



# OUR LADY OF LOURDES HARPENDEN

8<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2019  
2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY OF ADVENT (A)

**Parish Priest**  
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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

Last Sunday's readings focused on the final goal and meaning of our lives. It is the reason for the coming of Christ among us. Today we begin to look more directly at the coming of God's Son in our midst as a preparation for that final coming. The central figure in today's Gospel is John the Baptist.

The words of John today are primarily directed to ourselves, to the Pharisee and Sadducee in each one of us. Our most dangerous enemy is complacency: "I'm a good enough Catholic. I'm not perfect, of course, I'm not a religious fanatic but I keep the basics of my religion. I'm OK." Where our relationships with God are concerned, to stay in the same place is to go backwards.

If we have such a casual attitude to the demands of our faith, we may look on Advent and Christmas as merely memories of past historical events. But Advent means "coming" and, if this season is to be meaningful, there has to be a genuine coming of Jesus into our lives both as individuals and as community. It is a time to remind ourselves of our constant need for change.

If John the Baptist were to come among us today, what would he tell us? What would he warn us against? As we come to the end of another calendar year (and the beginning of the Church year) where do we need conversion and change in our lives? How can we and our families give better witness to the Christian message? What changes are called for in the way our parish gives corporate witness to the Gospel? The celebration of Advent calls for a serious consideration of these questions.

## IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Normally we would be celebrating the feast of the Immaculate Conception today, December 8<sup>th</sup>. As the feast coincides with a Sunday of Advent, that takes precedence over the feast. However, instead, we will honour Our Lady tomorrow with Mass at 9.15am. This feast is not a holyday of obligation, but it is an important feast, and a very good day to attend Mass.

## GENERAL ELECTION

In case you needed reminding the General Election takes place next Thursday. Enclosed, is a message from the Bishops of England and Wales suggesting some of the considerations we might take into account as we consider how we will use our vote.



## PATHWAYS TO HOLINESS

Over the past four weeks we have heard about three pathways to holiness, as we discovered something further about the lives of three saints whose lives span almost the last two hundred years. We were fortunate in the four speakers who came to enlighten us on the lives of St John Henry Newman, St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross and St Oscar Romero. The interest of those who attended was encouraging, and gives food for thought as to what else could be done to help us grow in the knowledge of our faith.

## 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.



## PENITENTIAL SERVICE

In the midst of all that remains to be done for Christmas, one important preparation is celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation, going to confession. We have the opportunity to do this as a parish on Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> December at 7.30pm. Do think about making time to attend, and so using this important opportunity.



## PATRICIA POLLOCK RIP

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Patricia Pollock who died recently. Patricia's Requiem Mass will be this Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> December at 10.30am. We remember Patricia's family, Catherine & John Buck in our prayers at this time.

## MASS CHANGES

Please note that there will be no Mass at 11am on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> December due to the Requiem Mass.

## 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 23<sup>rd</sup> 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](mailto:ginny.sjg@gmail.com). Thank you, Ginny,

### ADVENT REFLECTION

There will be an Advent Reflection at the Convent 18 Kirkdale Road, tomorrow Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December from 2pm - 3pm led by Sr. Regina

### CHRISTMAS FLOWERS

This weekend there be another chance for you to donate for the Christmas Flowers, so that the church can be decorated for the Christmas season. Thank you in advance for your generosity.



### CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

The parish service of 'Carols by Candlelight', with the nine readings, takes place on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup>



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.

### 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.



### MARY ADAMS RIP

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Mary Adams who died recently. Mary's funeral details will be announced shortly. We remember Mary's family in our prayers at this time

### FIRST RECONCILIATION

Yesterday almost 70 of our children made their First Reconciliation, a lovely moment for them as they encountered God's unending love through His forgiveness and mercy. It's a moment too when we are reminded of the essential place of Confession in our lives, the need we have to reflect on our lives, and to seek out the loving mercy of God.



### PARISH DIARIES 2020

Parish diaries, for the coming year, are now available. A voluntary contribution is welcome, and this can be placed in the Newspapers & Catholic Magazines box.

### WESTMINSTER YEAR BOOK 2020

The Westminster Year book is now on sale in the porch. 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.



### ST DOMINIC SCHOOL

Applications for places in Reception Class 2020-21 began on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2019 and close on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

Application forms for St Dominic are available from the school website at

[www.stdominic.herts.sch.uk/Our-School/Admissions](http://www.stdominic.herts.sch.uk/Our-School/Admissions)

Certificates of Catholic Practice will be available from Canon Dwyer, who will be available to sign forms in church on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> December between 3pm and 4pm. There is no need to make an appointment, but please be aware that signing is only at these times. Please note that 'practicing Catholic' means attending Mass every Sunday.

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!

**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.



**MASS INTENTIONS**

Usually when Mass intentions are accepted, we endeavour to indicate the date when the Mass will be said. From time to time such arrangements have to be changed, such as when a funeral is arranged. When this happens, the Mass is always transferred to another date, we trust you understand why it is necessary from time to time, to make such changes.

Lives simply  
Cut Down on  
Carbon  
Emissions.  
Why not walk to  
Church or car  
share.



<b>MASS INTENTIONS THIS WEEK</b>	
<p><b>Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December</b>  <b>St Ambrose, Bishop &amp; Doctor</b>                      10.00am Paul Hayes (Spec Ints)                      11.00am First Reconciliation Service                      5.00pm Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament  <b>Vigil Mass</b>                      6.00pm Erroll Yates RIP (Anniv)</p>	
<p><b>Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December</b>  <b>2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY OF ADVENT (A)</b>                      8.30am John Hegarty RIP                      9.45am People of the Parish                      11.30am Teresa Lawson RIP</p>	
 <small>2<sup>ND</sup> SUNDAY OF Advent</small>	
<p><b>Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December</b>  <b>The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary</b>                      9.15am Sr. Loretta (Spec Ints)</p>	
<p><b>Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December</b>  <b>Advent feria</b>                      9.15am Margaret Foulds RIP  <b>Refreshments after Mass today</b></p>	
<p><b>Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> December</b>  <b>Advent feria</b>                      9.15am Anne Connolly RIP &amp; Anne Harrison RIP (Anniv)</p>	
<p><b>Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> December</b>  <b>Advent feria</b>                      10.30am Requiem Mass for Patricia Pollock</p>	
<p><b>Friday 13<sup>th</sup> December</b>  <b>St Lucy, Virgin &amp; Martyr</b>                      9.15am Service of the Word with Holy Communion</p>	
<p><b>Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> December</b>  <b>St John of the Cross, Priest &amp; Doctor</b>                      10.00am Sr. Eileen (Spec Ints)                      12 Noon Baptisms                      5.00pm Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament  <b>Vigil Mass</b>                      6.00pm Jack Shaw &amp; Tom Shaw RIP (Anniv)</p>	
<p><b>Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> December</b>  <b>3<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY OF ADVENT</b>  <b>GAUDETE SUNDAY (A)</b>                      8.30am Denis Mann RIP                      9.45am People of the Parish                      11.30am Derek &amp; Gillian Woolcock RIP</p>	
 <small>3<sup>rd</sup> SUNDAY OF Advent</small>	
<p><b>CONFESSIONS</b>                      Saturday 10.30am-11.00am and                      at 5pm - 5.30pm before the Vigil Mass</p>	