



This parish is served by the Spiritans

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Mass Book Year B Vol 1 page 82

POPE FRANCIS' REFLECTION ON THE FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Today, the First Sunday of Advent, a new liturgical year begins. In it, the Church marks the passage of time with the celebration of the main events in the life of Jesus and the story of salvation. In so doing, as Mother, she illuminates the path of our existence, supports us in our daily occupations and guides us towards the final encounter with Christ. Today's liturgy invites us to live the first "important Season" which is that of Advent, the first of the liturgical year, Advent, which prepares us for Christmas, and therefore it is a time of expectation and a time of hope. Expectation and hope.

Saint Paul indicates the object of our expectation. What is it? The "manifestation of the Lord". The Apostle invites the Christians of Corinth, and we too, to focus our attention on the encounter with Jesus. For a Christian, the most important thing is the continuous encounter with the Lord, being with the Lord. And in this way, accustomed to staying with the Lord of life, we prepare ourselves for the encounter, for being with the Lord for eternity. And this definitive encounter will come at the end of the world. But the Lord comes every day, so that, with His grace, we might accomplish good in our own lives and in the lives of others.

Our God is a God-who-comes, do not forget this: God is a God who comes, who continually comes. Our waiting will not be disappointed by Him! The Lord never disappoints. He will perhaps make us wait, He will make us wait a few moments in the dark to allow our expectation to ripen, but He never disappoints. The Lord always comes, He is always by our side.

At times, He does not make Himself seen, but He always comes. He came at a precise moment in history and became man to take on our sins – the feast of the Nativity commemorates Jesus' first coming in the historical moment - He will come at the end of times as universal judge; He comes every day to visit His people, to visit every man and woman who receives Him in the Word, in the Sacraments, in their brothers and sisters. Jesus, the Bible tells us, is at the door and knocks. Every day. He is at the door of our heart. He knocks.

Do you know how to listen to the Lord who has come today to visit you, who knocks at your heart restlessly, with an idea, with inspiration? He came to Bethlehem, He will come at the end of the world, but every day He comes to us.

(continued overleaf)

THE CHURCH IS OPEN:

Tue-Fri 8:45am-4:00pm

Sat 10:00am-6:30pm

Sun 7:45am-12noon

SUNDAY MASS

Sat 2nd December

5:30pm Vigil Mass

Pat and Jim Gregory and relatives of the Selby and Gregory families. R.I.P.

Sunday 3rd December

8:30am Terry Halpin R.I.P.

10.15am McGirr family, deceased members.

WEEKDAY MASS

Tues 5th December

9.30am Arthur and Eileen Fox & friends R.I.P.

Wed 6th December

St. Nicolas, Bishop

9.30am John Fletcher RIP

Thurs 7th December

St. Ambrose, Bishop

9.30am Natalie Carter and Brian Lee R.I.P.

Friday 8th December

Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Solemnity.

Holy Day of Obligation.

9.30am Int. People of the Parish

CONFESSIONS

Tues-Fri 8:40-9:20am

Saturday 4:30-5:20pm

or by appointment

PARISH OFFICE HOURS: TUES, THURS, FRI 10.00am-2.00pm - Tel 01474705361

Parish Priest: Fr Alphonsus Beni CSSp

Email: alphonsusbeni@rcaos.org.uk **(Day off: Mon)**

PLEASE CALL OR EMAIL THE PRIEST

DIRECTLY FOR AN APPOINTMENT

Tel: 07500262446

Parish Secretary: Jane Pemberton

Parish Council Chair: Chris Pieroni

Email: hartleypcc@rcaos.org.uk

Safeguarding representative: Judith Stephens

Email: hartleysg2@safeguardrcaos.org.uk

Be careful, look at what you feel in your heart when the Lord knocks. We are well aware that life is made up of highs and lows, of lights and shadows. Each one of us experiences moments of disappointment, of failure and being lost. Moreover, the situation we are living in, marked by the pandemic, generates worry, fear and discouragement in many people; we run the risk of falling into pessimism, the risk of falling into closure and apathy.

How should we react in the face of all this? The Psalmist suggests: "Our soul waits for the Lord: he is our help and our shield. Our heart is glad in him, because we trust in his holy name." That is, the soul awaiting, confidently waiting for the Lord, allows us to find comfort and courage in the dark moments of our lives.

And what gives rise to this courage and this trustful pledge? Where do they come from? They are born of hope. And hope does not disappoint, that virtue that leads us ahead, looking at the encounter with the Lord. Advent is a continuous call to hope: it reminds us that God is present in history to lead it to its ultimate goal and to lead us to its fullness, which is the Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ.

God is present in the history of humanity, He is the "God-with-us", God is not distant, He is always with us, to the extent that very often He knocks on the door of our heart. God walks beside us to support us. The Lord does not abandon us; He accompanies us through the events of our lives to help us discover the meaning of the journey the meaning of everyday life, to give us courage when we are under duress or when we suffer. In the midst of life's storms, God always extends His hand to us and frees us from threats. This is beautiful!

In the book of Deuteronomy there is a very beautiful passage, in which the Prophet says to the people: "For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is to us?" No-one, only we have this grace of having God close to us. We await God, we hope that He manifests Himself, but He too hopes that we manifest ourselves to Him!

May Mary Most Holy, the woman of expectation, accompany our steps at the beginning of this new liturgical year, and help us to fulfil the task of Jesus' disciples, indicated by the Apostle Peter. And what is this task? To account for the hope that is in us.

TEXTS FOR THIS WEEK- FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Isaiah 63: 16-17,;64: 1, 3-8 Oh, that you would tear the heavens open and come down.

Psalm: *God as hosts, bring us back; let your face shine on us and we shall be saved.*

1 Corinthians 1: 3-9 We are waiting for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed.

Mark 13: 33-37 Stay awake, because you do not know when the master of the house is coming.

Communion Antiphon: *The Lord will bestow his bounty, and our earth shall yield its increase.*

For Daily Prayers and Mass Readings online, visit
<https://www.universalis.com>

VISITING THE SICK AND HOUSEBOUND

If you or someone in your family is housebound and would like a priest to visit, please contact Fr Alphonsus or the parish office to arrange a visit.

PRAYER FOR THE SICK & HOUSEBOUND

Father, we thank you for the gift of your Son in the Eucharist. We now place before you all the sick and housebound of our parish. As they share in this Eucharist with us, we pray that they may come to know the depth of your love for them and, the joy, the peace, and healing of your presence. We make our prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PARISH NOTICES

ADVENT AND THE JESSE TREE

The word Advent means "the coming or arrival." As Christmas approaches we look back and remember that starry night in Bethlehem when the entire world was changed in an instant.

The Jesse Tree helps us unite the tradition of decorating Christmas trees with the biblical events that led to Jesus' birth. The name comes from Jesse, the Father of the great Jewish King David. For each day of Advent, there is a symbol to match the biblical events from Creation to Christmas.

If you would like to make your own Jesse Tree and 'ornaments' this Advent, you are very welcome to take home the sheets with templates of the symbols etc, which are in the porch.

CAROL SERVICE SUNDAY 17th DECEMBER AT 3pm

Please come to our lovely annual parish family Carol Service. Our church choir will be singing. The children will present a Nativity Scene. You can join in the carols and enjoy a mince pie after the service organised by the Mini Vinnies. The event is organised by the Saint Vincent de Paul Society to raise funds for local families in need. We look forward to seeing you there!



MASSES FOR THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

24th December CHRISTMAS VIGIL MASS FOR CHILDREN: 5.30pm This Mass is intended only for families with young and school aged children.

24th December 'MIDNIGHT' MASS: 8.00pm

25th December CHRISTMAS DAY: 9.30am

ST FRANCIS DE SALES 200 CLUB

November Draw winners: 1st prize £50 no.60 T. Gordon, 2nd prize £25 no.93 H. Bonner.

Our Christmas Draw will take place on Sunday 24th December after the 8.30am Mass. There will be 3 prizes of £100, £70, £50. Membership for the 200 Club is open to anyone over 16yrs and costs £24 per draw number for the chance to win a prize each month. All necessary information and forms etc can be found in the church porch or on the parish website. Speak to Tina or Kate for any assistance.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY AND YOUTH GROUP TEAMS

If you would be interested in joining the Leaders' Team for Children's Liturgy or the Youth Group, please speak with Fr Alphonsus who will then pass your details to the parish Safeguarding Rep. Anyone wishing to volunteer must first have completed a DBS Check for Ministry with Children/Youth Group in the Catholic Church. Thankyou.

REGULAR NOTICES

PARISH REGISTRATION

We welcome all new parishioners to St Francis de Sales, Hartley. We want you to feel at home in the parish. **The first thing to do is to introduce yourself to the parish priest and then register on the Parish Database.** Registration Forms are available in the porch, or on the parish website. Please consider how you can support the parish with your talents, skills and resources and submit a **'Sharing my Time & Talents'** leaflet, also found in the porch area.

MASS INTENTIONS

If you would like to have a Mass offered for an intention, please take a brown Mass Offering envelope the porch, fill in the details and return it to Fr Alphonsus directly.

SOCIETY OF SAINT VINCENT DE PAUL (SVP)

'We are a small group who offer confidential support through phone calls, house visits, accompanying to local medical, dental appointments. We also offer confidential financial support. Contact us via the parish office.'

CATECHETICAL PROGRAMMES

Parishioners are asked to first check the **SACRAMENTS** section on the parish website for general information on the programmes. Please speak with Fr Alphonsus for any further advice. All Sacramental programmes are lead by the parish. Those wishing to enrol for Sacramental programs should be registered parishioners, attending Mass.

BAPTISM FOR BABIES AND INFANTS

Parents of infants and those seeking Baptism, please attend weekend Mass and speak with Fr. Alphonsus afterwards to register for the Baptism Course.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY – FOR CHILDREN IN YR-Y2

On Sundays at the 10.15am Mass. Please bring your child into the Meeting Room before Mass begins and **remain with your child until both leaders have arrived.** In compliance with Diocesan Safeguarding Guidelines, no parents nor any other adults can remain in the meeting during the session. Thankyou.

SACRAMENTS OF RECONCILIATION and EUCHARIST

There will not be a class on Friday 15th December. Class will resume on Friday 5th January 2024.

SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION 2024

Any young person in school Yr8 or above who would be interested in joining the program, please speak to Fr Alphonsus for further information, thankyou.

RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) 2024.

Journey in Faith: Are You Interested in Becoming a Catholic? If you have never been baptized, if you were baptized in another Christian denomination and would like to become Catholic, or if you were baptized Catholic but never received the Sacraments of Eucharist or Confirmation, you are welcome to join the RCIA program, the process by which adults become Catholic. **RCIA Enquiry forms** are available in church or on the parish website. Please speak with Fr Alphonsus to discuss anything further.

DIOCESAN NOTICES

CARITAS SOUTHWARK 'ADVENT GIVING CALENDAR'- supporting those in need this Christmas. Please pick up a copy from the table in the church porch or visit rcsouthwark.co.uk/mission/caritas-southwark/

OFFERTORY COLLECTIONS 26th November 2023

Envelopes: £32.00 Loose Plate: £59.70

Contactless: £55.00 Online banking: £1,209.50

2nd Collection: £41.50 Thatch Fund: £73.30

Thank you for your contributions to the parish.

Please check that your GA Envelope number & the correct date are written clearly on your envelope. Thankyou

This week's 2nd Collection: Advent Wreath

CHRISTMAS OFFERING TO THE PARISH PRIEST

Please use the Christmas Offering envelopes that are in the porch and note your Gift Aid number on the envelope. If you donate by Bank Standing Order, please mark your donation 'Christmas Offering.' You may also use the Cashless Machine in the porch.

THATCH FUND

Funding raised £40,099.39 of our Target £55,000.00

Thankyou for your continued support! Please keep depositing your £1 weekly donation in the Thatch Fund Box at the back of the church OR use the Contactless machine in the porch. You can also set up a £4 monthly/£52 annual, Bank Standing Order at: **Nat West Bank. Account name St Francis. Account number 34363181 Sort code 60-06-33.** If you are a UK tax payer, please submit a Gift Aid declaration form - **online** (follow directions below) or **hard copy** (on the shelf in the church porch) If you already use the parish Gift Aid scheme, *please* note your GA number against any donation. If you do not know your GA number, please contact the parish office for assistance.

Are you a UK Taxpayer? Please consider joining the Parish Gift-Aid Scheme.

Simply scan the QR code with your phone and fill in the form or visit the web link. Please contact the parish office for any assistance. Your support is greatly appreciated. Thankyou

SUPPORT OUR PARISH
**Sign up to
Gift Aid &
Planned Giving**



Scan QR code
or visit: forms.rcaos.org.uk/giftaid/

Our parish is part of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Southwark CIO registered charity number 1173050

You can also donate via our Justgiving page www.justgiving.com/St-Francis-de-Sales-Hartley.

If you shop online, you can raise donations for the parish! visit www.easyfundraising.co.uk

'PLANNED GIVING' and GIFT-AIDED DONATIONS

The parish relies on contributions to maintain the church building and presbytery, supporting the priest in his ministry, which is the Church's Mission. Please consider setting up a Monthly Bank Standing Order. This is most helpful to the parish for budgeting and planning projects.

Other ways to support the parish financially are:

- (i) Weekly Gift Aid Envelopes (via Parish office)
- (ii) Through *Givealittle* on the parish website
- (iii) Using the Contactless Machine in the church
- (iv) Cash, or Cheque payable to **RCAS Hartley**
- (v) Using the One-off Donation white envelope
- (vi) Online transaction to Nat West Bank Account St Francis de Sales Acc: 34143580 S.C. 60-06-33.

PARISH GROUP MEETINGS

YOUTH GROUP

All young parishioners are welcome members. Contact: Laura Bourne via hartley@rcaos.org.uk

ADULT CHOIR

Thursdays at 7:30pm. New members are welcome Contact: Yvonne at yhegarty@talktalk.net

KNIGHTS OF ST. COLUMBA

Third Wednesday each month at 7:00pm in the meeting Room. New members very welcome. Contact: William Rons williamrons@hotmail.com

CATHOLIC WELCOME CIRCLE (CWC)

Second Wednesday of the month in the Meeting Room 2:00pm. Contact: Margaret Walsh.

BEREAVEMENT GROUP

Please contact the parish priest to arrange a visit.

ST VINCENT DE PAUL (SVP)

Monthly meetings arranged by the SVP group. Contact can be made through the parish office.

CATENIANS (Meopham Circle)

First Wednesday each month at 7.30pm at Hartley Country Club. Contact Les Bober on 07811 407386 or Steve Lewis, on 07305 360305 if you would like to learn more about us.

For a newsletter emailed weekly, or to suggest articles/additions, contact the parish secretary: hartley@rcaos.org.uk. **Newsletter items received after 11.00am Thursday may not be included that week.**

Editor reserves the right to edit articles. A parish of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Southwark.

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