

Weekly Message from Fr William for First Sunday of Advent 2022

Dear People of St Mary's,

Thank you those who have volunteered to help with our Warm Welcome initiative at St Mary's. (see last Sunday's weekly message). I'll be in touch.

If you felt that wasn't for you, here's a couple of other opportunities to help those in need as we go into the winter months this year with a cost of living crisis, and especially when the Christmas Season breaks upon us in just four weeks' time.

Catholic Care have launched a Christmas Appeal 2022:

'Right now, hundreds of families across our diocese are desperately trying to just get by, hit hard by the cost of living crisis. They don't want to even consider what Christmas will look like...Please be part of our ongoing support that is continuing to change lives by donating to our Christmas appeal.'

Phase 1 of this appeal was your donations of tinned or packed food, toiletries, and new toys. These have now been collected by Catholic Care and will be given to families most in need. Phase 2 is to help them raise funds by sending money directly to Catholic Care. The bulletin lists all the giving options you can use – direct transfer, write a cheque, or by phone, or you can scan the QR code on their Christmas Appeal 2022 poster in the Atrium.

Then there's the Homes for Ukraine scheme. After months of the brutal war in Ukraine the number of people fleeing the war and in need of shelter remains high and will continue to increase as we go through the winter. Ukraine has already had its first snowfall, and temperatures can be sub-zero right through to March. The Kremlin may continue to target and destroy energy infrastructure. At the time of writing, half of Ukraine's power grid has been put out of action by aerial bombardment, meaning half the population is without electricity. President Zelenskyy has recommended any of his people who can to take temporary exile in friendly countries like the UK so that Ukraine's depleted energy capacity can be focused on the people who need it most. This means that more Ukrainians will be looking for a place of safety and welcome in the UK and other countries in the coming months. St John of God and Caritas Social Action Network have teamed up to offer a matching, training and support programme for hosts and displaced individuals under the Homes for Ukraine scheme. See bulletin and noticeboard for how you can get involved.

This Sunday is the First Sunday of Advent, a new season and the first day of the new Christian Year 2022-23. See weekly message 30 October 2022 for the Christian Year at a glance. In the homily this Sunday I'll be talking to you about the place of this season in our Christian spirituality.



First Sunday of Advent, 27 november 2022