



CATHOLIC CHURCH OF OUR LADY, ST JOHN'S WOOD

+ 3rd Sunday of Advent, Year B (*Gaudete Sunday*) - 17 December 2023

Westminster Roman Catholic Diocesan Trust: Registered Charity Number 233699



Don't Tell Me to be Happy

What is that sound that really sets you on edge? That noise that can cut through you like glass. For some, its fingernails scraping on a blackboard. For others, it's the squeal of a sound system when the microphones aren't working. Or even a puppy's cry or the curate's pleas not be sent out in the rain!

For me that sound takes place today in our second reading. In St Paul's letter to the Thessalonians. It isn't what Paul says, but the translation of the Greek that Paul said. St Paul begins, in our translation, "Be happy at all times."

But that is not the word the Greek uses. Instead, it uses the word χαίρετε. Charitate means rejoice, or, to use the Latin word, Gaudete. Happiness and rejoicing are similar they're not the same. Happiness is something we hopefully feel quite often but fleetingly. When our team has won at sport, when we organise that holiday or when we finish at work. It is a passing emotion, one which appears all of a sudden and can vanish just as quickly.

Rejoicing is rather bigger than feeling happy. We often wake up feeling happy, but rarely do we awake from our slumber rejoicing. We rejoice when something monumental happens to us or someone we love. The birth of a new child let's say, or a marriage.

When we rejoice, even if something annoying happens, it doesn't disturb that inner joy we have. St Paul is saying we likewise should rejoice that our salvation has been accomplished by Jesus Christ, even when bad things happen.

It's that same rejoicing Our Lady did at the annunciation of Our Lord's birth. She became pregnant before betrothal, she was a young girl from a backwater town of the Roman Empire. She must have had many things that could have worried her. Yet she rejoices in the Lord, because she trusts in his goodness and mercy.

As we in these final days draw closer to the Lord's birth and we face the inevitable pressures and expectations Christmas brings let's seek not to just have a happy Christmas but one in which we charitate, gaudete, or rejoice. Whilst happiness comes and goes, that joy in the Lord and our salvation can see us through the darkest days of winter and our lives. For He who came in the flesh once will come again in Glory and until then, through the power of the Holy Spirit, is made present to us through the sacraments.

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

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday
9:30am—10:00am
Thursday 6:30pm—7:00pm
Saturday 5:15pm—5:45pm

Music for Sunday

3 Hail to the Lord's Anointed
4 Hark! A Herald Voice is Sounding
8 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel
Lassus *Missa Congratulamini mihi omnes*
Gallus *Rorate coeli*
Byrd *Venite exultemus Domino (B-17)*

Sunday Readings

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Isaiah 61:1-2, 10-11

Luke 1:46-50, 53-54

R Isaiah 61:10

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

John 1:6-8,19-28

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

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An Advent/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 generous service.

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 this Monday 18 December at 6:30pm followed by festive refreshments. All are needed and welcome.

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.

A Christmas Celebration in Westminster Cathedral. 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 & 20 December at 7:30pm. Tickets can be purchased from the Cathedral Gift Shop or directly from Ticketmaster: www.ticketmaster.co.uk

Over 50's Group last session takes place on Tuesday 19 December and will resume on Tuesday 9 January 2024.

Art Class. The last session takes place on Wednesday 20 December and will resume on Wednesday 3rd January 2024.

Parents & Toddlers Group will resume on Tuesday 9 January 2024.

Nativity Play Rehearsal for Christmas Eve will take place on Friday 22 December at 5:00pm. If you would like your child to be involved as a shepherd or an angel, please contact Sister Brigid.

Creative Writing will resume on Thursday 11 January 2024. Each session is always open and welcoming for anyone with an interest in writing. No previous experience required. Just come along and have a go!

Tea & Coffee will resume in the parish hall after the 9:00am Mass on Sunday 14 January 2024. To be able to continue with this important ministry we need more volunteers to assist. If you can help, please contact Kathleen in the parish office.

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

March for Life UK are launching their new initiative 'Connect' in 2024 to help bring together like minded pro-lifers in their own communities and turn the tide on abortion at a local level. If you are interested in being part of this, please send your name/email to: info@marchforlife.co.uk. More Information can be found at: <https://www.marchforlife.co.uk/connect/>

Retrouvaille in England and Wales is a lifeline for Troubled Marriages. Retrouvaille is a programme designed to help heal and renew marriages. The word Retrouvaille simply means rediscovery. Rediscover yourself, your partner, and a loving relationship in your marriage. For further information including details of programmes taking place in the New Year please visit: <http://www.retrouvaille.org.uk/>

Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes 2024 will take place from 19 - 26 July 2024. Join the pilgrimage as a pilgrim. Serve the sick as a St Frai Helper (18+). Support the sick by sponsoring a St Frai helper to care for them on the pilgrimage and praying for our care team. Please see the poster in the porch.