**CHURCH OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION & SAINT JOSEPH**

**23 ST JOHN’S STREET, HERTFORD SG14 1RX**

[**https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/hertford**](https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/hertford) **Email:** **hertford@rcdow.org.uk** **Tel: 01992 582109**

**Parish Priest: Monsignor Séamus O’Boyle**

**Third Sunday of Advent – ‘Gaudete Sunday’ – 17th December 2023**

**Prayers & Readings for this Sunday’s Mass can be found on p. 87 in the Parish Mass Book.**

**Please note that there is a Loop system in the Church.**

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*View from the Presbytery*

On Wednesday evening the children from our Parish Primary School, St Joseph’s, led us in a very thought-provoking Advent Service with songs, poems and prayers. Many of the prayers were written by the children themselves. It was, I have to admit, a very moving event. They had prepared well and that showed. I was particularly struck by one of the poems read which I had never heard before – ‘Christmas Bells’ written by the American poet H W Longfellow. He wrote the poem in the 19th Century, and yet his words could have been written in our own day:

*I hear the bells on Christmas Day*

*Their old familiar carols play,*

*And wild and sweet*

*The words repeat*

*Of peace on earth, good-will to men!*

*And in despair I bowed my head:*

*‘There is no peace on earth,” I said;*

*“For hate is strong,*

*And mocks the song*

*Of peace on earth, good-will to men!”*

*Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:*

*“God is not dead, nor doth He sleep:*

*The Wrong shall fail,*

*The Right prevail,*

*With peace on earth, good-will to men.*

No matter what is happening in our troubled world, the truth of the Birth of Christ is a guiding light for all who believe. Right can prevail and there can be peace on earth if we strive to be the people of good-will who can bring it about! *Fr Séamus*

**POPE’S INTENTION FOR DECEMBER**

For persons with disabilities We pray that people living with disabilities may be at the centre of attention in society, and that institutions may offer inclusive programmes which value their active participation.

**TIMES OF MASS OVER CHRISTMAS:**

Please pick up one of the coloured leaflets with all the times up to New Year’s Day

**A NEW YEAR’S PARTY** will be in the church hall on Monday 1st January 2024 after the 12noon Mass. If you would like to come please bring a plate of food if possible. There will be a list at the back of the church for you to put your name down so that we will have an idea of numbers. Thank you!

**A CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION IN WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL**

Tickets are still available for our annual Christmas concerts which celebrate the mystery of Christ’s Incarnation in carols and readings performed by the world-famous Westminster Cathedral Choir, orchestra, and celebrity readers, on **Tuesday** **19th and Wednesday 20th December** at 7.30pm.  Tickets can be purchased from [www.ticketmaster.co.uk](http://www.ticketmaster.co.uk) simply type in Westminster Cathedral when prompted.

**CHRISTMAS STOCK STILL AVAILABLE IN THE REPOSITORY:** Please put your

money in the wall box at the back of the church.

**MISSIO RED BOXES:** Would all parishioners in possession of red Missio boxes please return them as soon as possible to the sacristy?
Once all boxes have been handed in and contributions counted, the empty boxes will be placed with names attached on the table in the cloister to be picked up and used for the 2024 process. Thank you. Peter Mahoney

**IF YOU GO IN TO HOSPITAL**: If someone is sick in hospital, please let us know here at the Presbytery, and/or ask the staff on the ward, so that your loved one can be visited whilst in hospital, and receive Holy Communion and any other Sacraments from the Chaplain.

At the Lister & QE2 hospitals, the Chaplain is: John O’Neill 01438 314333

**ROSARY GROUP:**  Come and join us in thechurch hall on **Tuesday evenings** at 7pm for recital of the Rosary and the Chaplet of Divine Mercy.

**THE SVP** are distributing **over 10,000 Vinnie Packs** containing cold weather essentials to the homeless this winter. Please could you consider sponsoring packs at a suggested donation of £4.20 per pack? Donations can be sent to **Vinnie Packs, PO Box 72264, London SW1P 9EZ** with cheques made out to SVP or by bank transfer to Nat West **sort code 60-60-04, account no. 4608 8237**. Thank you so much for your support

MASS INTENTIONS:

**Saturday 16th**

**6pm:**  Antonio Maiorano (RIP)

**Sunday 17th** *Third Sunday of Advent*

**8.30am:** People of the Parish

**10.30am:** Anne & Martin Fitzgerald

**Monday 18th NO MASS**

**Tuesday 19th**

**12.15pm:** Daniel (Ints)

**Wednesday 20th**

**10.00am:** Mary & John Barbour (RIP)

**Thursday 21st CHURCH CLOSED**

**Friday 22nd**

**12.15:** Margery Rossi (Anniv.)

**Saturday 23rd**

**6.00pm:** Shaughnessy Family (Ints)

**Confessions this week:**

After Mass on Tues, Weds & Fri

Saturday: 10.00-10.30am

5.15-5.45pm

**PRAYERS ASKED FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK:** Elizabeth Barnes, Ursula Partner, Jan Kracinski, Stephen Carey, Norene Hristov, Paul Cox, Malcolm Gilbert, Enzo Andrean, Miriam Matthews, Ruth Featherstone, Stephen Judd, Mary Ward, John Sweeney, Pam Gates, Juliet Davis, Phyllis Read, Jo Black, Robbie Robinson, Fr Terry, Angela White, Manuel Lopez.

**OFFERTORY COLLECTION:** Many thanks for your contributions: **Last Weekend: £496.67**