

**“Wherever we may be, we are in the service of the same Lord and doing battle for the same King”**  
( St Benedict )



## Tips for the weekend – 2nd/3rd December

Have you ever thought of having a Reverse Advent Calendar? It is a great way of supporting your local food bank.

This advent, find a big box and every day put something in it which is non-perishable.  
Treats as well as basics are good.

By Christmas you will have a box full of good things to donate to your local food bank.  
Winter can be an especially difficult time for those on low incomes, with more money needed for heating which reduces money left for food

## Today we begin our celebration of the season of Advent.

It is the beginning of the Church’s year, and looks forward to the End of time, when Jesus is expected to return as Judge – his “coming in Glory”.

Among the first generation of Christians this sense of expectation was very strong. St Paul and his first converts all believed initially that it would take place during their lifetime. In his first letter, written perhaps twenty years after the death and Resurrection of Jesus, Paul writes: *“Those who have died in Christ will be the first to rise, and then those of us who are still alive will be taken up in the clouds...to meet the Lord”*.

He writes this to reassure those who were worried that some of their brothers had died before the return of Jesus.

It is as if they were living during the interval between two acts of a play. The death and resurrection of Jesus had initiated God’s Kingdom, and his return would complete it. This theme is clear in the readings leading up to Advent, which in the first centuries of the Church’s life started some weeks earlier.

The gospel readings, this year from Matthew, reflect the situation some fifty years later, when this keen awareness of living in “the End Times” had become less vivid. His gospel gives the impression that his community has lost some of that first, vivid expectation of the imminent Return of Jesus. The next generation of Christians had become aware that they were living in the age of mission – Matthew’s gospel ends with the words of Jesus, *“Go and make disciples of all nations...and know that I am with you to the end of the age”*. Perhaps, after all, it was going to be a long wait.

Matthew includes at the end of the gospel the parables which we heard at mass over the last few weeks – about the wise and foolish bridesmaids waiting for the coming of the Bridegroom, Jesus; the servants who are entrusted with a share of their master’s wealth (the talents), which they are to use profitably while they await his return; and the great scene of judgement at the end of time, the division of sheep and goats.

All of these encourage us to sharpen our sense of longing for Jesus’ return, expressed in one of the earliest Christian prayers, *Maranatha, Come, Lord Jesus*. In some Eastern churches this is expressed visually by an empty throne, ready for the appearance of the Lord Jesus, which they call in Greek *etymasia, readiness*. This is the spirit which the season of Advent offers us. In the words of the opening prayer we ask for *the resolve to run forth to meet Christ with righteous deeds at his coming*.  
May the Lord grant us all this grace in the coming weeks.

**Anniversaries – Please pray for the souls of** - John Davidson, Revd Rupert Studd, Peter Lovell, Agnes Greenstreet, Trevor Adam, Allan Cameron-Wilson, Amy Constable, Jane Stimson, Dr Ronald Matthews, Molly Cox, Louisa Jane Thornton, Ann Botting, Doris Barber, Stephen Price, Dom Roger Bacon, Joanne Etherton, John Isted, Mrs Ray Smith  
**Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them, may they rest in peace. Amen.**

## PARISH NEWS AND EVENTS

### *Special Events for your Calendar*

**Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December: 7.30pm. Christmas Music from Handel's Messiah in the Abbey Church. Jenny will be selling her wonderful jams and chutneys after the mass and at the concert, our fantastic Traidcraft stall will be open and refreshments of red & white wine and soft drinks together with mince pies will be served after the concert. All in aid of Irundu.**

**Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> December:** Joint Carol Concert for the Circle Club and the local Nursing Homes (Worth Schola and Ardingly College Schola) in the Abbey Church@ 11.30am.

**An evening of Advent reflection:** On 17<sup>th</sup> December, we are pleased to offer a meditative moment of prayer and quiet to help you prepare for Christmas. We will begin with the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in the chapel at 5.30pm. This will be followed by Monastic Vespers to which everyone is most welcome. After Vespers there will be mince pies and mulled wine in the Narthex. At 7.30pm D’Arcy Trinkwon will perform Olivier Messiaen’s “La Nativite du Seigneur” (The birth of the Lord).

**RISE Theatre group performance:** 13<sup>th</sup> January, the “RISE Theatre” will give a performance of their highly acclaimed play “Romero”. This will take place in the PAC at 7pm. There will be refreshments beforehand and the play will last about 1 hour. Cost for tickets is £10 per adult and £5 for children.

**To reserve a ticket, please contact the office.**

**Church Unity Celebration:** Sunday, 21<sup>st</sup> January, at 3 pm. This will be in the Abbey church, followed by refreshments. Everyone is welcome, and all the Churches in the local villages. The team from Crawley Down will offer “merry church” in the Unity Room, for any child who would like this.



### **PEG EVENT 2018**

Saturday 27 January 2018 - our great New Year event! Luxury coach to Greenwich to explore the Cutty Sark, Queen's House and Maritime Museum, the famous Greenwich indoor market, wonderful street food, guided tour of almshouses and more! Tickets NOW £29  
Contact Sara Barclay-Hudson (01444 461236) [sbh0369@yahoo.com](mailto:sbh0369@yahoo.com)

## *Can you help?*

**Volunteering:** The Gatwick Visitors Group, which visits immigration detainees held at the airport; Refugees Welcome Crawley, who befriend and help refugee families who live locally; the Crawley SVP Group, who assist families in need in the Crawley area; Life, which supports a house in Crawley and another in Haywards Heath, for single mothers; helping prepare and serve meals in the Friary Hall in Crawley on Sundays at lunch time. Please look at the web site, on the volunteering page, or get in touch with the office for more information.

**Garden Space:** Does anyone have space in their garden for a group of families, directed by gardeners from Refugees Welcome Crawley, to cultivate plants and vegetables? Please get in touch with the office. Thank you

**Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group:** The Gatwick Detainee centre is in great need of jogging bottoms, hoodies, coats, trainers and rucksacks. We would be most grateful for any of these items that you may be able to donate. Anything you have can be dropped off at the parish office. Thank you

**Alzheimer Society:** We are again collecting used stamps for the Alzheimer society. There is an envelope on the noticeboard in the Narthex for you to just drop these off. Thank you for all your help with collecting these, this past year.

**PACT Christmas Gift Appeal:** Please help us by donating a Christmas present for children with loved ones in prison. Christmas is hard for the families and a Christmas present means the world to these children. If you could please donate a gift (**unwrapped and new**) for £5-£10, for a child, and drop it off at the parish office we would be so grateful. Deadline for gifts is Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December. Please see noticeboard in Narthex. Thank you

**Taidcraft Stall:** Our Traidcraft stall will be open every Sunday until Christmas, for Christmas cards and gifts. For any special orders for cards etc., please contact Beryl - [berylmcnulty@btinternet.com](mailto:berylmcnulty@btinternet.com)

**Prayers for Healing:** There will be a half an hour service of prayers for healing starting at 10.45am after Sunday Mass in The Blessed Sacrament Chapel. All welcome!

**Bookshop:** Advent Reflections are available in the Abbey Bookshop

**Catholic Schools:** Bishop Richard asks us to respond to this, concerning Catholic Schools. Do you support Catholic schools and the right of Catholics to send their children to them? Then we need you to make your voice heard. The Government is making a critical decision on whether to overturn the admissions cap which prevents Catholic schools from allowing all Catholic pupils to attend. They have acknowledged that this policy discriminates against Catholics and promised to abandon it, now we need you to tell them not to U-turn on their promise to Catholics. Visit <http://catholicnews.org.uk/education-cap> or search for "catholic education" in your search engine, to write to the Government and urge them to drop their policy which bans new Catholic schools.

## OTHER EVENTS

**Feast of the Immaculate Conception:** 'On Thursday the 7<sup>th</sup> December, the vigil of the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, please pray and fast for the end of abortion and euthanasia in this Country. Your prayer and fasting is urgently needed, and it really does save lives. **Please also pray that buffer zones around abortion centres won't be introduced.** For information on the days of Prayer and Fasting see: [www.GoodCounselNetwork.com](http://www.GoodCounselNetwork.com)'  
Please see petition on the website for Citizen G.O.

**Evenings of Reflection for Confirmation candidates:** Bishop Richard will once again be hosting a series of Evenings of Reflection for Confirmation candidates around the Diocese. The evenings centre on an experience of Lectio Divina, led by Bishop Richard, and have proved extremely popular in 2016 and 2017 with some great feedback being received. In fact, a stunning ninety percent of young people who returned evaluations last year, indicated that the evenings were something they would recommend to somebody else! All evenings run from 7pm to 9pm and available dates are: Thursday Jan 18th, Horsham, Saturday Feb 3rd, Womersley (50 places left), Thursday Feb 8th, Epsom (30 places left), Thursday Feb 22nd, Worthing, Saturday Mar 10th, Bexhill.  
Booking is essential as space is limited. To book your group in, just send Jack Regan an Email- [Jack.Regan@dabnet.org](mailto:Jack.Regan@dabnet.org)

**Annual Justice & Peace Assembly:** Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> January. "Hope Overcoming Fear". The church in the modern world. Speakers Jack Valero – co founder of Catholic Voices and Dr Anthony Towey of St Mary's University. To book, contact Ruth Gerun on 01283 651164 (see our noticeboard)

**World Meeting of Families:** Bishop Richard invites families to join him on a pilgrimage to Dublin for the World meeting of families 22<sup>nd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> August 2018. This event includes; a three day congress exploring themes from Amoris Laetitia. International speakers will lead sessions for adults and there are age appropriate activities for children and young people. This is followed by a concert style "Festival of Families" on the Saturday and the event concludes with Sunday Mass concelebrated by Pope Francis. For further details please contact: [wmof2018@dabnet.org](mailto:wmof2018@dabnet.org)

