

ST MARGARET'S PAGE

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT - 3 December 2023 - Year B



In Peter writes:

Once again, the Church begins a new Liturgical Year with the First Sunday of Advent. Attention in the secular world has already turned to Christmas by-passing Advent. Magic Radio has gone full Christmas as repeatedly emphasised by every presenter. So that channel's airways are filled with Christmas songs old and new, 'Wishing you a White Christmas'; 'So this is Christmas'; 'Merry Christmas', songs for every taste. It is all too early and trivial. Noddy Holder did say, in a moment of self-understanding, that he could never reform the pop group Slade as the prospect of singing 'Merry Christmas' every concert was even too much for him. It is easy to decry the present-day secular Christmas with its emphasis on spending and faux sentimentality, but all this fevered activity does at least show that the average non-religious person feels the need to celebrate the end of the year and the beginning of the new, cosmic events bigger than themselves.

Christians certainly recognise something is happening at Christmas and the New Year, not just the astronomical events of changing seasons and the difference between shrinking and expanding duration of sunlight. God has entered the world, the Word became flesh, being born in human time. What the Church celebrates at Christmas both develops the Jewish understanding of the one God, God will be seen, as God always was, the continuous relations of the Trinity, the eternal conversation both without and within time. This celebration also develops the meaning of being human, of the spiritual relationship between God and humanity, and between people themselves, now definitely brothers and sisters of the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ.

Being born into the world at Bethlehem gives human history a role greater than that of the eternal flow of cosmic cycles. Time belongs to God, time has a direction towards the future, rather than being the endless repeated cycles of cosmic patterns. Traditionally historical dates have been divided between 'Before Christ' (BC) and 'Anno Domini' (AD). Yet this flow of time finds itself submerged often in the eternal cosmic cycles of the year, and its human manifestations, the school, college, university year with its start dates, term dates, half-term dates, so that the years seem to pass in eternally evolving human cycles. In one sense this is inevitable, human life ultimately depends on the growing seasons, even if that is circumvented by the

importation of food grown in other countries.

Advent is the timely reminder, the Christian antidote to not to be fully submerged in the endless cycles of yearly life. When Jesus invites the apostles to 'Stay awake,' the command is not literally never to sleep, or to endless duty, but to remember the one-way direction of life towards the return of Jesus Christ. Life has a direction, and its fullest meaning comes from its earthly conclusion and not its yearly cycles.

'Staying awake' is the conscious reminder of this single direction and helps us understand what may be achieved by Jesus Christ breaking into the endless cycles of cosmic time. The birth of Jesus does not just change the perception of time but brings hope into the world, life's journey is filled with His offer of mercy and His gifts of divine friendship. To me the birth of Jesus Christ brings a warmth to creation that the endless cosmic cycles do not possess of themselves. This is no proof of the Christian faith, but the universal consequences emanating from the individual circumstances surrounding the birth of one child make strange sense.

The minute individual scale of the account, the angel speaking to Mary; Mary's visitation to Elizabeth; the journey owing to political circumstances from Nazareth to Bethlehem, the birth in a stable, all point to the fact that only God can span from universe to individual. Jesus Christ is our own unique cosmic saviour and 'staying awake,' is to see this connection between universe and individual is possible. Staying awake also involves being attentive to the workings of Christ's care, kindness and love in our lives, sometimes ministered through others, because life at my level, contains the whole. My life is both individual and universal. My life, shared with others, even in its own unique circumstances may become part of the universal because Jesus Christ is the Lord of history and God the creator of the Universe.

To take all this to heart is to change our lives by rediscovering its beauty and purpose, that my life possesses intrinsic worth as it possesses a definite future and is not simply an endless repetition. Advent is a penitential season, not in the same way as Lent, but this time of penance means re-examining our priorities, the direction of our lives, and the consequent need to change our conduct.

St Margaret of Scotland Catholic Church

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Parish Priest: Canon Peter Newby; Deacon Joseph Estorninho; Parish Administrator: Cynthia Souza; Bookkeeper: Ann Edes

Mass Intentions: 2/12 – 10/12

2/12	Sat	10.00am	John Heffernan RIP	Rita Johnston
3/12	Sun	8.30am	For you the people	
		10.30am	For all suffering in Gaza, Israel and Ukraine	A parishioner
		6.30pm	Ann Davies RIP	Barbara de
4/12	Mon	10.00am	Jacques Sabatien RIP	Audrey Lematte
5/12	Tue	10.00am	Intentions of the Secular Clergy Common Fund	
6/12	Wed	10.00am	Missionary spirit of the Parish and the Church	
7/12	Thu	10.00am	Eucharistic Service	
8/12	Fri	10.00am	Intentions of the Lucey family	Maria Drennan
9/12	Sat	10.00am	James Gallagher RIP	Mary Gallagher
10/12	Sun	8.30am	Thanksgiving - Joyce Event	Gogarty
		10.30am	Intentions of Helen Douglas	Rita Johnston
		6.30pm	In thanksgiving for Mira Kalmar birthday	

Entrance Antiphon:

To you, I lift up my soul, O my God,
In you, I have trusted; let me not be put to shame.
Nor let my enemies exult over me;
and let none who hope in you be put to shame.

Response to the Psalm:

God of hosts, bring us back;
let your face shine on us and we shall be saved.

Mass Times & Liturgical Services (4/12-10/12)

Weekend	Saturday	10.00 am
	Sunday	8.30 am, 10.30 am & 6.30 pm
Weekday	Mon, Tue, Wed & Fri	10.00 am
Eucharistic Service	Thu	10.00 am
Confessions	Saturday	10:30-11:00am
	Sunday	10.00-10.20am

PRAYERS FOR THE SICK

Girda Kerrigan, John Forsyth, Rose Blackman, Ursula van der Westhuizen, Cathy McKendry, Rose Blackman, Rachel Rose, Arthur Mathewson, Pat Friel, Mary Regan, Pauline Slawson, Ben, Carol Samba, Colin Bartram, Gerry McEntee, Rose Williams, Peter Coughlan, Hilary Sudell, Rose Lorden, William Hamilton, Mary Arnold, Cesar Juan Urrutigoity, Mary Ethel Arnolda, Sydney Parkes, Christopher Browne, Antonella Sesta, Margaret Masterson, Carmen Ruibal, Chris McLoughlin (son of Olga), Tony Tucker, Dr Christopher Khoo, John Wood-Collins, Jim Polland, Theresa Bulpitt, Sue Rolph & Dick Cotter.

Anniversaries - Gertrude Ulrich, Nan Cobbing, Monica Scriven, Irena Starzecki, Collin Morgan, James O'Malley, Edna Hughes, Florence Pluck, Doris Geary, Jack Halligan, Alison Noble, Rose Polland

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. ~Amen~

December Prayer Intention

For persons with disabilities : We pray that people living with disabilities may be at the centre of attention in society and that institutions may offer inclusive programmes which value their active participation.

Advent Giving Tree

This Advent we will be giving to the homeless of our diocese working in partnership with the Passage, the charity of the archbishop, Cardinal Vincent Nichols.



Children will also be involved this year. While adults can select a label with an essential item (clothing/toiletries) requested by the Passage, children can select labels with a task for them to perform to help others together with a prayer intention.

Items should be returned to church, not earlier than the third Sunday of Advent when they will be collected for distribution to those in need.

Visits to the sick and housebound

If you are unable to attend Mass and would like to receive Holy Communion, please contact Deacon Joseph via the parish office.



Advent Penance Service



WEDNESDAY 13TH DECEMBER
at 7pm in the Church

Join us at St Margaret's Church for a prayerful opportunity to prepare for Christmas. The Sacrament of Reconciliation, with guest Confessors, will be available.

CALLING ALL CHILDREN !!!

Advent Wreath Making Session

Come and decorate your own Advent Wreath on **Sunday 3rd December** after 10.30 am Mass.

Materials will be provided. Donations are welcome!



Christmas tree decorating

All children are invited to decorate the St Margarets Christmas tree on **Sunday 10th December** after 10.30 am Mass.



Come join us!!!!

Sing at Christmas Eve Mass, 9.00 pm

Come and join us to sing and proclaim the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Please contact Gavin for further information on rehearsals and other arrangements. Gavin can be reached by email on gavin.evenhuis@gmail.com.

**"The Mustard Seed Presenting
"Shine your Light"**

**On
Saturday
16th December 2023 at
8.00 pm
in the Church Hall,**



On Saturday 16 December the Mustard Seed prayer group will present, "Shine your Light." An initiative of the National day of Prayer and Worship which is all denominations joining together for praise and worship and to spread the Gospel.

Please see www.shineyourlight.org.uk

We will have an evening of praise and worship music suitable for Advent with readings and reflections. We will offer hospitality and, an opportunity for prayer ministry. A great opportunity to get in the right Spiritual place for the birth of our Saviour Jesus!

Call out for any young children (4+ years) to be part of our Christmas Tableau taking place during Mass on **Christmas Eve at 5.00 pm**. We need shepherds & angels to join us for the Nativity story. If your child would like to take part, please contact the parish office. Adult helpers also needed to serve hot chocolate and refreshments after the Mass. Thank you.



Also, Singers needed for the Children's choir, Christmas Eve Mass 5.00 pm.

Pizza & Prayer - For those aged 12 - 18

An evening to reconnect with friends, together with opportunity for quiet reflection or reconciliation.



Friday 22nd December 6:30 pm - 8:30 pm

Adoration available in the chapel 6:30 - 7:30 pm; come for just a few minutes or stay longer.

Opportunities for the sacrament of reconciliation in the library.

Pizza served in the hall from 7:30 pm.

Come and catch up with other teens, reconnect with those from your Confirmation group or make new friends.

The evening is free, but please sign up in advance so we can plan accordingly. [Link to join - <https://parish.rcdow.org.uk/stmargaretsonthames/events/984/>]

Used stamps for Medical Missionaries of Mary



Please collect all the stamps from your Christmas post. In January we will be collecting used stamps for the MMM, as we did last year; the sisters sell these to raise money for their work in Africa and other countries.

THANK YOU TO THE OLUNTEER CLEANERS

Thank you to all the volunteer cleaners who helped Eustace clean the Church, polishing the benches, the silverware, the windows and all the hidden corners of the complex. It is good to have these biannual cleans as they reach the places, our regular cleaner cannot clean on a regular basis.



Thank you!!

The Divine Mercy Apostolate, London is holding a Divine Mercy Advent Reflection 2023 at Sacred Heart RC Church New Priory Quex Road Kilburn London NW6 4PS on Sunday 10 December 2023 from 2:30 pm to 5:30 pm led by the Marian Fathers.

The Retreat will include teachings on the Message of Mercy, Stations of the Cross, Holy Mass, Hour of Mercy with Adoration and Benediction and Veneration of the Image of Merciful Jesus. All Welcome. Please call millie on [07957594646](tel:07957594646) for more information

Next Wednesday the 6th of December, in preparation for Christmas, St James' Parish will be hosting a special Advent evening with Rev Dr Lukasz Mazurek, MIC, Director of Divine Mercy Apostolate in the UK. Father Lukasz will be offering a talk which will inspire you and help you to wait with expectation to the birth of our Lord. The talk, "**Mary and the Lost Art of Waiting**" will take place at **Church of St James, Twickenham, 7pm-9pm**. Come and join us for a beautiful evening: mulled wine, Christmas treats and the joy of Advent. To book: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/mary-and-the-lost-art-of-waiting-tickets-769304529557?aff=oddtcreator>

Westminster Cathedral the mother Church of our diocese has improved the lighting of its main sanctuary. The previous aged and inefficient system had to be replaced as spare parts were no longer available. The improved lighting is of great benefit on major occasions particularly if they are being broadcast or live streamed. The improvements are being funded by the Friends of Westminster Cathedral. They are asking for our help by supporting their Big Give Campaign with online donations. For donations made from 12.00 noon on Tuesday 28 November and before 12.00 noon on Tuesday 5 December every £1 given is worth £2 with matched funding and £2.25 if you can tick the Gift Aid box. The link to the donation site is <https://bit.ly/FriendsBG23>



Let there be peace on earth: Young Adult Advent Retreat

Come and take time aside with other young adults aged 18-35 this Advent. We will have time to reflect and pray to prepare ourselves for the coming of the Prince of Peace.

When: Saturday 16th December 2023, 10:30am-2:30pm

Where: FCJ Spirituality Centre, 32 Phoenix Road, London NW1 1TA (a short walk from London's Euston station)

Who: facilitated by Sr Anouska Robinson-Biggin fcj (The Faithful Companions of Jesus (FCJ) are an International Congregation of Catholic Sisters founded by Marie Madeleine d'Houët in France in 1820)

Cost: By Donation

For more information book your place

**Let there be peace on earth
Advent Retreat
for young adults aged 18-35
10:30am-2.30pm**



Facilitated by Sr Anouska Robinson-Biggin fcj

FCJ Spirituality Centre, 32 Phoenix Road,
London NW1 1TA

Cost: by donation

For more information and/or to book your place scan here:

