



# CATHOLIC CHURCH OF OUR LADY, ST JOHN'S WOOD

+ 1st Sunday of Advent, Year B - 3 December 2023

Westminster Roman Catholic Diocesan Trust: Registered Charity Number 233699



## Stay Awake at All Times!

Sister Brigid was telling me about her chaplaincy group at St Joseph's primary school. They were reflecting on today's Gospel and Sister Brigid had to stress how the call by Jesus to "stay awake" was not an excuse for midnight feasts or binge-watching *YouTube* videos. Any parents who discovered a sudden unwillingness of their youngster to go to sleep in the past week, now know to whom their complaints should be directed.

Rather Jesus is calling us in Advent to be vigilant, to be prepared, to be ready for him. The Jewish people were told by God through the teaching of the prophets that they needed to be prepared and alert for the coming of the Messiah, yet very few were. We too are called to be prepared for the return of Jesus, his second coming, in glory. But how often do we think about it? Advent is a time to be more aware of this promise by Jesus and to live our faith with more commitment, passion and resolve. To be vigilant, watchful, and spiritually awake.

So, Advent isn't about passively waiting, with little more effort than opening the windows of our Advent calendar; it's about actively engaging with the world around us. We're called to reflect on our actions, choices, and the state of our souls. In staying awake, there's an encouragement to be alert to the needs of others, to recognize opportunities to serve, and to be present for those who require support and compassion.

Our parishes are blessed with people who are eager and willing to volunteer and be of service to their local community. But in Advent perhaps reflect whether you could give some of your time to help support and strengthen our parish communities. Perhaps that's in a regular way, such as helping at our coffee mornings, helping in outreach programmes or hidden tasks like cleaning or perhaps it is being generous at parish events whether by bringing food or helping others. Perhaps, if you're young, it's about praying about whether God is calling you to serve at the altar or be in the youth choir at 12:00 noon Mass or the 11:00am choir.

Such generosity embodies vigilance in action. It necessitates an awake, attentive heart sensitive to the Church's needs, the body of Christ's needs, as St Paul says. When we volunteer, we embody the essence of Christ's teachings—selflessness, compassion, and service to others.

It is not only us who benefit from the generosity of our time and effort, we prepare the way for Christ in the hearts of those we serve. It's a tangible expression of the Advent spirit—preparing the path for love, hope, and kindness to enter the lives of those who are marginalized, lonely, or in need. It was that spirit the shepherds and kings had when they recognised the call to come and pay homage to the infant king.

*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

264 Tell Out My Soul  
5 Hark the Glad Sound! The  
Saviour Comes  
1 Come, Thou Long-  
Expected Jesus  
Antegnati *Missa All'acqua  
sagra à 6*  
L'Heritier *Alma Redemptoris*

## Sunday Readings

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Isaiah 63:16-17; 64:1, 3-8  
Psalm 79:2-3, 15-16, 18-19 R v 4  
1 Corinthians 1:3-9  
Mark 13:33-37

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 ( <a href="mailto:kevinjordan@rcdow.org.uk">kevinjordan@rcdow.org.uk</a> ) Fr Alex Balzanella ( <a href="mailto:alexanderbalzanella@rcdow.org.uk">alexanderbalzanella@rcdow.org.uk</a> )
Parish Sister:	Sr Brigid Collins, RSM ( <a href="mailto:brigid@rcdow.org.uk">brigid@rcdow.org.uk</a> )
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Parish Safeguarding Rep:	Frances Uchea ( <a href="mailto:stjohnswoodsg@safeguardrcdow.org.uk">stjohnswoodsg@safeguardrcdow.org.uk</a> )
Director of Music:	Martin Toyer ( <a href="mailto:martintoyer@rcdow.org.uk">martintoyer@rcdow.org.uk</a> )

**Thank you** to everyone who donated to the Sick & Retired Priests' Fund Collection. We raised a magnificent £1,156.96.

**An Advent/Christmas Leaflet** with the times of all Masses, Confessions 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.

**First Holy Communion and Confirmation in 2024.** Application forms for both Sacraments are available to collect from one of the clergy after Mass. Candidates for Confirmation must collect the forms themselves. Only if you can attend all the sessions should you post completed forms through the rectory door by 12 noon on Tuesday 5 December 2023.

**If you are applying to Catholic nursery , infant and primary schools**, please follow this link to Admissions: <https://catholiceducation.org.uk/guidance-for-schools/admissions> and read the Guidance for Clergy document. If you meet these criteria please contact Kathleen in the Parish Office to arrange an appointment.

**English Group for Adults** takes place in the parish lower hall on Monday 4 December from 10:00am until 12:00noon. Anyone wishing to improve their English as well as any volunteer helpers are welcome to come along and join this friendly group. Everyone is welcome. For further information please contact Lois on 07761 590 240.

**Westminster Cathedral** has improved the lighting of its main sanctuary. The previous aged and inefficient system had to be replaced. The improvements are being funded by the Friends of Westminster Cathedral. They are asking for our help by supporting their *Big Give Campaign* with online donations. Donations made up to 12 noon on Tuesday 5 December are matched by generous matched funders. The link to the donation site is <https://bit.ly/FriendsBG23>

**Rest in Peace: Julianna Viette.** Requiem Mass at Our Lady's on Thursday 7 December at 11:00am, Burial at St Mary's Cemetery at 1:00pm.

**Eucharistic Healing Service** takes place on Friday the 8 December, the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, with Mass at 6:00pm, Vespers at 6:45pm, and the healing service at 7:15pm (with choir and individual benedictions) in St Dominic's, The Rosary Shrine, Southampton Road NW5 4LB. 'Let us come before the Lord, praying for healing of mind, body and soul, as we prepare for His Nativity.'

**SVP Foodbank Collection** will take place next weekend on 9/10 December.

**The Divine Mercy Apostolate, London** is holding a Divine Mercy Advent Reflection at the Sacred Heart RC Church, Kilburn, on Sunday 10 December, 2:30pm—5:30pm, led by the Marian Fathers. The retreat will include teachings on the Message of Mercy, Stations of the Cross, Holy Mass, Hour of Mercy with Adoration and Benediction, and Veneration of the Image of Merciful Jesus. Contact Millie on 07957 594 646 for more information.

**The Christmas Big Clean** needs you to help give an added sparkle to our well-kept church and sanctuary. Please come along to the church on Monday 18 December at 6:30pm followed by festive refreshments. All are needed and welcome.

**St. Edward's Catholic Primary School** is consulting on its proposal to change its Admission Arrangements for 2025/26. Full details may be found at: [www.stedwardsprimary.org](http://www.stedwardsprimary.org)

<u>Day</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Group</u>
Sunday	Upper Hall	After 9:00am Mass	Tea & Coffee
Monday	Lower Hall	10:00am-12 noon	English Group
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