



Saint Bartholomew's Catholic Church, Norbury

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The Parish Office is open from 9.30am - 3.30pm Monday to Friday (except for Bank Holidays)

A parish of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Southwark CIO – Registered Incorporated Charity No. 1173050

SUNDAY 3rd DECEMBER 2017

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

YEAR B

Recently we have been presented, through the advertising media, with what an increasingly materialistic world regards as the 'essentials' for the 'perfect' celebration of Christmas: decorations, presents, lights, food and, of course, alcohol! As we begin Advent, we are clearly reminded of the true purpose of *Christ-Mas*, the *Feast of Christ's Birth*, as well as of the infinitely higher purpose for which God first created us then redeemed us, namely eternal possession of Him in Heaven; indeed a far higher purpose ever imaginable than that of collecting mere earthly possessions.

Through the **Entrance Antiphon** (cf Psalm 24:1-3) we affirm our hope in the ultimate Joy which awaits us if we persevere in love of and trust in God. **Isaiah** (63:16-17; 64:1, 3-8) recalls, from Israel's history, the consequences of choosing to live in opposition to God, imagining that one 'knows better' than one's Creator; a disastrous separation which can only be remedied by repentance and conversion. Advent embodies a call to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The vital acknowledgement by a sinner of the urgent need to be reconciled with God is highlighted in the **Response to the Psalm** (Psalm 79: 2-3, 15-16, 18-19 response v 4). **Saint Paul** (1 Corinthians 1:3-9) encourages us, who eagerly await Christ's Second Coming at the end of time, to persevere in fidelity to Our Lord, thereby keeping us, '*...steady and without blame until the last day...*' Through the **Alleluia verse** (Psalm 84:8) we beg for God's limitless, '*...mercy...and...saving help*', ours for the asking!

We are brought face to face with something which material success can blind us to, as it did the man who rejoiced in earthly riches, only to die suddenly, appearing unprepared, before his Heavenly Judge. The **Gospel** (Mark 13:33-37) compels us to take a long hard look at ourselves, warning us of the unpredictability of death which could take us completely by surprise; our priorities in this finite world will determine our Eternity and, because God loves us and knows our Fallen Nature, He continually warns of the danger of the '*Eat, drink and be merry!*' philosophy of life.

We must certainly not develop a gloomy, Scrooge-like attitude towards the celebration of this momentous Birth but, rather, we are directed towards true Joy; our eventual celebration of Christmas is intended to lift our Souls upwards, towards God; to look beyond the here-and-now, joining in the *Glorias* of the Angels and the down-to-earth wonder of the Shepherds and Kings. Christmas Cheer, to be genuine, must be rooted in the Joy of knowing that the Babe in

the manger, having grown to adulthood, established the Church, Died, and Risen, having defeated death, has Ascended to His Father, going ahead of us to help us on towards the Ultimate Celebration of Heaven!

Next Friday, **8th December**, we celebrate a pivotal moment in the history of Salvation, **The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception**. This Dogma, defined by Pope Pius IX in 1854, proclaims the Truth that, of all humans created, Mary, alone, was kept free from Original Sin, preventing it from touching, soiling and weakening her Soul. She alone was (and ever remained) in the State of Grace from that first instant of her life in the womb of her Mother, Saint Anne. From then and, indeed, throughout her life on Earth, Mary co-operated willingly and perfectly with God's Grace. A measure of the humility required to accept with Faith this, perhaps challenging Truth, lies in its having been revealed in 1858 to Saint Bernadette Soubirous, then an illiterate, poverty-stricken French peasant girl, by Our Blessed Lady herself, who declared, when asked to reveal her identity "*Que soy era Immaculada Conception*", which of course in Bernadette's language of Bigourdane means "I am the Immaculate Conception." Read more about this fundamental Catholic Teaching at <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/07674d.htm>.

'O come, O come, Emmanuel!'



Thank you for your generosity

Last week's collection came to **£2025.00** (£1380.00 in baskets; £645.00 in standing orders.).

The total for Catholic Youth Services was **£577.00**

LIFE thanks you for helping them to raise **£156.00** at last Sunday's Coffee Morning. Proceeds have been sent to LIFE HQ. You may read about the vital work carried out by LIFE by going to: www.lifecharity.org.uk

ADVENT PASTORAL LETTER FROM ARCHBISHOP PETER

This will be read at all Masses this weekend. You will also find this available on the parish web site. If you would like to receive a printed copy, but do not have a computer & printer, please contact the parish office.

Sick and Housebound: *If you know of anybody who is sick or housebound, or in a local care home, who is unable to come to Mass, and who would like to receive Holy Communion, Reconciliation, an Anointing or a Blessing, please contact the parish office. Dedicated chaplains meet the pastoral needs of Catholic patients in hospitals.*

Please pray for our Sick and Housebound parishioners:

Jessica Anane, Lilian Armstrong, Mrs Austin, Juliette Blake, Alan Blaquiére, Anita Blaquiére, Barry Breese, Erna Breese, Frances Caulfield, Audrey Draude, Teresa Florek-Smail, Raffaella Forte, Giovanni Franco, Rachel Gadd, Eamon Gillespie, Elaine Gunther, Anne Harris, Agnes Healy, Evelyn Hyland, Mary Kenny, Elsie McCleave, James McDonald, Breda McDonagh, Michael Madigan, Ajitha Mahatantila, Gerard Mascarenhas, Mary Meyern, Janina Miller, Edgar Ming, Maria Parnis, Marion Robertson, Parwar Saib, Frederic Saint-Rose, Alice Scott, Elizabeth Scott, Maggie Sunich, Edythe Thirlwall, Monica Vergara, Mary White, Ethelda Williams, Carole Winch, John Windsor, Charmaine Wise, Georgette Yoo Foo, Tony Zammit.

RECENTLY DECEASED

Please pray for the happy repose of the soul of **Cesare Verrilli**, of Sherwood Avenue, who died on Thursday 28th November 2017. His funeral takes place here on Saturday 9th December 2017 at 8.30am. Our sympathy and prayers go to the family.

WE WELCOME INTO THE FAMILY OF THE CHURCH,

Beatrice Atene Primrose Mitchell & Amara Zadie Rebecca Onuekwusi, who were Baptised here last Sunday.

CHURCH CLEANING IN THE COMING WEEK - GROUP 5 PLEASE:

Elizabeth Ayoola, Kelly Bello, Sandra Hodgson, Emma Morrone, Josephine Ofili, Blessing Otite, Amanda Squires, Maria Verrilli. As ever, the burden falls on the few. If you could possibly help out say once every 6 weeks, or if you have recently volunteered to help, but you have not yet been allocated to a group, just contact the parish office.

IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR ALTAR SERVERS

We really do need to have some additional servers at both the 8.30am and 11.30am Masses. Therefore we should like to ask whether any servers who normally attend the 10.00am Mass would be both willing and able to swap to either of these other Masses? If you can help in this way, please let Cathleen Nicholls or Jed Murphy know.

READERS AND EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

Would those who have not yet done so please contact the parish office as soon as possible with your availability for the rota for Christmas Eve (Sunday 24th December 2017) and Christmas Day (Monday 25th December 2017).

The next rota will run from New Year's Eve weekend (30th & 31st December 2017) through to 28th & 29th January 2018. That rota will be published in mid December, so your kind cooperation is sought so that the rota may be produced in good time. If you wish to be emailed the rota, please send your email address to the parish office.

Please do not leave this until the last minute as much preparation is already going on in time for Christmas.

CATHOLIC BIBLE SUNDAY

This takes place next Sunday, 10th December 2017. The theme is "Welcome the Word". The Bishops' conference of England and Wales is making available Scripture-focused materials to help us all explore Advent, Christmas and beyond. The Bible is a precious resource, which can be all too easily neglected. The following links are suggested to help us to welcome the Word into our lives: www.facebook.com/cbcew; twitter.com/catholicew; www.flickr.com/photos/catholicism; www.catholicnews.org.uk/rss/feed/cbcew-news;

CHRISTMAS POSTER

As usual at this time of year, the Knights of St Columba will be distributing their Christmas Posters after all Masses this weekend. Please take one home with you and perhaps display it in your front window or on your door.

You are kindly requested to make a donation towards the Seminary Fund for the training of future clergy.

LEGION OF MARY

Meet and support your fellow Legionaries this afternoon between 2.45 and 5pm at St Teresa's in Morden, 250 Bishopsford Road, SM4 6BZ. All auxiliaries and active members plus their spouses are cordially invited to join the Annual General Reunion party! It's a shared table, with soft drinks and hot beverages provided.

A SERIOUS THREAT TO CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Do you support Catholic schools, and the right of Catholics to send their children to those schools? Archbishop Peter Smith writes:

“We need you to make your voice heard. The government is making a critical decision on whether to overturn the admissions cap which prevents Catholic schools from allowing all Catholic pupils to attend. This cap was introduced by the Coalition Government in 2010. The present Government have acknowledged that this policy discriminates against Catholics and indeed they promised to abandon it. Now we most urgently need you to tell them that they must not perform a U-turn on that public promise they made to Catholics. Please visit <http://catholicnews.org.uk> or search for Catholic Education in your search engine. There you will be able to write to the Government and urge them to drop their policy which bans new Catholic Schools. If you don't have a pc, please write to the Secretary of State for Education, The Right Hon Justine Greening MP directly instead at: Sanctuary Buildings, 20 Great Smith St, Westminster, London SW1P 3BT . Thankyou.”

BAPTISM PREPARATION COURSES 2018 AND ARRANGING BAPTISM

The first course is expected to be run on both Saturdays 13th and 20th January 2018. To join these sessions, and/or to book a date for your child's Baptism, please complete a Baptism Details Form, available from the Church porch, and hand this in to the parish office. Further sessions are planned for April and July 2018.

THE CATHOLIC TRUTH SOCIETY (CTS)

There is now a good stock of booklets relating to Advent and Christmas. Please take a look in the rack which is situated on the wall just outside the Repository. If there is anything you wish to obtain, but you do not see in the rack, please contact Ann Daniels via the parish office, so that your request might be fulfilled. You may even download CTS booklets onto many portable reading devices. See: www.ctsbooks.org

THE REPOSITORY

In addition to the many books, diaries, calendars and devotional items which are always held, the repository is now fully stocked for Christmas, including cards, calendars, diaries, nativity scenes etc. Demand is always very high. So as to avoid disappointment, please don't delay your purchases until the last minute. When it's gone, it's gone!!.

CHILDREN'S NATIVITY TABLEAU: ACTORS, ACTRESSES AND SINGERS NEEDED!

The Children's Liturgy Group are producing their annual Nativity Play for Christmas Eve, during the 6.15pm Vigil Mass on Sunday 24th December 2017. Please note that the rehearsal will now take place on Saturday 23rd December 2017 at 11.30am (**not 4.00pm as previously advised**) in the church, at which roles will be allocated and costumes provided. Children of all ages from school nursery upwards are welcome. If you would like your child to be involved, please contact Linda Harries on 07770 623230 by 11th December at the latest.

You may also contact Linda by email: l.harries@gmail.com

ADVENT

Advent commences this weekend, and we begin Year B in the Parish Mass Book. There will be a Day of Penitence later in the month, when Confessions will be available for a whole day, giving you a great opportunity to prepare for Christmas. Each Sunday during Advent, a candle will be lit on our Advent Crown, as we look forward with great longing for the coming of the Light of the World, Christ Himself at Christmas.

CHRISTMAS CAROLS AND READINGS WITH THE POLYPHONY CHOIR AND ORCHESTRA

This annual event, an integral part of our parish preparation for Christmas, will take place on Sunday 17th December 2017 at 2.30pm in the church. Entry will be by Programme only at a cost of just £3.00. These will be available from the Repository or on the door before the concert begins. Do come along to hear the choir singing, and take in the wonderful sound of the instruments of the orchestra; listen to the Word of God in the readings.

This event provides a wonderful opportunity for you to immerse yourself prayerfully in the true meaning of Christmas. We hope that as many as possible will come along. Programmes will be available shortly.

ALTAR SERVERS CHRISTMAS ROTA

The sign-up sheet for Altar Serving at Christmas may be found in the Sacristy. In particular we need Servers for the Christmas Eve Family Mass at 6.00pm as well as Midnight Mass. Please note that there will be NO 5pm Mass on either Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. The usual Morning Masses will take place on Christmas Day.

Practice for Family Mass - Sunday 17th December at 6.00pm (30 minutes)

Practice for Midnight Mass - Sunday 17th December at 6.30pm (30 minutes)



Parish Masses This Week

Sunday Masses: Vigil, Saturday 6.15pm; Sunday: 8.30am, 10am, 11.30am and 5pm

Parish Mass Book: This Sunday - p.82; Friday - p296

Weekday Masses: Mon - Fri: 7.30am; Mon – Sat 10am

Morning Prayer of the Church: Monday - Saturday 9.15am

Adoration and Benediction: Monday - Saturday 9.30am; Sunday 4pm (*Rosary & Benediction in May & October*)
On First Fridays - Adoration after 10am Mass, closing with Benediction at 2pm

Rosary: Monday - Saturday after the 10am Mass

Confessions: Saturday, after the 10am Mass, until 11am; then in the afternoon from 5pm to 6pm

Date	Time	Intention
FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT	6.15pm (Sat 2nd December)	Nellie O'Donnell RIP
	8.30am	Mary Houlihan RIP
	10am	Alessandro & Vera Di Brita and Clara Lucia RIP
	11.30am (Polyphony Choir)	Future welfare and happiness of baby Robyn Elizabeth Price
<i>Benediction</i>	4pm	
	5pm	People of the parish

First Week of Advent

Monday 4th December 2017	7.30am 10am	Gina & Antonio Procaccino RIP Albert Rego RIP
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Tuesday 5th December 2017	7.30am 10am	Welfare of Sue Cullen Gamaliel Peters RIP
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Wednesday 6th December 2017	7.30am 10am	Antoinetta & Franco Falco RIP Veronica & Hilary Nwabueze RIP
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Thursday 7th December 2017 St Ambrose, Bishop & Doctor of the Church (Memorial)	7.30am 10am	Welfare of Richard Keane Helen Whitcombe RIP
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Friday 8th December 2017 THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY (Solemnity)	7.30am 10am	Etienne Dalmeida RIP Elizabeth Doyle RIP
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Saturday 9th December 2017 - Our Lady	8.30am 10am	Funeral of Cesare Verrilli Mick Lynch RIP
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Next Sunday 10th December 2017 SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT	6.15pm (Sat 9th December) 8.30am 10am 11.30am	People of the parish Joey D'Souza RIP Ernest Joseph Borgonha RIP Patrick John Lacey RIP
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<i>Benediction</i>	4pm 5pm	SVP intention
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