The Roman Catholic Parishes of Old Hall Green, Puckeridge & Buntingford

(Established 1793: 2 Farm Ln, SG11 1DT) (Established 1914: 3 Station Rd, SG9 9HT)

website: https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/oldhallgreen **website:** https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/buntingford

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Bishop's Stortford Parish Office: Monday to Friday 9:00 am to 3:00 pm ☎ 01279 654063

Mass Times for the Week commencing
2-10 December 2023
All Masses will take place in the parish church of
St Richard of Chichester, Buntingford.



Saturday 2nd December
Vigil Mass of the 1st Sunday of Advent
6.00pm: The People of the Parish

Sunday 3rd December
The 1st Sunday of Advent
9.15am: The People of the Parish
11.00am: The People of the Parish

Saturday 9 December
Vigil Mass of the 2nd Sunday of Advent
6.00pm: The People of the Parish

Sunday 10 December
The 2nd Sunday of Advent

9.15am: The People of the Parish
11.00am: The People of the Parish

REFRESHMENTS

Refreshments are being served after the 9.15 a.m. Sunday Masses. Parishioners from both Sunday Masses are warmly invited from 10.15 a.m. for tea, coffee and biscuits, or just for a chat.

VINNIE PACKS—The SVP are distributing 10,000+ Vinnie Packs containing cold weather essentials to the homeless this winter. To help, cash donations can be sent to Vinnie Packs, PO Box 72264, London SW1P 9EZ with cheques to 'SVP' or by bank transfer to Nat West sort code 60-60-04, account no. 4608 8237 . Thank you

Set a guard, O Lord, over my mouth; keep watch at the door of my lips.
Do not let my heart be drawn to any evil thing or take part in works of wickedness
with men who do iniquity; let me not feast on their delicacies.
Let the righteous man strike me; let his rebuke be an act of loving devotion.
It is oil for my head; let me not refuse it.
For my prayer is ever against the deeds of the wicked (Ps 141:3-5).

Today we celebrate the 1st Sunday of Advent, the beginning of a new liturgical year. Advent means to attend, to wait, to tend towards something. Advent is an image of a life spent in a "fight" trying to "stay awake". I have a few memories that when I was 8 or 9, I used to celebrate my birthday at home with relatives and friends, and I was counting the hours before the party in excitement waiting to see my friends and to celebrate with them. In the Gospel of today, Jesus four times says to his disciples: "Stay awake!" And Christ himself, through his Word, comes and wakes us up.

But now, in your spiritual life, what are you waiting for? What do you expect God to do in your life? During the Advent season, we await His coming, His manifestation among us, His visit to our house, His Incarnation. All this waiting is not just like waiting for a train that you know will arrive at a precise moment, on a precise platform, and in an exact place (apart when there are strikes or bad weather…). It is waiting for a train that you do not know when it will arrive, at which platform, etc. This waiting teaches us to be patient, it is very important because teaches us to learn how to wait for something, or better for someone very important, who is going to arrive sooner or later and bursting into joy at his coming (like Simeon waiting to see Jesus in the Temple, cfr. Lk 2:29-32). Christ comes in the events of our lives, but we need to be ready welcomers.

This leads to the theme of the short parable of the Gospel of today: It is like a man traveling abroad: he has gone from home, and left his servants in charge, each with his own task; and he has told the doorkeeper to stay awake (Mk 13:34). We are called to be like the doorkeepers, vigilant, attentive, awake: ready to welcome the master of the house at his return, but also ready to close the door if some delinquent or a thief is willing to rob you. On the other hand, we need to be careful of what comes out of our hearts: we need to stop evil going out of us with our gossiping, judgments, lies, ill-treating, etc., but instead opening the doors and let out kindness, joy, patience, love, mercy, etc.

So a final question for our reflection, is: Who is the master of your house? Is it Christ who gives sense to your life or someone else? In this time of Advent, let us ask the Lord to come and visit our house, let us be ready welcomers for the King of Kings so that we can become like the Virgin Mary, carrying Christ in our bodies.

Fr Marco Lazzaron

A Prayer Offering to the Holy Child.

0 Dear, sweet Infant Jesus. I offer You: my will, that You strengthen it; my mind, that You inspire it; my memory, that You fill it; my wishes and desires, that You cleanse them. I sacrifice to You: my intentions, that You guide them; my trouble and my labour, that You bless them; all my inner and outer activities, that You make them sacred. All I am and all I have Is Yours. Your love for me is my hope and my trust. Hear me and grant that I may never leave You. Amen