

Church of St John the Evangelist, Islington

39 Duncan Terrace, N1 8AL, #020 7226 3277

Parish priest: Fr Rajiv Michael, Asst Priest: Fr Jakub Jozsko, Administrator (Mon/Thu/Fri): Grace Wu

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3rd & 4th Sunday of Advent (Year B – 17th Dec 2023)

Upto Christmas and Beyond	
Weekday masses (18-24th Dec) Mon: 6:30 PM with Adoration Tue: 6:30 PM with <i>Lectio Divina</i> Weds: Funeral Mass at 10:45 AM Thur-Fri: 10 AM	Christmas Mass Times 24 th December, Christmas Vigil Mass (Early Family Mass): 6 PM 24 th December, Midnight Mass : 11:30 PM (Carols) followed by mass at midnight 25 th December (Christmas Day): 9:30 AM & 11 AM
Sunday masses Saturday: <i>No Vigil Mass</i> Sunday: 11 AM (<i>no 9:30 AM mass</i>) (Advent 4 th Sunday)	Week following Christmas Tues-Fri (26th – 29th Dec): Mass at 10 AM No Mass on Thursday 28th Dec. New Year's Day Jan 1st: Feast of the Mother of God, Mass at 10 AM. <i>The Church will be closed a bit earlier 26th-31st Dec, around 2 PM.</i> <i>Parish Office closed from 26th Dec till the 8th Jan.</i>

As we enter the third week of Advent, the cry of the Baptist recedes to make way for the second figure of Advent, Mary. She rises to invite us to the crib to which we will journey (very) soon after the fourth Sunday of Advent. No sooner than we have the 4th week of Advent this year than we are on to Christmas day. But this last week of Advent still has much to offer us, as we wait. From the 17th start what are known as the 'O' Antiphons. These preface the Evening Prayer of the Divine Office which all priests and religious are required to pray. They are so called because they address the Messiah, the One to come with increasing desire and urgency, under several of his titles: *O Wisdom, O Adonai, O Stock of Jesse...* you can hear many of these antiphonal cries in the hymn *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*.

The end of our calendar year, no doubt, carries with it its share of memories. Maybe there were promises and hopes which remained unfulfilled this year; maybe there were sufferings too hard to bear, but maybe there were also joys for which to give thanks. It is good to wait for the Lord, the Psalmist says (Ps 37,39,40,62..), and to wait with patience. Changing the calendar to another year carries with it no promise – except perhaps our own optimism. But to those who wait for the Lord, the Scriptures promise that he will come. This last week of Advent, let us continue to wait. Place your desires, your hopes and longings in the bosom of Mary and wait with her in patience but also in expectation. And the one who is coming will come without delay.

It has been quite intense, behind the scenes for us at the Presbytery. The building is in a very bad shape (there was water pouring into Fr Jakub's room!) and we've just started on (and still identifying other) essential repairs but there is a lot more to do. We seem to have had a slow recovery from our Covid closure of the Church as a community. I daresay we have made some initial progress in starting to rebuild our parish community. But to be *the body of Christ*, we have much to do – and we all have to work together. Thank you for all your support, love and welcome, especially

to me as I've started as a new parish priest in this Church. There have been many who have worked quite hard in the background, both who are of the staple team at the Presbytery and many of our faithful volunteers. We also welcomed Grace as our new Parish Administrator among them. Thanks to the parishioners who have volunteered of their time to help us with odd tasks and those who even managed a social after the installation with Bishop Nicholas! We've started a few groups, and there's more to come (see below). If you have things you would like done in the Church, do come and speak to us. Don't stay on the sidelines – please get involved! Let us entrust ourselves and everything we have to Our Lady, Mother of God to whom we are consecrated and under whose maternal love we will begin the New Year. If you're travelling may the angels accompany you, like they did the Holy Family to Bethlehem. And we hope you have a very wonderful Christmas break with your family or wherever you may be. With every blessing, Frs Rajiv & Jakub.

News & Events

Tree Decoration: Would you like to decorate our Christmas trees? Join in the fun and get creative, and perhaps get to know some other parishioners! Tree decorating is on Thursday 21st at 6pm at St John's with mince pies and mulled wine afterwards.

Christmas Offertory Envelopes are available to take away. Please return at any time, either in the collection at Sunday Mass, or you can post them through the presbytery letterbox.

Carols at Westminster Cathedral: Tickets are on sale for the Westminster Cathedral carols, on 19 and 20 December at 7.30pm. Tickets can be purchased from www.ticketmaster.co.uk and type in Westminster Cathedral when prompted.

Thanks to Communion & Liberation (CL) for lifting our spirits with a wonderful Carol service this weekend! Would you like to know more about this movement? If you have wondered how your faith can make a difference in your daily life, if you've wondered if your daily work and activities can be a place of encounter with Jesus Christ, you'll benefit greatly from joining CL in their weekly meetings. We are very happy to announce that CL has opened a chapter for their weekly meetings at St John's. Every Thursday 7 PM, a few people to meet to reflect using either a topic of Scripture or some writing based on it. All are welcome and no prior knowledge or experience is necessary! Inviting CL to our parish is one attempt to help people find help to grow in their spirituality. Come for some growth in faith, fellowship and joy. They will restart in the New Year, mid January.

Change to Mass Times: We hope moving the Mass times in the week to the Evening on Mondays and Tuesdays were helpful. If you did so, do let us know. We are always there if you have any helpful feedback. At some point we will also have to rearrange the Sunday masses, so that we can serve the two parishes better and more equitably.

The London Jesuit Center offers some great courses: A fortnightly online session of **guided prayer** led by the spirituality team at the London Jesuit Centre and some special guests.

There is also a course on the **Gospel of Mark** which we are reading now on Sundays, Year B. Both start **18th January, Thursday**. See <https://www.londonjesuitcentre.org/whats-on> for more details.