked roads straight, fill in deep valleys, and bring down high mountains. Using those images figuratively, we all understand what it means to walk a crooked way, and lose the path we're supposed to be on. Can we companion those who have lost their way and gently lead them back to the straight and narrow? We all know what it means to keep falling into the same hole of mistakes throughout our lives, but can we have compassion and treat those who find themselves in those situations with respectability and peace? We've all faced insurmountable odds and tough events in our lives that seem too rugged to climb. Can we be gentle with those who seem to be overwhelmed with life and simply need a calm place to rest along the road?

The last image that is used in our reading from the prophet Isaiah today is that of a shepherd who feeds his flock and gathers them together. We know that the ultimate shepherd is Jesus, but he has asked us to carry on his work here on earth until he comes again. The Good Shepherd is the one who seeks out the lost, gathers them into his bosom, and carries them safely back to the flock. Think of all the people in your life who you imagine to have wandered away from the flock. Can you treat them as the good shepherd would? Can you seek them out rather than wait for them to struggle back? Can you quit writing people off as a lost cause? Can you reclaim those who have thought to be worthless and allow them to be part of your community of brothers and sisters? This is a season in which we are to awaken to the truth of God, and how God invites us to live in this world. This season invites us to alertness to the ever present call to be witnesses for Jesus in the world. This is the season when we are asked to admit how we have failed to be the disciples of Jesus, we would wish or claim to be and to begin to be that who we say we are. When we celebrate the birth of Jesus on December 25, will you be more awake and alert or will it just be a day of sentimentality and remembrance? Do you find comfort in the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem and challenge in following in his footsteps? Advent is more than just a season to prepare for a single date, but it is a practice of faith and spirituality that leads to a new and deeper way of living every day of our lives. What are we doing right now to awaken ourselves to the opportunities that Jesus gives us to be his presence in the world today and every day of our lives? Let us each take the invitation that Advent offers and live it to its fullest. May we continue our Advent preparation in anticipation of our Lord's birth and his return. Blessings of Advent to all. Let's pray for each other this week. Wishing you a great week ahead! BE BLESSED AND BE A BLESSING

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON: O people of Sion, behold, the Lord will come to save the nations, and the Lord will make the glory of his voice heard in the joy of your heart.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Let us see, O Lord, your mercy and give us your saving help.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION Alleluia, alleluia! Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight, and all mankind shall see the salvation of God. Alleluia!

COMMUNION ANTIPHON: Jerusalem, arise and stand upon the heights, and behold the joy which comes to you from God.

DEANERY ADVENT PENITENTIAL SERVICE will be held at St Gregory's church on Thursday 14 December 7pm There will be a short service including music followed by the opportunity for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. There will be a number of priests available to hear individual Confessions. In addition every Friday during Advent, Confessions will be heard between 6pm-7pm and on Saturday from 5.00pm-5-40pm at Christ the King. **"In the life of the body a man is sometimes sick, and unless he takes medicine, he will die. Even so in the spiritual life a man is sick on account of sin. For that reason he needs medicine so that he may be restored to health; and this grace is bestowed in the Sacrament of Penance."**St. Thomas Aquinas

THE MYSTICAL RIVER OF PEACE There was once a man exerting himself to find peace in his life so he went on a journey in search of a beautiful and mystical river. When he found the river, he sat down next to it, drank from it, bathed in it, fished from it; he played in it and he even nearly drowned in it. The man gained tremendous peace just being near the river. He stayed many days and nights near the river and listened to its mystical teachings. Before he left, he took a picture of the river and then set off for home. Upon his return, his family, friends and townspeople all noticed the peace this man possessed. They asked him what happened at the river as they wanted to know the mystical teachings he had learned. The man told them, "You must go for yourselves and experience the river. You must see, listen, touch, taste and smell the river for yourselves. I could never describe or hope to explain the beauty and mystery I experienced from this river. Words can never say it all. I urge you: Go! Experience this river yourselves." But the people found the man's picture of the river and they took it from him. They put the picture in a special frame and hung the picture on a wall so they could come and gaze at the picture for hours at a time. Seeing what happened, the man was sad. He wished he had never taken that picture of the beautiful and mystical river.

This weekend the church highlights the Second Week in Advent with an invitation to come to the "mystical river" to discover "peace" within a fast paced month as well as within ongoing news reports of tensions in Israel-Palestine conflict and war in Ukraine. The scripture readings throughout Advent encourage us to let go of anything that prevents us from exploring the mystical river which points to the peaceful spirit of the first Christmas. Like the people who sought only to look at the picture of the mystical river, it is common to gaze at beautiful objects or even religious pictures, articles and statues that render momentary peace to our lives; however, Advent invites us to experience ongoing "peace" which consists of letting go of anything that crowds our existence so that we embody peace, give peace, and become instruments of peace. Like the man who drank, bathed, and fished in the river, authentic peace comes by generating time to experience the mystical river that uncovers God's grace within ourselves. Mark's Gospel for this weekend puts us in touch with John the Baptist who summons us to straighten the roads we journey through life to generate peace as it redirects our lives through an untravelled path that incites a change of heart from anything that lulls us away from the experience of Christ's peace. This is not easy since it bids us to intense honesty within ourselves in that self-deception is something that often hinders us from a genuine, personal encounter with Christ. Many of us go through each day without the ability to deal with our flaws as denial is rampart in our society. Others take the eye for eye approach found in the Old Testament and relinquish any desire to develop skills or approaches to discover peace. The second reading at Mass this weekend from Peter's Letter states, "In the Lord's eyes one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years are as one day." It reiterates the belief that we must learn to live with a patient approach to life in that whenever patience is practised it tenders peace into our hearts. Sometimes it is difficult to imagine that we may be our greatest enemy that prevents peace to enter our lives.

St. Mother Teresa was once asked how to promote peace in the world and she replied, "Go home and love your family" which makes a person see that self-knowledge and personal honesty are necessities for a peaceful existence. Honest peace also navigates us to detect the motives behind our actions as it assists us to recognise that we are free to love and not love, to heal and hurt, to comfort and console, to judge and cause pain, but also free to change if we take time to go in search of the mystical river that steers us to the discovery of new possibilities in our lives. On this Second Sunday of Advent, strive for interior reflection that engenders peace within your heart knowing that we believe in a patient God. This enables us to reshape the goals of the season that leads to the mystical river of God's peace.

CHRISTMAS FLOWER- HELP DECORATE THE CHURCH FOR CHRISTMAS- SECOND COLLECTION-DONATIONS 16/17 DECEMBER Each year as we gather to celebrate Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, our worship is enhanced by poinsettias, flowers, and greens. Your generosity makes this possible. Your gift may be made in memory of a specific person or in thanksgiving for God's blessings. There will be a **second collection** for Christmas flowers next weekend.

POINSETTIA IN MEMORY OF YOUR DECEASED LOVED ONES If you would like to remember your deceased loved ones in a special way this Christmas, you can do it with a poinsettia. We are once again decorating the church with poinsettias purchased in memory of someone special in your life. All memorial lists will be posted on the News Bulletin boards at Christmas. Or Join us in adorning our Altar area with beautiful poinsettias generously donated by you, our parishioners. For each £10.00 donation, we'll include a loved one's name in our Christmas bulletin, whether in the "memory of" or in "Thanksgiving for."

CHRISTMAS CARDS Christmas cards are available for you to buy from the parish.

CHRISTMAS PARTY FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN AND YOUNGER: This will once again be run by the teenagers of the parish supported by Sue Winfrey-Harvey and Helen James. Date = Saturday 16th December from 11am until 2pm in the Parish Hall. Food and entertainment will be provided and we hope Fr. Christmas will be able to pay a visit too. If your child is below 5 they should be accompanied by an adult. Please sign up at the back of church. Any teenagers who would like to help Sofia, Jerome, Darryl and Ropa with the party should let Fr. Saji know.

CHILDREN'S NATIVITY Sunday December 17th 4pm the Children's Liturgy Group will produce the Nativity in the Church, followed by a Bring and Share Supper. If you would like your child/children to be involved please see me, Sharon Jameson, after Mass or contact mob 07933785368 jamesonsharon11@gmail.com Rehearsals will be after Mass in the Church Nov 26th and Dec 3rd /10th and 17th. If you have not yet completed a Parental Consent Form please collect/return to Children's Liturgy Team asap. Thank you.

COME AND CAROL Saturday Dec. 9th after Mass 7pm in the Church Hall. 'Come and Carol' You are invited to an all-age Christmas Celebration with music, carols, readings, sketches, poems, children's activities and more! Mulled wine, tea, coffee, mince pies. Donations to 'Mary's Meals'.

CHRIST THE KING SCHOOL CAROL SERVICE ON THURSDAY 14TH DECEMBER 5.00PM Christ the King Primary School will hold a Carol Service on Thursday 14th December at 5.00pm in our Church. Open to all members of the Parish.

ADVENT CAROL SERVICE Thursday 21 December 7pm at St Osmond's Church Fr Joseph is once again organising an Advent Carol Service (the one held last year was absolutely beautiful) and is calling for singers to join him. There are two more rehearsals the 7 & 13 December 6pm - 7pm in St Osmond's Parish Rooms and everyone is most welcome - the music will not be too challenging, come and make this part of your personal preparation for Christmas, email: office@salisbury Catholics.org or call 01722 562703.

COMMUNITY, WE NEED YOU! DECEMBER PRAYER INTENTION We pray for families who will enjoy this holiday season together, and for those families who struggle or are less than ideal. We pray for safe gatherings and spaces for kinship to and flourish, and we pray for those who feel alone or have lost someone that they will find love and peace.

THE SCHOOL ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION (SOPHIE SHORT-HEADTEACHER) This year marks the 60th year of providing Catholic education in Amesbury. I was delighted to see so many members of our parish and former members of staff able to join us to celebrate with a special blessing from Bishop Declan on Tuesday. Following a liturgy with our school family, there was tea cakes and time to look through the artifacts of our school history. Included in these are not only photos of our school over the years but the original school log books, including the one from the very first cohort of pupils back in September 1964. 60 Septembers have now passed and 60 times we have welcomed new pupils to our youngest class - I am hopeful that there are at least 60 more years in our school future and look forward to being part of our continued journey. Thank you to all those of you who were able to join us, we'd love to hear any stories of your own history with the school by emailing office@ctk.thedcet.com

VISITS TO THE SICK If you cannot come to church because of illness, please be sure that we are notified so that we might minister to you either at home, hospital, or nursing home or in any care facility. Because of confidentiality issues, we cannot come to you unless requested to do so by you or your family.

CHRISTMAS MASS AND SERVICE TIMES-2023-2024

- Saturday December 9th **Come and Carol** at 7.00pm (Music, Carols, Children's activities etc)

- Thursday 14th December **Christ the King School Carol Service** in our church at 5.00pm

- Thursday 14th December **Deanery Penitential service** in St Gregory's Salisbury at 7.00pm

- Sunday 17th December, 4.00 pm **Children's Nativity**

- Saturday 23rd December, **Vigil Mass at 6.00 pm**

- Sunday 24th December, **Mass at 11.00am**

- Sunday 24th December, **Christmas Eve 5.30 pm Carols, 6.00 pm Family Mass** (Children)

- 11.30pm **Carol Service**

- 12.00am **Midnight Mass**

- Monday 25th December, **Christmas Day-9.30 am Mass and 11.00 am Mass**

- Tuesday 26th December, **Feast of St Stephen, The First Martyr** 11.00am Mass

- Wednesday 27th December **Feast of St John the Apostle, Evangelist** 10.00am Mass

- Thursday 28th December **Feast of the Holy Innocents, Martyrs** Mass at 10.00am

- Friday 29th December **St Thomas Becket, Bishop, Martyr** Mass at 10.00am **ANN LARKE BIRTHDAY INTENTION**

- Saturday 30th December **Vigil Mass** for Sunday Mass at 6.00pm

- Sunday 31st December **Mass** at 11.00am (New Year's Eve)

Monday 1st January **New Year's Day- 2024 MARY THE MOTHER OF GOD** Mass at 11.00am
Monday 1st January **New Year's Day- 2024 MARY THE MOTHER OF GOD** Mass at 11.00am-**FOR ALL OUR FAMILIES**

WHY DON'T YOU STOP US One of the things we all grow up knowing is that we have a free will. When it comes to making choices and doing what we want to do, free will seems like such a great gift. But when we habitually make choices as individuals or as a community that do us harm, we are always looking for somebody to rescue us from our choices. Sometimes our prayers are directed to God, asking God to save us from ourselves. If we are willing to accept the gift or free will, then we also need to accept the consequences of exercising our free will. During Advent, this may be the most proper time for us to look at the exercise of our free will, and the consequences for ourselves and others. Doing everything we want, when we want and how we want it, we know to be universally destructive. We all have a bit of vice within us. If we're honest, we have to admit that we have some bit of lust, gluttony, greed, sloth, anger, envy, and pride. These we have come to know as the seven deadly sins or the seven greatest vices in our human existence. If we have a tendency to misuse our free will, it is usually in one of these seven directions. I'm suggesting that a very fruitful advent reflection and spiritual practice might be to take a day of the week to focus on how one of those seven deadly sins has its hold on us. How might it have become such a habitual part of our lives that we don't even know that it's there? Those seven deadly sins sound so unattractive, but given the right circumstances, they become very attractive to each of us. If they are present in our lives, then there is less room for Jesus to be present. We are less able to be open to his coming into our lives if these seven deadly sins have any grip on us. During this season, there are many opportunities to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation, or you might call it confession or penance. Why not take advantage of the sacrament and the forgiveness and mercy of God that comes with it. Why not let this be a time in our own individual and our communal life to be more responsible for our free will, and not continually ask God to save us from our own choices. If there is any lack of generosity in the world, it is because of our greed. If there is any presence of violence or hatred in our lives, it is probably stemming from wrath and anger. Much of our physical and mental disease comes from our gluttony and our laziness. Many of the difficulties in our own relationships come forth from lust or envy. We are particularly touched by the lack of humility in our world today, always wanting to be right and number one. Might pride have a grip on your heart and mind? The season of Hope and expectation can become even brighter and more joyful as we get rid of all those things in our lives that don't give us life. Let's do what we can to save us from ourselves, and invite a greater presence of Jesus into our lives.

REMEMBER OUR HOMEBOUND MEMBERS- FRIENDLY VISITORS If you are a parishioner who has empathy for our older population, please consider visiting a homebound member of our parish. The days can be long for them and many of their family members and friends have passed. Probably, more often than not, many have constant pain and suffer from chronic illnesses. However, they still have the need for love, compassion, and knowing someone cares about them. Just asking them a few questions can help start a friendly conversation, such as, "What world events had the most impact on you when you were growing up?" "What chores were you expected to do as a child?" "What food or drink was a special treat when you were a teenager?" The list is endless! We usually ask the visitor to be in contact with their "new friend" every two weeks and visits should be about an hour. Please contact me at the email address above, if you have the name of any parishioner who is homebound or in a care home and would like to have one of our Friendly Visitors stop by to share conversation and prayer.

FUNDRAISING TEAM The aim this Christmas is to try to find items that are attractive, functional and yet affordable. We have tried to find stocking fillers we think will suit children of all ages. There is also a raffle, with at least 20 prizes, at just £1 per square. This will be drawn on 17th December, so in time for Christmas. Up until now, we have sent 100% of the money raised to Mary's Meals, the charity that feeds 2.5 million children worldwide. This year we are sending 50% to the Food Bank in Amesbury, to help local families who are struggling financially. We have greatly increased our efforts to find attractive items, for both the raffle and table sale and now need your help and support to make this a real success. **Work as though everything depended on you. Since love grows within you, so beauty grows. For love is the beauty of the soul.**