

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

Parish Priest: Canon Seamus Keenan. Assistant Priest: Fr Ditto Devassy

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THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

14th December 2025



CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Our parish Christmas Concert is this Friday 19th December at 7.30pm in the Guild Room. Admission £5 in aid of our parish project. We are looking for acts. Anyone willing to do something at the concert can let me or Mary Frost know (07708 264054).

FIRST CONFESSIONS

The children preparing for this sacrament are reminded that they are to attend St Joseph's church this Friday at 6.00pm to celebrate their First Confession. Please be on time.

CONFIRMATION 2026

Those wishing to receive the sacrament of Confirmation next year, i.e. Year 9 of school or older, are asked to collect an enrolment form from the sacristy. Preparation classes will start in January 2026. Any adults seeking Confirmation will be seen separately.

PENITENTIAL SERVICE

There will be Penitential Service with individual Confessions on Tuesday, 23rd December at 7.00pm in St Joseph's.

Mass Times – St Joseph's, Bedford

Sunday	8.15am	Bernadette McQuaid
	9.30am	Tom Raju
	11.00am	Ursula Bolding & Jacqueline Emery
	6.30pm	Odion & Omoh

Monday *Feria*

10.45am Canon Seamus Keenan

Tuesday *Feria*

10.45am Celia & Paul Goodstadt, RIP

Wednesday *O Wisdom*

10.45am Maureen McCormack, RIP

Thursday *O Adonai*

10.45am Joanne Harrison, RIP

7.00pm John & Hannah Chegwyn

Friday *O Root of Jesse*

10.45am Mr & Mrs DiGennaro, RIP

Saturday *O Key of David*

10.45am Daniel Reddy, RIP

Mass Times – Our Lady's, Kempston

Saturday 6.00pm Mary Ita O'Connor, RIP

Confessions – St Joseph's:

Saturday 11.30am – 12.30pm (Exposition)

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Come, Lord, and save us.

ROSARY: Daily at 10.20am

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION: Thursday 11.30am-7.00pm

CLEANING: S Masih, D Cummings, M Golomingi

FLOWERS: No flowers

NEXT SUNDAY: Fourth Sunday of Advent

Readers & Ministers: Rota Week 2

Children's Liturgy: Bimla & Natalie Mathews

ADVENT GIVING TREE

Thanks to all who took a label and promised a gift. Gifts should be handed in today, please. There is still an opportunity to give by donating £5 for chocolates for our Catholic prisoners in Bedford Prison. Place the money in an envelope marked Bedford Prison and hand into the presbytery or place in the offertory bag on Sunday. Thank you.

EVANGELISATION & HEALING SERVICE

We are invited to the above in Our Lady's, Kempston, on Saturday, 3rd January from 1pm to 4pm. Includes praise and worship, talks, prayer ministry, Holy Mass, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Healing Service. All welcome.

CAROL SERVICE

St Thomas More Catholic School will be holding a Carol Service in SS Philip & James Church, Severn Way, Bedford, this Monday 15th December at 7.00pm. All are welcome to attend.

BEDFORD FOODBANK

The following items are needed for the Foodbank: Tins of tuna, potatoes, fruit, sweetcorn, 500g bags of rice, cuppa soups, bars of chocolate and bottles of fruit squash. These can be left in the green bin in St Joseph's and the box at Our Lady's church.

SCRIPTURAL STUDIES

All parishioners are warmly invited to join our weekly scriptural study sessions led by Fr Ditto. The next session will be this Tuesday at 7.00pm in the Guild Room, access from Church Street.

RED MISSION BOXES

To all parishioners who have a Red Missio Box. Can you please return the boxes at any Mass in both churches by Sunday 21st December. If you are Gift Aided, please write your name on the bottom of the box as we can claim 25p in every pound donated. Please take another box home to start again for 2026. Many thanks for your support.

HOSPITAL MASS

Mass will be celebrated in Bedford Hospital Chapel (Multi-Faith Prayer Room), every second and fourth Tuesday at 2.00pm. All welcome to attend.

CHRISTMAS DRAW TICKETS

These are still available for sale after each Mass at £2.50 a book. Prizes for the Draw gratefully received.

DIOCESAN DIRECTORY 2026

The new Diocesan Directory is on sale at the back of the church at £3.50 per copy. Please place money in the wall-box marked 'Books'.

REFLECTION

This third Sunday of Advent is known as 'Gaudete' Sunday, meaning 'rejoice' or 'take delight in'. We are fast approaching Christmas, and so we rejoice at the Saviour's birth. There is normally rejoicing at the birth of a child, bringing delight to the parents. More so, then with the birth of the Christ-child, who brings the promise of joy and peace and eternal life. He is that light which darkness cannot

(Jn 1:5). As long as we keep him in the centre of our lives and seek his will, then our joy is guaranteed, and the darkness of this world will not prevail. Joy is the heartbeat of faith. If joy is absent, then faith must be dead in us and, therefore, needs resuscitating. How do we keep that experience of joy alive, along with the accompanying virtue of hope? Christian belief, if truly lived, naturally blossoms into joy. The unmistakable sign of authentic faith is joy. Faith, therefore, must be sincerely lived, and that's the challenge! Not easy, but, aided by grace, it is possible. We see this in the lives of the saints who lived their faith to a heroic degree. And this is not beyond us. We are called to be saints. We can, of course, ignore that call and go our own sweet way without making much of an effort. If so, then we will miss out on a lot of joy and inspiration along the way, with faith becoming dull and uninspiring. Faith is a difficult path to follow and not for the faint-hearted, but we make it more difficult for ourselves by our pride and intransigence. The possession of a listening heart to the voice of God will guard against this happening, and we must guard against it! Otherwise, as I say, our faith becomes a dead thing, devoid of joy and hope and authenticity. Do I live my Catholic faith on my own terms, or am I humble enough to seek the truth as taught by the Church and proclaimed by Christ and his gospel? If we invoke the Holy Spirit in this matter, then he will lead us to the whole truth, enlightening our minds and filling our hearts with the beauty of God's call and vision for us. The truth will make us free, as Jesus promised (Jn 8:32). Free from what? From deception, lies, the captivity of sin and worldly values. We are to embrace Christ's values and teachings, which lead to the truth and subsequent freedom, leading us to a new identity as a child of God. There is great joy in knowing this, for it offers security and release from anxiety. No matter what may come our way in life, the God-given joy will sustain us throughout. And it is important to realise that it is God-given, as the fruit of a faith authentically lived. And in all this, it is also important to remember that we do not attain to such purely by our own efforts. We rely on God's grace and mercy. His grace, which is the help we call upon in prayer, and his mercy when we fail through human weakness and seek forgiveness. The Lord sees our efforts and will reward us...with joy!

LAST WEEK'S COLLECTIONS

Offertory

St Joseph's £1781.21

Our Lady's £390.11

Thank you