St Vincent de Paul Catholic Church
Altrincham



First Sunday of Advent 29th November 2026
(Parish Mass Book page 82)

We continue the excerpts from Pope Leo's Apostolic Exhortation Dilexi Te (I have loved you) on Christian love for the poor.

For us Christians, the problem of the poor leads to the very heart of our faith. Saint John Paul II taught that the preferential option for the poor, namely the Church's love for the poor, "is essential for her and a part of her constant tradition, and impels her to give attention to a world in which poverty is threatening to assume massive proportions in spite of technological and economic progress." For Christians, the poor are not a sociological category, but the very "flesh" of Christ. It is not enough to profess the doctrine of God's Incarnation in general terms. To enter truly into this great mystery, we need to understand clearly that the Lord took on a flesh that hungers and thirsts, and experiences infirmity and imprisonment. "A poor Church for the poor begins by reaching out to the flesh of Christ. If we reach out to the flesh of Christ, we begin to understand something, to understand what this poverty, the Lord's poverty, actually is; and this is far from easy."

By her very nature the Church is in solidarity with the poor, the excluded, the marginalised and all those considered the outcast of society. The poor are at the heart of the Church because "our faith in Christ, who became poor, and was always close to the poor and the outcast, is the basis of our concern for the integral development of society's most neglected members." In our hearts, we encounter "the need to heed this plea, born of the liberating action of grace within each of us, and so it is not a matter of a mission reserved only to a few."

At times, Christian movements or groups have arisen which show little or no interest in the common good of society and, in particular, the protection and advancement of its most vulnerable and disadvantaged members. Yet we must never forget that religion, especially the Christian religion, cannot be limited to the private sphere, as if believers had no business making their voice heard with regard to problems affecting civil society and issues of concern to its members.

Indeed, "any Church community, if it thinks it can comfortably go its own way without creative concern and effective cooperation in helping the poor to live with dignity and reaching out to everyone, will also risk breaking down, however much it may talk about social issues or criticise governments. It will easily drift into a spiritual worldliness camouflaged by religious practices, unproductive meetings and empty talk."

Nor is it a question merely of providing for welfare assistance and working to ensure social justice. Christians should also be aware of another form of inconsistency in the way they treat the poor. In reality, "the worst discrimination which the poor suffer is the lack of spiritual care... Our preferential option for the poor must mainly translate into a privileged and preferential religious care." Yet, this spiritual attentiveness to the poor is called into question, even among Christians, by certain prejudices arising from the fact that we find it easier to turn a blind eye to the poor. There are those who say: "Our task is to pray and teach sound doctrine." Separating this religious aspect from integral development, they even say that it is the government's job to care for them, or that it would be better not to lift them out of their poverty but simply to teach them to work. At times, pseudo-scientific data are invoked to support the claim that a free market economy will automatically solve the problem of poverty. Or even that we should opt for pastoral work with the so-called elite, since, rather than wasting time on the poor, it would be better to care for the rich, the influential and professionals, so that with their help real solutions can be found and the Church can feel protected. It is easy to perceive the worldliness behind these positions, which would lead us to view reality through superficial lenses, lacking any light from above, and to cultivate relationships that bring us security and a position of privilege.

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS AT ST VINCENT'S

ADVENT ALMS - As is customary we dedicate one of the wallboxes at the back of church to alms. This year we are supporting Friends of the Holy Land which is a UK-based, non-political Christian charity that provides humanitarian aid and long-term support to Christian communities in the West Bank, Gaza, Israel, and Jordan.
They help Christian families remain in the region amid declining local populations, economic hardship, and conflict. They work across Christian denominations and are endorsed by the Patriarchs and Heads of Churches in Jerusalem, with governance by UK trustees. They operate through local committees, staff, and partners on the ground to identify needs and distribute funds directly. https://www.friendsoftheholyland.org.uk/

LET US PRAY GROUP ADVENT SERVICE - The Let us Pray group will lead the parish Advent service in church on Tuesday 1 December at 7.30pm – an opportunity to spend a short time in quiet prayer with reflections, scripture readings and gentle music. All welcome.

LET US PRAY ADVENT LEAFLET of prayers, reflections and scripture passages are available at the back of church.

ADVENT DAY BY DAY BOOKLETS are available to buy from the sacristy for £1.

ADVENT CALENDARS, CHRISTMAS CARDS AND GIFTS are available to buy after weekend Masses. Cash payment only. All proceeds will be donated to Cornerstone.

PARISH CAROL SERVICE - Sunday 20th December at 3pm. As we have done in previous years, we are forming a scratch choir which anyone of any age is invited to come along and join in. Children are very welcome. If you enjoy singing please come along as no previous experience is needed! **Rehearsals are 4-5pm on Sunday 6th and 13th December** and will take place in church. There will be a further rehearsal at 2pm on the day, before the Carol Service starts at 3pm. Please do come along and enjoy singing some familiar carols and some that may be new to you. We look forward to seeing and singing with you!

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CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES

Christmas Eve Masses:	4.00pm	First Mass of Christmas *(for vulnerable and elderly parishioners)*
	6.00pm	Children & Families' Christmas Vigil Mass
	8.00pm	Christmas Mass
	12:00pm	Christmas Midnight Mass preceded by carols at 11.30pm
Christmas Day Masses:	8.30am, 10.00am and 11.30am	***No Evening Mass***

PARISH PRAYER

We invite every parishioner to take a Parish prayer card from the back of church to use at home. We also suggest that leaders of Parish groups use it at the start of their meetings and that those who visit parishioners in hospital or at home give them a card and use the prayer each time they visit. We hope this will help everyone, especially those who are unable to come to church, to feel they are part of the same welcoming and supportive Parish community.

RECEIVING HOLY COMMUNION

A number of people have asked questions about how they should receive Holy Communion. A guidance sheet taken from the Church's official norms has been produced. This is available with this newsletter and at the back of church.

REGULAR ACTIVITIES

- **Children's Liturgy** - At the 10am Mass. Next liturgies are Sunday 13th and 27th December.
- **Tea and Coffee after 10am Mass** - every Sunday, with video games (FIFA, tennis, etc), table tennis and other games, all for parents and children.
- **Playgroup** - Every Friday in term time from 9.30am - 11.30am in Westleigh
- **Bridge** - Every Monday at 2.00pm in Westleigh
- **SVP** - Meets fortnightly on Mondays at 6.30pm in Westleigh.
- **Emmaus Prayer Group** - 7-8pm Mondays in Westleigh. Everybody welcome, please just come along.
- **Secular Carmelites** - 1st Wednesday of every month at Westleigh from 6pm to 8pm
- **The Craft & Coffee club** - 10am in Westleigh: 3rd & 17th December (every fortnight)
- **Mothers' Prayers** - Every Thursday 11.15am in Westleigh
- **Men's / Women's Catechesis** - 7.15-8.30pm,Thursdays (alternate weeks) in Westleigh
- **St. Vincent's Parish Choir** - Rehearsal every Thursday at 8:30pm in church
- **Friday Club** - First Friday of every month, 2pm in Westleigh. Entertainment & refreshments organised by SVP.
- **Windows Group (for widows)** - 3pm-4.30pm on Fridays: 11th December
- **Young Adults Group (18-35 years)** - Saturday 19th December. Come along for 5.30pm Mass followed by Adoration & Sacrament of Reconciliation, a Talk, food, time to socialise etc.
- **Youth Mass** - Sunday 13th December 6.30pm Mass (monthly). Young musicians welcome, please arrive at 6pm.

Pope's Intention for December

For single-parent families - let us pray for families experiencing the absence of a mother or father, that they may find support and accompaniment in the Church, and help and strength in the Faith during difficult times.

During Advent and Christmastide we are asked to pray for these intentions:

Openness to the Word of God; Migrants and Refugees, Expectant Mothers.

PARISH MASS BOOKS are available to buy from the Sacristy - £6.50 for the normal size and £16.00 for the large print (A4) size. Please pay with cash.

FRIDAY CLUB - 2pm-4pm FRIDAY 4th DECEMBER

Our next session is on Fri 4th Dec 2pm to 4pm, Westleigh. The highlight of the afternoon will be a concert presented by pupils from St. Vincent's Primary School. This event will have a Christmas theme with refreshments including mulled wine and mince pies and a variety of entertainment. All parishioners, friends and visitors welcome as usual.

CARITAS AT CHRISTMAS APPEAL - 28TH/29TH NOVEMBER RETIRING COLLECTION

Every penny you give goes directly to help those in most need within our Diocese, providing food vouchers, practical support and the reassurance of care and compassion when it matters most. If know someone in need of assistance please contact info@caritasshrewsbury.org.uk 0151 651281. Thank you for your support.

LIBRARY OPEN MORNING - SATURDAY, 5th DECEMBER

This is an opportunity to find a Christian book to read during Advent. From 10.00 till 12.00 noon, upstairs in Westleigh, you can enjoy free coffee and home-made cake while you choose.

SVP WINTER HELP If you know of any parishioners, including yourself, who might need help with their winter bills or would appreciate visits please contact James for the SVP on 0161 941 3498, 07513 036063 or jamesjudge@talktalk.net

SVP RETIRING COLLECTION - 5th/6th DECEMBER is for the South Sudan Baby Feeding Appeal. All money raised will go to support this vital cause and alternative methods of donating will be displayed on the posters outside Church.

MOUTHPEACE WINTER 2026 newsletter is on the CAFOD/J&P section of the parish website. There are several resources for Advent, activities and details of the Pax Christi day retreat in Liverpool on 5th December.

ACTION BY CHRISTIANS AGAINST TORTURE (ACAT) CHRISTMAS CAMPAIGN

The ACAT Dec 2026 - Feb 2027 newsletter is on the CAFOD/J&P section of the parish website. Along with many interesting articles and prayers, the newsletter includes details of this year's Christmas greeting campaign. Please consider sending a Christmas message of support to one or more of the prisoners of conscience being held in captivity around the world and remember them in your prayers. The details for individual greetings are on p22-36. As usual, please closely follow the advice on the wording of messages to avoid additional suffering for these prisoners.

CORNERSTONE CHRISTMAS DONATIONS

We asked Cornerstone if they wanted us to support them again this Christmas. Please see their response: *'We are thrilled that St Vincent de Paul would once again like to collect items this Advent for families and individuals experiencing homelessness and poverty. The perfect present is the Lynx or similar boxed toiletry gift sets (duo or trio sets) that are on sale in supermarkets at Christmas; typically containing a shower gel, antiperspirant or body spray. These will be given out during a Christmas meal, so we want to ensure everybody has the same items. These are needed for men and for women, and please don't wrap them, as our elves will do that.'* If you are able to donate any of these items please leave them in the box at the back of church, thank you.

ADVENT RETREAT DAY FOR YOUNG ADULTS (AGE 18-35ish!)

On Saturday 5th of December there will be a day of recollection for young adults at St Joseph's Eucharistic Shrine, led by Fr Joseph Fawcett-Wood and Fr Sean Davidson. The day starts at 12pm and ends with 5pm Mass. Please bring a packed lunch. This will replace our normal session at St Vincent's. After mass, around 6pm, we'll head to Beretto Lounge in Stockport for a social and to do our secret santa gift exchange for those who signed up. Please feel free to join for as much or as little of the day as you are able to, or just join us at 6pm for the social!

OUR PARISH FAMILY

We welcome into God's Family Frederick Rowlinson who was recently baptised here. Please keep him and his family in your prayers.

Congratulations to Felicity Turner-Wilson and George Frielick who were married here recently.

Requiescant in Pace Please pray for those who have died recently especially Sr Anne Donnelly CJ (IBVM) and all those whose anniversaries occur around this time.

Please pray for the sick who include Billy, Dave Berry, Martin Brennan, Denise Brooks, Johnny Carroll, Emma Coulson, Anna Croft, Sandra Davis, David Michael Devine, Lynda Edwards, Freddie Fenton, Viv Fenton, Marie Forde, Diana Hartley, Mary Heanue, Catherine Heraghty, Fabian Horra, Mike Jenkenson, Ste Johnson, Thomas E Killeen, Laura MacGinn, Keith Madeley, Claire McAllister, Martin McConnell, Kevin McDermott, Rupert McDermott, Carol McLaughlin, Douglas and Lynn Mitcheson, Brian Morris, Maureen O'Hara, Anne O'Neill, Serge Pascau, Annabel Tats, Dawn Raisbeck, Tony Raisbeck, Margaret Russell, Anne Ryan, David Ryan, Gemma Ryan, Joe Ryan, Joseph Ryan, Kay Ryan, Liz Ryan, Michael Ryan, Mick Ryan, Steve Ryan, Ann Thomas, Mick Thomas, Anthony Tomlinson, Derek Watson, Liz Whitworth and all in our hospitals and homes.

Mass Schedule

Sunday 29th November *First Sunday of Advent*	8:30 Mass 10:00 Mass 11:30 Mass 18:30 Mass	For recovery after an operation For the People of the Parish John Quinn Alan Johnston (RIP)
Monday 30th November *St. Andrew*	11:30 12:15 Mass 18:00	*Eucharistic Adoration & Benediction* Alice Bickers (Birthday Memories) *Eucharistic Adoration*
Tuesday 1st December *Ferial*	10:00 BV Mass 11:30 12:15 Mass **19:30**	Tom Rooney & Kathleen (RIP) *Eucharistic Adoration & Benediction* John Scotson (Ann) **Pray and Reflect Advent Service**
Wednesday 2nd December *Ferial*	11:30 12:15 Mass	*Eucharistic Adoration & Benediction* John Worthington (RIP)
Thursday 3rd December *St. Francis Xavier*	10:00 BV Mass 11:30 12:15 Mass 18:00	Sheila Curran (RIP) *Eucharistic Adoration & Benediction* Irene Burke (Ann) *Eucharistic Adoration*
Friday 4th December *Optional Memorial:* *St. John Damascus*	11:30 12:15 Mass 18:30 19:00 Mass	*Eucharistic Adoration & Benediction* Joan Doherty (Ann) *Confessions after Mass* *Rosary* John & Jane Hunt (Ann)
Saturday 5th December *Ferial*	11:00 10:45-11:45 12:15 Mass 16:15-17:00 17:00 17:30 Mass	*Eucharistic Adoration & Benediction* *Confessions* David Shard (Ann) *Confessions* *Rosary* Joe's Intentions
Sunday 6th December *Second Sunday of Advent*	8:30 Mass 10:00 Mass 11:30 Mass 18:30 Mass	Tom Finnigan (RIP For the People of the Parish Vincent Magher (40th Ann) Karen & Andrew (Wedding Celebrations)

CHILDREN'S LITURGY - 10am Mass on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month

BOWDON VALE MASSES 10am Tuesday and Thursday **SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION -** as above & by request

NOVEMBER RETIRING COLLECTIONS: 1st SVP, 15th Clergy Education and 29th Caritas

MASS READING CYCLE: Sundays Year B, Weekdays Cycle 1; Psalter Week 1

PARISH CLERGY - Parish Priest: Canon Jonathan Brandon **Assistant Priest:** Fr Joseph Fawcett Wood

CONTACTS

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MONEY MATTERS Offertory Collection 22nd November £1904.20

Many thanks to the parishioners for your generosity in the cash collection, standing orders and through the card machine.

The Diocese of Shrewsbury is a registered charity No. 234025

DONATE

December Live Simply: During the winter when home-grown fruit and veg are more limited, consider where your fruit and have come from and whether the taste justifies the air or marine fuel and pollution to get them to you.

Parish Safeguarding Representative Helen Norwood: 07800 656966

The parish of St Vincent's, Altrincham sometimes collects personal information about parishioners. All personal information is collected, processed and stored in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations. This is retained only as necessary and used by the Parish/Diocese for the benefit of the Parish and for legitimate reasons such as administrative and religious purposes. You can read our full privacy notice at www.dioceseofshrewsbury.org/about-us/privacy-notice. T*he Diocese of Shrewsbury is a registered charity No. 234025*