

**THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

***The Art of Conversion***

15<sup>th</sup> December 2024

Missal Page 40

Integrity arises when the inner light - which never fails - is matched by how we behave on the outside. People come to John the Baptist with the question, "What must we do?" Without the inner illumination which comes first they might decide that they will hang up their second coat in the wardrobe and store that extra loaf in the freezer. Without inner wisdom they might begin to argue with John as to why they should offer warmth and nourishment to someone who has not worked for it.

The tax collectors have done well by tipping the scales in their own favour. Will they take a cut in their bonuses? Will there be consequences if they opt for honesty? Soldiers don't teach embroidery classes. They throw their weight around. If they were to limit their use of force to what is necessary for peace and sacrifice the extra revenue that comes from intimidation what will become of them? The point being that when we try to change the way we work on the outside, we have to work from the inside to sustain it. What looks like a simple call to justice from John has become a journey of self-discovery!

Change does not come easy. There will be mountains to climb and obstacles which need to be removed, but this will not happen unless they can be clearly seen. None better than John for this task. But only for this task. John knows he is not the Messiah. He has many things to learn from the 'One who is to come'. Just like the rest of us! Watch carefully. John correctly envisions a 'Baptism of the Holy Spirit and of Fire.' But he does not fully understand the vision. He thinks it bodes judgement and destruction. The Holy Spirit, a howling wind that separates wheat from chaff, that is flicked in the air and devoured by fire. John is presenting the classical good versus evil, reward versus punishment paradigm.

But when the Beloved Son does appear the Holy Spirit comes as connection. The Spirit draws people into God's Heart and works with them to produce the 'good works' that give glory to God. The Spirit comes as inspiration and direction. The Spirit is the Advocate and the Paraclete, who encourages, empowers and strengthens us for all that is good. The Spirit enables us to share our resources and gifts with others and not oppress them. It is a fire that burns with passion. It is a fire that does not go out. It is the same fire which sent Moses back to his community with freedom in his hands.

So, in this third week of Advent I wanted to ask, when was the last time you asked yourself the question? The question being, "What is the next thing I must do to grow as a more committed, more compassionate and more faithful disciple of Jesus. Take Compassion as an example. Let's say we made it the heartbeat of our morning prayer for this third week of Advent.

Let's say we decided to read something about compassion each day to develop our understanding of what it really is. Let's say we decide to act with compassion whenever the opportunity presents itself. We pray, we ponder, we act.

I love this, all too human example from, 'A Hidden Wholeness' by Parker Palmer, (San Francisco: Joseph-Bass, 2004, 155-156.

At Pendle Hill, the Quaker community where I lived and worked for eleven years, our lives were so intertwined that people could quickly become attached to each other and just as quickly become alienated. But alienated is a mild word to describe my relation to one woman who lived there. She was, in my mind, the devil's spawn, sent directly from the pits of hell to destroy all that is green and good about life on earth.

The people at Pendle Hill gather every morning in a 'meeting for worship', forty-five minutes of community silence, occasionally broken by words spoken spontaneously from the heart. One morning, I arrived late for worship and the only seat available was next to her. Agitated, I came close to turning around and walking out. But I managed somehow to sit down, close my eyes, and start to meditate, slowly forgetting that I was sitting next to a creature from the dark side.

About half an hour later, head still bowed, I opened my eyes and found myself staring at the upturned hand this woman had rested on her knee. There, spotlighted by a shaft of sunlight, I saw the faint but steady throb of an artery in her wrist, the elemental beat of her very human heart. In that moment, I know beyond words that here was a person just like me, with strengths and weaknesses, hopes and disappointments, joys and despairs. In that moment, my sense of who she was, and of who I was to her, underwent some sort of transformation. I never became close to this woman. In truth, I never stopped feeling wary of her. But I could no longer demonise her as I had until that silent, sunlit moment.

We pray, we ponder, we act. When good things begin to happen, we give thanks for the Spirit and the Fire at work in us. When we think we have done it on our own we reject any such nonsense. Rather, we continue to commit ourselves to the work with gratitude in our hearts. Because, as John Sobrino so rightly said, the process, the art of conversion never ends. We just have to keep chiselling at our own statue.



### GIVE Campaign Update #051



**\*CAFOD\*** Thank you to everybody who has donated to CAFOD. The church as a whole helped raise over £900 this quarter, which helps them massively with crucial humanitarian work.

**\*GIVE A GIFT FOR CHRISTMAS\*** Thank you for everyone's generous donations!

**\*Fire marshals needed\*** Full training provided.

**\*Supporting sacristans needed\*** 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!

**\*FLAME Fundraising Volunteers\*** We are seeking the support of a few parents who can assist with our fundraising efforts for the upcoming FLAME day out in Wembley next year. Your help would make a significant difference and directly benefit the whole group. Please reach out to Bernard or the office if you're able to help, thank you!

**\*Parish excursions\*** for older parishioners:

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!

### Church Gate

The church gate at the bottom of the garden is now closed, however the entrance further up on the opposite side of the garden is open, as it has a footpath.

### Catholic Herald

Catholic Herald copies are now available at the church entrance. If you take one with you, please pay £5 to the office so that we can keep the subscription running for future months.

### Defibrillator

There is a defibrillator in the corner of the Sacristy, just so everyone is aware in case it needs to be used in an unfortunate situation.



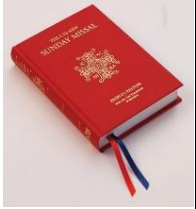
### St. Joseph's School Carol Concert

To get everyone in the mood for Christmas, our Key Stage 2 children will be singing their hearts out for us in church on Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> Dec at 6pm. Please come and show your support!



## Sunday Missals

We hope everybody is enjoying the new Sunday Missals. However, a number of them have been accidentally removed from the church over previous weekends. 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.



## Candle Boxes

Please can anyone lighting a candle in the candle boxes ensure they're at least 3 inches apart from another candle, so that they don't melt into one another and make clean-up more difficult. Thank you.



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+) ☺	07/01	Church Hall
Children's Liturgy (please pre-book) 👧 👦	15/12	Church Hall
Soup & Roll ☺	10/01 (second Friday of the month)	Church Hall
Parish Prayer Group 🙏	Back soon	Church Hall
RCIA 📖	Every Wednesday, 7:30pm-9pm	Church Hall



We pray for the repose of the souls of Patricia Doherty, Jerry Tobin and Maureen Taylor, 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		Patricia Holmwood	Paula Sandford	Phyllis Lewis
Rico Morales	Sally Torode	Terri & Andy 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](mailto:office@bracknellcatholicchurch.org)

***Gaudete Sunday, the third Sunday of Advent, is marked by joy. Zephaniah speaks of God's delight in His people, while Paul calls us to rejoice always. True joy comes from a deep trust in God's presence and His promises, even during life's many challenges. The Gospel reminds us that this joy is not selfish—it flows outward through generosity and kindness towards others.***



## 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](mailto: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](mailto:office@bracknellcatholicchurch.org) **Website:** <https://www.bracknellcatholicchurch.org>

### MASS TIMES

#### THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Saturday	14 <sup>th</sup>	6pm	Mass	<i>Yvette Bone RIP</i>
Sunday	15 <sup>th</sup>	8:30am	Mass	Parish Intentions
		10:30am	Mass	First Holy Communion
Monday	16 <sup>th</sup>	<b>NO MASS</b>		
<b>Liturgy of the Day 'O Wisdom'</b>				
Tuesday	17 <sup>th</sup>	10am	Mass	<i>Camelia-Adela Harrison (Physical Healing)</i>
<b>Liturgy of the Day 'O Adonai'</b>				
Wednesday	18 <sup>th</sup>	10am	Mass	
<b>Liturgy of the Day 'O Root of Jesse'</b>				
Thursday	19 <sup>th</sup>	10am	Mass	
<b>Liturgy of the Day 'O Key of David'</b>				
Friday	20 <sup>th</sup>	11am	Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament	
		12 noon	Mass	<i>Tom Smith RIP</i>
<b>Liturgy of the Day 'O Morning Star'</b>				
Saturday	21 <sup>st</sup>	10am	Mass	
		11am	Confessions	

#### FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

##### Liturgy of the Day 'O King of the nations'

Saturday	21 <sup>st</sup>	6pm	Mass	<i>Da Cunha &amp; Lessie D'Costa RIP</i>
Sunday	22 <sup>nd</sup>	8:30am	Mass	<i>Carol &amp; Terry Phillips RIP</i>
		10:30am	Mass	Parish Intentions (Baby Thomas)

**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](mailto: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](mailto: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**