

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

NEW BEGINNINGS?

Sunday 10th December 2023

Mass Book Page 85

Saint Mark opens by summarising all that will follow - 'The Beginning of the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.' But when we get to the end of his Gospel and look back, we realise how bold Mark is being. Every word, "beginning", "good news", "Jesus", "Christ", "Son of God", feels different because of the story which has been told. Mark knows that something has begun that will never end. This is not the standard story of political fame, triumph, and glorious recognition. Mark even reverses the conventional meaning of "Christ", and "Son of God". In this Gospel, the main character has no privilege or prestige. The destiny of Jesus was to face fierce resistance from his own religious leaders. He was abandoned and misunderstood by his own disciples. And then to suffer and die and rise again. For Mark, all of this is Good News, and, for those who are ready, his Gospel will provide a deeper and deeper insight into the true meaning of these titles.



And so, it begins before it begins. John the Baptist is hard at work. His message is one of repentance or metanoia. John lives like a prophet, eats like a prophet, dresses like a prophet, and talks like a prophet. John gives voice to God's eternal plea, "Come back to me with all your heart".

As a prophet, John must liberate people from the sin which ensnares them. He does this by asking them to have a new mind and changing their behaviour. He uses Baptism as a powerful symbol of this great undertaking. Those who go down into the water must first have made a rigorous self-examination of the life that they are living. In Baptism, they experience a new sense of freedom. They have shaken off the shackles of the past and are ready for something new. Which is exactly the impression John wants to make. Newly Baptized people are not completed, they are only ready for the main event. In most adventure stories, the hero or heroine must overcome many obstacles in their path to reach their goal. For John, the obstacles are not in the way of the one journeying but in the way of the One arriving! The whole point of clearing the ground is to allow this One to arrive. It works like this; God and the ones who work with God go after people. God is always searching for us, and we must cultivate the art of welcoming Him when he comes.

The question then is whether or not we are ready for this new beginning. Are we willing and open? Can we engage with Jesus and his teaching? We can be presented with many opportunities for spiritual formation but seize none of them. This question of readiness might explain why the teaching of Jesus fell on so many deaf ears.

But I imagine a different kind of scenario for being ready. It might, as Mark suggests, begin with a life changing insight into the horror of sin and our need for forgiveness. Perhaps it is more likely that people just wake up one day and find that there is no life in their lives. The passion, pleasure, and purpose of what they do and who they are is no longer there. The flow of life and love has dried up and, underneath the surface of things, people are hungry for change. These are the moments when, realising that we are dying at our own hands, we risk it all. If this is true, our encounters with dissatisfaction or desperation might turn out to be our best moment of Grace. The waters of the river Jordan will carry our sins away. The Baptist watches. He deflects our gratitude and praise. He tells us this is only the first step. That someone is coming who will pour Spirit like water into our desert lives. We are on the edge. We hear the Baptist speak, "I am the beginning before it begins".



The funeral for Ena Stanton RIP will take place on Thursday 14th December at 11am at Easthampstead Park Crematorium.

**MAY THEIR SOULS AND THE SOULS OF ALL THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED,
THROUGH THE MERCY OF GOD, REST IN PEACE. AMEN.**



GIVE Campaign Update #002



The Parish recently launched a new campaign. In the first wave of pledges released, there were 70 ways for parishioners to get involved, through donating their time, talent, or treasure.

Only 7 parishioners had responded to pledges in the first week. The total number of pledges responded to has now doubled, with some parishioners willing to take on two or three separate roles within the Church- thank you!

Our community needs your generosity so that we can be faithful to the vocation God has given to us.

Your mission for this week is to visit the GIVE section of the Parish website and have a browse through the different categories of pledges available, picking out some that appeal to you.

[GIVE – St Joseph & St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Parish \(bracknellcatholicchurch.org\)](http://bracknellcatholicchurch.org)

THANK YOU!

'GIVE A GIFT' Appeal Thank You

The Parish Pastoral Care team would like to say an enormous THANK YOU to everyone who donated a gift or gifts to the Parish 'Give a Gift' Appeal. Your generosity was truly overwhelming! Our thanks also go to the amazing team of volunteers who came together to sort and wrap all your donations. It was an amazing team effort, so thank you for volunteering your time. This week we have started to deliver all these gifts, so our thanks in advance to all those who are undertaking this very important delivery. Together, you have made it possible for us as a Parish to touch the lives of so many in our community in a very positive way and truly deliver the message of Christmas.



Christmas Eve Children's Mass

All children attending this mass at 5pm are invited to wear a shepherd's head dress or an angel's head dress for the service. You can also bring a cuddly animal if you want to!



Pastoral Area Advent Penitential Service

On the eve of 14th December, from 7:30pm, there will be a gathering of Priests from across the pastoral area at the Immaculate Conception Church in Sandhurst (GU47 9BS). You are all invited to come and partake in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, especially those who have not yet been to confession this year.

First Holy Communion Books

If anyone has books about First Holy Communion from when their child undertook the Sacrament, the First Holy Communion team would appreciate donations to aid the upcoming cohorts in their religious journey.

CAFOD Israeli-Palestinian Crisis Appeal

Donate to CAFOD's Israeli-Palestinian Crisis Appeal at cafod.org.uk/ipc or call 0303 303 3030 to support those affected and get funds to local trusted experts in Gaza and southern Israel who have been working alongside communities helping those most in need.



Flower Power Team Christmas Collection

On the third week of Advent (17th December), there will be a second collection held for Parish flowers, with the proceeds going towards buying lovely floral numbers to make the Church pop with colour!

Care Home Singing 2023 Dates for your Diary

- Wed 13th Dec 2-3pm Bracknell Care Home, Crowthorne Road, RG12 7DN
- Fri 15th Dec 11am-12 Edmonds Court, Sandy Lane, RG12 2HP

Carols will be sung, please join in if possible!

New Choir and Music Group Members

If you play/are interested in playing an instrument, or your voice is your instrument, please reach out to John Weeks on 01344 451373, who will be able to put your talent to good use.

Baptism Preparation Evening

11/01 7:30pm–9:15pm

Complete a Baptism Enquiry Form if you haven't already!



Cuppa & A Chat

Every Tuesday
2pm–3pm



Children's Liturgy

10/12 8:30am and
10:30am Mass



Soup & Roll

08/12, 12/01, 09/02
after 12 noon mass



WE PRAY FOR THOSE IN OUR PARISH COMMUNITY WHO ARE SICK, HOUSEBOUND OR IN HOSPITAL AND FOR THOSE WHO CARE FOR THEM

Inge Walker	Anne Hardy	Patricia Holmwood	Blanche Shap	Ethna Sweeney
Mary King	Mary Phelan	Tony Andrews	Sally Torode	Dorcas Innes-Grant
Rico Morales	Mary Murray	Thelma Briggs	Margaret Pearce	Audrey Lam
Marie Swash	Terri Landmann	Vilma Taborda	Zac Hoy	Brenda Lynch
Amanda Killestein	Doreen Pryor	Sharon Bryan	Terry and Peggy McCullough	John Moir
Beryl Pilgrim	Charles Hose	Douglas & Bernadette Hunt	Clarita Kokou-Tchri	Margaret Finnieston
Louis Burgisser	Prim & Ian Maynard	Vivienne Halfpenny	Ann O'Sullivan	Lucia Saligoi
Leonie Macintosh	Maureen Baxter	Ann D'Ambrosio	Edmund & Kate Carroll	Claire Hose
Arthur Hardy	Bernard O'Neill	Phyllis Lewis	Eddie & Flo Moore	Jerry & Susan Tobin
Janet Read	Ann Lynch	Bridget Riordan	Ursula Docherty	

To add or remove a name to this list with consent, please contact the Parish Office.

If you or your relative is housebound, or because of illness cannot come to Mass and wish to receive Holy Communion at home, call the office on 01344 425729 or email office@bracknellcatholicchurch.org

PARISH OF ST JOSEPH and ST MARGARET CLITHEROW, BRACKNELL

Parish Priest: Fr. Daniel McAvoy **Deacon:** Rev. Aidan Lynch

Parish Administrators: Francis Barton and Donna Mody

Safeguarding Team: Marion McGuire, Sarah Birch, Paula Read

07712 048695 safeguarding@bracknellcatholicchurch.org

Parish Office, St. Joseph's Church, 39 Braccan Walk, Bracknell, RG12 1HA

Office Hours: Monday - Tuesday 9:00-3:00pm, Wednesday - Friday 9:00-5:00pm

Telephone: 01344 425729

Email: office@bracknellcatholicchurch.org **Website:** <https://www.bracknellcatholicchurch.org>

MASS TIMES

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Saturday	9th	6pm	Mass	<i>Bertha Da Cunha RIP</i>
Sunday	10th	8:30am	Mass	Parish Intentions
		10:30am	Mass	<i>Barbara (Babs) McAvoy RIP</i>

Monday 11th **NO MASS**

Tuesday 12th 10am Mass *Tommy & Annie Robinson RIP (& Family)*

ST. LUCY, Virgin, Martyr, memorial

Wednesday	13th	10am	Mass	<i>Jose Coelho RIP</i>
Thursday	14th	10am	Mass	<i>Ena Stanton RIP</i>

ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS, Religious, Doctor of the Church, memorial

Friday	15th	11am	Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament	
		12pm	Mass	<i>Allan James RIP</i>
Saturday	16th	10am		<i>Marion Redmond RIP</i>
		11am	Confessions	

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Saturday	16th	6pm	Mass	Parish Intentions
Sunday	17th	8:30am	Mass	<i>Daniel Bagayas FHC</i>
		10:30am	Mass	<i>Sheila Van de Vyver RIP</i>

ALL MASSES ARE LIVESTREAMED <https://www.bracknellcatholicchurch.org/watch-live>

New to our parish or not yet registered?

<https://www.bracknellcatholicchurch.org/parish-life/parish-registration>



01344 425729

office@bracknellcatholicchurch.org

Are you lonely? Are you ill and in need of prayer and/or support? Perhaps you have not had contact with the Catholic Church for a while. Whatever the reason, please do get in touch for a chat.



07852 497 218 / 07851 200 987

office@bracknellcatholicchurch.org

Are you in the land of loss & would appreciate a chat with someone in our group? If so, do not hesitate to get in touch.



Call **IN CONFIDENCE**
07731 862 349

If you are struggling financially and need practical assistance, the local Society of St Vincent de Paul (SVP) may be able to help. Do call us in confidence for a chat.

DONATIONS TO PARISH FUNDS Online, Bank Transfer, DD, <https://www.bracknellcatholicchurch.org/planned-giving>

BANK DETAILS: Account Name: CDP Bracknell St Joseph Sort Code: 30-93-04; Account Number: 00875520

PLEASE MAKE CHEQUES PAYABLE TO: **CDP BRACKNELL ST JOSEPH**

South Berkshire Pastoral Area, Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth Registration Number: 1199568