

## NEWSLETTER

3RD SUNDAY  
OF ADVENT**Prepare, discern, decrease**

These three verbs describe the spiritual experience of Saint John the Baptist, who came before the Messiah preaching the baptism of conversion to the people of Israel. This is the paradigm of every Christian's vocation.

John worked above all to prepare, taking nothing for himself. He was an important man: the people sought him and followed him. His words were strong, like a *sharp sword*, according to the expression of Isaiah (49:2), If perhaps he felt tempted to believe he was important, he never gave in to this, as demonstrated by his response to experts who asked him If he were the Messiah. 'I am a voice, only a voice', he said *A voice that cries in the wilderness; Make a straight way for the Lord*. His first job was to prepare the hearts of the people for an encounter with the Lord.

But who is the Lord? The answer to this question lies in John's second vocation: to discern who the Lord was, among so many good people. The Spirit revealed this to him. Therefore, he had the courage to say: *there is the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world* (Jn1:29). Whilst preparing us, John said: *one is coming after me*. Yet in knowing how to discern and point out the Lord, he said: *this is the one, who existed before me* (Jn1:15).

This is where John's third vocation-to decrease-comes in because precisely from this moment of his life he begins to humble himself, to decrease, so that the Lord will increase, to the point of allowing himself to be humiliated. This was John's most difficult milestone, because the Lord had a manner that he had not imagined. In the prison in which Herod Antipas had locked him, he suffered not only the darkness of the cell but the darkness of his heart as well. He was assailed by doubts: *'Is he the one? Have I made a mistake?'* So much so, that he sent his own disciples to Jesus in order to ask him: *are you the one who is to come, or must we wait for someone else?* (Lk7: 19). John's humiliation is twofold: the humiliation of his death, as the price of a whim, but also, the humiliation of the darkness of the spirit.

It's beautiful to think of the Christian vocation like this. A Christian doesn't proclaim himself; he proclaims another, he prepares the path to another: to the Lord. He must know how to discern; he must understand how to discern the truth from what may resemble the truth but is not; he must be a person of discernment. He must be a person who knows how to humble himself so the Lord may increase in the hearts and souls of others.

*Pope Francis*

**Sunday 12th December** lets pray together- *"Yesterday we celebrated the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, patron saint of the unborn. We ask for her guidance and inspiration as we the church seek to support all pregnant mothers through their pregnancies, and that we would become models of support to all in society. Lord hear us"*.

**Volunteers**

we would like some volunteers to help decorate the Church and set up the Crib after the 11 am Mass on Sunday 20th December. If you could, then join us next Sunday.

**MASS INTENTIONS****December 12th, 2020**

6pm - Jan Bednarczyk RIP

**December 13th, 2020**

9am—Pro Populo

11am— Holy Souls

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

Confession  
only by appointment.

**Spiritual  
Communion**

Jesus!

My God and my All  
my soul longs for thee.

My heart yearns to  
receive thee in  
Holy Communion, come, O  
Lord.

Bread of heaven and food of  
angels to nourish my soul  
heal my body and to rejoice  
my heart  
come most lovable friend of  
my soul,

to inflame me with such love  
that I may never again be  
ever separated from thee.  
Amen

**Readings for this & next Sunday**

1st Reading; Isaiah 61; 1-2, 10-11,  
Psalm Luke 1; 46-50, 53-54, responsive Isaiah 61:10  
2nd Reading - Thessalonians 5: 16-24  
Gospel – John 1;6-8; 19-28

1st Reading; 2 Samuels 7; 1-5, 8-12, 14-16  
Psalm 88; 2-5, 27, 29, responsive v 2  
2nd Reading - Thessalonians 5: 16-24  
Gospel – John 1;6-8; 19-28

### Year of St Joseph

Pope Francis has proclaimed the Year of St Joseph, from 8th December 2020-8th December 2021. Giving us the opportunity to commit ourselves, 'with prayer, good works, to obtain, with the help of St Joseph, head of the Family of Nazareth, comfort, and relief from the serious human and social tribulations that besiege the contemporary world today'.

The Holy Father has granted the gift of indulgences, the Conditions for the plenary indulgence.

**The plenary indulgence is granted to the faithful under the usual conditions (sacramental confession, Eucharistic Communion, and prayer for the Pope's intentions)** to Christians who, with a spirit detached from any sin, participate in the Year of St Joseph on these occasions and manners indicated by the Apostolic Penitentiary. The indulgence is granted to those who will meditate for 30 minutes on the Lord's Prayer, or take part in a Spiritual Retreat of at least one day that includes meditation on St. Joseph St Joseph a man of faith who invites us, 'to rediscover our filial relationship with the Father, to renew fidelity to prayer, to listen and correspond with profound discernment to God's will'. Thank you, *Fr. Christopher*

*"God is God for everyone, and in Jesus every wall of separation has definitively crumbled... Jesus created unity... God gives love, God asks for love... The Spirit inspires everything. And every Christian who is not afraid to devote time to prayer can make his or her own the words of the Apostle Paul: "the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me" (Gal 2:20)... Only in the silence of adoration do we experience the whole truth of these words... The prayer of adoration is the prayer that makes us recognize God as the beginning and the end of all of History. And this prayer is the living flame of the Spirit that gives strength to witness and to mission."* *Pope Francis*

**John 1: 6-8, 19-28;** John the Baptist, knew he had to bring people to Jesus. So, it is with us. We endeavour to lead our lives right so that others would know that faith in Jesus makes all the difference. Equally, John knew that his baptism was with water and it was preparing the way for Jesus's baptism with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit dwells within us, he leads and guides us; as we try to be open to his powerful work within us, in our hearts.

*Fr. Christopher*

*"For a Christian the most important thing is the continuous encounter with the Lord, being with the Lord. And in this way, accustomed to staying with the Lord of life, we prepare ourselves for the encounter, for being with the Lord for eternity. And this definitive encounter will come at the end of the world. But the Lord comes every day, so that, with His grace, we might accomplish good in our own lives and in the lives of others."* *Pope Francis*

*"Each day, in our heart, we face many choices... If we look within ourselves, we can see two very different questions arising. One asks, "What do I feel like doing?" This question often proves misleading, since it suggests that what really counts is thinking about ourselves and indulging in our wishes and impulses. The question that the Holy Spirit plants in our hearts is a very different one: not "What do you feel like doing?" but "What is best for you?" That is the choice we have to make daily: what do I feel like doing or what is best for me? This interior discernment can result either in frivolous choices or in decisions that shape our lives – it depends on us. Let us look to Jesus and ask him for the courage to choose what is best for us, to enable us to follow him in the way of love. And in this way to discover joy. To live, and not just get by."* *Pope Francis*

### First Holy Communion

After Thursday's parent's meeting. It was noticed some parents were unable to attend. Could you contact the Parish Office to collect the books with payment. The cost of the books £ 40.00 Course one Reconciliation £20.00 Course two Communion £20.00 The baptism certificate of your child must be delivered to the office before the course commence. Dates of the sessions:

Frist Penance—Book 1

1.10th January; 2.17th January; 3. 24th January; 4. 31st January, 5. 7th February, 6. 21st February

with Frist Reconciliation on 27th February.

First Communion—Book 2

1. 7th March; 2.14th March; 3.21st March; 4.28th March; 5.18th April; 6. 25th April with First Communion on 1st May 2021

## CHRISTMAS TIMETABLE

**Sunday, 20<sup>nd</sup> December 2020**

**Fourth Sunday of Advent**

Masses at 6pm, Saturday & 9am & 11am Sunday  
Confession on Saturday - 5pm – 5.45 pm

**Thursday, 24<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

**Christmas Eve**

4.00pm  
6.00pm  
12.00 midnight

Senior Citizens' Mass for Christmas  
Children's Mass for Christmas  
Midnight Mass of Christmas



**Friday, 25<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

**Christmas Day**

11am

Mass of Christmas Day

**Saturday, 26<sup>st</sup> December**

**St Stephen's Day**

6pm Mass

**Sunday, 27<sup>st</sup> December**

**The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph**

Masses at 6pm, Saturday & 9am & 11am Sunday

**28<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

No Mass

**29<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

10.30 am Mass

**30<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

No Mass

**31<sup>st</sup> December 2020**

10.30am Mass

**1<sup>st</sup> January 2021**

10.30 am Mass

**Sunday, 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2021**

**Second Sunday after Nativity**

Masses at 6pm, Saturday & 9am & 11am Sunday

**From 4<sup>th</sup> January 2020**

**all Masses at usual times**

**6<sup>th</sup> January 2021**

**The Epiphany of the Lord**

9.15am & 8pm Mass



CAFOD's Advent parish resources and prayers include [Advent prayer cards](#) (one for each week), a series of daily [Advent reflections](#), [online prayer events](#), an online carol service guide with a carol sheet, a chance to join or organise a fun run and other social events. For more information on all of these please see [cafod.org.uk/parishes](http://cafod.org.uk/parishes)

### Those who might be in Need

If you are aware of anyone who might be in need at this difficult time, do let the parish office know, by giving their details after having consulted with them. We can assist with food vouchers and one of our neighbours are willing to help with groceries. Do let us know if anyone might need help.

Thank you, Fr Christopher

### Providing digital support for housebound elderly during COVID 19

St. Edmunds are delighted to offer isolated residents digital and telephone support. As the coronavirus continues, loneliness affects more people. Life can feel overwhelming. Reaching out to others may feel like a challenge at times, and knowing where to look for advice is sometimes hard.

Knowing where you can get help to cope with loneliness can be a lifeline such as where you can find help accessing essentials like prescriptions and food. Our signposting can offer advice about where to turn for financial help with money, rent and bills.

For more information on this service, please contact Dymphna Dale - Trained Befriender

on 07539 078 072 or email [Dymphnasdesigns@aol.com](mailto:Dymphnasdesigns@aol.com)

**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](mailto:millwall@rcdow.org.uk); <https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/millwall/>



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

**Mrs Katherine Woznicka**  
*Parish Secretary*

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

On 3<sup>rd</sup> December, the Department for Social Justice of the Bishops' Conference issued the following statement, signed by the Chair, Bishop Richard Moth, on COVID-19 vaccines:

In September 2020 the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales issued a statement [COVID-19 and Vaccination](#) (24th September 2020). In the light of the recent breakthrough in vaccine development we now wish to issue a follow up statement.

The development of a vaccine against COVID-19 presents an important breakthrough in protecting others as well as oneself from the virus; a virus which has not only caused a global pandemic and led to a huge loss of life but has also placed a great burden on healthcare workers and systems.

Each of us has a duty to protect others from infection with its danger of serious illness, and for some, death. A vaccine is the most effective way to achieve this unless one decides to self-isolate.

At present, debate concerns the use of the vaccines developed by Pfizer & BioNTech, Moderna, and Astra Zeneca. Some have questioned the use of the Astra Zeneca vaccine since it has been developed from cell-lines originating from the cells of an aborted foetus in 1983. The [Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith](#) and the [Pontifical Academy of Life](#) have expressed the view that one may in good conscience and for a grave reason receive a vaccine sourced in this way, provided that there is a sufficient moral distance between the present administration of the vaccine and the original wrongful action. In the COVID-19 pandemic, we judge that this grave reason exists and that one does not sin by receiving the vaccine.

Both the Pfizer & BioNTech and Moderna vaccines have a different source since they are mRNA-based vaccines. On 2 December 2020, the Pfizer & BioNTech vaccine was approved for use in the UK.

Each Catholic must educate his or her conscience on this matter and decide what to do, also bearing in mind that a vaccine must be safe, effective, and universally available, especially to the poor of the world.

Catholics may in good conscience receive any of these vaccines for the good of others and themselves. In good conscience, one may refuse a particular vaccine but continues to have a duty to protect others from infection.

Bishop Richard Moth  
Chair, Department of Social Justice  
Bishops' Conference of England and Wales

The statement can also be found on our [diocesan website](#) and on the [Bishops' Conference website](#)

**LAST WEEK'S COLLECTIONS:**      loose: £182.80      envelopes: £850.77      total: **£1033.57**  
Standing orders in October **£2468.00**      Sick & Retired Priest Fund: **£310.00**

As a charity we rely on your donations only. As you have not been allowed to come to the church, we only were receiving donations set up as standing orders. We will be grateful for your financial support when you are back.

Your new sets of gift aided envelopes are available for collection before/after any mass or from the office.  
Alternatively you could sent your donation by bank. Parish account is on Parish Web.

*Thank you for your Generosity*

WRCDT Charity No: 233699