

Holy Rood Catholic Church

Holy Rood Rectory, Exchange Road, Watford,
Hertfordshire. WD18 0PJ

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Parish Email: watford@rcdow.org.uk

Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday 9:30am-1pm
& 1:30-3:30pm.

Office Location: Percy Road, WD18 0QA

Parish Priest: Fr Gerard O'Brien

Assistant Priest: Fr Tim Mangatal

Deacon: Rev Neville Dyckhoff
nevilledyckhoff@rcdow.org.uk (☎Opt 2)

Parish Administrator: Annette Rahilly

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Third Sunday of Advent

17 December 2023

Devotion to the crib is no doubt of very ancient origin; but it remained for St. Francis of Assisi to popularise it and to give to it the tangible form in which it is known at the present time. When St. Francis visited Rome in 1223, he made known to Pope Honorius III the plans he had conceived of making a scenic representation of the place of the Nativity. The pope listened gladly to the details of the project and gave it his sanction. Leaving Rome, St. Francis arrived at Greccio on Christmas Eve, when, through the aid of his friend Giovanni Velita, he constructed a crib and grouped around it, figures of the Blessed Virgin and St Joseph, the donkey, the ox, and the shepherds who came to adore the new-born Saviour. He acted as deacon at the midnight Mass. The legend relates that having sung the words of the Gospel "and they laid him in a manger" he knelt down to meditate briefly on the sublime mystery of the Incarnation, and there appeared in his arms a child surrounded by a brilliant light. A painting by Giotto representing St. Francis celebrating Christmas at Greccio is preserved in the Basilica of St. Francis at Assisi. Devotion to the crib has since spread throughout the Christian world. Yearly, from the eve of Christmas until the day of the octave of Epiphany, a crib representing the birthplace of Christ is shown in all Catholic churches in order to remind the faithful of the mystery of the Incarnation and to recall according to tradition and the Gospel narrative the historical events connected with the birth of the Redeemer. The old Franciscan church of Ara Coeli possesses perhaps one of the largest and most beautiful cribs in the world. In this crib the famous *Santo Bambino*

di Ara Coeli is exposed from the eve of Christmas to the feast of the Epiphany. The *Santo Bambino* is a figure carved out of wood representing the new-born Saviour. It is said to have come from the Holy Land, and in the course of time it has been bedecked with numerous jewels of great value. It is carried in procession yearly on the feast of the Epiphany by the Minister General of the Friars Minor who solemnly blesses the city with it from the top of the high flight of stairs that lead to the main entrance of Ara Coeli. All Catholic homes should have a crib at the centre of the home. It would be very special if children in the family made one and brought it out each year.

Planned Giving Drive Huge Thankyou to all who supported the PGD. Some people have mentioned that they have **standing orders direct with the Diocese direct**, Central Services and can they change this to go direct to our parish. Yes, this is possible. Please let office know. And remember we already pay 33% of our offering and any rent to central services.

First Holy Communion Congratulations to Ava, Gianni, Breacan and Dorian who made their First Holy Communion recently. May God keep them safe always.

Christmas Offering If you are going to be away over Christmas, please consider making your Christmas offering before you go. The offerings at Christmas and Easter make up Fr Tim's & Fr Gerard's salary for the year. Thank you for your constant kindness and support.

MASS TIMES & INTENTIONS**Sunday 17 December****3rd SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

8am Frank McGuigan & Duffy family
 9.30am Ninetta D'urso RIP
 11am Hilda Guya-Persaud anniv.
 12.30pm People of the Parish

Monday 18 DecemberAdvent feria

8.30am Roselena Danail RIP 2nd anniv.
 12noon **Margaret Harris RIP Requiem Mass**

Tuesday 19 DecemberAdvent feria

8.30am Helena Duckett RIP
 12noon **Julia Samakomva RIP Requiem Mass**

Wednesday 20 DecemberAdvent feria

12noon Mary Woodrofe RIP

Thursday 21 DecemberAdvent feria

8.30am **Please note time** Ninetta D'urso RIP

Friday 22 DecemberAdvent feria

7.15am Anne Brown RIP
 6pm Jeannine Scriva RIP

Saturday 23 DecemberAdvent feria

11am Mr & Mrs Paulson Cabral Int.
 6pm Nancy Lauhingfan RIP

Sunday 24 December**4th SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

8am People of the Parish
 9.30am Deceased members of the Hardwidge,
 Howe & Southam families
 11am Domenico Santarsiero & Maria Jose
 Santarsiero RIP
 12.30pm Marie O'Brien RIP 1st anniv.
 6pm People of the Parish
 10pm People of the Parish

BLESSED SACRAMENT LAMP

Mariya Private Int.

**EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT
& BENEDICTION**

Tuesday 9am – 10.45; Friday 6.30pm-7.15pm

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Friday 6.30pm-7pm
 Saturday 11.30am-12noon & 5pm-5.30pm

SACRAMENT OF THE SICK by request**BAPTISMS**

Rev. Deacon Neville - 01923 224085 (Opt 2)

ALL BOOKINGS VIA PARISH OFFICE

Catechism Corner Gaudete Sunday, is the 3rd Sunday of Advent and from Latin words “*gaudium*,” meaning joy and occurs on the 3rd Sunday of Advent and the nearness of the feast is reason for great joy. There are multiple reasons for Joy. There is joy in looking forward to the annual celebration of Christmas, but there is also joy in recalling the birth of Jesus on the first Christmas. The joy is heightened because he was born to save us from our sins. (Mt 1:21b). The joy also extends to anticipation of the Second Coming, either at the end of physical life or the end of the world, the time when believers will be given the crown of righteousness (2 Tm 4:8) and a place in the Father’s house (Jn 14:2) to dwell with God and his angels and saints for all eternity. The rose colour represents joy and may be used as the liturgical colour for *Gaudete* Sunday. Purple remains the official colour for the Advent, because all of Advent has a penitential tone, a time to be absolved of sin and be in the state of grace for Christmas. *Gaudete* Sunday offers a brief respite to focus on the uplifting, upcoming joyful celebration of the Nativity.

Transport to Christmas Masses If you require assistance please contact the Parish office and provide your details by Wednesday 20 December.

Christmas Masses

Please note in your diaries. Christmas Eve is a Sunday and we are obliged to attend Holy Mass. Christmas Day is Monday and again, we are obliged to attend a Christmas Mass.

Fridays in Advent

7.15am & 6pm

Christmas Eve

Sunday Masses 8am, 9.30am, 11am & 12.30pm

Christmas Masses

6pm

10pm

preceded by carols from 9.30pm.

Polish Mass 8pm.

Christmas Day

8am, 9.30 and 11am. Polish Mass - 2.15pm.

St Stephen’s Day, Tues 26th December - 12noon.

Wed, 27th, Thurs 28th & Friday 29th - 12 noon.

School Applications signing sessions for Reception year Saturday 6th and 13th at 9am in Parish hall. Nursery year Saturday 10th and 17th February at 9am in Parish hall.

Mass time change for this Thursday at 8.30am.