



3rd SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Gaudete Sunday

12th December 2021



What is special about the Third Sunday of Advent? For much of the Church's history, this Sunday had a special name: "Gaudete" Sunday. The traditions surrounding this Sunday go back as far as the fourth or fifth century, as does the season of Advent itself. Advent, our preparation for Christmas, was originally a forty-day penitential season like Lent. In fact, since it used to begin on November 12 (just after the Memorial of St. Martin of Tours), it was called "St. Martin's Lent." "Gaudete Sunday" was the Advent counterpart to "Laetare Sunday," which marks the midpoint in Lent.

On Gaudete Sunday, the season of Advent shifts its focus. For the first two weeks of Advent, the focus can be summed up in the phrase, "The Lord is coming." But beginning with Gaudete Sunday, the summary might be, "The Lord is near." This shift is marked by a lighter mood and a heightened sense of joyous anticipation.

Liturgically, the colors lighten as well. The priest usually wears rose-colored vestments, a hue seen only on Gaudete Sunday and Laetare Sunday. On this day, we light the third candle of the Advent wreath, which is also rose-colored, or if you prefer, pink.

The word "Gaudete" is Latin for "Rejoice." In times when the focus of our anticipation is often on the negative and fearful, this celebration is a reminder that God who loves us is still in charge and that we await his coming not with fear, but with tremendous joy.

Background on the Gospel Reading

This Sunday's Gospel continues last week's focus on John the Baptist and his role in preparing the way for Christ. Recall that last week's reading described John's appearance in the desert and established his connection with the prophetic tradition of Israel. If we were to read Luke's Gospel continuously, we

would learn about John the Baptist challenging the crowds who came to him and calling upon them to show evidence of their repentance. John tells his listeners that they cannot rely on their lineage as Israelites because children of Abraham can be raised up from stones. Repentance, rather, must be observable in one's actions. Here, Luke is continuing to set up two important themes of his Gospel message: the Christian faith is expressed in one's actions, and the call to salvation is extended to everyone, Jews and Gentiles.

In today's Gospel reading, the crowds ask John the Baptist for specifics. What evidence of repentance is required? John replies by naming concrete actions: crowds should share their food and cloaks; tax collectors should be just; soldiers should act fairly. The concern for justice is a hallmark of Luke's Gospel.

When the crowd begins to wonder if John the Baptist might be the Messiah, John interprets his baptism and makes it clear that his ministry is in preparation for the Messiah. John the Baptist knows his place and role in God's plan of salvation. By encouraging the crowd to act similarly in accordance with their stations in life, John's teaching suggests that each person has a role to play in God's salvation. It is the great mystery of our salvation that God permits and even asks for human cooperation in his divine plans.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

CHRISTMAS EVE

Friday 24th December

4.30pm Vigil Mass of Christmas, Family Mass
8.40pm Carols and Readings
9pm the Mass of the Nativity of the Lord

CHRISTMAS DAY

Saturday 25th December 9.30am

SUNDAY HOLY FAMILY MASSES

Sunday 26th December

8.30am &
10.30am Mass: with Blessing of the Children's toys.

NEW YEAR'S DAY

Saturday 1st January

10am: Mary the Holy Mother of God
6.30pm: Vigil Mass

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

REPOSITORY

There is a good selection of Christmas Cards, Advent Calendars and Candles on sale in the repository from this weekend onwards. Don't miss out!

READERS FOR ALL WEEKEND MASSES

The rota for each mass is due to be updated to start in the New Year. Please let Pat Biggins - at pat.biggins@ntlworld.com or phone 07752580759 - know as soon as possible if you are willing to be included as a reader. Existing readers; it would help if you would confirm your continuing availability.

NEW CHURCH DOORS

A word of thanks to Val Shanley and Maple tree Construction, for installing the new church doors. We had a donation for one set of the doors, and the other set was paid by the parish.

Sat 11 th	6.30 pm Vigil Mass	St Damascus I Pope J M Alexander RIP
Sun 12 th	8.30am 10.30am	Elizabeth Madden RIP Bowen Family Holy Souls Intentions
Mon 13 th	10.00	St Lucy Virgin & Martyr Angela Gray RIP
Tue 14 th	10.00	St John of the Cross, Priest & Doctor Angela Gray RIP
Wed 15 th	10.00	Cloney Family
Thu 16 th	10.00	Mrs F Wade Holy Souls Intentions
Fri 17 th	No Mass	

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

Holy Hour: Saturday 5.15 - 6.15 pm
Confessions: Saturday 5.45 - 6.15 pm
Or by appointment with Fr. Denis
Family Mass: 1st Sunday 10.30 am

PARISH MASS ON-LINE

Fr. Denis is also still celebrating Mass online at 6.30 pm every Saturday night for the Vigil Mass. Mass is accessible 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 <https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/baldock>

BOOKING TO ATTEND MASS IN PERSON

For all services in Church, you need to book online, through our website below. *Please go to the Parish website: <https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/baldock>*

THE WEDNESDAY WORD IS AVAILABLE VIA THIS LINK:

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

Going into Hospital? - If you are going into hospital do ask to see a Catholic Chaplain. Please call the Chaplaincy office at the Lister Hospital 01438 285518. . Mobile: 07876 526935

St. JOHN'S SCHOOL is our Catholic Parish Primary School. Parish families are welcome to visit and have a tour of the school. Please come to the School Office or 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>

NEWSLETTER

Please submit items for inclusion, preferably by Tuesday evening, by either emailing the **dedicated newsletter email address please note new address** baldock@rcdow.org.uk or handing them to Fr. Denis. Thank you

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Let's not forget that the only Christmas present we wanted last year was to see our family and friends. Don't let the hustle and bustle of a commercial Christmas make you forget what's really important.

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS:



We pray especially for the sick of the parish and for those who care for and support them, especially Christopher Gillham and Mairead Kirke. We remember those who have died recently: Angela Gray and Michael Turner, and all those whose anniversaries occur about this time; Adelaide Murphy; Oliver Lynch; May Jones Alexander; Catherine McCall; Gordon Hackett; Jane Buckley; Josephine Cornish; Jennifer Windebank; Mary Craster; Martin Geraghty; Joseph Sicheri; John Walsh; Henrietta Knights; Ruth Cannon; Leon Sicheri; Mary Diana Norton; Mary Postlethwaite; Rebecca Hegarty.

FIRE OF ADVENT

"Advent, like its cousin Lent, is a season for prayer and reformation of our hearts. Since it comes at winter time, fire is a fitting sign to help us celebrate Advent...If Christ is to come more fully into our lives this Christmas, if God is to become really incarnate for us, then fire will have to be present in our prayer. Our worship and devotion will have to stoke the kind of fire in our souls that can truly change our hearts. Ours is a great responsibility not to waste this Advent time."

"Take time to be aware that in the very midst of our busy preparations for the celebration of Christ's birth in ancient Bethlehem, Christ is reborn in the Bethlehems of our homes and daily lives. Take time, slow down, be still, be awake to the Divine Mystery that looks so common and so ordinary yet is wondrously present.

"An old abbot was fond of saying, 'The devil is always the most active on the highest feast days.'

"The supreme trick of Old Scratch is to have us so busy decorating, preparing food, practicing music and cleaning in preparation for the feast of Christmas that we actually miss the coming of Christ. Hurt feelings, anger, impatience, injured egos—the list of clouds that busyness creates to blind us to the birth can be long, but it is familiar to us all."

