



CATHOLIC CHURCH OF OUR LADY, ST JOHN'S WOOD

+ 2nd Sunday of Advent, Year B - 10 December 2023

Westminster Roman Catholic Diocesan Trust: Registered Charity Number 233699



What's Another Year?

Three years ago this week, the Diocese asked us to invite families and friends to form the biggest "bubble" possible before they decided which of the extra Masses they would come to that we were to offer on Christmas Day. All of this was to maximize the capacity of our churches during the Covid pandemic so that, hopefully, no-one would be turned away from celebrating the birth of our Saviour in the proper way.

Now there are no restrictions on the number that can attend Mass for Christmas. In a sense, the tortuous paths to Christ's coming of which Isaiah and John the Baptist speak in today's readings have been made straight. There are no external obstacles to the fullest celebration possible of our Faith. Normal service has been resumed.

But the call to straighten the path of the coming of the Lord is not an ancient or even recent historical one nor just about being ready for His future coming, the eschaton or *Parousia*—it is also about facilitating His coming to us every day. So, since the Scriptures speak to us now, what are the barriers to Christ's coming that we are asked to take down in 2023?

Each of us has valleys, dark moods formed by worry and worsened by the long nights and short days when we feel overly sorry for ourselves and overlook God's attempts to console us with His Word and His Real Presence in the Eucharist. And even when we do look at these difficult issues, sometimes we deal with them using only the giddy heights of our arrogant self-reliance, thinking we can lift ourselves all the way to salvation only to find that it is all too much for us alone. As for the cliffs and ridges, these are the things that seem so much more important during Advent when it merely becomes a countdown to Christmas Day, all the things which need to be organised for that wonderful celebration which can take over our lives. And then, even when these obstacles have been levelled, the debris and weeds remain to be tidied away to smooth the Lord's coming to us.

The very beginning of the Good News has John asking the faithful people to declutter their lives, to repent of their sinful and negative ways, to create a smooth path for Christ. Now is the time to make that highway and we begin that process by acknowledging that we need the Lord in our lives. Perhaps we don't always make His coming to us easy, especially as we are back to shoe-horning our Faith into already busy lives. But while it is just another ordinary year, let us recapture the sense of loss we feared in 2020. As we do, let us resolve to make this not just another Advent, but one where Christ's coming really means something—through Confession, straighten the path of Christ to come to us in the Eucharist that the Prince of Peace may calm and heal all our worries this year and always. *Fr Kevin*

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

- 9 On Jordan's Bank the Baptist's Cry
152 Holy Virgin, by God's Decree
147 Hail, Queen of Heav'n, the Ocean Star
Palestrina *Missa Qual è il più grande Amor*
Palestrina *Canite Tuba (W-288)*

Sunday Readings

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Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11
Psalm 84:9-14 R v 8
2 Peter 3:8-14
Mark 1:1-8

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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)
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Director of Music:	Martin Toyer (martintoyer@rcdow.org.uk)

The SVP Foodbank collection takes place this weekend. Please leave non-perishable items on the table in the porch. Thank you for your support.

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.

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 generous service.

Let there be peace on earth: Young Adult Advent Retreat for those aged 18-35 takes place on Saturday 16 December from 10:30am - 2:30pm at the FCJ Spirituality Centre, 32 Phoenix Road, London NW1 1TA. Cost: By Donation. For more information and to book your place please email: bookings.fcjcentre@fcjhouse-somerstown.co.uk.

CAFOD are having a Carol Concert on Wednesday 13 December from 7:00pm until 8:00pm at St James Roman Catholic church, Spanish Place, 22 George Street London W1U 3QY. All are welcome. You can also Donate to CAFOD's Israeli-Palestinian Crisis Appeal at: cafod.org.uk/ipc or telephone 0303 303 3030 to support those affected and get funds to local trusted experts in Gaza and southern Israel who have been working alongside communities helping those most in need.

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.

A Christmas Celebration in Westminster

Cathedral. Tickets are now on sale for our annual Christmas concerts which celebrate the mystery of Christ's Incarnation in carols and readings performed by the world-famous Westminster Cathedral Choir, orchestra, and celebrity readers, on 19 and 20 December at 7.30pm. We encourage everybody to purchase tickets quickly before these popular events are sold out. Tickets can be purchased from the Cathedral Gift Shop or directly from Ticketmaster; go to www.ticketmaster.co.uk and type in Westminster Cathedral when prompted.

SVP Vinnie Packs cold weather essentials for the homeless. To sponsor a pack at £4.20 each please send your donation to Vinnie Packs, PO Box 72264, London SW1P 9EZ, cheques payable to SVP or via BACS to Nat West S/C 60-60-04, A/c Nr 46088237

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.

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

Social Media. Do visit <https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/stjohnswood/>, and Our Lady's RC Church, St John's Wood Facebook page which are regularly updated.

<u>Day</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Group</u>
Sunday	Upper Hall	After 9:00am Mass	Tea & Coffee
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