

Weekly Message from Fr William for Third Sunday of Advent 13th December 2020

Dear People of St Mary's

Thank you to all our staff and children in our school celebrating Advent Mass with me on Friday - me in church, the school each in their own classrooms.

Great news about the vaccine! Light at the end of the tunnel, and hope for everyone. And it seems appropriate that the news comes in Advent. Just like for Advent, the time of waiting is nearly over. Just like for Advent, what the world has been waiting for is nearly here.

And just like Advent it's also a case of 'Nearly here, but not yet'. The advice from the scientists is not to relax covid measures, to continue to observe the same covid restrictions, because we're not out of the woods yet. And the government are requiring us to keep to the restrictions a little while longer, to keep each other safe, to keep safe the wider community. So as we hold out together for the end of the pandemic, let's continue to keep safe, and to keep each other safe.

I heard recently a story from the final day of the Great War. On 11th November 1918, at 5am, the armistice was announced. Six hours later, at 11am, the armistice came into force. Between 5am and 11am three thousand soldiers died. That morning, after the armistice had been announced, these three thousand American soldiers crossed the river Meuse in Northern France. As they were crossing they were mowed down by enemy machine guns. The armistice had not yet come into force. If they'd waited an hour or two longer they could have strolled across in perfect safety. Well I thought this was a helpful image, and I wanted to share with you, as we encourage each other to hold on and to hold out for the end of the pandemic.

Christmas 2020 will be different for all of us. The government has issued a relaxation of the restrictions for the five day period 23rd to 27th December. At the same time they, and their scientific advisors even more so, are recommending that we use this freedom responsibly. Nicola Sturgeon describes each set of covid restrictions as a 'boundary'. The restrictions describe the limits up to which we can go, but that we don't have to go right up to the boundary. It's for the parents of each family to decide how they're going to celebrate Christmas this year, and at the same time how to keep their family safe. I'll be doing the same for the parish.

Keep well, keep safe, keep each other safe, and God bless you



Third Sunday of Advent – Sunday 13th December 2020