



CHURCH OF OUR LADY IMMACULATE AND ST ANDREW

16 Nightingale Road, HITCHIN, SG5 1QS

(In the care of the Augustinians of the Assumption)



Newsletter No 1920



5th – 12th December 2020 – 2nd SUNDAY OF ADVENT Year B the gospel according to Mark

Parish Prayer: Lord Jesus, as the world copes with coronavirus, help us to remember that you are always with us. Grant wisdom to decision makers and bless all health workers. Bring healing to the sick; give peace to the anxious and comfort those who are sad. Stir us to show your love and mercy most especially to the poor and weak. This we ask in your name. Amen.

Ramblings Prepare the way of the Lord! Prepare the way of the Lord! The call to *prepare* rings out loud and clear. Someone great is coming. His greatness lies in the fact that he truly, deeply cares for us. He comes to put things right both within us and around us; to heal what is broken, to reconcile the unreconcilable, to free those weighed down by mistakes and errors made, however terrible; to enrich the peace within us and between us, to guide us into healing and nurturing the world. It is no wonder that Peace is the theme of this Sunday of Advent. Peace does not just happen, it demands preparation, commitment, perseverance, effort and sacrifice. In response we prepare ourselves to greet the Prince of Peace when he comes. One of the greatest longings, one of the greatest desires of our Advent journey is to find inner peace which is what we hope Jesus will bring, knowing that this is also what he wants for us. The odd thing about inner peace is that it does not leave us inactive but motivates us into action. Advent Peace moves us to work to improve ourselves, our families, our communities. Peace is not a calm unworried existence, it urges us to reach out, to uncover the newness in people and situations around us. It is unhappy with the status quo because new possibilities await to be discovered, set free and lived. Once the pandemic is over our inner peace will not allow us to return to the way things were before. We will want to reach out to new ways of living, of caring, of praying, of worship. For we will know that only in this way will the Joy, Love and Peace of Christmas be real, be true. *While you are proclaiming peace with your lips, be careful to have it even more fully in your heart.* – Francis of Assisi. *Jesus became what we are so that he might make us what he is.* - St. Athanasius.

Daily Mass at 10am is open to the public and is livestreamed on [Livestream Mass](#) and posted to the homepage of the parish website by 11.30am daily. If you can come another day please leave Sunday for those who can't.

Readings: This week: Is 40:1-5.9-11, 2 Peter 3:8-14, Mark 1:1-8

Psalm: Let us see, O Lord, your mercy and give us your saving help.

Next week: Is 61:1-2.10-11, Thess 5:16-24, John 1:6-8.19-28

Diary Dates

Sun 6 December

This Sunday would have been our **healing and wholeness service**. As we have done for the last two services if you have a need for healing prayer or have a family member or friend you would like prayer for, please let Trish know on 07801 752141 or trishbonnett@rcdow.org.uk. Members of the healing ministry team will be praying on Sunday for anyone in need of the Lord's healing help.



Sun 6 December – Saturday 12 December

10am Mass in the church.

Wed 9 December

6pm – Feed Up Warm Up – Scout Hall



We pray for **Elizabeth Margaret Smith** (Betty) whose funeral is on Friday 11 December 2020 at 3pm at North Herts Crematorium only. We also pray for **Clive Knight** whose funeral is on Thursday 17 December 2020 at 11am and for **Phyllis Creswell** whose funeral is also on Thursday 17* December 2020 at 1.45pm. We also pray for parishioner **Sheila Dobey** who died this week and whose funeral is in Suffolk. May they rest in peace and rise in glory and may the Lord comfort their families. ***Please note there will not be a Mass at 10am on this day.**

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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 !

Christmas Masses- Your help needed

Before the recent lockdown we were getting to the stage that the attendance at the Sunday Mass was quite large. It felt like it was time to consider having more Masses at the weekend.

Also we need to consider the Masses we are having at Christmas and the likely attendance.

There is no obligation to attend Mass on Christmas Day but we know many people will want to celebrate the birth of Christ. Many of you may come to church for the first time since March and we need to ensure you are aware of what you need to do when you come to maintain the safe environment we have created for our worship. We need to manage the numbers of people who will attend as we are limited because of the need for social distancing between households.

Over the period of Christmas Eve until 28th December, the government is planning to relax rules so that "bubbles" are expanded to include three households. This will enable people who are families or friends, and are in the same Christmas "bubble", to sit together in the church and create more available space for others. We will need to have a booking system to enable us to do this and get the track and trace information we are obliged to maintain. It would be easier to ask those who can to email us with their preferences but we need to be mindful of those who do not have access to email and give them an equal opportunity to attend a Mass at Christmas. We will need to ask all parishioners to reach out to those who may not have heard about what is being offered at Church for Christmas and let them know how they can make a booking also.

One way in which more people can participate in the 'days of the Nativity of the Lord' is by attending Mass during the Christmas Octave, from Christmas Day until the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God on 1 January. The meaning of the Octave and Christmastide, which extends until the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, has been lost and could be recovered during this period of time. Participation in the Octave will enable people to celebrate the rich liturgy of the Feasts that occur during the eight days. So it may be that you don't come on Christmas Day but one of the other days during that octave.

The potential plan for Christmas Masses and additional Masses at the weekend depends on two main factors:

1. The number of people likely to attend at the new times. If the demand for a particular time is low we will not have a Mass at that time because of all the other people who are needed to make it happen (see below)
2. Having key people in place for each additional Mass
 - a) 2 Stewards to help with track and trace and showing people to seats
 - b) 1 Master of Ceremonies to help set up the Mass and clear afterwards
 - c) 1 Reader per Mass as the number of readings will necessarily be limited at present
 - d) 2- 4 Eucharistic ministers to help with the distribution of communion (more will be required at Christmas)
 - e) 1 additional cleaner will be needed after every additional Mass (cleaning is not a difficult task now we have our fogging machine)

If you have not done any of the above but are willing to learn we will offer appropriate training in all functions so that you can help to make an additional Mass happen.

If we have the right numbers and all of the people needed then our plan is to offer the following

24th December Christmas Eve Mass at 10am
Christmas Vigil

Mass @ 9pm

25th December Christmas Day Masses at 9am and 11am

There will also be Masses at 10am during the Octave as follows:

26th December St Stephen

27th December The Holy Family

28th December The Holy Innocents

29th December St Thomas Becket

30th December 6th day in the octave

31st December 7th day in the octave

1st January Mary, Mother of God

After this we will look at offering additional Masses at the weekend to go back more to the pattern we used to have. It is our intention to continue to Livestream and record the Masses for those who are not able to come to the church and we have to keep in mind the experience of Mass for those viewing it / listening to it online.

With all of this in mind we have put together a two questions which we hope will help us determine if we will have the help we need to be able to have

additional Masses at Christmas and we will repeat this exercise after Christmas with regard to Sunday Masses thereafter at the weekends. We would be grateful if you would answer the questions as fully as possible.

Please note that answering these questions does not mean that you have 'booked' your space at a Christmas Mass.

The sooner we get all the help we need in place the sooner we can put out a call for people to book a place at a Mass so it is down to us all to help make this happen.

To let us know your answers please ring or text Trish on 07801 752141 or email her at trishbonnett@rcdow.org.uk

Which Mass would you like to come to on to celebrate Christmas Mass. Please indicate only one choice.

- a. 9pm Christmas Vigil Mass (24th December)
- b. 9am Christmas Day Mass (25th December)
- c. 11am Christmas Day Mass (25th December)
- d. No preference - whichever has space available
- e. I do not plan to come to Mass
- f. I will watch a Mass livestreamed
- g. I will come to another Mass during the octave

If you are able to help with any of the roles that need to be in place to have these additional Masses at Christmas please indicate which roles. (There will be simple training required for roles which can be given in a covid-safe way.) Please indicate all that apply.

- a. Steward to help with track and trace and show people to seats
- b. Master of Ceremonies to help set up and clear the Mass
- c. Reader
- d. Eucharistic minister
- e. Cleaner
- f. Not able to help
- g. Not coming to Mass yet

If you are able to help with any of these roles could you also please let Trish have the best telephone number to contact you on.

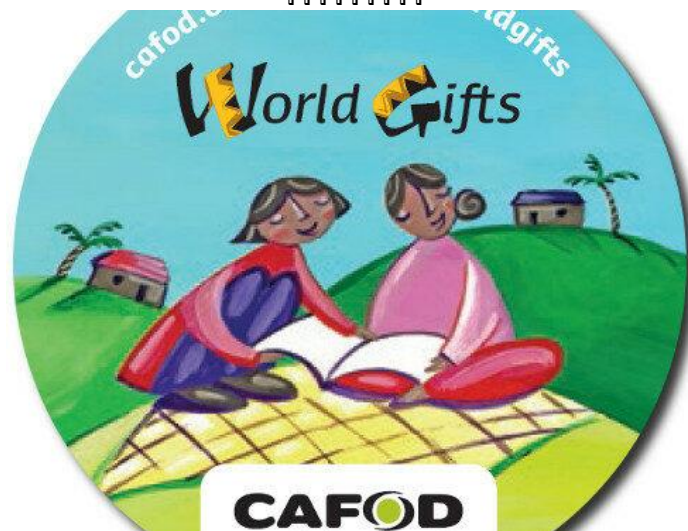
Please note the first appeal has yielded 28 responses which is not enough to have additional Masses so please do try to answer.

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The London Jesuit Centre are seeking volunteers who would be willing to act as parish or school ambassadors for the London Jesuit

Centre – bringing courses, events and retreats which might be of interest to the attention of parishioners or school staff through parish/school newsletters, websites or noticeboards. If you are interested in volunteering, please see [further information here](#).

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World Gifts, CAFOD's range of virtual gifts, make a real difference to families living in poverty across the world. While we have the coronavirus pandemic and lockdown here, we can still be good neighbours to our sisters and brothers overseas by giving World Gifts as Christmas presents to family and friends. The Keep Clean Kit gift for £6 and the Vegetable Garden gift for £10 are just two gifts that will help vulnerable families affected by the pandemic to protect and feed themselves. Let's spread joy and hope around the world this Christmas. Visit <https://worldgifts.cafod.org.uk/>

You can read CAFOD's response to the proposed Aid budget cuts on their web page <https://cafod.org.uk/News/Campaigning-news/Overseas-aid-budget-cut>

Details of online events including Mass on 16th Dec are on their web page here <https://cafod.org.uk/Volunteer/Online-talks>

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Update on COVID-19 and Vaccination



In September 2020 the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales issued a statement [COVID-19 and Vaccination](#) (24 September 2020). In the light of the recent breakthrough in vaccine development we now wish to issue a follow up

statement. For the full statement see [Update-on-covid-19-and-vaccination](#)

The development of a vaccine against COVID-19 presents an important breakthrough in protecting others as well as oneself from the virus; a virus which has not only caused a global pandemic and led to a huge loss of life but has also placed a great burden on healthcare workers and systems.

Each of us has a duty to protect others from infection with its danger of serious illness, and for some, death. A vaccine is the most effective way to achieve this unless one decides to self-isolate. Each Catholic must educate his or her conscience on this matter and decide what to do, also bearing in mind that a vaccine must be safe, effective, and universally available, especially to the poor of the world.

Catholics may in good conscience receive any of these vaccines for the good of others and themselves. In good conscience, one may refuse a particular vaccine but continues to have a duty to protect others from infection.

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The history of the Focolare Movement & its work for inter religious dialogue

Many people ask, 'What is the Focolare Movement? Here is an opportunity to find out Main speakers: Jon Dal Din & Pat Whitney

Tuesday 8th December 2020 8pm by Zoom

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85757641505?pwd=b09FSVhzTm9xTHNnbEFvTjFnTzVaUT09>

Meeting ID: 857 5764 1505

Passcode: 647113

www.whifgroup.co.uk



Our Lady's Parish


Faith Development Helpline

Problems or doubts about your faith?
Are you feeling a bit lost?

Try ringing
07398 821315

Tues, Weds, Thurs
8pm – 10pm

This is a confidential service and follows Parish Safeguarding Policies

 Fr Vincent de Paul Bailly was the Assumptionist who pioneered our work in the press. He gave himself to the production of La Croix the daily paper and Le Pelerin originally a pilgrims newsletter but today a review available all over France. The modern Bayard Presse continues this apostolate.

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 207


Growing in Conjugal Love - Dialogue Take time, quality time. This means being ready to listen patiently and attentively to everything the other person wants to say. It requires the self discipline of not speaking until the time is right.



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	Robert Hitchcock roberthitchcock@rcdow.org.uk Trish Bonnett trishbonnett@rcdow.org.uk	}01462 459126 press 4 }
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 This week's counting teams:
Sunday Team: Monday Team:



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