



CATHOLIC CHURCH OF OUR LADY, ST JOHN'S WOOD

+ 3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year B - 21 January 2024

Westminster Roman Catholic Diocesan Trust: Registered Charity Number 233699



A HARRY POTTER IT IS NOT

We often perceive the Bible as a book, a text sitting on our shelf. We may contemplate reading it, but opening the cover leads to instant confusion. Where to start? What does it mean? How does it apply to my life?

While the Bible is central to our relationship with Jesus, we shouldn't think of it as a mere book, something comparable to our holiday reading. A better perspective is captured in this Sunday's theme: the "Word" of God. The Bible serves as the account and medium of God's communication with us. Its pages narrate a rich history, showcasing God's presence in various ways throughout humanity.

The Old Testament, occurring before Jesus' birth, tells diverse stories of personal relationships with God and His message to the world. It explains the world's creation in Genesis and explores the question of why bad things happen to good people in Job. However, it's crucial to understand that these stories aren't just historical accounts or just applicable to the people involved; they guide us in our personal and intimate conversations with God. They show us that God is always there for us, no matter how we feel or who we are.

The Old Testament conveys that through the "Word," God bridges the gap between us and Him, revealing His love for humanity. Yet, the speaker of that "Word" remains hidden in the Old Testament, whether in the cloud before Moses or the silence before Elisha. The pivotal moment in the Bible and human history occurs with Jesus Christ's birth, where God speaks directly and definitively. Jesus is depicted as the Word made flesh, the visible manifestation of the eternal Word.

Jesus invites us not just to hear the word but to "Remain in my word" (Jn. 8:31). This invitation goes beyond a brief encounter, encouraging a deep unity, akin to branches on a vine. The Bible isn't a rushed paperback but a text allowing us to be with God, converse with Him, open up, trust, and know Him.

If we question whether this is what God wants, remember how He shared 33 years of human life with us, building friendships, enjoying time, and sharing in joys and sorrows. The Bible is proof of God's love for us, offering an encounter with that love.

It might not be the easiest or lightest book on your shelf, but opening it may invite you into a relationship of love, beauty, and wonder surpassing any bestseller.

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

Rosary

After weekday Mass

Exposition & Confessions

Saturday 10:30am—11:00am

Confessions

Saturday 5:15pm—5:45pm

Music for Sunday

- | | |
|-----|-----------------------------------|
| 258 | Praise My Soul the King of Heaven |
| 221 | Guide Me O thou Great Redeemer |
| 212 | Dear Lord and Father of Mankind |

Sunday Readings

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Jonah 3:1-5,10

Psalm 24:4-9 R v 4

1 Corinthians 7:29-31

Mark 1:14-20

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Telephone: 020 7286 3214 Website: <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)

Crib Offerings will be donated to the Catholic Children's Society (CCS) to support their work with local children and families in need. Please donate at the crib or CCS website: www.cathchild.org.uk/crib. The crib will remain in church until Candlemas (The Presentation of the Lord): 2 February 2024.

Rest in Peace

Thomas Emmett Dunne. Requiem Mass at Our Lady's on Friday 26 January at 11:00am, committal at St Mary's Catholic Cemetery.

Barry James Buckley. Requiem Mass at Our Lady's on Friday 2 February at 11:30am, committal at Kensal Green Cemetery.

First Holy Communion Programme continues on Saturday 27 January from 12:00pm—1:00pm in the parish hall.

Confirmation Programme continues on Sunday 28 January from 4:00pm—5:30pm in the parish hall.

Next Sunday is Racial Justice Sunday. The theme chosen for 2024 is: "Seeing one another in the life of the Church." It is important to recognise that we are all children of God, regardless of our race and background. This year's theme seeks to promote reflection, discussion and action on our theme and to encourage us to carry this through in the weeks and months after Racial Justice Sunday. For more information please visit: <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/racial-justice-sunday/>

The Blessing of the Throats, on the feast of St Blaise, will be offered after the 10:00am Mass on Saturday 3 February 2024.

Day of Recollection for Readers. On 3 February, 2:00pm– 5:30pm in the Lower Hall at Marylebone there will be an afternoon of prayer, reflection, development and support for those undertaking ministries in both St John's Wood and Marylebone parishes. New volunteers are most welcome and refreshments will be provided.

Junior Choir Open Rehearsal on Sunday 4 February at 10:45am for children (aged 5+) who would like to try out singing in the choir. If you are interested in attending, please email our Director, Martina, at martinasmyth@rcdow.org.uk.

Marriage Week 2024 is an annual celebration offering the opportunity to support and promote marriage and family life. It is celebrated this year from 7-14 February. Resources can be found at: <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/marriage-week-2024/>

World Day of the Sick. On Saturday 10 February 2024 Cardinal Vincent Nichols will celebrate the Annual Mass of Our Lady of Lourdes in Westminster Cathedral at 2:30pm. During this Mass anointing of the sick will be offered. For tickets please email the Parish Office at: stjohnswood@rcdow.org.uk by **next Sunday, 28 January 2024** advising if you are booking for wheelchair users who require anointing, walking sick who require anointing or assisting the sick, who do not require anointing.

Synodal Day of Discernment. Join people from a range of backgrounds for a day of reflection, conversation, and action, to prepare for the October 2024 Synodal Assembly, in Rome. Please see the poster in the porch.

Vocations Weekend for Women (20s & 30s).

Theme: 'Discerning God's Call in your life'

Dates: 16-18 February. **Location:** Liverpool.

Jesus invites each of us to 'Come and See' - this weekend will give the opportunity to explore the vocation to religious life and to reflect on God's call to you. For more information please email Sr Lynne fcJ at: fcjvocationeurope@gmail.com or visit the website at: www.fcjsisters.org.

PARISH HALL DIARY

Day	Location	Time	Group
Sunday	Upper Hall	After 9:00am Mass	Tea/Coffee
Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday	Upper Hall	9:30am-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