



OUR LADY OF LOURDES HARPENDEN

15TH DECEMBER 2019
3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT (A)
GAUDETE SUNDAY

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The Church is usually open each day
from 7.00am until 6.30pm (approx.)
for quiet prayer and contemplation,
everyone is welcome

This third Sunday of Advent is also known as "Gaudete Sunday" - Gaudete means 'Rejoice!' Formerly, as some may remember, Advent was a much stricter penitential season. However, this Sunday was intended to be a relaxing break reminding us of the celebrations soon to come. As a symbol of this, the penitential violet of the vestments may be softened to a rose colour.

A penitential mood is not an inappropriate way to prepare ourselves to welcome the coming of the Lord. And, though we may not have fasting, the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be celebrated during the days leading up to Christmas. At the same time, it is difficult not to feel some excitement as we anticipate the celebration of Jesus' coming among us.

That excitement is heightened as we hear of John the Baptist, presented by Jesus as one of the greatest persons ever born. Yet he missed the privilege being born into the age of Christ, a privilege that has been made available to us. We could do well to emulate John in preparing ourselves for Jesus to become really part of our lives.

Our Christian vocation, however, is similar to his. We are called to prepare the way for Jesus to come into our own hearts, and also to prepare other people's hearts so that they, too, may "experience the joy of salvation", that healing, wholeness and holiness we all long for and which alone gives real meaning to our lives. Christmas is a time of gifts - both giving and receiving. Let us make sure that among the gifts we offer to others is some of the Christian joy which we ourselves have received.

FIRST MASS OF CHRISTMAS

In recent times, a number of parishioners have suggested that the first Mass of Christmas is celebrated earlier than midnight.

Interestingly the Church, in the official books, doesn't refer to 'Midnight' Mass, but to 'Mass during the night'. So, this year we will celebrate first Mass of Christmas at 10.00pm, on Christmas Eve, with carols at 9.30pm.



CHRISTMAS TIMES

Details of the times of the various Masses, and other services over Christmas, are available today, so do please collect one of the cards. If you know someone who no longer attends you might take a copy for them, let them know they're still welcome.

PENITENTIAL SERVICE

No doubt the pressure is growing for many of us as the countdown towards Christmas continues! Within all that remains to be done, it is important to remember what it is we are preparing to celebrate, the Birth of Christ. An essential part of our preparation is celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation. In addition to the regular times of confession, there is an additional opportunity, **next Thursday at 7.30pm, at the Penitential Service**. Another important addition for your 'to do' list.



ALTAR SERVERS

Altar Servers will be needed for the various celebrations over Christmas. Those who are available to serve should indicate their availability on the lists in the sacristy.



MARY ADAMS RIP

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Mary Adams who died recently. Mary's Requiem Mass

will be this Wednesday 18th December at 11am. We remember Mary's family, in our prayers at this time.

PARISH CHILDREN'S NATIVITY SERVICE

The service will be at **5pm on Christmas Eve** and is a lovely reminder to the children about the reasons for celebrating this great feast. This year we are dramatizing the story "The Christmas Story as told by

Assellus the Christmas Donkey" which will be read by an adult, but we do need a cast of many - (shepherds, angels, wisemen, townsfolk etc.).



So, if your child/children would like to take part please come to the rehearsal in church on **Monday 23rd December at 10am to 12pm**, there are no speaking parts, so no need to worry about learning lines. Your child/children do need to be at the rehearsal to take part on Christmas Eve. We have some costumes, but if you have anything suitable then they would be most useful. The children need to be of primary school age and if they are taking part in the service, they will need to be in church at **4.30pm on Christmas Eve**. Please let me know as soon as possible if they would like to take part by calling or emailing me on, 01582 620322 or ginny.sjg@gmail.com. Thank you, Ginny,

CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

The parish service of 'Carols by Candlelight', with the nine readings, takes place next Sunday 22nd December at 6.00pm. A lovely opportunity to focus on the message of Christmas. Mince pies and mulled wine will be served afterwards in the undercroft.



THE PARISH OFFICE will be closed on **Thursday 19th December** and will re-open on **Thursday 2nd January**, all items for the newsletter should be received before 10am on 2nd January.

SVP CHRISTMAS TREE

This year the SVP Christmas Tree will be once again supporting the Food Bank. As in previous years the tags on the tree have the items needed by the local Food Bank. If you would like to support this cause please take a tag and place the item in the box under the tree. The tag can then be replaced on the tree.

Thank you.



ST STEPHEN'S DAY MASS

26th December is the feast of St Stephen and Mass will be celebrated at 10am.

St Stephen, was the first Martyr and is the Patron Saint of Altar Servers. During this Mass some of our more recent servers will be enrolled in the Guild of St Stephen and more longer serving servers will receive their medals. We hope that many of our servers will be present to celebrate their patron.



FROM THE REGISTERS: BAPTISM

We welcomed the Luisa Marotta & Kit Lauterpacht into God's family on 30th November.



WESTMINSTER YEAR BOOK 2020

The Westminster Year book is now on sale in the repository. A very useful directory priced at £4.50.

CHRISTMAS STAMPS

This year's Christmas stamps show scenes from the Biblical story of the Nativity from the Annunciation, the journey of the Magi and the birth of Jesus Christ. If you want religious stamps you may need to



specifically ask for them. A little way to give witness to the true message of Christmas.

WALK IN THE PARK - NEW YEAR'S DAY SPECIAL

All are welcome to join us outside church at the slightly later time of 10:30am on Wednesday, 1 January (after that day's Mass for the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God) when we will gather for our first parish walk of 2020. As usual, we will spend an hour enjoying the fresh air in Rothamsted Park before going for coffee together. If the weather's bad, it's straight for coffee!



ST DOMINIC SCHOOL

The closing date for applications for places in the Reception Class 2020-21 is 15th January 2020. We are aware that some parents may not have had the opportunity to see the school as yet and therefore a further visit date has been arranged for the **Wednesday 8th January 2020 at 9.15am**. If you would like to make an appointment for this visit, please telephone the school office on 01582 760047 to make a booking. Due to the nature of the visit, we request that you do not bring children with you on this occasion.



 livesimply

A date for the new year 2020! On Saturday 4 January theologian, David McLoughin, Emeritus Fellow of Newman University, will be giving a talk on 'A spirituality for difficult times - living in justice and peace on a vulnerable planet'. The talk will be at 11.00am in the Undercroft, followed by a shared lunch. Hope to see you there. Laudato Si!

HARPENDEN SPOTLIGHT ON AFRICA QUIZ

What a way to have something to look forward to in the New Year - our annual fun Quiz night for Saturday 1st February 2020 in Lourdes Hall,

Southdown Road. 7 for 7.30 pm prompt start. Up to tables of 8 but you can also come and join a table. Tickets are £15 each to include a tasty Godfrey's Fish and Chip Supper (veg option too). Your ticket will pay towards a school lunch for 1000 needy children. Raffle and cash bar. This is a popular event so contact Wendy Howson, wendyhowson@hsoa.org or 07917 621059.

GETTING MARRIED

For some years in our Diocese it has been the policy that at least six months' notice of the date on which you hope to marry, must be given to the priest of the parish. The reason for this is to allow sufficient time for all the formalities and preparations that are required. It is highly advisable to delay setting the date for any other arrangements until you have agreed the date for the ceremony in the church where you hope to marry. If you are thinking about getting married, here at Our Lady of Lourdes please contact Melanie to arrange an appointment with Canon Dwyer. If you know someone getting married, please draw their attention to this notice.



CHRISTMAS NEWSPAPERS

Next weekend there will be a double issue of The Universe & The Catholic Times. The price of The Universe will be £3 and The Catholic Times will be £3.

MASS INTENTIONS THIS WEEK

Saturday 14th December

St John of the Cross, Priest & Doctor

10.00am Sr. Eileen (Spec Ints)
12 Noon Baptisms
5.00pm Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

Vigil Mass

6.00pm Jack Shaw & Tom Shaw RIP (Anniv)

Sunday 15th December

3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

GAUDETE SUNDAY (A)

8.30am Denis Mann RIP
9.45am People of the Parish
11.30am Derek & Gillian Woolcock RIP



Monday 16th December

Advent feria

9.15am Sr. Regina (Spec Ints)

Tuesday 17th December

Advent feria

9.15am Ian McGregor RIP
Refreshments after Mass today

Wednesday 18th December

Advent feria

9.15am John McKenna RIP (Anniv)
11.00am Requiem Mass for Mary Adams
7.30pm Advent Penitential Service

Thursday 19th December

Advent feria

11.00am Maureen Territt (Spec Ints Sick)

Friday 20th December

Advent feria

9.15am Service of the Word with Holy Communion

Saturday 21st December

Advent feria

10.00am Sadie Beirnes RIP
5.00pm Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

Vigil Mass

6.00pm Ian Swanson RIP (Anniv)

Sunday 22nd December

4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (A)

8.30am People of the Parish
9.45am Bernard St John Glew RIP
11.30am Elizabeth & Timothy O'Mahony RIP
6.00pm Carols by Candlelight



CONFESSIONS

Saturday 10.30am-11.00am and
at 5pm - 5.30pm before the Vigil Mass