

ST THOMAS MORE – PARISH NEWSLETTER

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SUNDAY 17TH DECEMBER 2023

3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT (GAUDETE SUNDAY) (Year B)



Parish Shop

If you still need to buy cards or devotional objects for Christmas the Parish Shop (Repository) will once again be open after the 11am Mass and possibly also the 9.30am Mass (please ask). The shop can be found on the ground floor of the parish centre.

Carol Service at St Thomas More

There will be a **Carol Service** on **Wednesday 20 December** at 7.30pm followed by a gathering in the parish hall. The Carol Service will consist of a series of readings, hymns, choral pieces and prayers. It should be a good way to prepare for a prayerful Christmas and appeal to those

who like singing Christmas Carols and listening to the choir. Everyone is welcome. Please take some of the publicity on display in the Narthex and invite friends.

Preparing for Christmas

The crib has now been installed in front of the altar as last year. Thank you to those who worked during the week to make the crib look so attractive. Given the size of the crib and that it needs to be reassembled each year almost from scratch, the amount of work is considerable. If you are observant you will notice minor changes from last year. The crib will remain in place until 2nd February, the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord and hopefully will help many people pray about the mystery of Christ's birth.

At times for security it may be necessary to lock the doors leading from the Narthex to the church. On those occasions, if the front doors of the church are open please do feel welcome to pray in the Narthex. The crib will be lit and it is possible to see the crib from the entrance.

By the time this newsletter is published we hope that Christmas tree in the entrance to the church will have been decorated. This will give a festive feel and make the church entrance a welcoming space, which will hopefully help attract people into the church over the Christmas season.

The Christmas Service Cards with the times of Masses over the Christmas season are available in the Narthex. Please note that on Sunday 24th December (4th Sunday of Advent) Mass will be at 9.30am and 11.00am.

In the evening the Vigil Mass of Christmas will be at **6pm**;

the Mass during the Night will be at **10pm**;

the Christmas Day Mass will be at **11am**.

First Holy Communion Classes

These take place on Saturday mornings 11am until noon. The class on Saturday 16th December will be followed by a break for Christmas. Classes begin again on Saturday 13th January.

Seniors' Pre-Christmas Celebration

The Seniors' Pre-Christmas celebration last Wednesday was a very joyous and lively event. Thank you to all those who worked so hard to make it a great success providing the food, decorating the hall so beautifully and inviting the musicians. As well as excellent food this year music added a new dimension to the celebration.

Mass intentions

Please be aware that we have already allocated the Mass intentions for December and there remain a number outstanding. If your Mass intention is for someone who has recently died or is seriously ill, we shall try to allocate a Mass as soon as possible in January.

Please speak to Maggie Ainsworth in the Parish Office (Tuesday or Friday mornings) or email her at swisscottage@rcdow.org.uk about any Masses you wish to be offered on a specific day. Alternatively please use the brown Mass intention envelopes in the Narthex. These can be handed to a priest or put through the letterbox of the presbytery.

Club Lodwar

Thank you for your support. Membership is still available and would make a very nice Christmas gift. Applications are available in the Narthex. A Christmas card comes with a new membership!

Area for young children during Sunday Mass

If you are new to the parish it may help to know that during the 9.30am and 11am Masses on Sundays we generally open the parish hall and project a view of the sanctuary onto the screen in the seminar

room (top floor). This enables parents with small children who become restless to follow the Mass from there if they so wish.

Collections

We have now returned to the practice of taking a collection during the Offertory. You can place cash and the offertory envelopes in the collection basket when it is passed around. If you give via the card reader, just pass the basket on and remember to give your donation via the card reader in the Narthex.

Christian Joy

From Pope Francis Angelus address 17 December 2017:

In recent Sundays the liturgy has emphasised what it means to assume an attitude of *vigilance* and what *preparing the way* of the Lord entails, concretely. On this Third Sunday of Advent, called the “Sunday of joy”, the liturgy invites us to welcome the *spirit* with which all this happens, that is, precisely, joy. Saint Paul invites us to prepare for the coming of the Lord, by assuming three attitudes. Listen carefully: three attitudes. First, constant joy; second, steadfast prayer; third, continuous thanksgiving. Constant joy, steadfast prayer and continuous thanksgiving.

The first attitude, *constant joy*: “Rejoice always” (1 Thess 5:16), Saint Paul says. This means always being joyful, even when things do not go according to our wishes; but there is that profound joy, which is peace: that too is joy; it is within. And peace is a joy “at the ground level”, but it is a joy. Distress, difficulties and suffering pass through each person’s life, we are all familiar with them; and so often the reality that surrounds us seems to be inhospitable and barren, similar to the desert in which the voice of John the Baptist resonated, as today’s Gospel passage recalls (cf. Jn 1:23). But the very words of the Baptist reveal that our joy rests on a certainty, that this desert

is inhabited: “among you” — he says — “stands one whom you do not know” (v. 26). It refers to Jesus, the Father’s envoy (...) He has come to the earth to restore to mankind the dignity and freedom of the Children of God — which only he can communicate — and thereby to give joy.

The joy which characterises the awaiting of the Messiah is based on *steadfast prayer*: this is the second attitude. Saint Paul says: “pray constantly” (1 Thess 5:17). By praying we can enter a stable relationship with God, who is the source of true joy. A Christian’s joy is not bought; it cannot be bought. It comes from faith and from the encounter with Jesus Christ, the reason for our happiness. And when we are rooted in Christ, the closer we are to Jesus, the more we find inner peace, even among everyday contradictions. For this reason a Christian, having encountered Jesus, cannot be a prophet of misfortune, but a witness and herald of joy. A joy to share with others; an infectious joy that renders the journey of life less toilsome.

The third attitude Paul points to is *continuous thanksgiving*, which is grateful love towards God. Indeed, he is very generous to us, and we are invited to always recognise his beneficence, his merciful love, his patience and goodness, thus living in unceasing thanksgiving.

Joy, prayer and gratitude are three attitudes that prepare us to experience Christmas in an authentic way. Joy, prayer and gratitude. (...) In this last period of the Season of Advent, let us entrust ourselves to the maternal intercession of the Virgin Mary. She is a “cause of our joy”, not only because she begot Jesus, but because she keeps directing us to him

ST THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC CHURCH

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Tel: 020 7435 1388

17th – 23rd December 2023

<https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/swisscottage/>

	MASS	OTHER ACTIVITIES
SUN 17th December 3rd Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday) (Readings. Year B)	9.30am People of the Parish 11am Mass Mark Sharman (RIP anniversary) 6.00pm Mass Holy Souls	The Church opens at 9.15am 10.30am Confessions 5.30pm Confessions
MON 18th December Advent feria	10am Mass Mariusz Witkowski (RIP)	The Church opens at 9.30am Monday to Saturday.
TUE 19th December Advent feria	10am Mass Gina Da Silva (intentions)	
WED 20th December Advent feria	10am Mass Maria Maguire (recently deceased)	7.30pm Christmas Carol Service
THU 21st December St Peter Canisius, Priest & Doctor	10am Mass Mervyn Agnew (recently deceased)	
FRI 22nd December Advent feria Friday abstinence	10am Mass Constance Gibson (RIP)	10am to Noon Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament
SAT 23rd December Advent feria	10am Mass Noel Burke (RIP)	The Church opens at 9.30am No First Holy Communion Class

Prayer Intentions:

Recently deceased: Alex Solomon-Tabet; Ken Brown; Fr Dominic McKenna; Jeanette Francise-Tabet; Robinson Emmanuel; Joan Ross; Maria Maguire; Mervyn Agnew; Fr Terry Murray OMI

Anniversary: Brigid Monaghan; Helen O' Neil; Cristina Pancha; Jamil Tayar-Tabet; Erik Karlsson; Maria Fernanda; José Miguel Vargas Alvoraz; Mark Sharman

Confessions:

Monday to Friday: before and after 10am Mass
Saturday: before and after 10am Mass
Sunday: 10.30am and 5.30pm (before Mass)

Forthcoming liturgical celebrations:

25th December: **THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD (CHRISTMAS)**

1st January: **SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD**

7th January: **THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD**