

## NEWSLETTER

FIRST SUNDAY OF  
ADVENT

## FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Today we commence our season of Advent. Our Lord is the reason for the season, the reason for the season of Advent and the season for Christmas. In the hustle and bustle of getting everything prepared for Christmas, we remember that our Lord is the reason for Christmas. In all that we do in this In these four weeks of Advent we are given by the Church to prepare ourselves for Christmas. Yes, our entire lives, not just Advent, are a preparation and waiting in hope for God. Thus our Gospel asks us to prepare for the Lord's Second Coming and because we don't know when that will be, we can see our Gospel asking us to be ready to be called from this life whenever that will be, to be ready for our death. The Lord gives us advice and the first is, 'Watch yourselves, or your hearts will be coarsened with debauchery and drunkenness and the cares of life'

The Lord is reminding us to be aware of the temptations, attractions and the distractions in life that pulls us away from the real meaning of life, and it's our Lord himself who is the real meaning of life. There is no lasting happiness, only a temporary escape from today with its disappointments, responsibilities, in its 'debauchery and drunkenness' that our Lord refers to in the Gospel. So, for lasting peace and happiness we get our Lord's second advice. 'Stay awake, praying at all times for the strength to survive all that is going to happen, and to stand with confidence before the Son of Man'. The point here is, that our Lord asks us to pray. If however, we are too busy to pray then we are too busy. St Paul in our second reading advises us on how to use our time.

'we urge you and appeal to you in the Lord Jesus to make more and more progress in the kind of life that you are meant to live: the life that God wants'

These words of St Paul and from our Lord should lead me and you to ask, 'How do we spend our time?' I need to withdraw from what is a waste of time and instead to 'stay awake, praying at all times.' And to make substantial progress in the kind of life I am meant to live: The life that God wants.' The poem, which I include here, might help us to think about how we use our time.

*I knelt to pray but not for long,/ I had too much to do,/ I had to hurry and get to work  
For bills would soon be due./ So I knelt and said a hurried prayer,/ And jumped up off my knees.  
My Christian duty was done/ My soul could rest at ease./ All day long I had no time /  
To spread a word of cheer./ No time to speak of Christ to friends,/ They'd laugh at me I'd fear.  
No time, no time, too much to do,/ That was my constant cry,/ No time to give to souls in need  
But at last the time, the time to die./ I went before the Lord,/ I came; I stood with downcast eyes,  
For in his hands God held a book;/ It was the book of life./ God looked into his book and said  
'I waited for you each day/ I sent my Son Jesus for you/ But the time for Him you rarely found.'*

(Sadly I don't know the source, and I have adapted it slightly).

To find time for our Lord we have the season of Advent. Advent is a time of grace given us by the Church to help us prepare our hearts for His coming. Let's not miss out on the grace God is willing to give us this Advent. Let us use the season of Advent to deepen our relationship with God and prepare our hearts for the celebration of Christmas. Let's remind ourselves there is only one gift at Christmas, and that gift is Jesus Christ our Lord.

'Stay awake, praying at all times for the strength to survive all that is going to happen, and to stand with confidence before the Son of Man.'

Fr. Christopher

## MASS INTENTIONS

**December 1, 2018**

6pm - Ints of Rahilly & McDonald Families

**December 2, 2018**

9am - People of the Parish

11am—Margaret Pudney  
RIP

For weekday mass intentions please, see the notice board on the left hand side of the main door of the church.

Confessions on  
Saturday at 5.15-5.45pm or  
by appointment

**HOLY HOUR**

Every Saturday at 5pm

**FIRST HOLY COMMUNION**

The First Reconciliation and First Communion Course will begin here at St Edmund's on **Wednesday 5th December** with the Parents Meeting (7 pm). Books will be available to buy on that day. Your child will need one book for First Reconciliation course and one for First Communion course. The cost of a book is £18. You can buy both at once or to buy a second one before the start of the second course. If for any reason you cannot afford it, please, come to talk to me. Those parents who wish to help with the course, could you submit your details to the Parish office as soon as possible. Thanks,  
Fr Christopher

## Readings for this and next Sunday

1st Reading; Jeremiah 33:14-16

Psalms - 24:4-5, 8-9, 10, 14 response v 1

2nd Reading - Thessalonians 3: 12-4:2

Gospel - Luke 21:25-28; 34-36

1st Reading; Baruch 5:1-9

Psalms - 125: response v 3

2nd Reading - Philippians 1: 4-6; 8-11

Gospel - Luke 3:1-6

### Advent Grace

Unless we have been shocked to our depths at ourselves and the things we are capable of, as well as at the failings of humanity as a whole, we cannot possibly understand the full import of Advent.

If the whole message of the coming of God, of the day of salvation, of approaching redemption, is to seem more than a divinely inspired legend or a bit of poetic fiction two things must be accepted unreservedly.

First, that life is both powerless and futile in so far as by itself it has neither purpose nor fulfillment. It is powerless and futile within its own range of existence and also as a consequence of sin. To this must be added the rider that life clearly demands both purpose and fulfillment.

Secondly, it must be recognised that it is God's alliance with humanity, his being on our side, ranging himself with us, that corrects this state of meaningless futility. It is necessary to be conscious of God's decision to enlarge the boundaries of his own supreme existence by condescending to share ours for the overcoming of sin.

All we have to rely on is the fact that these promises have been given and that they will be kept. God helps us to find ourselves and then to get away from ourselves, back to him.

*Fr. Alfred Delp, s.j*

### Prognostication in the Heart

Recently I was approached by one of those street preachers. Usually, I tend to avoid them, but this time around he approached me and started a conversation. He was insistent in telling me that we need not look at the heavens to read the signs of the times. All he and I had to do was to look into our own hearts- should we do, we would see the time of our Lord's coming is fast approaching.

I asked myself, what am I to do with a preacher like this? Would it be enough to dismiss him? But he knelt down and asked for my blessing. As I turned and walked away, I couldn't help but wonder who had the insight into spiritual reality, was it this man or those rushing past towards their shopping and to their appointments.

The season of Advent is a reminder that life is brief and it passes by quickly over time and not wasting my time or yours on frivolous pursuits. Attentiveness and being ready are the themes of Advent, for our Lord will return, for he said so.

He will ask you and me, whether we peered into our own hearts and discovered his appeal for our love and fidelity.

*Heavenly Father, show us how to prepare our hearts for your Son's coming. This Advent may many souls return in love of him.*

*Fr. Christopher*

On Saturday 8 December (starting 3pm) at St. Dominic's Priory (Southampton Rd, Belsize Park, London NW5 4LB), Westminster Youth Ministry will be celebrating its annual diocesan Youth Mass. Led by Bishop John Wilson, young people from all parishes are welcome. The music for the Mass will be provided by Catholic artist Edwin Fawcett and the young Music Ministry scholars who spent a year preparing for this day. For more information about the Youth Mass, as well as to apply for next year's free music scholarship, visit [dowym.com](http://dowym.com)

**Andrzej Wdowiak**, Director of Youth, Westminster Youth Ministry

### Catholic History Walks in London

**London at Christmas and the New Year** Sunday 16th December 2018 & Wednesday 2nd January 2019, both at 3pm. Join us for seasonal walks through Westminster and Victoria, taking in Christmas trees and crib-scenes. Meet at Westminster Cathedral. Nearest Tube: Victoria.



## Rosary Group's Monthly Prayer Meeting Sunday 02nd December

Meet by the statue of Mary  
after 11am Mass

*The theme of our prayers will be:*

**Christmas Celebrations**

**Beginners Welcome**

Meetings held 1st Sunday of every month  
Please bring your Rosary. Booklets Available

**Pray With Us † Pray The Rosary**

### Proclaim Spring Gathering 2019

Rt. Rev Nicholas Hudson has invited representatives to join him at this gathering on Saturday 23rd February 2019 from 9.30 am - 3.00pm at St Mary & St Michael (Commercial Road) Parish Centre, 2 Lukin Street E1 OAA. With this in Mind, I invite ALL are young people in the Confirmation Group, First Holy Communion Group, and All Catechumenate's and Candidates of RCIA with there Catechists to join Bishop Nicholas Hudson on Saturday 23rd February 2019. Kindly, would All Catechists put this date in your diary and encourage everyone in your groups to attend With You. Thank you.

*Fr Christopher*

### Fun with Rosaries (Part Three)

Let's just say that you now have a nice rosary you really like and you want to learn how to use it. What next? The rosary is a practical experience, meaning there are no classes in how to say the rosary. There are also too many things on the internet that are unhelpful or confusing. You will certainly not learn what the rosary means to you through study.

My advice is to start simply. Just pick-up the rosary without thinking and say it out loud. Its good enough to begin with. People feel silly and self-conscious at first, which is why they say their prayers in their head. Prayers only become real when you say them out loud. You don't lose your place when you say a prayer, only when you just think them.

Start and finish with the sign of the cross. Just say the Our Fathers and the Hail Marys. Forget about the other prayers. Concentrate on each bead as you hold it and each word as you say it. Do this every day at the same time until you feel confident. Learn discipline. Don't let distractions delay or interrupt you or else you will soon give-up in frustration.

Be patient. When you are ready, begin each rosary with your own personal prayer. Say it to God, Jesus, Mary, or your favourite saint. Pray about something that troubles you, on behalf of someone else, in thanks for something good, or just because. Its your choice. Its a free space for you to grow in your faith about the things that matter to you personally.

When you feel ready, you should start saying the rosary before mass or confession, during the saturday Adoration, and maybe even instead of your evening prayers. This is also the time when you should introduce the other prayers into your rosary: the Apostle's Creed, Glory Be, Fatima Prayer, and Hail Holy Queen. You will find the rosary takes less time than you think.

Saying the rosary is much more fun in company. Catholics most often say their prayers together. We sometimes forget what to say when there is no-one to say it with. So say your rosary with a friend or loved-one at home. Be brave. Ask someone politely that you are on nodding terms with in church if you can join them in their rosary. Its ok if they say no.

The Parish also has a Rosary Group that meets on the first sunday of the month after the 11am mass. You don't have to join. There are plenty of people that say the rosary all the time in church who are not part of the Rosary Group and that's fine. It really only matters that saying the rosary makes your your faith grow and your life better.

If I was to offer any advice to a new Catholic, it would be to buy a rosary and use it today. Practical experience is the only way we truly learn, after all.

*My thanks, Paul Marlow.*

### Green Token Appeal

Its December already and that means Christmas is already upon us. Lots of good causes ask for your money at this time of year. I would like to ask you to do something good that won't cost you anything. Its totally FREE and really easy to do. It will also help a lot of your neighbours on the Isle of Dogs, some with families, who really need your help.

Ask for a handful of Green Tokens every time you are at any Asda checkout. As you exit Asda, go to the community boards in between the postbox and the toilets. Put the tokens in the slot marked Island Gardens Foodbank. We need you to do that until the end of December. Asda will then help us feed people for about two months.

*My thanks, Paul Marlow.*

### Free Prayer Candles Available

The Parish has accumulated a number of used altar and advent candles that need to find a good home. We would like to give them away to anyone who will use them as part of their daily prayers. People can give a donation if they wish, but anyone can take the candle of their choice for free. We only ask that parishioners do not leave lighted candles unattended at home and are careful not to scald themselves with hot wax. Please ask one of the sacristans after mass or contact the parish office (see back of newsletter for details), if you are interested.

**Diocese of Westminster**  
**Roman Catholic Parish of St Edmund of Abingdon, Millwall**  
297 Westferry Road, Millwall. E14 3RS  
Telephone: 020-7987-4114; Email: millwall@rcdow.org.uk



**Fr Christopher Silva**  
*Parish Priest,*

**Mrs Katherine Woznicka**  
*Parish Secretary*

**The office may be contacted by phone:**  
**Monday to Friday 9am-2pm**  
**Closed on Bank Holidays**

**NEW PARISHIONERS** — Please fill in a “Registration Form” from the Church porch and hand it in to the Office or to the Parish Priest.

**BLESSING OF HOMES** — Contact the Parish Secretary to book a date and time.

**COMMUNION FOR THE SICK AND HOUSEBOUND** — Contact the Parish Secretary to arrange for a visit from the Caring & Sharing Group.

**BAPTISMS** — Parents must attend a 2-session Baptism Formation Program (during pregnancy or after birth) – **Next baptismal course will be on Mon 7 January & Mon 14 January 2019 - 7.30pm.** Please, call the office to reserve your space. Please, note that all baptism will be during Mass.

**WEDDINGS** — Contact the Parish Priest by email or letter, **even if you wish to be married elsewhere.** Please give full names, contact details, religion of each party and whether or not either of you has been married before. The Church normally requires six months notice of weddings.

**WHAT HAPPENS IF I GO INTO HOSPITAL?** — If you are admitted as a patient, please ensure the Chaplains’ Office is informed you would like to be visited by a Catholic Minister. This has to be done by you or a relative.

**PROTECTION OF CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS** — The Parish is completely committed to the protection from abuse of all children and vulnerable adults in its care. The Parish Protection Officer is Mrs Diane Winship and she should be contacted directly on 07799-414-806 if you have cause for concern. The Diocesan Protection Officer may be contacted on 020-7798-9350/07803-634-236, by email to arianna.sommariva@rcdow.org.uk or at Vaughan House, 46 Francis Street, SW1P 1QN.

**AN EMAIL NEWSLETTER** — The newsletter is available electronically, enabling you to remain in touch even when you are away on holiday or on business—as well as reducing our ecological footprint. Email the Parish Secretary to arrange to be added to the distribution list.

**SET OF DONATION ENVELOPES** for current financial year are now ready for collection by the entrance hallway. If you notice any misspelling in your name/surname or the address, please let me know by email on millwall@rcdow.org.uk. Also, if you want to donate by envelope you can let me know via email and I will prepare a box for you. During the week the boxes are available from the office.

*Katherine*

**LAST WEEK’S COLLECTIONS:** loose: 434.44 envelopes: 548.34, total: **982.78**  
***Thank you for your Generosity*** WRCDT Charity No: 233699

**ST EDMUND’S  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
Westferry Road, Millwall E14 3RS  
020 7987 2546

**BISHOP CHALLONER  
COLLEGIATE SCHOOLS**  
Commercial Road, London E1 0AB  
020 7791 9500