

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 1921



12th – 19th December 2020 – 3rd 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 3rd Sunday of Advent Gaudete

Sunday, the Sunday of Joy expressed by the lighting of the pink candle. The circle of light is now three-quarters full – the birth of Christ approaches. Isaiah reinforces the joy by writing about good news, the healing of brokenness, of freedom, of integrity and new life. You can feel the joy. In his letter to the Thessalonians St Paul adds: *"May the God of peace make you perfect and holy; and may you all be kept safe and blameless, spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."* He speaks of a happiness that can only be found in God and offered to us by the Spirit. John the Baptists continues to call us to prepare the way for the Lord. *"Make a straight way for the Lord!"* he says. He encourages us to be ready to greet Christ at his birth and not get side-tracked along the way. Let us make all our preparations for Christmas as though Christ is the special guest to our homes this year. He certainly won't be bringing covid-19 with him, but focusing on him can make our preparations all the richer, after all it is Christ's birthday. Sense and feel Christ's presence on that special day because, as numbers will be limited, we will have more time to give to him. The lights put up outside people's houses are inviting Jesus to enter. We carry the inner light of Christ within us, received at Baptism, and our Advent preparation helps it shine more brightly so that Jesus does not pass us by. As the promised Messiah, Christ comes to heal not just ourselves or our relationships but also our world.

Let the words of Gaudete take root in your hearts:
Rejoice, rejoice! Christ is born of the virgin Mary. The time of Grace has come, which we have waited for, let us devotedly render Him joyful songs. Rejoice, rejoice! Christ is born of the virgin Mary.

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

Psalm: **My soul rejoices in my God.**

Next week: 7:1-5.8-12.14.16, Rom 16:25-27, Luke 1:26-38

Diary Dates

Sun 13 December – Saturday 19 December

10am Mass in the church.

Sat 12 December

2pm Confirmation Mass

Sun 13 December

2pm Confirmation Mass

Wed 16 December

6pm – Feed Up Warm Up – Scout Hall

Thurs 17 December

No 10am Mass due to funerals below both of which will be live streamed.



11am Funeral Mass of Clive

+++++

1.45pm Funeral Mass of Phyl Creswell –

Only family and invited friends are permitted to attend both Masses.

May Clive and Phyl rest in peace and rise in glory and may the Lord comfort their families.

+++++

Reconciliation before Christmas

To receive the sacrament of Reconciliation before Christmas please contact Fr Tom on 07547 171570 or Fr Euloge on 07424 004647 to make an appointment. Ideally this will take place after a daily Mass and will be conducted in a Covid-safe way.

+++++

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 !

+++++

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



Reconciliation



Masses at Christmas – how to book

We have arranged the following Masses for Christmas:

- Christmas eve 6pm for families with children only
- Christmas eve vigil at 9pm
- Christmas day 9am
- Christmas day 11am

To book a Mass please go to the survey link here [Christmas Mass Booking](#) and complete fully with the information required. All Masses will be live streamed for those who opt to watch at home.

We will do our best to give you your first choice and will contact you to confirm the time allocated. If you are not able to do an online booking please ring Cheryl in the parish office on **01462 459126** and let her know your choice and she will log it manually. Please give her your telephone number so we can confirm your Mass.

††††††††††



We wish to extend a huge thank you to you all for your continued generous offertory donations particularly so during this very difficult year

for everyone. We hope that you continue to use your Planned Giving Envelopes and Standing Orders wherever possible. We do now have another form of giving which you may find helpful. Please check out the “Our Lady Immaculate & St Andrew Hitchin” page on the “Virgin Money Giving” website or check out the Virgin Money Giving section of our Parish website. The Diocese is also looking into “contactless giving” which hopefully will be rolled out to parishes next year. This would provide another option for Parishioners who don’t use Planned Giving Envelopes or Standing Orders to possibly consider using. Watch this space!

††††††††††

A big thank you to our very generous parishioners who have donated an amazing £765 to buy Christmas presents for the children of the families we are supporting through the hamper scheme this year. We now have

Thank You!

sufficient funds to buy all the presents we need and so no further donations are required, however, if you have a donation in the pipeline, please be assured it will be very welcome to help with any last minute requests for Christmas assistance, or for ongoing support in the New Year. Very many thanks once again and God bless you all.

††††††††††



We hope to begin our next confirmation programme in January 2021. We need parishioners who can help Rob and his small team of catechists to do this. Are you willing

to share your faith with the next group of young people who are exploring the sacrament. You need to be prepared to listen and encourage the young people to discuss issues of faith and be happy to talk about your own faith journey. This is vital and important work.

Passing on the faith is what Jesus commissions us to do in Mark 16:15 **‘Go to all the world and proclaim the good news.’** We all are responsible for passing on the faith to the next generation and we need you to help us do this with our young people. All training provided.

Are you willing to come and help?

Do not miss this opportunity to strengthen your faith by sharing with others

If so please contact Rob at roberthitchcock@rcdow.org.uk

††††††††††

The Annual Report & Accounts for the Diocese for 2019 have been published and are available to read and download at www.rcdow.org.uk/about-us

††††††††††

YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROJECT Westminster Youth Ministry, together with Catholic Voices, are launching a brand-new project to raise up the next generation of Catholic leaders.

Are there young people in your parish who have the potential to become our future Catholic leaders? ‘Rise Up’ has been created to train, equip and inspire young people in their leadership skills and faith formation.

The programme includes workshops, individual mentoring, faith formation and a level one accredited national qualification. The course will start in February and is for practising Catholics aged 15-21 who live, work or study in the Diocese of Westminster. We are excited to share this with you and think it will be unique opportunity for 20 young people of our Diocese.

The applications close on 8th of January. All the details can be found here:

<https://www.catholicvoices.org.uk/rise-up>

††††††††††

FAMILY RESOURCE A useful resource to share with families, linked with the film 'Star'. The resource is aimed at 'Leaders and Parents' so is suitable to be used by parents at home. The film itself is available on Amazon – DVD & Prime Video (£4.99) and at Asda and other supermarkets (£5)

The link to the resource [The Star resources](#) .

††††††††††

Due to the lockdown over the summer when churches were closed, **Sea Sunday (Apostleship of the Sea)** was postponed



STELLA MARIS
SUPPORTING SEAFARERS AND FISHERS
AROUND THE WORLD

this year from July to 20th December.

As the weather turns colder and the nights draw in, our chaplains are busy preparing for the winter season. Cold weather supplies such as hats, socks, gloves, and scarves will soon be in great demand amongst the seafarers and fishers whom we support. Our chaplains are on hand to make sure that they are prepared for the harsh weather that can sometimes be found on our shores. Please visit the Stella Maris online shop where you can make a donation and/or find information about some lovely Christmas gifts that are available to buy in the online shop. This includes the inspiring book by Fr. Colum Kelly "At Sea: Awaiting Orders" and prints of the beautiful

painting "The Spring" By artist and Stella Maris supporter Brendan Berry.

www.stellamaris.org.uk/shop/

††††††††††

London Jesuit Centre Malachy Keegan returns to LJC to offer a 2-session course online: [Dealing with Anxiety](#) on Saturdays 16 and 23 January 2021. Booking is now open.

[An Introduction to the Bible](#), a 5-week online course, begins in January with Brian Purfield.

With the prospect of Covid restrictions being lifted, please remember that the London Jesuit Centre offers [individually guided retreats](#) to suit individual needs and availability. We have newly renovated en-suite guest rooms and a private chapel as well as access to Farm Street Church.

There is still a limited number of places available for [The God of Freedom: Exploring Liberation Theologies](#) and [Exploring Black Theologies](#), 5-week online courses led by Theodora Hawksley (Susanna's daughter).

††††††††††

World Gifts, 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/>



Fr Philippe Liessens was superior of our study house at St Gerard in Belgium for some years but his heart was really given to ecumenism. He worked tirelessly in Belgium and very much with the Anglican religious orders in England.

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 208

Growing in Conjugal Love - Dialogue Instead of offering an opinion or advice, ensure you have heard everything the other person has to say. This means cultivating an interior silence that makes it possible to listen to the other person without mental or emotional distractions.

 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/>

Parish Administrator Cheryl Saunders
Pastoral Assistants Robert Hitchcock
Trish Bonnett

cherylsaunders@rcdow.org.uk }
roberthitchcock@rcdow.org.uk } 01462 459126 press 4
trishbonnett@rcdow.org.uk }



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

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>