
21st / 22nd December 2019

Fourth Sunday of Advent (Year A)

No: 1192

Today we celebrate the fourth and last Sunday of Advent, and the readings direct our attention towards the awaited feast of Christmas. We hear the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy – "The virgin is with child", and the birth of a son to be called *Immanuel, God is with us*. Although this year we read Matthew's account, which sees the events of Jesus' birth primarily through the experience of Joseph, the role of Mary becomes increasingly prominent in the remaining days of the season. In the early centuries the Feast of the Annunciation was celebrated on December 18th. We offer below some lines from a meditation of St Bernard, inviting the reader to enter this scene in prayer and devotion, and to embrace the sense of urgency which is so characteristic of Advent.

You have heard, O Virgin that you will conceive and bear a son; you have heard that it will not be by man but by the Holy Spirit. The angel awaits an answer; it is time for him to return to God who sent him. We too are waiting, O Lady, for your word of compassion; the sentence of condemnation weighs heavily upon us.

The price of our salvation is offered to you. We shall be set free at once if you consent. In the eternal Word of God we all came to be, and behold, we die. In your brief response we are to be remade in order to be recalled to life.

Tearful Adam with his sorrowing family begs this of you, O loving Virgin, in their exile from Paradise. Abraham begs it, David begs it. All the other holy patriarchs, your ancestors, ask it of you, as they dwell in the country of the shadow of death. This is what the whole earth waits for, prostrate at your feet. It is right in doing so, for on your word depends comfort for the wretched, ransom for the captive, freedom for the condemned, indeed, salvation for all the sons of Adam, the whole of your race.

Answer quickly, O Virgin. Reply in haste to the angel, or rather through the angel to the Lord. Answer with a word, receive the Word of God. Speak your own word, conceive the divine Word. Breathe a passing word, embrace the eternal Word.

Why do you delay, why are you afraid? Believe, give praise, and receive. Open your heart to faith, O blessed Virgin, your lips to praise, your womb to the Creator. See, the desired of all nations is at your door, knocking to enter. If he should pass by because of your delay, in sorrow you would begin to seek him afresh, the One whom your soul loves. Arise, hasten, open. Arise in faith, hasten in devotion, open in praise and thanksgiving. Behold the handmaid of the Lord, she says, be it done to me according to your word.

During our celebrations of Christmas, beginning with our carol service on Sunday afternoon, we will offer an invitation to any who may be visiting and is not accustomed to regular church attendance. We would especially like to invite those who, for any reason, may have lost the practice of their faith and might like to find a way to return to a Christian community. Do please invite your friends and neighbours and family members to these celebrations; and, if you know of anyone who might like one, do please direct their attention to the invitation which will be in the orders of service. Thank you.

Anniversaries

Please pray for the Souls of – Josephine McLoughlin, Alec White, John Hall, Joanna Mackey, Jack Mantelow, Stanley Pitt, Joy Argent, Veronica Lamarche, Ambrose Rigby, Eve Dodwell, John Edward Clarke, Faith Shine, Mrs Duncan, Hugh Vredenburgh, May Lane, Revd George Church, Paul Rubridge, Donald Nicolson, Muriel Price, Marie Rogue, Patricia Langridge, Frances Mary Webb, Mrs W G Wallis, Albert Laithwaite, Henry Hyslop, Emmie Walford, Basil Hull, Vivian Trowbridge, Alistair Stone, Elizabeth Figg, Josette Previtt, Joseph Loftus, Tom Harrison, Reginald Ball, Ken Cooper, Julia Herrick, Mary Needham, David Gesden, Philip Curran, Philip McNulty and Paul Bonner.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them, may they rest in peace. Amen.



Prayers

Please pray for the healing of Laura Rawlinson. Please pray for her family.



December Calendar



Sunday 22nd December – Family Carol Service at **4pm** in the Abbey.

Tuesday 24th December

NO 8am mass, Concelebrated mass at **9am**

Carols and Organ Music – **10.30pm**

Midnight Mass – **11pm** (followed by refreshments in the Narthex)

Wednesday 25th December

Christmas Day mass at **10am** (11.30am at St Dunstan's)

Christmas Holidays



This is the final In Touch until **11th January**.

Maria Stribbling will be on holiday from **23rd December**
and will return on **Monday 6th January**

Junior Church will return on Sunday **5th January**.



Alpha

Our next Alpha Programme will start on **Monday 20th January** at 7.30pm.

This is an interactive course for anyone who would like to deepen their Faith.

If you are interested in joining these sessions, please let us know at the Parish Office by either emailing parish@worth.org.uk or calling 01342 710313. Thank You.



*We hope you all have a Wonderful Christmas and New Year.
May this season bring you much Love, happiness and laughter.*

In preparation for our celebration of Christmas, we offer another quotation from the letter of Pope Francis, meditating on the crib.

In a particular way, from the time of its Franciscan origins, the nativity scene has invited us to “feel” and “touch” the poverty that God’s Son took upon himself in the Incarnation. Implicitly, it summons us to follow him along the path of humility, poverty and self-denial that leads from the manger of Bethlehem to the cross. It asks us to meet him and serve him by showing mercy to those of our brothers and sisters in greatest need.

Discover your Vocation

Is God calling you to the Priesthood? The St John Vianney Group is a group for men aged 18-45 who wish to explore whether they have a calling. For further details contact Fr Con Foley at foleycon@gmail.com or 01932 842643

Justice & Peace Social Action

Annual Justice & Peace assembly “Still no room at the Inn”. How can we respond to the homeless crisis today? Come along to the St Philip Howard Centre, Crawley on **Saturday 25th January**. Contact Tessa at Tessa.Ricketts@abdiocese.org.uk or 01293 651154

Divine Renovation

Come along to the St Philip Howard Centre, Crawley, RH10 6RP on **Thursday 30th January** from 1pm-4pm to meet others interest in, inspired by, or utilising the Divine Renovation programme in their parishes.

The afternoon will provide an opportunity to network, share your best practice and explore any challenges in order to build thriving Parish communities for the future

For more information or to register, please contact Jon Harman (Spiritual and Formation Advisor) at **jon.harman@abdiocese.org.uk**

All are welcome. Please let us know if you have any additional needs.

A sandwich lunch will be provided

A Day for Readers

Join us for an opportunity to grow in knowledge and skills to become better at reading the scriptures aloud at Mass. There will be expert input from Sarah Beresford, Director of the Catholic Bible School, who’s Masters Dissertation was on the formation and training of readers for Mass.

25th January, 10.30am – 2.30pm at Our Lady of Sorrows Parish Centre, Bognor Regis, PO21 1JX.

To book your place call 01243 823619 or email bognorcatholicparish@live.co.uk

Evening Prayer for Divorced, Remarried & Separated

All those in our Parish communities who may be divorced, remarried or simply separated, are warmly invited to come together with Bishop Richard for afternoon tea, conversation and the celebration Evening Prayer.

There is no cost for this event. All are welcome, please let us know if you have additional needs.

Sunday 23rd February at 3pm in St John the Evangelist Church, Horsham, RH12 2PJ

For more information or to book, please contact our Marriage & Family Life Advisor, Katherine Bergin on katherine.bergin@abdiocese.org.uk

REGULAR EVENTS IN THE PARISH

Mass Times - Saturday: 9.00 am (Concelebrated) and 5.00 pm (First Mass of Sunday),

Sunday: 9.30 am, with an 11.30am mass at St Dunstan's West Hoathly

Daily Mass: 8.00 am and 5.30 pm (Concelebrated), Holy Days of Obligation: Vigil Mass: 7.30 pm;

Feast Day: 8.00 am and 5.30 pm

Adoration - Friday evenings 7.00- 8.00pm in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel. Reflection, music and silence.

Sunday Adoration – In St Dunstan's Chapel, West Hoathly, every Sunday from 5pm-7pm to support the parish evangelisation programme. Please feel free to come for as long as you wish.

Confessions (Sacrament of Reconciliation) - Sundays 9.10-9.30am before Mass.

Marian Prayer Group – Now Meeting 1st / 3rd Wednesday at 7:30pm, Lady Chapel.

Lectio Divina - Tuesdays 8.20pm, for 30 mins, Parlour 1 (entry from the Narthex) then Compline.

Sunday Prayers for Healing - Once a month, there is a half hour Service of Prayers for Healing in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel after 0930 Sunday Mass. All welcome! The next date is **5th January**.

Christian Meditation Group - Blessed Sacrament Chapel 7.45pm for 8pm start to 8.45pm followed by Compline. Contact Caterina 01243 554001. .

Vigil for Vocations - (1st Friday) 9.00pm to midnight in the Abbey Church.

Bereavement Support - Marian & Clare are available to meet you either at St Benedict's or to visit you at home. Contact the team via the Parish Office or email - clare_harper@hotmail.com or marian.imhasly@gmail.com.

Bible Study Group – Every Wednesday at 7.30pm in St Benedict's (Parish Office). Please double check with the Parish Office. **Next Session will be on 8th January.**

Nazareth Youth Group – For young people in years 9-13 on a Wednesday evening in Compass House between 5.45pm-7pm. It includes pizza, games, worship and social times. Contact Veronika on vbulakova@worth.org.uk

*“The Lord waits for us daily to translate into action, as we should, his Holy Teachings.”
(St Benedict)*

Next Sunday's Readings: **The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph (Year A)**

1st Reading – Ecclesiasticus 3:3-7, 14-17 2nd Reading – Colossians 3:12-21

Gospel: Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

The Escape to Egypt

Daily Readings

Monday – Mal 3:1-4, 23-24 Luke 1:57-66

Tuesday – 2 Sam 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16: Luke 1:67-79

Wednesday – Isa 52:7-10 Heb 1:1-6 John 1:1-18 (**The Nativity of the Lord**)

Thursday – Acts 6:8-10, 7:54-59 Matt 10:17-22 (**St Stephen**)

Friday – 1 John 1:1-4 John 20:1a, 2-8 (**St John**)

Saturday – 1 John 1:5-2:2 Matt 2:13-18 (**Holy Innocents**)

Worth Abbey Parish, Paddockhurst Road, Turners Hill, West Sussex, RH10 4SB

Parish Priest: Fr Paul Fleetwood

Mobile: 07764 260216

Parish Office Email: parish@worth.org.uk **Parish Office Tel:** 01342 710313

Parish Website: www.worthabbeyparish.co.uk **Secretary:** Maria Stribbling (Hours: 9.15am-1.15pm Mon-Fri)

Night time emergencies only: 07494 484979

Any cheques to be made payable to – Worth Abbey Parish

Safeguarding: Rachel Davies (07801 696354) and Maria Stribbling (01342 710313)

In Touch: If you would like anything to appear in 'In Touch', please contact Maria Stribbling at parish@worth.org.uk
(By Tuesday)

If you are unable to attend Mass and would like to receive Holy Communion at home, or if you have any prayer intentions, please let Fr Paul know.