



CATHOLIC CHURCH OF OUR LADY, ST JOHN'S WOOD



+ 3rd Sunday of Advent, Year A (*Gaudete Sunday*) - 11 December 2022

Westminster Roman Catholic Diocesan Trust: Registered Charity Number 233699

The Lord Entered John's Darkness; May He Enter Ours, Too

Saint John the Baptist is also known as the Forerunner. Whilst still in the womb of his mother, Elizabeth, he leapt for joy when the Lord Jesus came near in the womb of Mary, at the Visitation. The Annunciation to Mary also describes the young John, growing in the womb of his mother; we see here how the lives of the Baptist and the Son of the Most High are entwined, inextricably linked (Lk 1:26-36). From his earliest days John was dedicated to being the messenger of the Lord, preparing the way of the Lord. His living in the wilderness, his wearing unique clothing, eating penitential food, (Mt 3:4), point to a person who is waiting, preparing a way for the Lord. In the Gospel today, that waiting for the Lord, desiring to live in the holiness of the Lord, sees Saint John in prison and experiencing darkness, "are you the one who is to come, or have we got to wait for someone else?". John the Forerunner, whose purpose in life was to announce the Messiah, is experiencing doubt. Even John the Baptist experienced doubt. But Jesus calls him back to the Light by referring him to the promises of God in the Scriptures, and by confirming their fulfilment in His actions.

John, who preached a baptism of repentance, exhorting the peoples to confess their sins, was also a person with frailties, a man who needed the forgiveness and fortitude of the Lord. As Saint John the Baptist gave his all to prepare for the Lord, we must then ask ourselves, how are we preparing ourselves for the coming of the Lord, the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world, the humble and gentle King of the Universe born in a manger, Jesus? In centuries past, starting in the 5th century and even extending to the 20th in various forms, the time before Christmas was often referred to as Saint Martin's (of Tours) Lent: abstinence from certain foods was observed throughout and fasting was observed three days a week. It is so important that we question ourselves as to how we are preparing for the Lord of lords, and King of kings? Our parish is offering extra times of Confession to prepare ourselves for His Coming at Christmas, please see the times above for this great gift. Dearest brothers and sisters in Christ, one day He will come again in eternal glory, so let us prepare ourselves in His grace and joy! *Fr Ben*

Mass Times

Sunday

6:00pm (Saturday)
9:00am, 10:30am, 12:00 noon,
6:00pm

Weekdays

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday:
10:00am
Thursday: 7:00pm
Friday & Saturday: 10:00am

Rosary

After weekday Mass

Exposition & Confessions

Saturday 10:30am—11:00am

Confessions

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday,
Friday 9:15am—9:45am
Thursday 6:15pm—6:45pm
Saturday 5:15pm—5:45pm

Music for Sunday

Victoria *Missa Surge Propera*
Willaert *Alma Remeporis Mater*

- 3 Hail to the Lord's
annointed
- 4 Hark! A herald voice is
sounding
- 8 O come, O come,
Emmanuel

Sunday Readings, page 88

Isaiah 35:1-6, 10
Psalm 145:6-10 R. cf Isaiah 35:4
James 5:7-10
Matthew 11:2-11

Catholic Church of Our Lady, St John's Wood, 54 Lodge Road, London, NW8 8LA

020 7286 3214 www.olsjw.org.uk or stjohnswood@rcdow.org.uk

Facebook: Our Lady's RC Church, St John's Wood <https://www.facebook.com/ourladysjw>

Parish Clergy: Fr Kevin Jordan (kevinjordan@rcdow.org.uk)
Fr Ben Woodley (benwoodley@rcdow.org.uk)
Parish Sister: Sr Brigid Collins, RSM (brigid@rcdow.org.uk)
Parish Administrator: Claudia McHugh (stjohnswood@rcdow.org.uk)
Director of Music: Martin Toyer (martintoyer@rcdow.org.uk)

SVP Foodbank Collection—this weekend. Please leave your donations of non-perishable items on the table in the porch. Thank you.

A Christmas Leaflet with the times of all Masses, Confessions, and church opening times for the season is available to take home with you today. Please give them out to people who might be thinking of coming to our parish over Christmas.

Christmas Offering. This week you can take home a Christmas offertory envelope. This is your Christmas gift to the parish and is not taxed by the Diocese, so if you are going away please do use it. Thank you for your kindness, thoughtfulness and generosity throughout the year.

Readers and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. Even though there is a rota for Christmas, we know that some of you will be away so we thought it might be easier if you volunteered on the list which is outside the sacristy. God bless you for your great ministries.

English Classes Last session on Monday 12 December 2022 at 10:00am—12:00 noon in the parish hall. We'll then take a break and meet again on Monday 9 January 2023.

Parents & Toddlers Group Last session on Thursday 15 December 2022 and will resume on Tuesday 10 January 2023.

Creative Writing Last session on Thursday 15 December 2022 and will resume on Thursday 12 January 2023. New writers welcome.

Over 50's Group Last session on Tuesday 20 December 2022 and will resume on Tuesday 10 January 2023.

Westminster Cathedral Annual Christmas Celebration Concerts take place on Tuesday 20 December and Wednesday 21 December 2022 at 7:30pm. Music and readings for Christmas by the Westminster Cathedral Choir and Orchestra. For tickets, scan the QR code on the poster in the porch or visit www.westminstercathedral.org.uk.

Today's tea & coffee in the parish hall after the 9:00am Mass is the last one this year. We look forward to welcoming you back on 8 January 2023.

Crib Offerings will be donated to the *Catholic Children's Society* to support their work with local children and families, many of whom are facing severe hardship due to the cost-of-living crisis. Thank you for your support.

If you are applying to a Catholic nursery or primary school, follow this link to [Admissions \(https://catholiceducation.org.uk/guidance-for-schools/admissions\)](https://catholiceducation.org.uk/guidance-for-schools/admissions) and read the *Guidance for Clergy* document. If you can meet these criteria then please contact Claudia in the parish office to arrange an appointment to discuss applications. Next available appointments early January 2023.

Offerings. Standing orders are the easiest way to give regularly and can be set up via www.olsjw.org.uk. Please *Gift Aid* using the *Collections* by registering your usual card on the machine or scan the QR code and register your it at home which takes about 30 seconds.

Modern Media. Do look at our parish microsite <https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/stjohnswood/> (which is replacing the old website www.olsjw.org.uk), and at Our Lady's RC Church, St John's Wood *Facebook* page which is updated almost daily.

Westminster Year Book 2023 now available priced £5.00 from the repository.

Rest in Peace: Ruby Hankard. Requiem Mass at Our Lady's on Monday 9 January 2023 at 11:00am followed by committal at Golders Green Crematorium.

Day	Location	Time	Group
Monday	Upper & Lower Hall	10:00am-12:00 noon	English Class
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday	Upper Hall	9:30am-11:30am	Parents & Toddlers
Tuesday	Upper Hall	1:00pm-4:30pm	Over 50's
Thursday	Lower Hall	10:30am-12 noon	Creative Writing