

# Church of St John the Evangelist, Islington

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

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## Second Sunday of Advent (Year C – 8<sup>th</sup> December 2024)

### This Week

Weekday Masses	Sunday Masses	Confessions
<b>Mon – Fri</b> 10am, followed by Adoration until 11am <b>Mon</b> 6pm	Saturday Vigil 6pm Sunday 10am, 12 noon, 6.30pm	Saturday 5:30 - 5:50pm (and anytime, as possible, on request)

**T**hree figures in the Church are celebrated in their birth. The normal celebration is usually on the day of a saints' death because it marks their birth into eternal life – but also it marks their victory over the power of sin in their life. Their life is testimony to their valiant struggle by the grace of God, against all that draws them down, to become everything God created them to be: *like himself*. It is the triumph of God's grace in their life. But three people – John the Baptist, Mary and Jesus, of course – are celebrated in their birth. Why? Because they were born without sin. John the Baptist was cleansed in the womb by the word of Christ, who was still in the womb of Mary, during her visitation to Elizabeth. Jesus, was of course born sinless. And Mary, uniquely, was *conceived*, not just born without sin. Her Immaculate Conception is what is celebrated on the 8<sup>th</sup> (today), which unfortunately many think to be the conception of Jesus. But why does all this matter, especially to us? It might seem like they won the spiritual lottery, not having sin, and it is us who are struggling! Because, once again, in their lives, the Baptist, Mary and even Jesus, demonstrate a fundamental truth of the spiritual life. *That everything is gift*. It is easy to mistake the victory of the saints as their effort, their struggle: but in them too, it is the gift of God's love working in their hearts. And with Mary and the Baptist, they received what was given as gift – and they hold it as gift *for us*. What we need, we need only ask. It is not our efforts and holiness which succeed but simply God's grace. And Mary and the Baptist, along with all the saints hold their gifts out to us, to follow in their path this Advent.

### News & Events

**THANK YOU! Planned Giving Drive** Thank you to all those who were attentive and we very much appreciate the support you've given and can give. For all those that have completed forms, we will process this as soon as we can.

**Coffee morning** is today after the 10am Mass. We're very grateful for all parishoners that have offered to help by serving or baking and for those that stay for a chat.

**Setting up the Christmas Nativity Scene** Take part in this special event and contribute your time and talent by helping set up the crib. We're looking for able and willing volunteers to take part on **Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> at 7pm**. There'll be mince pies and mulled wine or just come along to help serve and sample the refreshments!

**Immaculate Conception** 8<sup>th</sup> December is usually the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception but it is moved to the 9<sup>th</sup> as it has fallen on a Sunday. We'll take this wonderful moment to re-consecrate our parishes and all in it to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. On **Monday 9<sup>th</sup> at 6pm** there's an additional Mass to celebrate this Solemnity.

**Confessions during Advent** Advent is the perfect time to take advantage of the Sacrament of Reconciliation especially because it can be very stressful and challenging. Confession allows Christ to be born within us during this Festive Season. For your convenience, confession will be available during the **10am and 12 noon Mass on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup>** as well as the usual time of **5.30pm to 5.50m on Saturdays**.

**Requiescat in pace** The funeral for **Lisa Marie Kennedy** will take place at 10am on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> December. The funeral for **Thomas Joseph Slattery** will be at 12 noon on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> December.

**Confirmation course 2024/2025.** If you're between the ages of 14 to 16 at the time of enrolment, we would like to warmly welcome you to join our Confirmation Programme 2024/2025. The course will start January 2025 and the confirmation date has now been confirmed as **6pm Friday 30<sup>th</sup> May** with Bishop Nicholas Hudson. If you wish to be enrolled, please complete a form from the website or pick one up in the church porch.

**The New Lectionary.** This will be introduced at St John's in January. Some parishes introduced this last weekend at the beginning of the new liturgical year. We apologise for the delay, but this is due to costs. If you would like to make a donation towards these books, it would be gratefully received. A lectionary book can also be marked in memory of a loved one or for your intention. The new lectionary, which is the book that contains the Scripture readings for Mass and the Sacraments, uses the English Standard Version – Catholic Edition of the Bible and the Abbey Psalter.

**Christmas and New Year Mass times** are on our website, on the notice board and available to take home with you in the church porch.

**Christmas lunch – call for helpers!** Sign up sheets for volunteers are at the back of the church. On Christmas Day this year, at St John's school, we are holding an open Christmas lunch for anyone who might be alone or unable to afford or cook a meal or simply fancies some company. This is an old tradition of St John's, which we're really happy to revive.. There are a few ways you can get involved. **We need volunteers on December 24th and 25th** to help prep ingredients, set up, decorate the space, help with cooking and host on the day. If you're unable to volunteer, perhaps you can gift a raffle prize or a financial donation – or know someone who might want to come for the lunch!

**Pictures needed!** Thank you to all who have generously shared their pictures. If you would like to appear on our new website and if you have pictures of Baptisms, First Holy Communion, Confirmation or weddings then please do email them to us. We might not be able to use all the photos, but will let you know when they're published. Digital copies only please.

**Scam emails targeting parishioners** We mentioned this last week and just wanted to remind you to stay vigilant with scammers who are targeting parishioners, impersonating their priests. The scam emails typically request the parishoner to purchase Amazon or other gift cards as gifts. Fr Rajiv and Fr Jakub would never ask you to do this by email. If you receive such an email supposedly from one of them, please don't respond and contact the parish office immediately. Thank you.

**Buying Christmas presents?** Advent is a time of prayer and preparation to prepare for the coming of Jesus: if he doesn't come back now, we remember his first coming in Bethlehem. But it's easy to be distracted with expectations of Christmas and the shopping involved. Maybe you could consider a 'virtual Christmas present' such as buying a goat, essentials for a family in need, through charities such as CAFOD, SCIAF or Christian Aid? Asking your children to choose the gifts is a wonderful way of teaching how other people live. You can also search for St John's at the [www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) before going to any retailer who will then donate to us a percentage of the total but at no expense to you.