



The Announcer



St Augustine's Catholic Church

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

Parish Priest: Fr Julian Davies

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FaceBook: "CatholicHoddesdon" Secretary: Dawn Bates (Mon, Wed, Thurs, Fri, 9am-4pm)
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

4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT/CHRISTMAS

24TH/25TH DEC 2023

Gospel: *Luke 1: 26-38*

Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son.

We are wired to be social creatures. Neuroscientists say that our brains function only as we interact with others. Our health and emotional wellbeing depend upon it. While we can communicate across distances as never before, are we really communicating? Communication is not just about hearing or seeing flat images. We are told that the greatest communication takes place as we interact face to face, since body language communicates over half of what is communicated. We apparently communicate, much less from the tone of our voice, and even less by the words themselves. As far as communication is concerned, digitalisation has brought immense benefits to humanity but its downside is a dehumanisation. In his post-synodal exhortation,



Christus Vivit, Pope Francis, warns that 'It is not healthy to confuse communication with mere virtual contact'. The digital environment he says can block 'the development of authentic interpersonal relationships' and lead to 'a gradual loss of contact with concrete reality'. An environment of remoteness, 'creates a delusional parallel reality that ignores human dignity' and invites a "digital migration" into a lonely world of rootlessness and "self-invention." If virtual contact is not to be confused with authentic communication, neither is the wall of recorded messages greeting you on the phone. It is so irritating to be addressed by a machine offering innumerable options unrelated to the simple question you want answered. The world of work has altered, not always for the better. Where automation deprives people of work, it denigrates their human dignity and is socially and psychologically destructive. In our streets we find the level of human engagement daily decreasing. Banks have disappeared. Postal services are not delivering. Most large shops seem to be short staffed. Even our hospitals are losing the human interface. The other day, not finding a patient on the ward where I was expecting him, I was at a loss trying to find him, once I found that the reception desk and visitors' portal were closed. Where have the 'human' beings gone? What has all this to do with Christmas you are probably thinking? Everything in fact. In our first reading today, King David wants to build a house for God, only to be told that God will build him a house, but a house, not made of bricks and mortar but of fully sentient human beings in covenantal relationship with their Creator, just like the previous covenants with Noah, Abraham and Moses. In our gospel reading, the angel Gabriel informs Mary, that in spite of her virginity she will conceive a son because *the 'Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you'*. This language was used only of the Temple, yet here it is used of a young woman. This 'overshadowing' of Mary is the same word used of the overshadowing the tabernacle, where the Jews believed that God above all resided. What was once applied to the Holy of Holies is now applied to a human being. Mary's human womb becomes the very receptacle for the presence of God, just as the ark of the covenant had been before. God himself would reside in human flesh, '*pleased as man with men to dwell*' as Charles Wesley puts it. Yet this was no rent a womb, surrogate affair. God Emmanuel would evolve in Mary's womb, like us in our mother's womb, from pin-prick ovum to full natal birth. Why? The children of the flesh had to be saved in the flesh. Sin-the enemy of humanity- could only be vanquished in humanity, not by us but only by his body and blood. Not the least of our sins, from which the Saviour came to save us, is the sin of inhumanity; our dehumanising of one another as if we are not made in God's image. Accepting the gift of Christmas means welcoming Christ into our lives. It is the incomparable gift of becoming more human; the prospect of a being, becoming fully alive and human in the fullest sense, as God always wanted us to be, in relationship with him as his sons and daughters. Celebrate the Saviour's birth. Happy Christmas! Will the human being self-identify please?

Fr Julian.

PRAYER & LITURGY

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.

CRIB APPEAL: Our Crib offerings are donated to the Catholic Children's Society. The Society is helping local families in crisis who are struggling to put food on the table, keep warm and provide a safe home for their children. You can donate at the Crib or via the CCS website www.cathchild.org.uk/crib.

EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT will not take place on **Friday 29th December at 11am** or in the evenings next week.

VIGIL EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT will take place from **11pm-11.30pm on New Year's Eve, Sunday 31st December** and then Mass will follow at **11.30pm**.

PLEASE PRAY for all those who have died recently including Maureen Harris and for all those whose anniversaries occur at this time including William Rainsford, Paul Gixti, Jean Walsh, Mary Ryan, Kay Gaffney, Christine Davies, Arnaldo Moruzzi, Salvatore Colletti, Ettore Forte and Giuseppa Busciglio. *May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace.*

CHILDREN'S CHOIR: Gabby Hanley will be running the Children's Choir at the 9.15am Mass on Sunday mornings. The children choir will resume on **Sunday 4th February at the 4pm Mass and 11th February at the 9.15am Mass.**

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.



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!

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 8th January 2024 from 7-8pm** in the crypt.

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 as soon as possible.



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

SPUC WHITE FLOWER APPEAL: The Society for the Protection of Unborn Children (SPUC) will be holding its annual appeal on the **13th/14th January**.



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: 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. <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 24th January** 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.

TUESDAY LUNCH CLUB will finish on Tuesday 19th December and resume again on **Tuesday 9th January 2024**.



2023 PARISH MAGAZINE in full colour, 60 pages, is now available to buy after all Masses this weekend. You can also purchase the magazine from the presbytery during the week. To cover the cost of printing, the cost is £5.

CAMINO DE SANTIAGO: A photo presentation of the pilgrimage route (500 miles / 790 kms) will be held on **Friday 26th January at 7pm in the crypt**. This will be accompanied by wine and nibbles at a cost of £5 per head. Please contact the presbytery if you would like to attend.



CHRISTMAS CARDS: Please do not leave Christmas cards for parishioners at the back of the church. We have found from past years that they are not collected. Thank you.

EPIPHANY CAROLS concert will take place on **Saturday 6th January 2024** at 7.30pm at Haileybury Chapel, in aid of Cancer Research UK's Brain Tumour research. Tickets are on a pay as you feel basis, and can be booked at tinyurl.com/Epiphany24. Seating is unreserved and your donation will have no bearing on where you sit. If you are unable to attend, but would like to donate, please contact: cambridgechoirfundraising@gmail.com

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

CHURCH CLEANING: Pat Kavanagh, Sue Alvey and Val. Thank you for your help.

CHURCH CLEANERS are needed to help with the Wednesday and Thursday cleaning teams. This would



be for one hour per month. If you can help, please contact the presbytery.

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.



THANK YOU from the presbytery to everyone for your very kind cards, gifts and good wishes. They are very much appreciated.
Fr Julian, Fr Mathews and Dawn.

Liturgy this week	Today's Liturgy
<p>Sat 23rd December St John of Kanty 9.30am Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament 10am Mass O'Connor Family intentions</p>	<p>Page 90 in the Mass books</p> <p>1st Reading: 2 Samuel 7: 1-5, 8-12, 14-16 <i>The kingdom of David will always stand secure before the Lord.</i></p> <p>Ps 88 — I will sing for ever of your love, O Lord.</p>
<p>4.00pm Italian Mass* 6.30pm Mass Justina Ogbodu RIP</p>	<p>2nd Reading: Romans 16: 25-27 <i>The mystery, which was kept secret for endless ages, is now made clear.</i></p>
<p>Sun 24th December FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT 9.15am Mass For the Parish 11.15am Mass Decd members of Beary Family 4.00pm Children's Nativity Mass Priest's intentions 12pm Midnight Mass Priest's intentions</p>	<p>Gospel Accl. Alleluia, alleluia! I am the handmaid of the Lord: let what you have said be done to me. Alleluia!</p>
<p>Mon 25th December NATIVITY OF THE LORD 9.15am Mass Priest's intentions 11.15am Mass Priest's intentions</p>	<p>Gospel: Luke 1: 26-38 <i>Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son.</i></p>
<p>Tues 26th December ST STEPHEN, the First Martyr 8.30am Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament 9.15am Mass Tony and Marie McPeake's intentions NO Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament</p>	<p>NEXT WEEK'S READINGS HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY & JOSEPH (YEAR B)</p>
<p>Wed 27th December ST JOHN, Apostle & Evangelist 8.30am Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament 9.15am Mass Decd members of Delaney Family NO coffee in the crypt NO Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament</p>	<p>1st Reading: Genesis 15: 1-6, 21: 1-3 2nd Reading: Hebrews 11: 8, 11-12, 17-19 Gospel: Luke 2: 22-40</p>
<p>Thurs 28th December THE HOLY INNOCENTS, Martyrs 7.30am Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament 8am Mass Fr Philip Miller's intentions NO Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Friday 29th Dec ST THOMAS BECKET, Bishop & Martyr (Abstinence from meat for those aged 14+) NO Exposition of Blessed Sacrament / NO Benediction 12 noon Mass Fr Julian's intentions NO Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament</p>	<p>ROSARY The Rosary is often prayed in the Lady Chapel after weekday Mass and Saturday 10am Mass.</p>
<p>Sat 30th Dec 6TH DAY IN THE OCTAVE OF CHRISTMAS 9.30am Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament 10am Mass Private intention</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>4.00pm Italian Mass* 6.30pm Mass Bridie Donaghy RIP</p>	<p>SACRAMENT OF MARRIAGE Catholics must approach their parish priest at least 6 months prior to their intended wedding, and before setting a wedding date.</p>
<p>Sun 31ST Dec HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY & JOSEPH 9.15am Mass Rosa Cattini RIP 11.15am Mass For the Parish 11.00pm Vigil Adoration / 11.30pm Mass (New Year's Eve)</p>	<p>Westminster Roman Catholic Diocesan Trust Registered Charity No. 233699</p>
<p style="text-align: right;">* Vigil Mass of Sunday</p>	
REGULAR EVENTS	

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*