

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

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

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SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

8th December 2024



OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE

The feast day Mass is this Thursday in St Joseph's church at 7.30pm with refreshments afterwards in the Italian Church Hall, Woburn Road. The principal celebrant will be Bishop Peter Collins, Bishop of the Diocese of East Anglia. All are welcome to this special celebration.

CHRISTMAS CARD SALE

Christmas cards and other religious items are on sale at the back of 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.

Mass Times – St Joseph's, Bedford

Sunday	8.15am	Paul Farrell
	9.30am	Nigel Denham, RIP
	11.00am	Rimute Kugi
	6.30pm	Aurelia Caserta, RIP
Monday	Immaculate Conception	
	10.45am	Nicolas Robles, RIP
Tuesday	Feria	
	10.45am	Ian Harper
Wednesday	Feria	
	10.45am	Mary, Ciro & Luigi Guerriero, RIP
Thursday	Our Lady of Guadalupe	
	10.45am	Da Costa Family
	7.30pm	Private Intention
Friday	St Lucy	
	10.45am	Des Orr, RIP
Saturday	St John of the Cross	
	10.45am	Barbara Jun, RIP

Mass Times – Our Lady's, Kempston

Saturday 6.00pm Gerry Fryer, RIP

Confessions – St Joseph's:

Saturday 11.30am – 12.30pm (Exposition)

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: What great deeds the Lord worked for us! Indeed we were glad.

ROSARY: Daily at 10.20am

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION: Thursday 11.30am-7.00pm

CLEANING: S Masih, D Cummings

FLOWERS: No flowers

NEXT SUNDAY: Third Sunday of Advent

Readers & Ministers: Rota Week 1

Children's Liturgy: Edward & Geraldine Byrne

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Our annual parish Christmas Concert will be on Friday 20th December starting at 7.30pm in the Guild Room (access from Church Street). Lots of entertaining talent will be performing in aid of our parish project. Tickets on sale at £5 per person today after all Masses. Light refreshments available.

YEAR REUNION MASS

My ordination year will be meeting to say Mass here in St Joseph's this Wednesday at 12 noon. All are welcome to the Mass.

PENITENTIAL SERVICE

There will be a Penitential Service with individual Confessions on Wednesday 18th December at 7.00pm in St Joseph's.

FIRST CONFESSIONS

First Confessions for our children preparing for this sacrament will be celebrated this Friday in St Joseph's church at 6.00pm.

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. 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. As all the labels went after the first two Masses last Sunday, the tree will only be on display at the 11am and 6.30pm Masses today. Thanks to all who have promised a gift.

FLOWER COLLECTION

There will be a second collection at all Masses next Sunday in St Joseph's to purchase flowers for the church at Christmas.

CHRISTMAS POSTERS

The Knights of St Columba have produced Christmas posters which you can display in your window, free from the back of the church.

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 Friday 20th December.

1000 ROSARIES DEVOTION

The 1000 Rosaries Devotion will be held this Saturday in the Reconciliation Chapel from 12.45pm to 5.30pm. All welcome to join all or part of this prayer-time.

CAROL SERVICE

We are invited to a Carol Service in SS Philip & James Church, Severn Way, Bedford, on Thursday 19th December from 7pm until 8pm followed by refreshments. St Thomas More School Choir along with students and staff will be leading the service.

REFLECTION

I watched a programme on the restoration of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris recently and was amazed at what had been achieved in just five years since it was badly damaged by fire. In the words of French President, Emmanuel Macron, to those who

worked on the restoration, "*You have turned ashes into art!*" The cathedral now looks sublimely beautiful, gleaming with restored stonework, art, liturgical furnishings and magnificent stained-glass windows allowing myriad colours to bathe the 800-year architectural masterpiece. Truly beautiful! St Paul says that we are temples of the Holy Spirit, God's dwelling place (1 Cor 6:19). As such, he wants to be welcomed and to feel at home. He wants us to be his work of art, restoring us to our original dignity and beauty which has been disfigured by sin: '*turning ashes into art.*' This is the work of grace operative in us. The season of Advent affords us the opportunity to allow that work to continue, making us into the masterpiece he wants us to be. How? Prayer and the grace of the sacraments, especially the sacrament of Confession. It may not feel like it but Advent is a penitential season, when we are encouraged to seek God's forgiveness in this sacrament, preparing us for the joyful celebration of Christmas. Being cleansed of personal sin is like being cleansed of the debris that litters our lives and obscures the beauty of who we really are as children of God and temples of the Holy Spirit. You know how it is; your room is a bit of a mess but because you are so used to it that way you don't notice any more. It's the same with our lives of faith. It can be a bit messy but we don't notice it; we have become used to a particular way of behaving, of sinning, and we have dulled our conscience to it. Now is the time to look more closely and examine one's life in relation to how God wants us to be. Pray that the Holy Spirit enlighten your heart and mind; shine his clear light on those dark recesses in order to identify what needs cleansing. This is what we traditionally call an 'examination of conscience'. We need to take stock of ourselves from time to time and Advent, along with Lent, is a good time to do this. Once we have done so we take it all to the Lord, the master craftsman, who sets to work on us through the grace of the sacrament of Reconciliation. Here he gets rid of all that unsightly debris that clutters the soul and reveals the beauty that exists underneath the grime of our sins. He is the one who alone can do this, allowing our sins to disappear into his forgiveness. Go to him and begin the work of restoration. His grace will turn '*ashes into art,*' making us into the living stones of a temple worthy of him, lit up with the beauty of his presence.

LAST WEEK'S COLLECTIONS

Offertory

St Joseph's £1621.51

Our Lady's £253.50

Thank you