

## **First Sunday of Advent, 1 December 2024**

***“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.”***

**“Shock and Awe” in one form or another has long been a feature of warfare. An academic definition calling the idea “rapid dominance” from the mid-1990s proposed several elements essential to this military tactic: a thorough knowledge of one’s enemy and the state of their deployment; swift, precise attack; excellent operational execution; and keeping complete control of the situation so the enemy has little chance of successful resistance. The result is that the other side is overwhelmed, feels helpless and believes that resistance is useless, and therefore the seeming inevitability of defeat leaves morale low.**

The cataclysmic Last Days that Jesus is prophesying certainly evoke this sense of shock and awe — the signs will be of dramatic upheaval in nature, whole nations disrupted, and the heavens shaken. Such is the catastrophic backdrop to the arrival of the Son of Man. That the Church gives us this teaching of Jesus at this time of year is to point us to the second, powerful meaning of Advent: the word “advent” means coming, arrival — as in Our Father’s “May your Kingdom come” — in Latin, “Adveniat regnum tuum”. The first coming referred to is the birth of Jesus, the Messiah, when the Word is made flesh, and we are, of course, preparing to celebrate Christmas. The second is the powerful coming of Jesus in the end times when he returns in power and glory.

**Jeremiah points forward to the time of the Messiah, framing it as the time of the fulfilment of God’s promise to Israel that salvation will come — a beautiful prophecy that will console the people in times of tribulation. However bad things seem, God wills the people to be saved and will act on their behalf. Jesus is direct: a time is coming where there will be a massive upheaval, the like of which people have not seen before; but his message is not that the disciples should be afraid, but that they should see such calamity as a sign of the closeness of their liberation. Jesus urges the disciples, understanding this, to stand with confidence. They will remember this in the terrible time ahead, when their Lord will be tortured and put to death, and they will subsequently learn that in his resurrection, the tumult was a sign that their salvation was indeed near at hand.**

**Jesus urges the disciples to virtuous living not so that they will be virtuous as an end in itself, but so that they will be attentive, prepared, and not taken by surprise at the return of the Son of Man in glory. They must stay alert, pray for strength — and then stand with confidence.**

Paul seeks to inspire the Thessalonians to follow his example of love, loving each other and loving the whole of humanity. This, he explains, is so that they will be prepared for the return of the Lord. Paul has taken the teaching of Jesus to heart and urges attentiveness so that they will be ready to meet their Lord. The community of believers Paul is addressing are already living an authentic Christian life and he encourages them to continue to progress in that life. What can we do to prepare ourselves to meet the Lord? We are attentive to his presence, looking for him where he is to be found. We begin with where we are now: “Where two or three are gathered in my name, I will be in their midst” says Jesus — so he is here amongst us today; our attentiveness to each other is acknowledging him, being attentive to him. **Jesus is present in the proclamation of his word - we stand for the Gospel, acknowledging the presence of the Risen Lord. Jesus is present under the form of bread and wine in the Eucharist, a truth we learn from the accounts of the Last Supper and his teaching recorded in chapter 6 of John’s Gospel, where Jesus refers to himself as the Bread of Life. We are attentive to Jesus’ presence in those who are in desperate need, as Jesus taught that: “Insofar as you did this [i.e. offered help] to the least of my brothers, you did this to me”. And we are attentive to the presence of Jesus when we address him and listen to**

him in prayer. Being attentive to the Lord, we will be prepared and able to stand with confidence before the Son of Man when he returns in glory — and when we are called from this life to the eternal life he has promised.

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**New Lectionary and Mass Books.** From this weekend, the First Sunday of Advent, we will be using the new books. The text of the readings is changing to the **English Standard Version – ESV**, as part of the continuing process of revising liturgical translations.

**Eucharistic Holy Hour on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> December, 6.00-7.00 pm**

**Monthly Coffees in the parish hall after Sunday 9.15 am Mass next Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December.**

From January 2025, coffees will be on the first Sunday of the month, rather than on the second Sunday.

**St Michael's Christmas Bake-off.** The Baking Contest will take place in the parish hall after the 9.15 am Mass on **Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2024**. Open to all ages. To participate, please fill in the entry form in the narthex by 9<sup>th</sup> December.

**Advent Service of Reconciliation** on **Tuesday, 10<sup>th</sup> December, 6.30 - 7.30 pm** at **St Michael's, Ashford**, and on **Tuesday, 17<sup>th</sup> December, 6.30-7.30 pm** after the evening Mass at **St David's, Stanwell**.

**Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2024.** We will celebrate the Solemnity at 9.15 am on Monday, transferred from Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December.

The **NOVENA OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY** starts on **Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> November** at the 9.15 am Mass until Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December. There will be Mass on **Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> December** at 9.15 am

**Annual Collection for Sons of Divine Providence.** We will take up the collection after all Masses next weekend, 7<sup>th</sup> /8<sup>th</sup> December.

**Christmas Flowers.** If you would like to donate towards the cost of the Christmas Flowers for the church, please place your donation in an envelope and hand it to the offertory collectors at weekend Masses or post through the Presbytery letterbox. Thank you.

**The Joy of Christmas** – our Parish Family Music Evening in the parish hall on **Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December**, from 7.00 pm. A night of music - singing and dancing. Buffet food. Tickets: £8.00 per adult; £5 for children (cash or card payment) will be on sale after weekend Masses and from Shenda in the parish office. *One drink and food are included in the price of the ticket.* There will be a bar on the night selling drinks and snacks.

## **CRIB and CLEANING.**

Dear Parishioners, We are reaching out to our wonderful community with a heartfelt request for volunteers. **On Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> December, and Saturday, 7<sup>th</sup> December, we will be gathering to put up and decorate the Crib and clean the church in preparation for the festive season.**

Your help would be greatly appreciated in making our church a warm and welcoming place for all who visit during this special time of year. If you can assist, please speak to Shenda in the parish office or send an email to [ashford@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:ashford@rcdow.org.uk). Thank you for your continued support and dedication to our parish community.

*In Christ Jesus, Fr Sidon Sagar, Parish Priest.*

**Repository Christmas Sale.** Thank you to everyone who supported the Sale, both at the Antiques Fair and after Masses last weekend. The Repository is open when the church is open and payment may be made by cash or card (*card machine is in the narthex – select the Repository tab*). Advent Calendars and 2025 Catholic diaries are still available.

**Caritas Advent Giving Calendar.** In the narthex are calendars designed for use in the Advent season. Advent is a time to think about those who might need some extra support this Christmas.

If you are able to follow the calendar each day and make up a food parcel this will be given to a needy family in the area. You may wish to substitute some of the suggested items with something that you would like to receive.

The food parcel should be delivered to Lee Gibson, Caritas Representative for St. Michael's and St. David's, at St. Michael's Presbytery by **Friday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2024**. She will then be able to distribute them to families in need before Christmas Day.

If you want more information please contact Lee on [lee.gibson.2na@btinternet.com](mailto:lee.gibson.2na@btinternet.com) or 07713 760281.

**Mass Intentions.** If you wish to book a Mass, please drop your intention envelope in the box at the back of the church in the offertory collection or through the presbytery letterbox. *Please use the new blue donation envelopes if you can make your Mass offering under Gift Aid.*

**Bucket Collection.** The Bucket Collection is for COSMIC. You will find the donations box in the wall at the back of the church.

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**This Sunday's readings, 1 December, First Sunday of Advent**

*Jeremiah 33: 14-16; 1 Thessalonians 3:12 – 4: 2; Luke 21: 25-28, 34-36*

**Next Sunday's readings, 8 December, Second Sunday of Advent**

*Baruch 5: 1-9; Philippians 1: 4-6, 8-11; Luke 3: 1-6*

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**Offertory Collection.**

Thank you for your offertories last week:

Loose Plate **£534.46**; Envelopes **£149.00**; Standing Orders £900.00

Contactless **£194.00** (*The Dona contactless PayPoint is in the narthex*)

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**MANNA Foodbank.** This week's shortages: *Tinned Cold Meat; Small Jars of Coffee; Long-Life Full Fat Milk (Blue); Tinned Soup; Tinned Green Beans; Single Sachets of Mashed Potato - Smash/Idahoan type; Fruit Squash; Deodorant for Men; Laundry Powder/Liquid/Capsules/Tablets; Shaving Foam/Gel; Liquid Handwash; toothpaste and Toothbrushes for 0-2 years; Toothpaste and Toothbrushes for 6+ years.*

Please leave your donations on the Presbytery doorstep or in the Narthex.

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**SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION**

*During Adoration after Saturday morning Mass (and by appointment)*

**SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM**

*To arrange a baptism please refer to the parish website:*

*(see: Parish Life → Sacramental Preparation → Baptism)*

*For the parish Mass timetable, please refer to the parish website:*

**<http://parish.rcdow.org.uk/ashford>**

**Safeguarding** If you've any concerns or require advice regarding the safety or well-being of a child or vulnerable adult, please contact our parish safeguarding rep, Tiziana Demurtas on 07778 533932 or ashfordsg@safeguardrcdow.org.uk  
You can also contact the Diocesan Safeguarding Team on 020 7798 9356 or [safeguarding@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@rcdow.org.uk)

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**PLEASE PRAY**

**for all the sick and housebound in our parish.**

**for anniversaries in December since 2017:** Angela Bentley, Marie Bouquet, Gavin Boyle, Anne Brown, Anthony Connell, Ronald Connor, Michael Cowan, Philip Eveleigh, Mary Gartlan, Thomas Harrington, Maurice Hunter, Michael Igoe, Vincenzo Mingoia, Mary Monahan, Margaret Murphy, Beryl Nicklette, Hazel Robinson, Cecilia Roughan, Marion Seal, Monica Stevens.

**for Fr Jonathon Stogdon and the parishioners of St Edmund's Whitton in the Upper Thames Deanery.**

**for the Holy Father's Prayer Intention that the coming Church Jubilee Year 2025 strengthens us in our faith, helping us to recognise the Risen Christ in the midst of our lives, transforming us into pilgrims of Christian hope.**

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### **Mass Intentions 1<sup>st</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> December**

<b>Sun 1<sup>st</sup></b>	<b>First Sunday of Advent</b>		
<b>(Saturday Vigil Mass)</b>	<b>06.00pm</b>	The people of the parish	
	<b>09.15am</b>	Anna Maria Corgiolu Demurtas RIP	
	<b>11.30am</b>	Neil Loony intentions	
	<b>06.00pm</b>	Bernard Wick RIP	
<b>Mon 2<sup>nd</sup></b>	<b>09.15am</b>	Aloysius Andrade RIP	
<b>Tues 3<sup>rd</sup></b>	<b>St Francis Xavier, Priest</b>		
	<b>09.15am</b>	Francisca Maria Barretto RIP	
<b>Wed 4<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>06.00pm</b>	Barbara Stevenson intentions	
<b>Thurs 5<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>09.15am</b>		
<b>Fri 6<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>09.15am</b>	Pacific Maningas RIP	
<b>Sat 7<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>St Ambrose, Bishop and Doctor of the Church</b>		
	<b>09.15am</b>	Corazon Phillips intentions	
<b>Sun 8<sup>th</sup></b>	<b>Second Sunday of Advent</b>		
<b>(Saturday Vigil Mass)</b>	<b>06.00pm</b>	Matilda Saparamadu RIP	
	<b>09.15am</b>	The people of the parish	
	<b>11.30am</b>	Angela Mary Bentley RIP	
	<b>06.00pm</b>	Pat and Colin Axtell RIP	

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## **St Michael's Catholic Church**

**112 Clarendon Road, Ashford, Middlesex TW15 2QD**  
**Telephone: 01784 252230; Email: [ashford@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:ashford@rcdow.org.uk)**  
**Website: <http://parish.rcdow.org.uk/ashford>**

*This parish is part of the Westminster Catholic Diocese Trustee Charity no. 233699*

**Fr Sidon Sagar FDP: Parish Priest, Fr Carlo Mazzotta FDP: Assistant Priest**  
**Parish Secretary: Mrs Shenda Holmes**

*Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday 9.00 am – 1.00 pm*