



CATHOLIC CHURCH OF OUR LADY, ST JOHN'S WOOD

+ 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year A - 5 November 2023

Westminster Roman Catholic Diocesan Trust: Registered Charity Number 233699



New Arrivals and Harsh Words

The presbytery has a new resident within its walls. Not a priest coming to London for study or distant, dreaded family members visiting, but Fr Kevin's new golden retriever puppy Cosmo. Many of you will meet Cosmo after Mass, if not today, then in the coming weeks.

Puppy training is always something of an adventure. Especially when the parish team come running in response to each pant or whimper like the London Fire Brigade. One of the greatest amusements has been hearing the warmth in people's voices when they speak to Cosmo, a tone that is always welcome when speaking to the parish clergy!

In our Gospel today Jesus' words come as quite a shock. It's certainly not the tone Sister Brigid uses towards Cosmo! "They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders" or "Everything they do is done to attract attention". Jesus is using harsh words about the leaders of the Jewish people. We might think that this is not the kind of language we expect from Jesus who tells us to love our enemies or those who persecute us.

Why this fierceness in tone towards the Pharisees? Because of the importance of their role. Jesus is painfully disappointed that those who are there to help the people live more faithfully to God's law and be a witness to the goodness of God in the world are focusing all their time on jockeying for position with each other, on appearing clever or being most ornately attired. These words are spoken out of an agony of love in order to bring healing to society.

Why are they such dangerous vices? Because they are corrupt and corrosive. It is corrupting when religious leaders do not practice what they preach. Matthew remembers these words and records them in his Gospel because that truth remains as true in the Church today as it was to the Jewish leaders 2000 years ago. Faith is not about how much we know, it's about putting what we know about Jesus into practice. A humble desire to love God, follow his teachings and serve our neighbour. Or, as Jesus says in today's Gospel, "The greatest among you must be your servant".

Jesus' words are not abusive or cruel, they are challenging. They show his disappointment that those who claim to teach Jews how to have a relationship with Jesus' heavenly Father evidently have no relationship with him themselves. But Jesus' words come with hope too, it is never too late for that relationship if we are willing to humble ourselves. If we do so, we are promised that when it really matters, we will be exalted. Not by others around us in this life, but by Christ amidst the saints and the angels.

Fr Alex

Mass Times

Sunday

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

Weekdays

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

Exposition & Confessions

Saturday 10:30am—11:00am

Confessions

Saturday 5:15pm—5:45pm

Music for Sunday

For the 9:00am and 12:00 noon Masses, please see the hymn boards in the church

*For the 10:30am Mass, please visit
<https://www.lgchoir.org.uk/music-lists/>*

Sunday Readings,

page 149
Malachi 1:14—2:2, 8—10
Psalm 130
Thessalonians 2:7—9, 13
Matthew 23: 1—12

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

020 7286 3214 <https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/stjohnswood/>

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

Parish Clergy:	Canon Kevin Jordan (kevinjordan@rcdow.org.uk) Fr Alex Balzanella (alexanderbalzanella@rcdow.org.uk)
Parish Sister:	Sr Brigid Collins, RSM (brigid@rcdow.org.uk)
Parish Administrator:	Kathleen Reddington (stjohnswood@rcdow.org.uk)
Director of Music:	Martin Toyer (martintoyer@rcdow.org.uk)

Sick & Retired Priests' Fund Collection takes place this weekend. Envelopes are available at the back of the church. You can also donate online at www.rcdow.org.uk/donations and the envelopes at the back of the church and poster in the porch also feature a 'QR Code' that you can scan with a phone camera to give online. You may also wish to consider becoming a Patron of the Sick & Retired Priests' Fund. If so, please take a leaflet home today, for more information. Thank you.

Please join us for tea and coffee today after 9:00am Mass in the parish hall, a nice way of catching up with old friends and making new ones.

November is the month of the Holy Souls. Please pick up an envelope and sheet as you leave the church on which to write the names of your deceased loved ones. Then return the sheet in the envelope, with any offering you may wish to include, to the rectory behind the church. The sheets will be placed in our Book of Remembrance which will be in the sanctuary during November. Four Masses each week will be said for those whose names are recorded there.

Monday English. We hope to start an English Conversation Group in the lower hall beginning on Monday 6 November, from 10:00am—12 noon. Anyone wishing to improve their English as well as any volunteer helpers are welcome to come along and join this friendly group. For further information contact Lois on 07761 590 240.

The Bi-Annual Requiem Mass at St. Mary's Cemetery NW10 5NU, Kensal Green, will be on Monday 6 November at 11:30am.

Upper Room Leadership Programme for those aged 18-22 years old, run by *Westminster Youth Ministry*, is a training programme for young Catholic leaders, taking 20 young Catholics on an exciting leadership training course. Applications close on 11 November: <https://youth.rcdow.org.uk/programmes/upper-room-leadership-programme/> or email: youth@rcdow.org.uk for more information.

Remembrance Sunday, 12 November 2023. The 10:30am Mass will be a Solemn Requiem for the Fallen.

Preparation for Sacraments of First Holy Communion and Confirmation in 2024. Application forms for both Sacraments will be available to collect from one of the clergy after all Masses next weekend.

SVP Foodbank Collection. Next weekend you may leave your donations of non-perishable items on the table in the porch after all Masses.

If you are applying to Catholic nursery , Infant and primary schools, follow this link to 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 Kathleen in the Parish Office to arrange an appointment to discuss applications.

St Anne's Care Home (which is run by the Little Sisters of the Poor) Christmas Fayre at 77 Manor Road, London N16 5BL, is on Saturday, 25 November from 12noon to 4:00pm. All are welcome.

Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes 2024 will take place from 19—26 July 2024. The Sanctuary's theme for the year is '*Come here in procession*'. Please see the poster in the porch.

Job Vacancies For details regarding diocesan job vacancies, please visit <https://jobs.rcdow.org.uk>.

<u>Day</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Group</u>
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday	Upper Hall	9:00am-11:30am	Parents & Toddlers
Tuesday	Upper Hall	1:00pm-4:30pm	Over 50's
Wednesday	Upper Hall	1:00pm-2:00pm	Art Class
Thursday	Lower Hall	10:30am-12 noon	Creative Writing