



3rd SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Gaudete Sunday

13th December 2020



This Sunday is called Gaudete, which means joy; this joy is arising in the Church, as Christmas is near. The opening antiphon in today's liturgy urges us to rejoice: '**let us rejoice in the Lord always; again I say rejoice!**' The Lord is near. Often people say that Christmas is for children. It is more true to say that Christmas is for adults who have not forgotten what it means to be a child. There is a sense of joy and fun in children, which is hard to suppress. Christmas is for those who have suffered 'the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune' and have not allowed it to destroy their wonder or joy or hope. Christmas is a time to rekindle our faith that our God will return; he is coming to us as a small child, making possible what seemed impossible. He is, after all, the God who raises the dead.

A child has no difficulty believing such wonders and we are called to learn how to trust in the God of the impossible. St Theresa of the Child Jesus said that: '*sanctity does not depend on this or that practise, but on a disposition of the heart, that makes us small and humble in the arms of God, conscious of our littleness, and bodily trusting in His Fatherly goodness.*' Grown-ups still 'get' something of wonder at second hand, through their children. The excitement and amazement of children, especially at Christmas time, is contagious, through their eyes we glimpse again what we once knew - the excited waiting of the Advent season, the longing, almost beyond bearing, for a great day ahead.

The season of Advent invites us to return and rediscover something we have lost. This is what the word repent means - turn back, turn

around, return. We are to do this not just to lament what has been lost, but to rediscover a sense of excitement, to be alert and keen and awake and attentive once more. We are to be open to the wonders that the Lord will yet reveal in our lives, which will awaken us from tiredness and cynicism. We are to become children of our Heavenly Father; claiming back that lost sense that a child's soul has, through prayer and reconciliation, penance and right living. It is not really an added extra, this child's soul in us, it is essential for our maturity since unless we become like little children, we shall never enter the kingdom of heaven.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

Whilst there is no obligation to attend Mass on Christmas Day, many people will want to celebrate the birth of Christ.

One way in which more people can participate in the 'days of the Nativity of the Lord' is by attending Mass during the Christmas Octave, from Christmas Day until the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God on 1 January. The meaning of the Octave and Christmastide, which extends until the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, has been lost and could be recovered during this period of time. Participation in the Octave will enable people to celebrate the rich liturgy of the Feasts that occur during the eight days. This will of course depend on the generosity of those who steward and clean the church.

Over the period of Christmas Eve until 28th December, the government is planning to relax rules so that "bubbles" are expanded to include three households. This will enable people who are families or friends, and are in the same Christmas "bubble", to sit together in the church and create more available space for others.

I recognise that celebrating Christmas this year will be a challenge in many different ways. Many families will also have to face the pain of bereavement following the death of one of their members during the year. Grief will be more keenly felt at Christmas and the desire to pray, visit the crib, or light a candle will be more earnest. I pray for you that the hope given by the Incarnation and the birth of Christ will continue to be a light shining in the darkness.

Bishop John Sherrington

PARISH MASS ON-LINE

Fr. Denis is still celebrating mass online, every Saturday night 6.30pm vigil mass, & Wednesday morning mass at 10am, which is available through the parish Facebook page:

Catholic Church of the Holy Trinity and

St Augustine of Canterbury.

For more information please go to the parish website page

<https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/baldock>

Email address: Baldock@rcdow.org.uk

St. JOHN'S SCHOOL is our Catholic Parish Primary School. contact the Head teacher, Thomas Timson on 01462 892478 to make an appointment. The school website is:

<http://www.stjohns4.herts.sch.uk/index.html>

RC HOSPITAL CHAPLAIN

Contact Tel: Mobile: 07876 526935 Lister 01438 285518,

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| Sat 12 th | 6.30pm Vigil Mass | Marian Hamilton intentions |
| Sun 13 th | 8.30am 10.30am | Kathleen Bradshaw <i>Holy Souls intentions</i> |
| Mon 14 th | 7pm | St John of the Cross Elizabeth Leimgruber RIP |
| Tue 15 th | No mass | Teresa Mc Hugh |
| Wed 16 th | 10am | Mary Callaghan <i>Holy Souls intentions</i> |
| Thu 17 th | No Mass | Bridget Keegan <i>Holy Souls intentions</i> |
| Fri 18 th | No Mass | Friday abstinence |

Please note that mass intentions as set out above may not always be read out, but the intention is offered

NEWSLETTER -If there is anything you would like to see included in the newsletter, please email the following address by Tuesday evening of the week you would like to see it in print:

baldock.rcc@ntlworld.com.

The Wednesday Word is now available on this link page:

<http://www.wednesdayword.org/school/index.htm>

REPOSITORY

Christmas is coming despite the dreaded coronavirus! We have a good selection of Christmas cards, candles, Advent calendars and other items, all at reasonable prices. They are on sale in the Repository at the back of the church and will be there when lockdown is over. Please place any money in the cash box on the table.

MISSIO - RED MISSION BOXES Because of the nature of this year, it hasn't always been possible to get the boxes emptied and the total for this year has been considerably less. If you can get to church, please bring your box and leave it in the large plastic box at the back of the church. You can collect your 2021 calendar from there also. If you can't get to church and would like your box emptied (every little helps!) please phone 01462 618131 or email marywaldren@yahoo.co.uk and I will arrange to come and collect it. Many thanks for your continued support for the Missions.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

RECONCILIATION

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is available before mass and after mass. Please do ask Fr. Denis if you would like to celebrate the Sacrament of reconciliation.

CHRISTMAS EVE Thursday 24th December

6.30 pm & 8.30pm the Mass of the Nativity of the Lord.

CHRISTMAS DAY

Friday 25th December

Mass at 8.30am & 10.30am, & 12 noon

Blessing of the Children's toys at 10.30 mass

St Stephens Day

Saturday 26th December 10am Mass

28th Dec Monday through to 31st Dec Thursday masses at 10am

NEW YEAR'S DAY

Mary The Holy Mother of God

Friday 1st January 10am

THE FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY

Wednesday 6th January 10am

A word of thanks to all those who have given of their time cleaning and stewarding the church; please do sign up to volunteer.

The services can only take place with the generosity of those who steward and clean

Please remember in your prayers:



We pray especially for the sick of the parish and for those who care for and support them, especially, Angela Gray, Mairead Kirke, and Dick Worbey. We remember those who have died recently; Margaret Doyle and all those whose anniversaries occur about this time: Jane Buckley, Josephine Cornish, Jennifer Windebank, Mary Craster, Martin Geraghty, Joseph Sichi, John Walsh, Henrietta Knights, Ruth Cannon, Leon Sichi, Mary Diana Norton, Mary Postlethwaite, Rebecca Hegarty, Mary Teresa Smith and Eileen Moynihan.

CHURCHES FINANCES & COLLECTION

A word of thanks to all those people who have donated for the upkeep of the Parish in one way or another. There are several ways to support the Parish. One of them is via a standing order, which is easy to set up and easy to stop, if you want to, when this difficult period has passed. Please use the bank account details from our website below to set up the standing order if you use online banking, or you can also write to, telephone or visit your bank as well. You can also donate via the website. Or, of course, you can contribute after mass in the Collection Plates provided.

<https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/baldock/donate/>.

Fr. Denis would like to thank everyone for their generosity during this time of pandemic