



The Announcer



St Augustine's Catholic Church

The Presbytery, Esdaile Lane, Hoddesdon, EN11 8DS Tel: 01992-440986

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Also in residence: Fr Mathews Valiyaputhenpura Joy (Chaplain to Knanaya community)
Safeguarding parish rep: Kathryn Hall – hoddesdong@safeguardrcdow.org.uk
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YEAR B

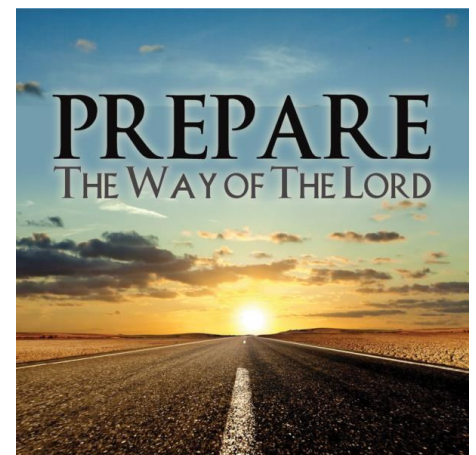
SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

10TH DECEMBER 2023

Gospel: *Mark 1: 1-8*

Make his paths straight.

Advent means that Jesus is coming towards us rather than we are coming towards him, although this is hopefully true as well. We can speak of four Advents. There is the Advent of Jesus' return at the end of time, 'his second coming' which we profess in our creed, that 'He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead'. This is the 'Day of the Lord' which St Paul highlights in our epistle reading today. Second, there is the Advent of the four weeks before the annual celebration of his first coming (Christmas), as a babe in Bethlehem. Then there is the Advent of his coming to take up residence in our lives. He told his disciples that he would set up home in the one who loved him and kept his word. Finally, there is the Advent featured in today's gospel, John the Baptist's preparation for Jesus' public ministry. We see the Baptist, in fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy, crying in the wilderness, 'prepare a way for the Lord make his paths straight'. Not long after John's voice pierced the Judean desert air, soldiers and engineers in the roman province of Britannia were laying down straight roads across our countryside. One of these was Ermine Street, the great northern road, which is basically our A10. If you have wondered why the road over to Royston is so straight, then the answer is the Romans built it. John would have been acquainted with similar roman roads in Judea, but even in Isaiah's day, six hundred years before, roads covered enormous distances across the desert, between South and North, East and West. Those who heard Isaiah prophesy 'prepare in the wilderness a way for the Lord. Make a straight highway for our God across the desert', might have thought of one of these ancient trade routes. Their construction involved the levelling of hills and the filling in of valleys. Of course, the highway prophesied by Isaiah, and proclaimed by John, was not one of stone and gravel, but a moral highway which had profound social implications, levelling the ground of the high and mighty and bridging distances across the gulf between humanity and God. John's clarion call was that the chosen people were not ready for the appearance of the Messiah. The reconfiguring of the landscaping of their lives had to take place before Jesus' message could be received and welcomed. John, if you like, was the warm up act before the event. The making of this highway in the desert was a call to action. The people of Israel had to be baptised in the Jordan for the repentance of their sins. John's message was radical. The Jordan was one of the liminal markers in the history of the chosen people. The Jews had needed to cross it in order to enter the Promised Land. John was taking the people back to that event and reminding them of God's graciousness and favour to them in the past, which they had readily forgotten. Their repentance meant the realignment of their whole lives towards God, a complete turning around of mind, soul and heart, away from sin towards righteousness. The act of baptism in the river was truly shocking, for Jews were never baptised. Only those entering into Jewry from outside-the pagan gentiles- were baptised. John was saying that the chosen people were as unclean as the gentile outsiders. Moreover, in contrast to the gentiles who could baptise themselves on becoming Jews, the chosen people were so unclean that John had to do it for them himself. In this Advent season, is John speaking to us? We consider ourselves chosen, do we not? We have been baptised, have we not? We have been baptised not with John's baptism, but in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Yet have we rejected Jesus, the one John prepared the way for? Do we betray our covenantal relationship with God? How aligned are we with God's loving purposes today? Tomorrow may be too late. Advent while being a time of hope, is also a summons to repent, a time to turn away from sin and its ruinous consequences in our lives, and to take this opportunity, perhaps final opportunity, for a change of heart and life. Then as the psalmist says, 'let us see, O Lord, your mercy and give us your saving help'. Maranatha Come Lord Jesus!



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Fr Julian.

PRAYER & LITURGY

WE WELCOME INTO THE CHURCH Lucia Rose, Zara Lord and Arthur Wells who will be baptised this weekend.

EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT will be from **5-6pm on Monday evening**. There will be **no Exposition or Benediction at 11am on Friday 15th December**, due to the funeral, but there will still be the 12 noon Mass. However, there will be Benediction at 6.45pm on Friday evening.



FRANCESCO DISTEFANO of Middlefield Road, died recently. His funeral will be on **Friday 15th December at 10.30am**.

ANTONIO FIONDELLA of Claremont, died recently. His funeral will be on **Tuesday 19th December at 9.15am**.

May they rest in peace.

PLEASE PRAY for all those who have died recently including Antonio Fiondella, Vincenzo Lombardi, Francesco Distefano, Edward Connolly and for all those whose anniversaries occur at this time including Paolo Di Maria, Annie Keogh, Margherita Barone, Onofria Maniscalco, Henryk Nolewajka, Sheila Turpin, Adelina Ciraolo, Georgina Nottle and Norman Waite. *May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace.*

MASS: On Friday 15th December, there will be an extra Mass at 9.15am with St Cross School, in church. All are welcome to attend.

CHILDREN'S CHOIR: Gabby Hanley will be running the Children's Choir at the 9.15am Mass on Sunday mornings. If your child would like to join the choir, Gabby will be playing **10th December**. The children will be singing at the Carol Service on the **17th December at 6pm** and also on **Christmas Eve Mass at 4pm**. There will be a rehearsal on Monday 11th Dec 7-8pm in church.



PRAYER GROUP will be held in the crypt on the first Thursday of each month at 7.30pm. Next date will be on **Thursday**

4th January 2024. All are welcome!

POPE'S INTENTION FOR DECEMBER: 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.

HELPERS FOR CHILDREN'S LITURGY at the 9.15am Mass are needed. **If you can help, please do contact the presbytery immediately**. Without more volunteers, children's liturgy may not be able to continue. Children's Liturgy will be held on the **17th December**.

ADVENT

RECONCILIATION BEFORE CHRISTMAS: Our Parish Penitential Services will be on **Monday 18th December at 11.30am and 7.30pm**.

PARISH CAROL SERVICE will be held on **Sunday 17th December at 6pm** with **adult and children choirs**. Refreshments will be served afterwards in the crypt. All are welcome!

CHRISTMAS MASSES: There will be a children's Nativity Mass at 4pm on **Christmas Eve** and there will also be Mass at Midnight on **Christmas Eve**. On **Christmas Day**, Mass will be at 9.15am and 11.15am.

ADVENT EXTRA magazines are now available to buy from the back of the church for £2.75. Please place your money in the newspaper box.

REPOSITORY now has Christmas cards and Christmas decorations for sale. Please do pop in to take a look.

HOUSEBOUND & SICK PARISHIONERS

PLEASE TELL US IF ANYONE IS HOUSEBOUND, EVEN TEMPORARILY, SO THEY CAN BE VISITED & HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO RECEIVE HOLY COMMUNION AT HOME.

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. Chaplains are: Lister, John O'Neill 01438-285138 or 07876-526935; Princess Alexandra, Fr Felix Adiele 01279-973183.

CATECHETICS

'Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults: If you are considering becoming a Catholic or are an adult Catholic wishing to be confirmed **our** next meeting will be on **Tuesday 9th January at 7.30pm** in the crypt.



CONFIRMATION PROGRAMME 2024: The next meeting will be on **Monday 11th December from 7-8pm** in the crypt. A letter has now been emailed to parents with the dates for next year. If you have not received the letter, please contact the presbytery.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION PROGRAMME 2023/2024: The next meeting for children in year 3 will be on the **14th January**.



FIRST HOLY COMMUNION: If your child is in year 2 and is interested in making their First Holy Communion in 2025, please contact the presbytery to register your interest.



BAPTISM COURSE: The next course will be held on **Saturday 20th January 2024 at 11.30am** in the church. The course must be completed before a Baptism can be arranged. To enrol on the course, please contact the presbytery.

JUSTICE & PEACE & PRO-LIFE

CAFOD WORLD GIFTS are a fun and meaningful way to give gifts and make a difference to some of the poorest communities around the world. Catalogues are now available at the back of the church.



SCHOOLS/UNDER 5'S

ST CROSS SCHOOL is looking for an Afterschool Club Leader from January to July. Monday to Thursday 3pm - 6pm. Training will be provided. If interested, please contact the school - 01992 467 309

ST AUGUSTINE'S SCHOOL has prospective Open Day Tours for New Reception and Nursery Parents on **11th December at 9:15am**. Open days for school are on: Mon 8th January @ 9:15am, Wed 10th January @ 2:00pm and Mon 15th January @9:15am - this is the last date for Reception class applications Nursery dates are: Mon 22nd January @9:15am, Mon 29th January @9:15am and Mon 5th February @9:15am. Please visit <https://staugustines.herts.sch.uk/herts/primary/staugustines/site/pages/sign-upform>



ST AUGUSTINE'S UNDER 5'S - a Registered Charity. The Under 5s is a friendly, busy and thriving early years setting. As a charity trustees are needed to help to continue to provide a valuable service for our parish and the community. If you are interested in helping and would like to find out more, please call the Under 5s on 01992 460614.

SOCIAL & MISCELLANEOUS

SEPARATION SUPPORT GROUP: The next meeting date for those undergoing separation or divorce will be held on **Wednesday 20th December** from 4.30-6pm in the presbytery.

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP: We are seeking to develop our ability to help those of us who

have undergone bereavement. If you would like to be involved, please contact the parish office.

SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY 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 823. Thank you.



RETRouvaille has helped many couples find new hope, nourishment and growth in their marriages. If you want to uncover or reawaken the love, trust and commitment that brought you together and work through difficult times in your marriage contact Retrouvaille confidential for more info about 2024 programmes. There is no group therapy or group work. The next programme commences with a Virtual weekend on **8 - 11 February 2024** or there is a Face to Face weekend in Welwyn Garden City on 14-16 June 2024. Contact 07887 296983 07973 380443, retrouvailleukinfo@gmail.com - or visit www.retrouvaille.org.uk



PARISH MAGAZINE: We hope to have the magazine ready for sale very soon.

DIOCESAN JOB VACANCIES can be viewed online <https://rcdow.org.uk/diocese/jobs>.

CHURCH CLEANING: Elizabeth Nsonwah, Toni Iamarino, Penny Bengé and Antonia Di Piano. Thank you for your help.

FINANCE

PARISH FINANCE: Thank you to all who continue to give regularly by standing order, or by envelopes. For those whose finances are more stable at present, please consider your parish giving, to help the parish out. Please see the link below <https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/hoddesdon/donate/> for the details, or fill in [this form](#). For a Standing Order, here are the necessary details:

Account Name:	WRCDT Hoddesdon
Sort Code:	40-05-20
Account Number:	31264370

NO CASH? You can make your offering here by scanning the QR Code with your smartphone. Alternatively, there is a contactless device at the left-hand exit door of the church. If you are a Tax Payer, please complete the Gift Aid Declaration.



Liturgy this week	Today's Liturgy
Sat 9th December St Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin 9.30am Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament 10am Mass <i>Paul O'Connell RIP</i>	Page 85 in the Mass books 1st Reading: Isaiah 40: 1-5, 9-11 <i>Prepare a way for the Lord.</i>
4.00pm Italian Mass* 6.30pm Mass <i>For the Parish</i>	Ps 84 — <i>Let us see, O Lord, your mercy and give us your saving help.</i>
Sun 10th December SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT 9.15am Mass <i>Larry O'Neill RIP</i> 11.15am Mass <i>Nicola & Margherita Barone RIP</i>	2nd Reading: 2 Peter 3: 8-14 <i>We are waiting for the new heavens and new earth.</i>
Mon 11th December St Damasus I, Pope 8.30am Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament 9.15am Mass <i>Innocent victims of Gaza & Israel conflict</i> 5-6pm Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament	Gospel Accl. Alleluia, alleluia! Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight, and all mankind shall see the salvation of God. Alleluia! Gospel: Mark 1: 1-8 <i>Make his path straight.</i>
Tues 12th December Our Lady of Guadalupe 8.30am Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament 9.15am Mass <i>Private intention</i> 6pm Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament	NEXT WEEK'S READINGS THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT (YEAR B)
Wed 13th December St Lucy, Virgin & Martyr 8.30am Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament 9.15am Mass <i>Caroline Delaney's intentions</i> followed by coffee in the crypt 6pm Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament	1st Reading: Isaiah 61: 1-2, 10-11 2nd Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5: 16-24 Gospel: John 1: 6-8, 19-28
Thurs 14th December St John of the Cross 7.30am Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament 8am Mass <i>Decd members of the Graffato Family</i> NO Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament	SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION (CONFESSION) Saturday 10.30 – 11am & 5.30 – 6.15pm Sunday 8.45 – 9am & 10.45 – 11am or ask Fr Julian at any other time.
Friday 15th December (Abstinence from meat for those aged 14+) 9.15am Mass with St Cross School in church 10.30am Funeral Francesco Distefano RIP NO Exposition of Blessed Sacrament or 11.50 Benediction 12 noon Mass <i>Joy Ighade's intentions</i> 6pm Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament 6.45pm Benediction	ROSARY The Rosary is often prayed in the Lady Chapel after weekday Mass and Saturday 10am Mass. SACRAMENT OF ANOINTING OF THE SICK Any parishioner sick, frail, or going into hospital for major surgery, can ask Fr Julian for the Sacrament of Anointing at any time.
Sat 16th December 9.30am Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament 10am Mass <i>Thomas and Lena Byrne RIP</i>	SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE Catholics must approach their parish priest at least 6 months prior to their intended wedding, and before setting a wedding date.
4.00pm Italian Mass* 6.30pm Mass <i>Justin Ighade's intentions</i>	Westminster Roman Catholic Diocesan Trust Registered Charity No. 233699
Sun 17th December THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT 9.15am Mass <i>For the Parish</i> 11.15am Mass <i>In Thanksgiving</i> 6pm Parish Carol Service	
* Vigil Mass of Sunday	
REGULAR EVENTS	
Mon 11th 7pm Confirmation, crypt Tues 12th 1pm Lunch club, crypt	Tues 12th 2.30pm Tuesday club, crypt Wed 13th 6pm Brownies, crypt

NEWSLETTER ITEMS TO PRESBYTERY IN WRITING, BY FAX, OR E-MAIL BY 9AM THURS WITH YOUR NAME & PHONE NO. — NEW PARISHIONERS Please take a parish membership form & information leaflet from the box in the porch. The completed forms should be posted through the presbytery letterbox. **MOVING HOME?** Please post new details through the presbytery letterbox. **PARROCCHIANI:** *Si pregano tutti i parrocchiani di prendere i questionari (uno per ciascun famiglia) che si trovano vicino al tabellone degli avvisi. Una volta compilati, i questionari devono essere riconsegnati depositandoli nella cassetta della posta vicina alla statua di Sant'Antonio*