

St Joseph's, Bedford & Our Lady's, Kempston

Parish Priest: Canon Seamus Keenan. Assistant Priest: Fr Liam Castle.

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FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

1st December 2024



FIRST COMMUNION CLASS

The next preparation class for First Confession and Holy Communion is this Saturday at 9.15am in the Guild Room.

CHRISTMAS CARD SALE

Christmas cards and other religious items are on sale at the back of the church in both churches. Profits from the sale in aid of our parish project, Mary's Meals.

CHRISTMAS DRAW

Tickets for the Christmas Draw are also on sale today after Mass at £2.50 a book. **Prizes needed, please**, for the draw which can be left at the presbytery or in Our Lady's church.

MULLED WINE EVENING

Our next fundraising event for our parish project is a Mulled Wine Evening at the home of Derek and Anna Ruff, Carlton Cottage, Chequers Hill, Wilden, MK44 2QQ from 7.00pm. Entrance £5.

Mass Times – St Joseph's, Bedford

Sunday	8.15am	Nigel Jones, RIP
	9.30am	Leszek Mikiciuk, RIP
	11.00am	Larry Conroy, RIP
	6.30pm	People of the Parish

Monday **Feria**

10.45am Irena & Family

Tuesday **St Francis Xavier**

10.45am Alessia & Alex

Wednesday **Feria**

10.45am In Thanksgiving: Tom Raju

Thursday **Feria**

10.45am Da Costa Family

Friday **St Nicholas**

10.45am Powell & Harper Families

Saturday **St Ambrose**

10.45am Junior Chanpda

Mass Times – Our Lady's, Kempston

Saturday 6.00pm Varkey George, RIP

Confessions – St Joseph's:

Saturday 11.30am – 12.30pm (Exposition)

RESPONSORIAL PSALM:

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.

ROSARY: Daily at 10.20am

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION: Thursday 11.30am-7.00pm

CLEANING: S Masih, A Daniels, R Okonkwo

FLOWERS: No flowers

NEXT SUNDAY: Second Sunday of Advent

Readers & Ministers: Rota Week 4

Children's Liturgy: Jo & Raoul Bull

JUBILEE YEAR

Christmas Eve sees the beginning of the Jubilee Year or Holy Year, entitled 'Pilgrims of Hope.' It is a year of grace proclaiming forgiveness and reconciliation. A small booklet called 'The Jubilee' has been produced and can be had free from the CTS stand at the back of St Joseph's church or in the porch at Our Lady's.

FATIMA DEVOTIONS

Fatima Devotions this Saturday after the 10.45am Mass. All are welcome to pray for this precious gift of peace.

MOTHERS' PRAYERS

Mothers' Prayers meet this Monday in the Reconciliation Chapel after the 10.45am Mass. All mothers welcome.

GIVING TREE

The SVP will be taking small gifts to those they visit this Christmas. If you would like to help by donating a gift, please take a label from the Giving Tree which is on display by the entrance of St Joseph's church from today, buy the item mentioned on the label and bring back the wrapped gift by Sunday 15th December with the label attached so as to identify the item donated.

OPEN MEETING

Our next open meeting relating to the parish questionnaire is this Thursday at 2.30pm in Our Lady's and at 7.30pm in the Guild Room at St Joseph's. The topic for consideration will be 'Social Action.' Come along and share your views.

NEW LECTIONARY

From today onwards we will be using the new translation of the Lectionary containing the scripture readings for Mass. The People's edition can be purchased from CTS. Tel: 02072 400042 or www.ctsbooks.org.

RED BOX APPEAL

End of year appeal for all Missio Red boxes to be returned to St Joseph's and Our Lady's, please, before 20th December. Thanks to all who support the missions in this way.

ADVENT ONLINE RETREAT

On four Monday nights at 7.30 – 8.30pm, started on 25th November, Fr John Udris and Avril Baigent are leading an online retreat called 'Doorways to Grace'. We explore the four Holy Doors of Rome and the saints behind them. How we, like them, are being called into a grace-filled encounter with Jesus in the coming Jubilee Year. To register, visit www.northamptondiocese.org/doorways.

REFLECTION

'The coming of our God our thoughts must now employ...' The words of an old Advent hymn summons us to look forward to the feast of Christmas, the first coming of Christ, but also his second coming. The readings of the first Sunday of Advent point to this second coming in rather dramatic language, describing the signs to look for which will be unmistakable. However, they do not

lead to the world's destruction but its transformation from its present state to something that will be shot through with the glory of God. And not only this earth but the whole cosmos: *'The whole creation is eagerly waiting for God to reveal his sons...of being freed, like us, from its slavery to decay and to enjoy the liberty and glory of the children of God'*. (Rm 8:19-21). We and this earth and the whole universe have a glorious destiny and future. But all that awaits us. In the meantime, our hearts need to be employed with Christ's coming now, not just in the celebration of Christmas, but in every moment of our sojourn through life. *"Life is Advent; life is recognising the coming of the Lord."* (Fr Henri Nouwen). How do we recognise him? We need to develop a sensitivity to his presence, and that can only come through the practice of daily prayer coupled, if possible, with the reading of the scriptures. This, of course, takes time and a certain discipline and it is not always realisable in a busy day when there is much to attend to. But I'm sure that if we really worked at it we could spare a few moments just to be with the Lord in prayer and allow him to speak into the silence. It is so rewarding! You may not initially appreciate the importance of that time given over to him, but because you have made the effort he will be able to make himself known. We will become sensitive to his presence and closeness and that's all he wants, just a little acknowledgement that he is there. Then, over time, we will want to find ways to stay longer with him and will look forward to those encounters. Like any relationship, we have to work at it until we become familiar with each other. They may be a few snatched moments in our busy schedule but they will become meeting points where we can just enjoy one another's company. This is what we naturally do in our friendship circles. So include the Lord who is our best friend. Prayer is the raising of the mind and heart to God. In that moment we meet him and he is not forgotten by us. To ignore him would be the sad thing. We would then become desensitised to his presence and miss out on the joy and the peace he wants to share with us to refresh us in our weariness at times. So use this Advent season to re-establish contact with the One who comes and knocks on the door of our heart: *"Behold, I stand at the door and knock."* (Rev 3:20) He waits to be invited in. He waits for you.

LAST WEEK'S COLLECTIONS

Offertory

St Joseph's £1567.07

Our Lady's £384.78

Thank you