Ss Mary & Joseph & St Mark

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FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT | 29 November 2026

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Parish Address: The Presbytery, 186 St John's Road, Hemel Hempstead, Herts. HP1 1NR

Sunday Cycle: Year B
Week Day Readings Year: 2
Divine Office: Week 1

JOIN OUR WHATSAPP COMMUNITY
for Announcements, Newsletter and Parish Groups

PARISH FINANCES
DONATE HERE
Thank you to all who plan their giving to the Parish in a committed way, especially by Standing Order with Gift Aid.
Account Name: WRCDT Hemel West
Sort Code: 40-05-20
Account No: 31095048

Of your charity please pray for

Ozana-Silvia Dragomir, to be received into Full Communion of the Catholic Church (from the Romanian Orthodox Church). Sunday at 10am.

Adults preparing for the Easter Sacraments to be accepted into the Catechumenate

Thomas Bennett
Rhiannon Jay-Cross
Claire Holmes
Alisha Oduntan

Candidates for Confirmation & to be received into the Catholic Church

Elizabeth (Lizzie) Ranner
Joanne Ferguson
Milena Estevan

SUNDAY GOSPEL: Mark 13:33-37 Stay awake in Advent Hope



Advent is the season of the Church's life which is for all the year round. In ordinary time, Lent or Easter, still we are in Advent, because all our life is an expectation of the coming of God. He comes in the moments when we must make the choices that will decide who we truly are, the moments of changes beyond our control, the moment of death, and the time of the death of the human race. Human history will come to an end, maybe in our lives or not, but come it will. Meanwhile we must live in watchfulness... Fr Euan Marley OP Full text

He who keeps Israel does not sleep or slumber.
Psalm 121:4

The discipline of hope: Why it isn't optimism rebranded

We tend to treat hope as something that happens to us — a feeling that arrives or doesn't, depending on circumstances. When things look good, we feel hopeful. When they look bad, the feeling drains away. On this account, hope is basically optimism rebranded: a disposition of the fortunate, the constitutionally sunny, the people who haven't been paying attention to the news.

For Ernst Bloch German Jewish philosopher), human beings are oriented toward what he calls the *Noch-Nicht-Sein*, the "not-yet-being." We are creatures of the future, constitutively incomplete, always leaning forward into something that has not arrived. The daydream, for Bloch, is not a waste of time — it is evidence of this fundamental structure. We dream forward.

We imagine what could be. And in doing so, we participate in the actual movement of history toward what he calls concrete utopia: a possible future latent in the present, waiting to be brought into being by those willing to work toward it.

His key concept is *docta spes* — learned hope. Educated, disciplined orientation toward genuine possibility. The charlatan sells false hope — the lottery ticket, the self-help promise, the demagogue's dawn. *Docta spes* is hope that has looked clearly at what is, understood the forces at work, and still found — in the cracks of the present — the seeds of something genuinely new.

It requires knowledge. It requires courage. It requires the willingness to remain oriented toward the future even when the present gives little encouragement. Bloch understood that hope, practiced this way, is a refusal to accept the existing order as the final word.

For Aquinas, hope is a theological virtue — a stable disposition of the will, ordered toward a specific object. That object, as he defines it in the *Summa Theologiae*, must meet four conditions: it must be good, it must be future, it must be arduous — genuinely difficult — and it must be possible to attain.

The last two conditions are the ones that bite the most. Hope lives in the space between despair and presumption. Despair gives up on the arduous good as unattainable. Presumption treats it as already secured, requiring no effort. Hope holds the tension: the good is real, it is possible, it is not yet here, and reaching it demands something of us. Something that costs nothing and requires nothing is not properly hoped for — it is rather expected. And like all virtues, hope must be exercised to remain alive. The theological virtue is a gift — it cannot be manufactured by willpower alone — but it atrophies without practice. The capacity for hope can be starved, as surely as any other capacity left unused.

What unites all the thinkers Benedict XVI refers to (*Spes Salvi*) and the Catholic tradition is the insistence that hope is active. It requires staying oriented toward the not-yet when the present is discouraging. It requires the sustained direction of the will toward a good that is arduous but real. It requires, in Benedict's terms, the daily work of prayer, the honest confrontation with suffering, and the refusal to let false consolation settle in where genuine hope should be.

All my hope on God is founded;
He doth all my trust renew,
Me through change and chance He guideth,
Only good and only true.
God unknown, He alone
Calls my heart to be His own.

Joachim Neander (1650-1680)

SMSJ: *Ss Mary & Joseph Church, St John's Road, Boxmoor, HP1 1NR*
SM: *St Mark's Church, John F Kennedy School, Hollybush Lane, HP12PH*

Date	Holy Mass Intentions
Sat 28 Nov	*Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary*
(SMSJ) 8am	Adoration & Confessions
(SMSJ) 9am	Mass Holy Souls
(SMSJ) 12 noon	Baptism Louis Mardon & William Hill
(SMSJ) 4-4.45pm	Confessions
(SMSJ) 5pm	Vigil Mass John (Sean) Sweeney (RIP ANNIV)
6.15pm	*Fundraising Supper by Cochin Indian Restaurant, Parish Centre – fully booked*
Sun 29 Nov	***1st Sunday of Advent***
(SMSJ) 7.30am	Holy Hour of Adoration
(SMSJ) 8.30am	Mass Holy Souls
(SMSJ) 10am	Mass Holy Souls *(Acceptance of Catechumens & Reception into full Communion – Ozana)*
(SM) 11.30am	Mass People of the Parish
Mon 30 Nov	*ST ANDREW, Apostle*
(SMSJ) 10am	Mass Holy Souls
Tues 1 December	*Advent Feria*
(SMSJ) 10am	Mass Helena Burnstein (Healing)
(SMSJ) 6pm	Mass Holy Souls
7pm	***Adult Formation (RCIA) in St Joseph's Hall***
Wed 2 December	*Advent Feria*
(SMSJ) 7am	**RORATE MASS by Candlelight** Canha Family
(SMSJ) 9am	Holy Hour of Adoration
(SMSJ) 10am	Mass Frances Jones (Healing)
(SMSJ) 11am	Funeral Mass for Hazel Charles (RIP)
Thurs 3 December	*St Francis Xavier, Priest*
(SM) 8.15am	Mass for JFK
(SMSJ) 10am	Mass Canha Family (INT)
1.30pm	***Bingo in the Parish Centre, Boxmoor***
7.30pm	***CWL in St Joseph's Hall***
Fri 4 December	*Advent Feria*
(SMSJ) 9am	Holy Hour of Adoration
(SMSJ) 10am	Mass Canha Family (INT
(SMSJ) 11.30am	Funeral Mass Geoffrey Massingham (RIP)
OLQ 7.30pm	***HEMEL YOUNG ADULTS 18-35 (Mass 7pm)***
Sat 5 December	*Advent Feria*
(SMSJ) 8am	Adoration & Confessions
(SMSJ) 9am	Mass Gwen Wisemen (INT)
3.30pm	***Boxmoor Lights Switch on at SMSJ***
(SMSJ) 4-4.45pm	Confessions
(SMSJ) **5.30pm**	Vigil Mass Martin Quigley (RIP)
Sun 6 December	**2nd Sunday of Advent**
(SMSJ) 7.30am	Holy Hour of Adoration
(SMSJ) 8.30am	Mass David Cook (RIP)
(SMSJ) 10am	Mass Betty Rawlings (RIP)
(SM) 11.30am	Mass Bernard Lewis (RIP)
2pm	***Blessing of the Crib in Marlowes***

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION (CONFESSION)
Saturday 8am-8.45am & 4pm-4.45pm at SS Mary & Joseph Church

THE POPE'S MONTHLY INTENTION FOR NOVEMBER: For the proper use of wealth. Let us pray for the proper use of wealth, that not succumbing to the temptation of selfishness, it may always be put at the service of common good and solidarity of those who have less.

THE SICK: Archbishop Richard Moth, Pippa Marchant, Paula Moore, John Ranch, Margaret Marchant, Tommy McLoughlin, Chrissie Ward, Juliet Edgar, Peter & Rose Gray, Andrew Cooper, David Turner, Andy Swift, David O'Mahoney, Rosie Fletcher, Lucy Chapman, Ellen Brett, Susana, Fr Dennis Opoku, Sabina Xavier, Jacqueline Austin, Merril Delaney, Marie Anthony, Terry Pearson, Mary Alcock, Louie Reidy
RECENTLY DEPARTED: Hazel Charles (Funeral Wed 2 December 11am), Geoffrey Massingham (Funeral Fri 4 Dec 11.30am), Dorothy Low (Funeral Thurs 10 Dec 11am), Vera Gavin (Funeral Monday 14 Dec 11.30am), Paul Pierre (d. 16 Nov), Louie Howard, Sylvester Nolan.

Explore FORMED for free. A new means of catechesis and evanglization for the whole family, young and old.
Login: 'Hemel Catholic'. We are using **SYMBOLON** for RCIA.

DENS COLLECTION OF FOOD, KITCHEN & HYGIENE ITEMS: Please take a leaflet of items to donate and leave in the box provided.

RAFFLE AT ST MARK'S: There will be homemade Christmas knitted goodies and young children's cardigans at £1 per ticket on sale. All donations will go to Parish Building Fund.

THE CATHOLIC WOMEN'S LEAGUE ANNUAL CHRISTMAS HAMPER RAFFLE will be in aid of The Catholic Children's Society. Raffle tickets will be available at SMSJ on Sundays 29 Nov & 6 & 13 Dec, after Mass and 5pm Sat 12 Dec and after the Carol Service (18 Dec), before the draw in the Parish Centre over mince pies and mulled wine. Tickets will also be available after the Sunday Masses at St Marks.

MISSIO 2027 calendars are available in the church porch.

RCIA (Adult Formation in the Catholic Faith) Next Session: Tuesday 1 December, 7-8.30pm. *See the website for all of the dates.*

The PARISH OFFICE will be closed from Wednesday 2 December, until Friday 4 December.

BINGO: Join the Knights of St Columba for their Christmas bingo session in the Parish Centre, Boxmoor Thursday 3 December, at 1-30pm. Tea/coffee and mince pies will be served along with a raffle for a lovely Christmas hamper. All welcome.

The CATHOLIC WOMENS LEAGUE will meet on Thursday 3 December, at 7.30pm in St Joseph Hall. Jane Gonzalez will present an Advent Reflection, ending with coffee/tea. For more details, contact Eileen know on 07831511543. All welcome.

HEMEL YOUNG ADULTS 18-35: The next meeting is on Friday 4 December 7.30pm at Our Lady's. Mass at 7pm.

CATHOLIC HOME-SCHOOLING Regina Caeli Academy is holding an information session on 23rd January next year.

PLEASE HELP WITH CHRISTMAS CRIB IN THE MARLOWES: The Knights of St Columba will erect the Crib at 8.30am on Sunday 6 December outside Costa Coffee. Contact Tom Joyce on 07825 173878 if you can help. The Blessing of the Crib is at 2pm with Carol singing. Come witness to the Saviour!

WOMEN'S FAITH GROUP: This is held on 2nd and 4th Monday of the month, in St Joseph's Hall at 6pm. On Monday 14 December, it will be one year since the group started and we will have a fellowship get together in St Joseph's Hall from 6pm until 8pm. All women are welcome.

ST JOSEPH'S MENS GROUP meets on the last Friday of the month at 7pm in the Presbytery. All men are welcome

Knights of St Columba (KSC) NATIONAL CHRISTMAS PAINTING COMPETITION for all younger members of the parish. Please click **here** to see all the details. Loads of prizes!

FORTHCOMING DATES:
+ Rorate Masses (of Our Lady in expectation): 7am on Wednesdays in Advent by candlelight.
+ Saturday 5 December 3.30-4.45pm: **BOXMOOR CHRISTMAS LIGHTS** will be turned on by the Mayor in Wharf Road, 12 foot Christmas tree in our grounds. Hemel band, combined Choirs & Carols. Refreshments.
PLEASE NOTE: 5pm Mass will move to 5.30pm on 5 December.
+ Sunday 6 December, 2pm Blessing of Crib in the Marlowes & Carol singing.
+ Friday 18 December (SMSJ): Carols by Candlelight at 7pm followed by mince pies and mulled wine in the Parish Centre with Raffle Draw.
+ CHRISTMAS CHARITY Catholic Children's Society

DAILY PRAYER @ Sacredspace.com & MAGNIFICAT
DAILY READINGS & REFLECTIONS: My Catholic Life, Word on Fire, Christian Art