

## Society of Saint Pius X

St. Mary's House  
12 Ribblesdale Place  
Preston - PR1 3NA

### Resident Priests:

Rev. Vianney Vandendaele (Prior)  
Rev. Gary Holden

### Contact details:

Telephone: 01772 562428  
Email: stmarys@fsspx.uk



## SAINT MARY'S NEWSLETTER

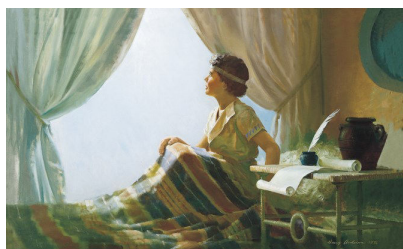


**DECEMBER 2018**

My Dear Faithful,



We have just entered the new month of December and consequently the corresponding new liturgical year and season of Advent. We are starting again the liturgical cycle that we have been through so many times in our lives. The older we are, the more cycles we will have experienced, celebrating the same feasts, in the same order, with the same prayers. Why is this repetition so important? Why do we need to do this over and over again? It is because God does not give all the lights we need all together. He spreads them over time according to the circumstances of our lives which change year after year. Indeed, major events may have happened to us since last year; we also learn and understand things differently as we get older because of our greater experience of life; our spiritual life may have changed either because we are closer to God or, unfortunately, because we have moved further from Him. In either case, we are in a new situation than we were last year and, as a consequence, the new celebration of the same feasts must enlighten us in different ways.



*"Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth"* (1 Samuel 3:10) said Samuel when God spoke to Him during the night. Each time we read the texts chosen, or written, by the Church when setting the Sacred Liturgy, God has something to tell us for our good in the present circumstances of our lives. See as well the circumstance of time when God spoke to the young Samuel. It was during the night, when all was in quiet silence. This detail tells us that God speaks to us only if we keep silence in our hearts. I'm not saying that it always has to be total silence around us if we want to hear the voice of God. Of course, for instance,

God speaks to us during a Sung Mass! What I mean is that when we pray, we must shut all the concerns of our lives, and especially the din of the world with all its electronic gadgetry, and focus on what God wants from us.

Advent is the time to prepare our souls to celebrate the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour of each individual person. During this season of Advent we ought to prepare for His coming worthily, even with material things for Christmas and the family. However, this must not be the essential. It is important, but more important is the spiritual preparation. The enthusiasm we put on the material preparation for Christmas must be a reflection of our desire to get our souls well prepared for this feast. Every year we must insist on the necessity for so doing by making a good Confession; for the coming of Our Lord is first and foremost this coming into our hearts by a good Holy Communion. But the Church wants this preparation to take a bit more than the time of a quick Confession. The three coming weeks must therefore help us dispose our souls to celebrate Christmas worthily.

From this follows that we must try to spend more time praying that Our Lord will supply all of the graces we need to prepare our souls. The model of this preparation is the crib: the simplicity of the stable, the humility of those present there, the retirement from the world represented by the city of Jerusalem are some of these dispositions we need to acquire before Christmas. This will take time and thoughtfulness. This is why we need to use the whole season of Advent for this purpose. Don't set up your cribs too close to Christmas but have them at the front of you early as a reminder of what your souls must be like by the 25<sup>th</sup> December.

Wishing you a Holy Season of Advent so that you may fill your souls with as many blessings as possible from the Divine Child at Christmas.

Rev. Vianney Vandendaele (Prior)

## The Crib

The crib or manger in which the Infant Saviour was laid after his birth is properly that place in the stable or khan where food for domestic animals is put, formed probably of the same material out of which the grotto itself is hewn. A very ancient tradition avers that an ass and an ox were in the stable when Christ was born. The tradition bears an allusion to Isaias (1:3): "*The ox knoweth his owner and the ass his master's crib*"; and is probably founded on the words of the Prophet Habacuc (iii, 2) which in the Septuagint version read: "In the midst of two animals thou shalt be known", instead of "In the midst of years" etc. as St. Jerome rightly translated the original Hebrew. Be this as it may, what pertains to the crib we may consider in the present article under three separate headings: (I) The Basilica of the Nativity and the Grotto of the Nativity at Bethlehem; (II) The relics of the crib preserved at St. Mary Major's in Rome; (III) Devotion to the crib.

### I. The Basilica of the Nativity and the Grotto of the Nativity at Bethlehem.



Bethlehem is situated on two hills and is 2361 feet above the level of the sea. The western hill is the Bethlehem of Scripture; whilst on the eastern elevation is situated the Basilica of the Nativity erected over the grotto. We may imagine, then, that the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph, there being "*no room for them in the inn*", left the town and came to the cave or stable on the eastern hill which served as a place of refuge for shepherds and their flocks against the inclemency of the weather. We are not concerned here with the controversies both as regards the historicity of St. Luke's narrative of the birth of Christ and as regards the actual site of the Grotto of the Nativity. Suffice it to say that there appears to be no sufficient reason for abandoning the very ancient and unbroken tradition which attests the authenticity of the place of the crib

now venerated. From the earliest times, moreover, ecclesiastical writers bear witness to this tradition. Thus St. Justin, who died a martyr in 165, says that "*Having failed to find any lodging in the town, Joseph sought shelter in a neighbouring cavern of Bethlehem*". About half a century later, Origen writes: "*If any one desires to satisfy himself without appealing either to the prophecy of Micheas, or to the history of the Christ as written by his disciples, that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, let him know that, in accordance with the Gospel narrative, at Bethlehem is shown the grotto where he first saw the light*".

St. Helena first converted the grotto into a chapel and adorned it with costly marble and other precious ornaments. The first basilica erected over the crypt is due most probably to the devotion and munificence of her son Constantine, of whom Eusebius says that "*The emperor himself, eclipsing even the magnificence of his mother's design, adorned the same place in a truly regal style*". Both the grotto itself and the basilica have undergone numerous restorations and modifications made necessary in the course of centuries by the ravages of war and invasion; but, at the present time, little remains of the splendid mosaics and paintings described in detail by Quaresimus and other writers. The Crypt of the Nativity is reached from the upper church by a double flight of stairs leading from the north side of the choir of the basilica to the grotto below, and converging at the place where according to tradition the Infant Saviour was born. The exact spot is marked by a star cut out of stone, surrounding which are the words:

"HIC DE VIRGINE MARIA  
JESUS CHRISTUS NATUS EST"



A short distance to the southwest is the manger itself where Christ was laid and where, as tradition asserts, he was adored by the Magi.

## II. The relics of the crib preserved at St. Mary Major's in Rome.



The relics of the crib that are preserved at St. Mary Major's in Rome were probably brought there from the Holy Land during the pontificate of Pope Theodore (640-649), who was himself a native of Palestine, and who was well aware of the dangers of plunder and pillage to which they were exposed at the hands of the Mussulmans and other marauders. We find at all events that the basilica erected by Liberius on the Esquiline first received the name of *Sancta Maria ad Praesepe* under Pope Theodore. During the pontificate of Hadrian I the first altar was erected in the basilica, and in the course of succeeding centuries the place where the relics are preserved came to be visited by the devout faithful from all parts of the Christian world. At the present time the remains of the crib preserved at St. Mary Major's consist of five pieces of board which, as a result of the investigation conducted by Father Lais, sub-director of the Vatican Observatory, during the restorations of 1893 were found to be taken from a sycamore tree of which there are several varieties in the Holy Land. Two of the pieces, which like the other three, must have been originally much longer than they are at present, stood upright in the form of an X, upon which three other pieces rested, supported by a sixth piece, which, however, is missing, placed across the base of the upper angle of the X. We may conclude from this that these pieces of wood were properly speaking mere supports for the manger itself, which was probably made from the soft limestone of which the cave was formed. The rich reliquary, adorned with



bas-reliefs and statuettes, which at present contains the relics of the crib was presented by the Duchess of Villa Hermosa in 1830. Pius IV (1559-65) restored the high altar upon which the relics are solemnly exposed for the veneration of the faithful yearly on the eve of Christmas.

## III. Devotion to the crib.

Devotion to the crib is no doubt of very ancient origin; but it remained for St. Francis of Assisi to popularize it and to give to it the tangible form in which it is known at the present time. When St. Francis visited Rome in 1223, he made known to Pope Honorius III the plans he had conceived of making a scenic representation of the place of the Nativity. The pope listened gladly to the details of the project and gave it his sanction. Leaving Rome, St. Francis arrived at Greccio on Christmas Eve, when, through the aid of his friend Giovanni Velita, he constructed a crib and grouped around it figures of the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph, the ass, the ox, and the shepherds who came to adore the new-born Saviour. He acted as deacon at the midnight Mass. The legend relates that having sung the words of the Gospel "*and they laid him in a manger*" he knelt down to meditate briefly on the sublime mystery of the Incarnation, and there appeared in his arms a child surrounded by a brilliant light. A painting by Giotto representing St. Francis celebrating Christmas at Greccio is preserved in the Basilica of St. Francis at Assisi. Devotion to the crib has since spread throughout the Christian world. Yearly, from the eve of Christmas until the day of the octave of Epiphany, a crib representing the birthplace of Christ is shown in all Catholic churches in order to remind the faithful of the mystery of the Incarnation and to recall according to tradition and the Gospel narrative the historical events connected with the birth of the Redeemer. The old Franciscan church of Ara Coeli possesses perhaps one of the largest and most beautiful cribs in the world. In this crib the famous *Santo Bambino di Ara Coeli* is exposed from the eve of Christmas to the feast of the Epiphany. The *Santo Bambino* is a figure carved out of wood representing the new-born Saviour. It is said to have come from the Holy Land, and in the course of time it has been bedecked with numerous jewels of great value. It is carried in procession yearly on the feast of the Epiphany by the Minister General of the



Friars Minor who solemnly blesses the city with it from the top of the high flight of stairs that lead to the main entrance of Ara Coeli.

(from Catholic Encyclopedia)

## Devotion of St. Francis to the Divine Child

### How St. Francis set up a Nativity scene on Christmas Day.

His determined ideal, his most ardent desire, his firmest wish, was to observe the holy Gospel on every point, and in every circumstance, to conform himself with zeal, application, energy and fervour to the doctrine of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and to imitate His example. He would think of His words in diligent meditation and entertain the memory of His acts with profound contemplation. Two subjects especially had such a firm hold on him that he could scarcely think of anything else: the humility manifested by the Incarnation, and the love manifested by the Passion.

*"I wish to evoke the memory of the Child born in Bethlehem"*

That is why I wish to piously preserve the memory of what he did in Greccio one Christmas day, three years before his death. There lived in this province a man named John, of good reputation and an even better life, and blessed Francis loved him greatly, for, despite his lofty lineage and his important charges, he gave no importance to nobility of blood and desired to acquire nobility of the soul.

About two weeks before Christmas, Francis called for him as he often did. *"If you are willing,"* he told him, *"let us celebrate the upcoming feast of the Lord in Greccio; leave now and take care of the preparations that I shall explain to you. Indeed I wish to evoke the*



*memory of the Child who was born in Bethlehem and of all the discomforts He endured from His earliest childhood; I wish to see Him, with the eyes of my flesh, as He was, lying in a manger and sleeping on the hay, between an ox and an ass."*

The faithful friend ran in all haste to prepare what the saint had asked for in the village.

The day of joy came, the time of rejoicing began. All the brothers from several convents in the area were called. Men and women, the people of the country, with joy in their hearts, prepared, each one according to his possibilities, torches and candles to illumine that night on which the shining Star rose to enlighten all of time. Upon his arrival, the saint saw that all was ready and rejoiced.

A manger and hay had been set out, with an ox and an ass beside it. Simplicity was truly honoured, it was the triumph of poverty, the best lesson in humility; Greccio had become a new Bethlehem. The night was as bright as day and as satisfying for the animals as for the men. The crowds arrived, and the renewal of the mystery renewed their cause for joy.



The woods rang with song and the mountains echoed the joyous sounds. The brothers sang the praises of the Lord, and the night was spent in rejoicing. The saint spent the evening standing before the manger, broken with compassion, and filled with unutterable joy. Finally, Mass was celebrated with the manger as an altar, and the celebrating priest felt a piety he had never before experienced.

### A small motionless child whom the saint's approach seemed to awaken.

Francis put on the dalmatic, for he was a deacon, and sang the Gospel with a resounding voice. His vibrant and gentle voice, clear and resounding, invited all the assistants to the highest joy. He then preached to the people and his words were sweet as honey as he spoke of the birth of the poor King and the little town of Bethlehem. Speaking of Jesus Christ, he tenderly called Him "the child of Bethlehem", and proclaimed this-

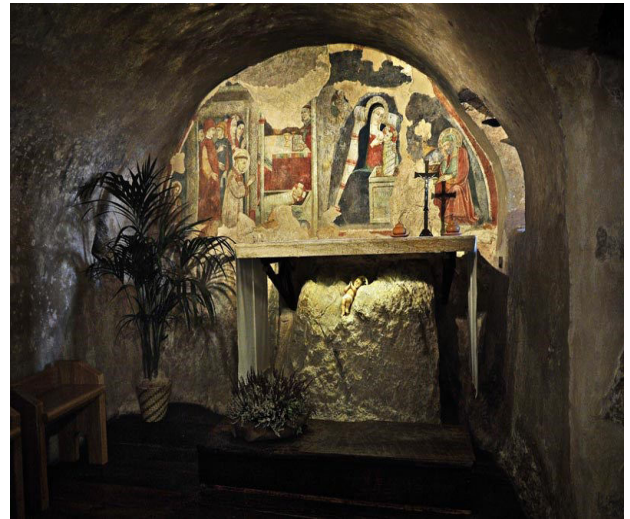


word “Bethlehem” like the bleat of a lamb; all his voice and all his love were on his lips. One might have believed, as he pronounced “Jesus” and “child of Bethlehem”, that he was licking his lips as if to savour the sweetness of the words.

Among the graces showered down by the Lord in this place, can be counted the admirable vision with which a man of great virtue was then favoured. He saw laying in the manger a small motionless child whom the saint’s approach seemed to awaken. This vision was most appropriate, for the Child Jesus was indeed sleeping forgotten deep in many hearts until the day when His servant Francis revived His memory and imprinted it indelibly in those hearts. After the night’s solemnities were over, everyone returned home full of joy.

**In Greccio, the Nativity scene has become a temple consecrated to the Lord.**

The hay from the manger was kept “that the Lord might heal the livestock, so great is His mercy!” Indeed many animals of the region, afflicted with divers ailments, ate of this hay and were healed. What is more, women who during painful and difficult childbirth held a few strands of the hay gave birth successfully. Crowds of men and women were able in this way to recover their health.



The Nativity scene became a temple consecrated to the Lord; on the site of the manger, an altar was built in honour of blessed Father Francis, that where animals once ate their meal of hay, men might henceforth, for the health of their bodies and of their souls, eat the flesh of the Lamb Who gave Himself to us, He Who lives and reigns forever in glory with the Father and the Holy Ghost, world without end. Amen. Alleluia, Alleluia! Thomas de Celano (Vita Prima, ch. 30)

(from sspix.org)

## Prayer before the Crib



I ADORE Thee, O Word Incarnate, true SON of GOD from all eternity, and true Son of Mary ever Virgin in the fullness of time. When I adore thy divine Person, and the Humanity united to thy Divinity, I venerate the poor manger which welcomed Thee when an Infant, and which was truly the throne of thy love. I prostrate myself before it with the simplicity of the shepherds, with the faith of Joseph, with the love of Mary. I bow down in veneration of this precious memorial of our salvation with the same spirit of mortification, poverty and humility with which Thou, though the LORD of heaven and earth, didst choose for thyself a manger wherein to lay thy tender infant limbs. And Thou, O LORD, who in thine Infancy didst deign to lay thyself in this manger, vouchsafe also to pour into my heart a drop of that joy to which the sight of thy lovely Childhood, and the miracles which accompanied thy Birth, gave rise. By that holy Birth, I now implore Thee to grant to all the world peace and goodwill, and in the name of the whole human race I render thanks and honour to GOD the FATHER, and to GOD the HOLY GHOST, who with Thee live and reign one GOD world without end. Amen.

## The Secret of the Rosary

### Twentieth Rose

#### The Hail Mary — Explanation

Are you in the miserable state of sin? Then call on the divine Mary and say to her: *Ave*, which means "I salute thee with the most profound respect, thou who art without sin" and she will deliver you from the evil of your sins.

Are you groping in the darkness of ignorance and error? Go to Mary and say to her: *Hail Mary*; which means "Hail thou who art bathed in the light of the Sun of Justice"—and she will give you some of her light.

Have you strayed from the path leading to Heaven? Then call on Mary, for her name means "Star of the Sea, the North Star which guides the ships of our souls during the voyage of this life," and she will guide you to the harbor of eternal salvation.

Are you in sorrow? Turn to Mary, for her name means also "Sea of Bitterness which has been filled with sharp pain in this world but which is now turned into a Sea of the Purest Joy in Heaven" and she will turn your sorrow to joy and your afflictions into consolation.

Have you lost the state of grace? Praise and honor the numberless graces with which God has filled the Blessed Virgin and say to her: *Thou art full of grace* and filled with all



the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and she will give you some of these graces.

Are you all alone, having lost God's protection? Pray to Mary, and say: "*The Lord is with thee*—and this union is far nobler and more intimate than that which He has with Saints and the just—because thou art one with Him. He is thy Son and His Flesh is thy flesh; thou art united to the Lord because of thy perfect likeness to Him and by your mutual love—for thou art His Mother." And then say to her: "The Three Persons of the Godhead are with thee because thou art the Temple of the Most Blessed Trinity," and she will place you once more under the protection and care of Almighty God.

Have you become an outcast and have you been accursed by God? Then say to Our Lady: "*Blessed art thou above all women* and above all nations, by thy purity and fertility; thou hast turned God's maledictions into blessings for us," and she will bless you.

Do you hunger for the bread of grace and the bread of life? Draw near to her who bore the Living Bread Which came down from Heaven, and say to her: *Blessed be the Fruit of thy womb* Whom thou hast conceived without the slightest loss of thy virginity, Whom thou didst carry without discomfort and to Whom thou didst give birth without pain. Blessed be Jesus Who has redeemed our suffering world when we were in the bondage of sin, Who has healed the world of its sickness, Who has raised the dead to life, brought home the banished, restored sinners to a life of grace and Who has saved men from damnation." Without doubt, your soul will be filled with the bread of grace in this life and of eternal glory in the next. Amen.



## Announcements

### All Day Adoration

Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> December

St. Pius X's Chapel,  
Manchester

#### Schedule:

- Mass at 10am;
- Exposition & Joyful Mysteries at 10.45am;
- Sorrowful Mysteries at 3pm;
- Glorious Mysteries at 6.30pm followed by **Benediction**.



Let us make an effort to attend this All Day of Adoration and see in this a good opportunity to have a kind of Advent Recollection to prepare our souls for the celebration of Christmas in the silence of the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.



*Our Lady of Fatima  
Correspondence Catechism*

*Confirmation Course  
Sisters of the Society of St. Pius X*

### Confirmations in May 2019

The Sisters of the Society of St. Pius X in Browerville, Minnesota U.S.A. run a highly successful international Catechism Correspondence school. They have kindly agreed to work with the District of Great Britain so that ALL the children who frequent our chapels (and any others who wish to apply) may receive the best formation possible by enrolling in the school.

#### **Who is this for?**

The project will commence with enrolments for a **course to prepare candidates for the sacrament of confirmation** which will be administered on:

- ◆ 11<sup>th</sup> May 2019 at St. Michael's School, Burghclere;
- and
- ◆ 12<sup>th</sup> May 2019 at Sts. Margaret & Leonard's, Edinburgh.

**ALL CHILDREN (11-16) WHO WISH TO RECEIVE CONFIRMATION MUST ENROL** unless they are pupils of St. Michael's School.

#### **Enrolment**

Enrolment is possible either by:

- ◆ completing the webform and making a payment of £15
- or
- ◆ completing an enrolment form (hardcopies are at the entrance of each Mass Centre) and sending by email to [district@fssp.x.uk](mailto:district@fssp.x.uk) or by post to Society of St. Pius X, St. George's House, 125 Arthur Road, Wimbledon SW19 7DR with a payment of £15

#### **How it works**

- ◆ Once a child is enrolled, the parents will be sent a course with instructions and homework sheets.
- ◆ Parents are expected to teach the course to their children (where possible, priests and catechists will assist at the Mass Centres). One homework sheet is to be completed each week and is to be sent to the GB District Catechism Secretary who is the intermediary between the SSPX Sisters and the parents.
- ◆ An SSPX Sister will correct the work and will personally correspond with the pupil through the parents (via the GB District Catechism Secretary).

**For further information** or clarification about this course or any other request such as Confirmation for an adult, whether it be under condition or not, please **speak to a priest** after Mass.

## Notices

### Feast Days

**Immaculate Conception:** Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> December — *Not a Holy Day of Obligation*

- ♦ Manchester: 11am;
- ♦ Preston: 12.15pm.

**Nativity of Our Lord:** Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> December — *Holy Day of Obligation*



- ♦ Preston: 9am;
- ♦ Manchester: midnight & 9am;
- ♦ Rhos-on-Sea: 12.30pm;
- ♦ Bingley: 12.30pm.

**Circumcision of Our Lord:** Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> January — *Not a Holy Day of Obligation*

- ♦ Preston: 11am;
- ♦ Manchester: 12.30pm.

### Sunday Mass Schedule and Locations

**PRESTON: Our Lady of Victories' Church**

East Cliff, off Winckley Square - PR1 3JH

Every Sunday: 9.30am — *Confessions from 8.45am*

**MANCHESTER: Saint Pius X's Chapel**

16 Deerpark Road, off Alexandra Road South - M16 8FR

Every Sunday: 9.30am — *Confessions from 8.45am*

**LIVERPOOL: Saint Peter and Paul's Church**

35 Upper Parliament Street - L8 7LA

Every Sunday: 12.30pm — *Confessions from 12noon*

**RHOS-ON-SEA: Saint David's Chapel**

Conwy Road (A547), Mochdre - LL28 5AA (North Wales)

Every Sunday: 5pm — *Confessions from 4.30pm*

**BINGLEY: The Little House**

Market Street - BD16 2HP

1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> (if any) Sunday of the month: 3pm

— *Confessions from 2.30pm*

### Ordinary Weekday Masses at Preston

(This schedule is subject to change; please check beforehand on the outside notice board or <http://fsspx.uk> — Mass Times & Calendars)

**Monday: 11am**  
**Tuesday: 11am**  
**Wednesday: 11am**  
**Thursday: 11am**  
**Friday: 11am**  
**Saturday: 12.15pm (Holy Hour at 11am)**



Mass Times & Calendars