



CHURCH OF OUR LADY IMMACULATE AND ST ANDREW

16 Nightingale Road, HITCHIN, SG5 1QS
(In the care of the Augustinians of the Assumption)



Mass Times
Saturday 6pm
Sunday 8.30am, 10.30am & 5pm
Monday – Saturday 10am
Exposition Thursday 7pm-8pm
Reconciliation Saturday 10.30am
during Exposition



Newsletter No 1867
30th November 2019 – 7 December 2019 - 1st Sunday of Advent – Year A
with the gospel according to Matthew



Election Prayer: Father, as we prepare to vote, help us remember that it is you who governs us; that in all our public duties we are called to do your work: to bring good news to the poor, to set free those who are captive, to give sight to the blind. We ask for your wisdom, so that our choices respect creation and serve justice for all. Amen.

Readings: Is 2:1-5, Rom 13:11-14 Matt 24:37-44

Entrance Antiphon: To you, I lift up my soul, O my God. In you, I have trusted; let me not be put to shame. Nor let my enemies exult over me; and let none who hope in you be put to shame.

Psalm: I rejoiced when I heard them say: 'Let us go to God's house'.

Intercession: Lord in your Mercy

Response: Hear our Prayer!



Ramblings Last Wednesday, called Red Wednesday, we prayed for and stood in solidarity with persecuted Christians throughout the world – a reminder of the freedom we have to celebrate and witness our faith. During the week our daily readings called us to be alert and attentive so as to be ready for Christ's coming at the end of time. The call to be ready and alert is repeated today, this time, however, we await the birth of Jesus coming to join us anew; to renew his presence in and among us. In persecution, faith is challenged continually. The value of prayer and community become a priority and the importance of Jesus to us clarified daily. Every moment of every day carries a sense of significance and urgency. Advent is a special opportunity to clothe everything we say and do with an awareness or recognition of God's presence. The presents given and received are signs of our love, care and thankfulness for those who have a special place in our lives which is precisely why God sends his Son to us - we are special to God. The wisdom of birth is that out of great suffering comes new life, great joy and happiness, the result of nine months preparation. We only have three weeks to prepare, but the greater the preparation the greater the joy. Christmas gift-giving makes everyone more pleasant, open and generous. God gives us the best of himself in Jesus, being always open and generous to us. This Advent recognise God's presence in every act of kindness, love, generosity and goodness so as to experience the true Christian joy of Jesus birth.

raised and these proceeds will go to Zaytoun "Plant an Olive Tree" in Palestine.

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Advent prayer books (£1 place in pamphlets box within the doors of the church) and **Children's Advent calendars** (FREE) are available from the table in the porch.

CONFIRMATION PREPARATION

All young people in Year 9 are invited to join the Confirmation Programme for 2020. You need to submit an application form to the parish office or to me at: susannahawksley@rcdow.org.uk. The application forms and all the dates for the programme can be found on the parish website under Sacramental Preparation/Confirmation. Please also sign the sheet that is on the noticeboard in the Link (down the steps from the porch). The deadline for applications is 16th December 2019. Don't delay - join today!



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Message from Ann Milner: Thank you to all the people who have been praying for me and who have sent me messages wishing me well. I had a very unexpected health scare recently but I'm making a good recovery. Please say a prayer of thanks for those amazing people in the NHS who do such an excellent job, saving lives despite funding cuts, staff shortages etc.

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When booking a Mass Intention in the Diary, please ensure you leave a contact telephone number. This helps in the event that the Mass may need to be moved and we can contact you to book an alternative date. Many thanks.

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Many thanks to you all for your kind generosity and support at the recent coffee morning run by the One World Group. A total of £123.41 was

Diary Dates

Sun 1 December **First Day of Advent**

Coffee Morning – Bethany Club

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2.30pm Healing and Wholeness Service



Parishioners who feel the need for these gifts are invited to share in this time of prayer, during which the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Anointing will be celebrated.

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6pm Advent service recalling memories of Advents past and of Fr Michael.



Mon 2 December

Parents & Toddlers Hall	9.30am	Beavers Scout Hall	6pm 7.15pm
Christian Meditation Grp	11.30am EC	Cubs Scout Hall	Half Term

10am Mass for Fr Michael (first anniversary)

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11am Service of remembrance at Sue Ryder Stagenhoe (led by Trish) All welcome.

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2pm Advent Service at Our Lady's school led by Fr Tom.

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7.30pm Mass for Fr Michael (first anniversary)

Tues 3 December **St Frances Xavier**

Morning Prayer Church	9.40am	Scouts Scout Hall	7pm
Bethany Club Hall	10.30am	Eucharistic Service	7.15pm

8pm – UCM – LCR

Father Tom will be showing a video of Bishop Robert Baron at the Eucharistic Congress. All are welcome.

Wed 4 December

Rosary Church	9.30am	RCIA EC	7.30pm
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6pm Feed Up Warm Up – Scout Hall

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7.15pm Liturgy Committee LCR

Thurs 5 December

Italian Club Hall	1pm	Christian Meditation Grp	6.30pm EC
Brownies Scout Hall	6.30pm	Choir Church	8pm

10am St Pio Mass followed by meeting in the LCR til noon.

Fri 6 December

Parent & Toddlers Hall	9.30am	Lectio Divina	2pm EC
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Sat 7 December **St Ambrose**

10am – RE Session - EC

Sun 8 December

Coffee Morning – KISS

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6pm Evening prayer and benediction for the start of the Year of the Word of God who speaks

If you have a young person in your family can you please pass on this message to them -

The Diocesan safeguarding team prepares and sends out to all parishes all seasonal newsletters throughout the year. The newsletters are a combination of advice, safeguarding news and images and they now need the help of our young parishioners to prepare a few drawings that will be stored in the safeguarding drive and will help making our future newsletters more interesting and complete. The drawings should be showing different subjects like

- Advent
- Christmas
- Lent
- Easter
- Spring
- Summer
- Autumn
- Winters
- Our Lady's church inside or out in the grounds
- Children's liturgy
- Nativity crib
- <4's liturgy
- Baptism
- First communion
- Confirmation
- Altar

or anything else that you think shows parish life. Please do not put your name on the picture as we cannot use any picture which has a name or date on it for GDPR reasons. Enclose a note with your name and we will also display your pictures in the church. I need all pictures before 20th December - just bring them to church in an envelope marked **To Trish**

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We have noticed an increase in foreign currency being placed in the Offertory each week. This affects the banking of the monies collected. Wherever possible, please may we ask that you only consider offering sterling in the collection and the boxes. Many thanks for your understanding.

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Cheques for Christmas Collections. It would be appreciated if cheques for the Christmas collections are made out to the Parish – i.e. Our Lady's Church and not to the Order. This will make accounting more straightforward. Please be assured that all such donations will end up in the right place !

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Please contact Fr Tom if you would like information on leaving a gift to the parish in your Will.

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If you or your friends and family are looking for a new opportunity with the Diocese of Westminster, please visit our website <https://jobs.rcdow.org.uk/>

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This Christmas our Crib Offering will be donated to the **Catholic Children's Society** to support their work with disadvantaged children and families. This will help provide mental health services, family support and emergency grants for vulnerable children in our Diocese.



The Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales have designated 2020 as '**The God Who Speaks: A Year of the Word**' to celebrate the 10th anniversary of *Verbum Domini* - Pope Benedict XVI's Apostolic

Exhortation on 'The Word of the Lord', and the 1600th anniversary of death of St Jerome, who translated the Bible into Latin.

Therefore, 2020 will be a year of **celebrating, living** and **sharing** God's word, through a range of events, activities and resources, available across the Diocese of Westminster.

We are invited to listen afresh to the word of God as did Our Blessed Lady at the Annunciation, to encounter anew the presence of that word, and to proclaim it afresh in the Church and the World.

The Diocese has a range of events which can be seen on the notice board and on the parish website.

Other useful websites with insights into scripture include

<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/home/events/the-god-who-speaks/>

<https://rcdow.org.uk/faith/2020-year-of-the-word-the-god-who-speaks/>

Events for December

1st December 3.30pm Solemn Vespers for the launch of the year of the word at Westminster Cathedral presided over by Bishop Paul McAleenan.

3rd Dec 7pm - 8:30pm THE GOD WHO SPEAKS.

JOURNEYING WITH THE BIBLE at Vaughan

House, 46 Francis Street, SW1P 1QN

Matthew: a Guide for 2020

Overview of the gospel of Matthew with the study of some paradigmatic passages Lecturers: Fr

Javier Ruiz-Ortiz, Ph.D. and Sr Monica Cardona Ph.D.

Suggested donation £5 per talk.

Please register at livingfaith@rcdow.org.uk

7th Dec, 10am – 3pm Scripture Retreat with Sr Anne Walsh OP and Sister Karen Marguerite d'Artois OP for liturgical ministers and everyone interested at Vaughan House, 46 Francis Street, SW1P 1QN Suggested donation £15. Registration is required at livingfaith@rcdow.org.uk

In our parish we will be holding some events

8th Dec Bible Sunday

All ministers of the Word will be recommissioned during the Mass they attend.

6pm Evening prayer celebrating the beginning of the Year of the Word

15th Dec 2.30pm Christingle service (aimed at children of all ages)



I hereby declare that the **Third Sunday in Ordinary Time** (January 26th) is to be devoted to the celebration, study and dissemination of the word of God. This **Sunday of the Word of God** will thus be a fitting part of that time of the year when we are encouraged to strengthen our bonds with the Jewish people and to pray for Christian unity. This is more than a temporal coincidence: the celebration of the **Sunday of the Word of God** has ecumenical value, since the Scriptures point out, for those who listen, the path to authentic and firm unity.

May the Sunday of the Word of God help his people to grow in religious and intimate familiarity with the sacred Scriptures. For as the sacred author taught of old: "This word is very near to you: it is in your mouth and in your heart for your observance" (Dt 30:14).

Future Dates

8th December St Francis Ramblers invite you to join them on their walk meeting at Stevenage station (walkers' train due in at 1006). Distance 10 miles with lunch stop (at The Rusty Gun, SG4 7PG), finishing at Hitchin in time for carol singing and mulled wine. Please call Paul on 07847 282626 for more details. For info go to:

<http://www.stfrancisramblers.ukwalkers.com>

Monday 6 January 2020 The Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School, in collaboration with Westminster Diocese, St Mary's University,

Newman Catholic College, St James' Catholic High School and St Ignatius College will be hosting a day of lectures and seminars focusing on Outstanding Education in a Catholic.

Candidates who wish to attend are asked to complete the application form to be found at <https://www.cvms.co.uk/Teaching-School/CPD-courses/> and return this to the teachingschool@cvms.co.uk

Other items of interest

The North Herts Food Provision timetable has been added to our website and is on the noticeboard in the porch. It includes all the places where you can go to get food if you are struggling but also places to go to use up waste food. One other project that we are directly involved in is our raised vegetable beds. Aletheia Mashiri (from our parish) kindly supplies the plants and looks after the beds for us. Please help yourselves when ever you think about them. We do not want the plants/food going to waste and the more frequently you pick, the more productive the plants are.



The Synod on the Amazon, a gathering of bishops and other leaders from around the world, has concluded recently in Rome. Over three weeks, our Church discussed how to protect this region and its people and while sharing the Good News of Christ. We can contribute our Church's good work of protecting the Amazon. We are invited to live in solidarity by taking these steps:

- praying for the Amazon and all creation;
- reducing climate change and deforestation by eating plant-based meals; and
- contacting our elected officials to let them know that we're Catholic and we support moral environmental policies.

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We had a lively hustings on Tuesday evening. The place was packed and four candidates gave answers to a wide range of pre-submitted questions, and everything was firmly chaired by Rev Jane of St Mark's who ensured that there was a generally good spirit about the proceedings. To see the full proceedings go to <https://www.hitchintv.co.uk/portfolio/general-election-hustings-for-the-hitchin-and-harpenden-constituency-2019/>



Good news this week. Our communities in Vietnam from January 1st will make a vicariate. This is the first step to becoming a province of the Assumption Congregation. Fr Peter Van Khue who lived in England at Bethnal Green for a year and was ordained priest there has been named the first Vicar Provincial. Fr Peter is actually parish priest of Vinh and has been a member of a number of commissions. We remember him and the new Vicariate in our prayers for so much of the Kingdom.



Living simply and sustainably: As has been highlighted before, most, if not all take-away coffee cups are not recycled, and that the plastic lining is the culprit! However, if you have a conscious heart and a spare couple of minutes to remove it, you would be the amongst the 1% that does!

To donate to Our Lady's through text giving on your mobile phone !!
Just text Parish HITCH to 70800 to donate £5.

Faith Development Helpline

If you (or someone you know) needs to chat about your faith or have been feeling lost ring

07398821315

Tues/Wed/Thurs 8pm-10pm.
 Confidential service provided.
 No need to identify yourself



AMORIS LAETITIA - THE JOY OF LOVE

156 Our Daily Love - Growing in Conjugal Love
 Marriage is an icon of God's love for us. God is communion: the three Persons of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit live eternally in perfect unity. This is precisely the mystery of marriage: God makes of the two spouses one single existence. (L'Osservatore Romano, 3 April, 2014.p8)

If you have a need for prayer, please contact **Mary** on **07759195487** and let her know your prayer intentions

Parish Priest Fr Tom O'Brien 07547 171570	Assistant Priest Fr Euloge Kasine 07424 004647	Parish 01462 459126 E-mail: hitchin@rcdow.org.uk Website: https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/hitchin/
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Parish Administrator Cheryl Saunders cherylsaunders@rcdow.org.uk	Pastoral Assistants Susanna Hawksley susannahawksley@rcdow.org.uk Trish Bonnett trishbonnett@rcdow.org.uk
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This week's counting teams:
Sunday Team: 4 Monday Team: 1



If you are going into hospital please notify the Chaplain on Tel: 01438 285519 or Email: spiritualcare.enh-tr@nhs.net