



St Nicholas of Tolentino RC Church, Lawford's Gate, Bristol BS5 0RE

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Download this Bulletin from the Parish Website: www.tolentino.org.uk

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Catechesis: Mary Hopper (01275-830788) Caretaking of our buildings: Eddie Mgbeoduru

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THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT YEAR A - 'GAUDETE' SUNDAY

JOY, THE ECHO OF GOD'S LIFE IN US

Is there a reason to be joyful when we look around our world - rich nations refusing to tackle climate change and global warming, refusing to end of poverty, refusing to welcome those fleeing terror and poverty; preferring to spend our wealth on weapons of destruction instead? So why rejoice??

Because God does not protect Himself from this alienated and destructive world, but seeks to find a home among us - in the poor places, conflict-ridden places - and in your heart and mine! Will there be room for Him in the inn of our hearts?

Let us indeed 'Gaudete' - Rejoice! Because God knocks upon the door of our lives and asks to be let in and change everything within us so that we can change everything around us! Indeed our joy is founded upon the God within us, the Immanuel God-with-us; and our joy will echo God's Life and Love within us to a world needing the joy of liberation! Let us light up the world with God's Joy!



SUNDAY: PARISH MASS at 10.00am (Live-streamed)

MONDAY: No Liturgy

TUESDAY: No Liturgy

DAYS OF THE GREAT 'O' ANTIHONS BEGIN

WEDNESDAY: 'O WISDOM' No Liturgy School Nativity Play at 2.00pm - all welcome

**THURSDAY: Adoration at 11.30am Mass at 12.00noon 'O ADONAI - LORD'
School Carol Concert/Service at 2.00pm - all welcome**

John the Baptist had doubts that Jesus was the Messiah - so Jesus told Joh's disciples: 'Go back and tell John what you see and hear - the blind see, the lame walk, lepers healed!'

FRIDAY: **'O ROOT OF JESSE'** School pre-Christmas Mass at 9.30am - all welcome
Adoration at 11.30am **Mass** at 12.00noon

SATURDAY: **Adoration** at 11.30am **Mass** at 12.00noon **'O KEY OF DAVID'**
Sacrament of Reconciliation: after Mass and 4.00-4.30pm

TODAY [1] On the **Third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete or Rejoicing Sunday)** we celebrate with great joy Jesus who comes to heal our world. He explains who John the Baptist is - a prophet and more than a prophet - the greatest of those born of woman yet not yet one who is 'born again in the Holy Spirit'! We are called to be healers in Christ of our world, its people and our planet!

[2] **Retiring Collection for Christmas Flowers for the Church**

NEXT SUNDAY [1] With the **Fourth Sunday of Advent** the Liturgy changes to immediate preparation to celebrate the birth of Jesus, without loosing the vision of the Final Coming of Christ in all glory. The Gospel speaks of the Annunciation to Joseph, the quite gentle strong man who hears in a dream the invitation to adopt Jesus as his own son, to continue to embrace Mary as his wife and to protect them both. Joseph embraces the very different 'dream of God' for him - will we embrace God's 'dream' for our lives and our world and let God change our lives too!

[2] **Mass with our LBGTQ+ friends and community** at 3.00pm - all welcome

[2] **Retiring Collection for the Parish 'Caritas' Fund - seeking to support the impoverished and marginalised of our inner city - please be generous.**

FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION - FEAST OF HUMANITY'S DIGNITY

The Feasts of Mary, the Mother of Jesus always look two ways! They reflect the wonder of Jesus, they reflect the wonder of being a disciple of the Lord! The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception teaches us that from the first moment of her existence in her mother's womb, Mary was sinless. Mary yielded to her Redeemer, her Redeemer from the beginning of her life. Her whole life was focused on the Father's gift to the world through her of Jesus. We are all, like Mary, made in the image and likeness of God, carrying the Divine Spirit within us. We are created for wholeness and holiness. The fundamental truth of our human nature (as we see in this Feast of Redeemed Humanity) is that we are whole and holy, filled with God, full of Divine Promise! Sin is not our nature, but Holiness is! Believe in your holiness and joyfully yield, like Mary, to the wonder of God within us Who makes us Whole and Human!

CHRISTMAS IS NOT CHRIST-MAS WITHOUT THE MASS! It is often rightly said that Christmas is a 'family time' and we gather around the family table: the Body of Christ (whose birth we celebrate), the Church, is our family and we need to gather around the table with Jesus Christ and his/our family in the Mass. And while there was no room in anyone's home in Bethlehem for him 2000 years ago, make sure you let him enter in and find a home in your heart and life by receiving him in the Eucharist this Christ-Mass, He brings you the greatest Christmas gift - Himself!

PRAY FOR THIS WEEK'S PARISH MINISTRY OR MISSION We pray for our **Ministry of St Nicholas Bread Foodbank**, led and managed by Lahiru Guntalike. It is a vital ministry providing food and toiletries to families and individuals most afflicted by the cost of living crisis. The foodbank is open every Monday, Wednesday and Friday 10am to 12.30pm and needs supporting, not only donations of food, toiletries, nappies or money etc but also with volunteers, especially from the parish community. Please contact Lahiru Guntalike (07482425539) for more information about supporting this life-giving mission.

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DIOCESAN PRAYER We pray this week for the parish in communion for mission of Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, Charlton Kings, served by (priest vacancy), parish Administrator Mrs Linda Portwain and all their community.

COLLECTIONS

GA: £10.00 + Loose £142.54 + Card Reader £386.32 + S.O. £206.35 = £745.21 thanks!

Donation to FoodBank £200.00 **Diocesan Poor Missions** £63.31 - many thanks!

DATES FOR THE DIARY

17th Dec School Infants Nativity Play (Church) at 2.00pm - all welcome
 18th Dec School Carol Service (Church) at 2.00pm - all welcome
 19th Dec School pre-Christmas Mass at 9.30am - all welcome
 19th Dec Big pre-Christmas clean of the church at 10.30am - volunteers please!
 24th Dec **CHRISTMAS EVE - MIDNIGHT MASS** at 10.30pm
 25th Dec **SOLEMN DAY MASS OF CHRISTMAS** at 10.00am
 31st Dec **New Year Watchnight Mass** at 10.30pm

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1st Jan **NEW YEARS DAY- FEAST OF MARY MOTHER OF GOD Mass for Peace** 10.00am
 3rd Jan Community Stewards meeting at 1.00pm in the Assisi centre
 6th Jan **FEAST OF THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD Holy Day of Obligation Mass at 7.00pm**
 21st Jan Parish Pastoral Council meets after 6.30pm Mass (7.15pm - Assisi Centre)
 22nd Jan Parish Finance Committee at 7.30pm (on Zoom)
 3rd Feb St Nick's School Governors meet at 5.00pm (School)

ADVENT - THE VISION OF MISSION Advent is a time for 'people with far-seeing eyes' - awakened to the reality of our world, ready to listen and to gaze: in order to recognise where, when and how Jesus comes in the 21st century (in the poverty, among the oppressed, disguised as an addict or as homeless, crying out for acceptance and freedom in the asylum-seeker, yearning for peace among the women and children who are the greatest victims of our wars). But one needs courage to see and to hear - more courage to speak and to act! The Spirit of God unfolds a vision of Mission - to transform the deserts and wastelands of our world into places of hope, rich and fertile in humanity and justice, healing and freedom. Our Mission is world-challenging and world-changing. Let our worship empower our mission, as we gaze upon bread and wine transformed utterly in Christ by the Spirit!

THE YEAR OF MATTHEW Throughout the new Liturgical Year (A) most Sundays we will be proclaiming the Gospel of St Matthew. This is the most Jewish of the Gospels, arising from the life experience (and so the questions and issues) of a first century Christian community composed mostly of Jews who had embraced Jesus as the Messiah they had long awaited. The author seems to have been a rabbi as many rabbinical techniques are used in this Gospel (eg grouping miracles, healings, parables in groups of seven). Jesus is presented as a New Moses giving a New Law (the Beatitudes) that fulfils and surpasses the Old Law. At a time when Christian Jews were excommunicated from the Synagogues and Jerusalem and its Temple lay in ruins at the hands of the Roman Army, the author is seeking to reassure them that they were being faithful to God's Covenant with His people in accepting Jesus, Messiah and Son of God ... they were faithful Jews by becoming Christians: the Gospel concludes with the Universal Mission ('all nations') entrusted to them by the Risen and Glorious Christ at the mountain of the Ascension.

ESSENTIAL TRAINING FOR CATECHISTS Clifton Diocese in partnership with 'Light of Truth' are offering [Essential Training for Catechists](#). Parishioners can join us on Saturdays, 13th & 20th December, online, from 9am to 12 noon for a short course of 3

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sessions, to discover the essential nature and principles of catechesis, the sources of catechesis, and the best ways to prepare and deliver our catechesis. This course is open to everyone involved or interested in any kind of catechesis for adults, young people or children. Anyone interested can sign up for the series by clicking on the Zoom link [here](#). More information on other courses & sessions run by the Sisters can be found on the following link: <https://www.lightoftruth.uk/join>

CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD (CLOW) We have not been able to restart this essential part of our Liturgy and the foundation of catechesis for our children through lack of enough volunteers to help our children and parish in this way. **However we are having Children's Liturgy of the Word each Sunday in Advent - starting next Sunday. BUT WE DESPERATELY NEED MORE VOLUNTEERS TO HELP IN ORDER TO SUSTAIN THIS IMPORTANT MINISTRY. Please offer some time and energy so that our children can enter more fully into the wonder of the Mass - Eucharist and the Word of God.**

CAFOD WORLD GIFTS THIS CHRISTMAS Why not give a friend or family a gift that benefits the poorest of our world. Jesus is not honoured by lavish gifts to each other - when you give someone a CAFOD World Gift, you are giving to Jesus who identified himself with the poor who benefit from your Gift. 'Whatever you do to the least of my sisters and brothers you do to me!' The catalogues for these CAFOD World Gifts can be found on the CAFOD website: www.cafod.org.uk/give/christmas-world-gifts

ADVENT - A TIME TO TURN BACK TO GOD This is a time to come humbly before God, seek His Ways: to help you, why not return to the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) this Advent in your preparation for celebrating the Birth of Jesus our Saviour. The Church strongly recommends that as a minimum we should seek to meet Jesus Christ, Bearer of the infinite mercy and love of God, as we prepare for both Easter and Christmas. Just as we have to clear the junk from our homes in order to make room for something new and better, so we need 'to clear the junk' from our hearts, minds and lives to make room for Jesus Christ Who comes to bring us New Life with the Father's embrace of endless and unconditional love.

Opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation:

Every Saturday - after Mass ands 4-4.30pm

Monday 22nd Dec - after 10.00am Mass (10.45-11.15am)

Tuesday 23rd Dec - after 6pm Adoration & 6.30pm Mass (7.15-7.45pm)

Wednesday 24th Dec - after 9.30am Adoration & 10.00am Mass (10.45-11.15am) and 4.00-4.30pm

SACRAMENTAL PROGRAMMES 2026: We begin preparing children for **First Eucharist** on Thursday 8th January at 4.00pm in the Assisi Centre, led by Mary Hopper. First session will be for both for children and parents. **First Reconciliation** begins on Saturday 10th January at 10.00am again in the Assisi Centre and is for both children and parents. **If parents have not yet applied for their children in these courses**, then please do so as soon as possible and before the first sessions in January.

ALTAR SERVERS PRACTICE FOR CHRISTMAS MIDNIGHT MASS There will be a short practice for those servers available for Midnight Mass **next Sunday (21st Dec) after the 10.00am Mass**. Will parents please ensure their children will be available for this short practice which should take no more than 20 minutes. **THANK YOU!**

MONTHLY YOUTH-LED MASS It was so joyous and encouraging to see the involvement of our young people during the Mass for Christ the Universal King. We will hold the Third Sunday of the Month as a Youth-led mass - so parents and others please encourage our young people to fulfil a ministry on Sunday 21st December and 18th January - our next two Youth-led Masses.

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