

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT

Sunday 8th December 2024

Missal Page 36

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If we are sending a letter, we would normally put our address, telephone number and the date at the top of the first page. By doing this we identify the time and place we live in, in case the person receiving the letter wants to reply. But if we were in a place where someone, say, a doctor, was worried about our connection to reality itself, they might ask us the name of the current monarch, prime minister, Archbishop of Canterbury, and all that.

The clever opening of the third chapter of St. Luke's Gospel does a version of this. Luke names the Roman Overlords,- Tiberius Caesar and Pontus Pilate, the Jewish Kings - Herod, Philip and Lysanias, and those who have authority in the Temple - Annas and Caiaphas. We know John's time and place by placing him alongside the so-called leaders of his day. But looked at from another angle, St. Luke is making a scathing judgment on these leaders. For although each, in their own way, claim to be mediators of sacred things, the Word of God sidesteps the lot of them and makes its way to a priests' son, who is also a prophet, and who lives in the desert. John's desert is a place of utter simplicity, purity and purification. And it is with a pure and a wise heart he avoids those who seek power and territory.

When John emerges from the desert, he has God on his mind and a very clear call to repentance or 'metanoia'. His baptism which, on the surface, 'washes sins away' or 'drowns one life to begin another', is really a journey into the strange landscape of the human heart. John has only one agenda, one mission - and it is the forgiveness of sins. But the sins which have been forgiven (repentance) must also be let go (metanoia) by the mind which wants to hang onto them.

John enters the human heart like a construction worker building a motorway. If there is a valley, it will be filled. If there is an obstacle, say a mountain, in the way, it will be flattened. If the road is too windy, it will be made straight. If it is too rough, it will be made smooth. Whatever is needed to make the Advent of God's Mercy arrive, will be done.

To grasp what John is doing we need to look for a moment at the Baptism of Jesus. In John's presence, Jesus goes down into the water and He prays. The heavens open and the Spirit descends. The Father speaks, "You are my Son, the Beloved, with you I am well pleased." (Lk 3,22). This is the goal of forgiveness and metanoia. Unless we know we are forgiven, and unless our mind can move in joy to letting go of those sins, we will be blind and deaf to the gift of the Spirit. John's motorway is only there to let God get close enough, through Jesus, to fill us with the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Why is this so important? My own experience of sin is that it's like superglue. We can all easily remember the story of the sins that were committed against us. It is much easier to remember the wrongs done to us than the blessings we have received through others. Soon we learn to sin back and wound others. And most of us, if we are honest, tell the story of our lives in terms of blows received and blows given. It is a 'tale of sin' which powerfully shapes our self-understanding. Worse still, as we nurture this version of ourselves, we elevate sin to a status it does not deserve. Little by little we are convinced that this is what is real.

The call to repentance is really an invitation to humbly acknowledge that this is part of our story. We have been wronged and we have wronged others. To avoid this kind of honest examination is a grave mistake. But we must not let our experience of sin define us. If we think that our sins cannot be forgiven, or that we cannot forgive the hurt that has been done to us, we will not blossom into Compassionate, Loving, Justice making and Respectful persons. Our experience of sin will stand like a huge roadblock which prevents The Beloved Son of God running to meet us and who has come to tell us that we are the Light of the World and the Salt of the earth. His words will not get past the armour of our hardened hearts. This is why John's work must be done first so that we can let go of sin and put on the mind of Christ.

In this second week of Advent, there is a clear invitation to come home to ourselves. This door can only open when we allow God to forgive us and then let the sin go.

It would be a great tragedy if God offered us forgiveness and we couldn't let go of the sin! In the Kingdom of God, we are all beloved daughters and sons of the Most High. God is well pleased with us. But we have to risk John's Baptism to clear the pathway for the full experience of the Spirit to arise in our hearts, and set us free!



GIVE Campaign Update #050

GIVE A GIFT FOR CHRISTMAS, and help us share the Christmas Message



We would like to invite our wonderful parish community to consider donating a Christmas gift for those around us who are most in need.

In the past, you have responded with overwhelming generosity to this appeal and, as a result, we have distributed Christmas gifts to the Berkshire Women's Aid Refuges, Bracknell LIFE House, local Care Homes and many needy families in the local community. This year, once again, we would like to distribute your gifts to these places and to those who are housebound. You can choose to give from any or all the following options:

- a) Give a gift for a mother or child at the Berkshire Women's Aid Refuge or Bracknell LIFE House.** If you would like to do this, then please contact the Pastoral Care team for details of children's ages, either by email: pastoralcare@bracknellcatholicchurch.org
- b) Give a gift of sweet treats** e.g. for adults - boxed sweet biscuits or confectionery; for children - boxes or stockings of confectionery.
- c) Give a gift of toiletry treats** e.g. boxed gift sets for women, men or children.

We can only accept the gift items specified above and these must be new, unused and, if edible, unopened and well within their sell by dates.

Please bring your donated items to St Joseph and St Margaret Clitherow Parish Hall after Mass on Saturday 7th December or between 9.30am – 12.00pm on Sunday December 8th. Thank you!

More prayers of intercession writers needed to help alleviate some of the time commitment our existing writers face.

Fire marshals needed at our 6pm Saturday Vigil Mass. Training provided.

Supporting sacristans needed for the Sunday 8:30am Mass. Full training provided.

Children's Liturgy We are still in need for someone to **lead** our **10:30** Children's Liturgy Masses. Full training will be provided and support is always available!

Parish excursions for older parishioners:

08/12: 3.00pm - Cineworld Bracknell. Andre Rieu's Christmas Concert. Cost: £13.45/14.45.

03/01: South Hill Park – Robin Hood & The Magic Arrow. Pantomime for adults. Cost: £26.50.

If any of these events appeal to you, please put your name down on the lists in the hall/entrance!

Christmas Carol Singing

The prayer group invites all of the parish to join them carol singing, on Tuesday 10th December. They will be meeting in the parish hall at 6:45pm to go out into town and sing, before possibly coming back to church for some prayer time, finishing at about 8pm. If you're interested, just turn up!



Sunday Missals

We hope everybody is enjoying the new Sunday Missals. However, a number of them have been accidentally removed from the church over last Sunday weekend. If you could please check at home, and if you have a stamped copy please return it. If you have bought one, your unstamped copy is available to pick up from the office.



Parish Events	When?	Where?
Gospel Outreach with Music (Carols)	16/12, 1:45pm-3pm	Bickerton House, RG12 2JB
Gospel Outreach with Music (Carols)	20/12, 1:45pm-3pm	Clement House RG12 2GH
Cuppa & Chat (60+) ☺	03/12, 10/12, 17/12	Church Hall
Children's Liturgy (please pre-book) 👧 👦	01/12, 15/12	Church Hall
Soup & Roll ☺	13/12 (second Friday of the month)	Church Hall
Parish Prayer Group 🙏	03/12, 7:00pm-8:00pm	Church Hall
RCIA 📖	Every Wednesday, 7:30pm-9pm	Church Hall

We pray for the repose of the souls of Patricia Doherty and Jerry Tobin, who passed away recently.

*May the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace.
Amen.*



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

FOR THOSE WHO CARE FOR THEM

Amanda Killestein	Angela Dossett	Ann D'Ambrosio	Ann Lynch	Ann O'Sullivan
Anne Hardy	Arthur Hardy	Audrey Lam	Bernard O'Neill	Beryl Pilgrim
Blanche Shap	Brenda Lynch	Bridget Riordan	Charles Hose	Claire Hose
Clarita Kokou-Tchri	Dorcas Innes-Grant	Douglas & Bernadette Hunt	Dymphna Slade	Eamon McNeill
Eddie & Flo Moore	Edmund & Kate Carroll	Inge Walker	Janet Read	Susan Tobin
Joe Rice	Leonie Macintosh	Louis Burgisser	Lucia Saligo	Margaret Finnieston
Marie Swash	Mary King	Mary Murray	Mary Phelan	Mary Stocking
Maureen Baxter	Maureen Taylor	Patricia Holmwood	Paula Sandford	Phyllis Lewis
Rico Morales	Sally Torode	Terri Landmann	Terry & Peggy McCullough	Tony Andrews
Ursula Docherty	Vilma Taborda	Vivienne Halfpenny		

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

Our world here in the UK has now changed, unfortunately not for the better. Last Friday, MPs voted to legalise assisted suicide, 330 in favour with 275 against. As people of reason and people of faith, we know this is a truly bad move. It will put pressure on the elderly and the dying, making them feel they are a burden. It will undermine palliative care and the trust that should exist between patients and doctors. More, the range of eligibility is bound to expand over time so that death by suicide will become normal. Although not unexpected, this vote poses a grave danger. Britain is now crossing a line from which there will be no return. Yet even so, all those of good will must continue the fight and the argument. As the bill goes through its lengthy committee stages, we now need to pray earnestly, and to work tirelessly, to contain its range and its reach, to ensure that people of conscience are not forced into participation. Indeed, given that some MPs who voted in favour are now wavering in their support, we should contact our MPs to urge them to vote against the bill at its Third Reading.

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	7 th	6pm	Mass	<i>Freda Crookall RIP</i>
Sunday	8 th	8:30am	Mass	<i>Cathleen Burke RIP</i>
		10:30am	Mass	Parish Intentions

THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY,

Joint-Principal Patron of the Diocese, *solemnity*

Monday	9 th	NO MASS		
Tuesday	10 th	10am	Mass	<i>Barbara McAvoy RIP</i>
Wednesday	11 th	10am	Mass	<i>Holy Souls in Purgatory</i>
Thursday	12 th	10am	Mass	<i>Maureen Taylor</i>
Friday	13 th	11am	Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament	
		12 noon	Mass	<i>Jose Coelho RIP</i>
St John of the Cross, Religious, Doctor of the Church, <i>memorial</i>				
Saturday	14 th	10am	Mass	<i>Allan James RIP</i>
		11am	Confessions	

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Saturday	14 th	6pm	Mass	<i>Yvette Bone RIP</i>
Sunday	15 th	8:30am	Mass	Parish Intentions
		10:30am	Mass	

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>

Pastoral Care 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.

Bereavement Support

07852 497 218 / 07851 200 987

bereavement@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.

SVP 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://bracknellcatholicchurch.org/give/>

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**

JOBS AVAILABLE IN THE DIOCESE: <https://www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/about-us/other/jobs>

South Berkshire Pastoral Area, Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth Registration Number: 119956