

THE CATHOLIC PARISHES OF *St Thomas More* and *St Joseph the Worker*

working in partnership with the Catholic Chaplaincy of Warwick University

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both parishes are part of the Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham Reg Charity No 234216

15th December 2024

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Psalter Week: 3
Weekday Cycle: Year 1
Sunday Year: C

Saturday 14 th	THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT	4.15pm	STM	Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Confessions	
		5.00pm	STM	Vigil Mass	Michael and Margaret Higgins (Anniv)
		9.00am	STM	Mass	Maureen Pearson (RIP)
		11.00am	SJW	Mass	Anastasia Whale (Anniv)
Monday 16 th	Advent Feria	7.00pm	STM	Advent Penitential Service	
Tuesday 17 th	O Sapientia	7.00am	STM	Rorate Mass	Stephen Naughton (RIP)
		10.00am	SJW	Mass	Sandra Davis (RIP)
		1.30pm	STM	School Carol Service in Church	
Wednesday 18 th	O Adonai	11.00am	STM	Mass 'n' Mingle	Mary Porter (Anniv)
Thursday 19 th	O Radix Iesse	2.00pm	STM	Mass of Thanksgiving	Sarah Collins (Ints)
		7.00pm	STM	Holy Hour on the 'O Antiphons'	
Friday 20 th	O Clavis David	10.00am	STM	Mass	Thomas and Rose Clarke (Anniv)
		12 noon	SJW	Mass	Martha and Frank Perry (Ints)
Saturday 21 st	O Oriens	10.00am	SJW	Mass	Black Family (Ints)
				followed by Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Confessions	
Sunday 22 nd	FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT	4.15pm	STM	Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Confessions	
		5.00pm	STM	Vigil Mass	Deceased of the Higgins Family
		9.00am	STM	Mass	Lauren and Stewart Daniel (Ints)
		11.00am	SJW	Mass	Katie Aubrey (RIP)

Welcome to Mass today. We extend a special welcome to anybody joining us for the first time.

Please introduce yourself, and if you are able, stay for refreshments after the Mass.

Our Gospel on this Third Sunday of Advent shows how Jesus brings change. John the Baptist speaks of Jesus, who will baptize with the Holy Spirit and fire. He describes Jesus holding a winnowing fan to clear the threshing floor, separating the wheat from the chaff. This shows that Jesus will bring a new way of living, one that challenges the old ways.

Some of us feel comfortable with the way things are. Life is good, and we do not want it to change. We feel secure and happy. Others among us welcome change because we live in difficult situations. We hope for a better life and trust that change will bring it. Some of us are in between, wanting change but also fearing the loss of what we have.

We often hold tightly to our possessions and positions, wanting to secure our future. But God's vision is bigger. He dreams of a world where everyone has what they need. This is a good time to reflect on our lives. Are we helping to build a world where everyone is cared for? Or are we part of systems that keep people down?

Let us carry the themes of joy, peace, and preparation in our hearts. Let us rejoice in God's presence, find comfort in His peace, and actively prepare for Jesus' coming. May we be inspired to live out our faith with renewed hope and love during this Advent season.

Let us pray. Lord, fill our hearts with joy and peace as we prepare for Jesus' coming. Help us to rejoice in Your presence and trust in Your care. Guide us to share Your love with others. Amen.

STM and SJW Website: stmcov.org/wp/

Facebook: Catholic Parishes of St Thomas More and St Joseph the Worker

Livestream webcam: <https://www.youtube.com/@stmandsjtw-cov>

Coventry Catholic Deanery: www.coventry-catholicdeanery.org.uk

OFFERTORIES

Collections STM: £732.60 | **SJW:** £180.00

Poor Parishes Fund: STM: £410.00 | **SJW:** £67.50

Standing Orders: STM: £1528.33 | **SJW:** £1200.00

Thank you for your continued generosity

WE PRAY FOR THE SOULS OF John Lucas, Patrick Browne, Catherine Brookes, Monica Hollinshead, Cathal Kelly, Patrick Browne, Philip Holt and Stephen Naughton together with all who have died recently. We pray for them and their families at this time. May they rest in peace.

WE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK AND UNWELL: Angie Browne, Judith Cuningham, Peter Cunningham, Frank Cunningham, Carl Lightfoot, Elaine Fossett, Margaret Eason, Madge Ward, Heather Walton, Jay Veeman, Pat Farr, Phil Sands, Margaret Kelly, Joanna MacKinnon, Hilary Hanson, Debbie Colby, Monika Tokarska-Hosoi, Joan Theaker, Veronica Hammond, Peter Kennedy, Alice Rowland, John Walker, Pauline Cullinane, Beatrice Upham, Peter Carvell, Sheila Jenkins, Lillian Chapman, Irena Bienek, Josie McElroy, Georgina Brannigan-Smith, Ann Kenny, Rose Warburton, Keelin Treharne, David O'Grady and Joan O'Leary.

WALK WITH ME booklets and calendars are available for everyone to use as part of your private reading and meditations.

PENITENTIAL SERVICE on Monday 16th December at 7.00pm in STM. During this service, there will be several priests available for Confession. In readying ourselves for the final coming of the Lord, the Church encourages us to make our Confession during the Advent Season. Do give some thought to going to Confession during Advent – especially if it has been some time since you last came. After all, Confession is a celebration of God's mercy.

BLESSING OF STRAW AND BAMBINELLI at all Masses today. St John Paul II encouraged children to bring the baby Jesus (Bambinelli) from each of their Nativity sets to Church to be blessed. This Advent tradition is a way for all of us to connect our Nativity scene at home to the celebration of Christmas at our church. The straw that is blessed can be taken away and placed in your homes, in your Christmas Crib or beneath the tablecloth which covers the table for Christmas Day lunch. It symbolises that our homes become little Bethlehem's where we make Christ and our visitors welcome.

TODAY we welcome Luke Theobald, a fourth year Seminarian for our Archdiocese, studying at the Venerable English College in Rome who will be starting his extended placement with us. As part of their formation, Seminarians spend time in a parish on an Extended Pastoral Placement. This is an opportunity to really get to know a parish and I am sure Luke will be kept very busy whilst here with us! His presence among us will also be a reminder of our constant need to pray for an increase in Vocations to the Sacred Priesthood. In the last ten years, numbers have dropped considerably resulting in a dearth of ordinations. We pray that more men will have the courage to answer the Lord's calling in their lives.

OUR FAMILY LUNCH planned for Sunday 15th December has been postponed. We hope to organise something for the New Year for our younger families.

THANK YOU to everyone who was involved with and supported the Christmas Bazaar this year. A festive time was had by one and all and many a bargain was purchased! A grand total of £2532.00 was raised (after expenses). The raffle winners can be found on the list at the back of STM.

MASS CARDS: If you require a card with the Order of Mass text, please ask one of the welcomers for a copy.

RORATE MASSES will conclude on Tuesday morning. If you haven't been to one, please do consider coming along. The Rorate Caeli Mass is a traditional Advent devotion wherein the Mass of the Blessed Virgin Mary for Advent is offered just before dawn. The Mass is lit only by candlelight and because it is a votive Mass in Mary's honour, white vestments are worn instead of Advent violet. In the dimly lit setting, we prepare to honour the Light of the world, who is soon to be born, and offer praise to God for the gift of Our Lady. As the Mass proceeds and sunrise approaches, the church becomes progressively brighter, illumined by the sun as our faith is illumined by Christ. After the Mass, tea, coffee and toast will be available in the MRR.

STM SCHOOL CAROL SERVICE will be held on Tuesday 17th December in the afternoon at 1.30pm. All parishioners are welcome to attend this service of readings and carols.

ON FRIDAY there will be the last extra Mass at 12noon in SJW which will be followed by a light soup lunch. If you are able to come along, please do.

LARGE PRINT NEWSLETTERS are available by request. If you would like one printing, please speak to Fr Simon.

ADVENT HOLY HOUR: The Great Advent Antiphons, known as the 'O' antiphons are prayed before the Magnificat at Evening Prayer. Each antiphon is based on a title for Jesus taken from the Old Testament. Today most people know them from the Advent Carol, 'O Come, O Come Emmanuel.' During the Holy Hour on Thursday 19th December, we will listen to the scripture passages and meditate on the different titles of Christ as we prepare for his coming at Christmas. After the Holy Hour, mulled wine and mince pies will be available in the MRR.

ADVENT CONFESSIONS: In readying ourselves for the final coming of the Lord the Church encourages us to make our confession during the Advent season. Do give some thought to going to Confession during Advent – especially if it has been some time since you last came. After all, Confession is a celebration of God's mercy. As well as the usual times at STM on Saturday evening (4.15pm – 4.45pm) and at SJW on Saturday morning (10.30am – 11.00am). There will also be a Penitential Service with visiting priests available for Confession.

WARWICK UNIVERSITY MASS at SJW will begin again on January 5th at 12.45pm. A number of students will be returning home for the Christmas holiday, so we wish them safe travels and a blessed time with family and friends.

IF YOU ARE A VISITOR to our Masses and not a Catholic, or a Catholic unable to receive, you are very welcome to come forward to receive a blessing. As you approach, please have your arm crossed over your chest, so that the minister knows to give a blessing. If you require a celiac host, please let us know before Mass.

OUR THANKS to the family of the late Daniel Harrington for the donations received to SJW after his Requiem Mass earlier this month.

SJW CHRISTMAS HAMPER RAFFLE: Tickets for the Christmas Hamper will be available after all Masses at SJW. This will be drawn after the 11.00am Mass on Sunday 22nd December.

OUR PIETY STALLS are open after all Masses with a wide variety of Christmas Cards and other gifts are available.

REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR: Thank you for your year-round donations to the Cheylesmore Food Hub. This time of year, they are particularly needed, so there is a reverse Advent Calendar where you give, instead of receiving, during Advent. Could you donate an item or two from the calendar? Boxes for donations are in the church porch. There are posters at the back of church for the list of items.

LECTIO DIVINA is the ancient practice of slow, conscious reading of a biblical or sacred text with contemplation and silent prayer. It is meant to promote communication with God and a deeper knowledge of Christ, in our lives today. In Advent there will be weekly sessions of Lectio Divina, on Tuesday mornings at 11.00am at SJW and on Thursday evenings at 6.30pm at STM. During this time of prayerful reading, we shall use the Gospel reading of the next Sunday Mass.

CHRISTMAS CARDS with the times of our Christmas and New Year Masses are now available. Please do take an extra card to share with any neighbours or parishioners that would welcome an invitation to these Masses.

REMEMBERING A LOVED ONE: If you would like to give a bauble in memory of departed loved ones, the sheets are available at the back of church to write their names on and a basket for you to place any donations for the bauble. The baubles will then be placed on the trees in church and the names printed off in a Book of Remembrance.

FESTIVE DRINKS with mulled wine and mince pies will be served after the 9.00am Mass next Sunday in the MRR. If you are able to pop in after Mass, please do.

CATHEDRAL CAROL SERVICE on Sunday 22nd December. If anyone would be interested in attending the Carol Service in Coventry Cathedral at 5.00pm, could you please write your name on the list at the back of church.

LIVE SIMPLY TIP OF THE MONTH: Please consider choosing Christmas gifts that help people in developing countries to help themselves. You can buy from catalogues available in church, shop online at worldgifts.cafod.org.uk or donate to the retiring collections at STM this weekend. Parishioners at STM have donated £13,729 since 2008 to buy CAFOD World Gifts for our virtual village. LiveSimply in solidarity with people in poverty.

NATIVITY CHARACTERS: If you have younger members of your family that will be attending the 5.00pm Mass at STM on Christmas Eve, they are more than welcome to come dressed as a character from the Nativity story.

SILENT VIGIL FOR THE CHILDREN OF GAZA on Friday 20th December from 12 – 1pm at the Crib in Broadgate, Coventry City Centre, CV1 1NH. As we approach Christmas, this is a chance to reflect on the reality of Christmas today in Palestine. All welcome to attend.

CARDS FOR PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE: Thank you to all who signed the cards after Masses last week. Between STM and SJW a total of 68 cards were signed. Our thanks to everyone who generous gave towards the cost of the postage.

WRAP UP WARM: As the temperatures are dropping outside, and our church heating systems sometimes struggle, it might be an idea to wear an extra layer if coming to Mass, taking the advice, we find in the Book of Proverbs: 'snow may come, she has no fears for her household, with all her servants warmly clothed.'

CHEYLESMORE FOODHUB: It is now possible to support the work of the Foodhub through financial donations. It allows for more flexibility for the Trust to purchase foods. The required information is Cheylesmore Food Hub CAF Bank Ltd, Sort Code: 40-52-40 and the Account no: 00034145.

SEVEN DAY CANDLES can be sponsored for £5. Please bring the information to the Sacristy at STM and SJW. At STM the candles can be sponsored for St Thomas More, Our Lady, St Joseph and the Sacred Heart and at SJW they can be sponsored for St Joseph, Our Lady, St Anthony and the Sacred Heart.

LIVESTREAM FACILITES at both STM and SJW have now changed and are available through one page on YouTube. This is to help keep us in line with Data Protection and Safeguarding requirements. For details about the livestream, please see the front of this newsletter.

SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION PREPARATION will begin with on Wednesday 18th December from 5.00pm – 6.00pm in the MRR.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION AND CONFESSION PREPARATION will begin in the New Year on Saturday afternoon from 3.30pm – 4.30pm in the MRR.

THE CHAPEL OF UNITY are hosting twenty-minute Meditations and Reflections on Advent Scriptures at 6.00pm on Monday evenings. These will be held via Zoom and can be accessed using the Meeting ID: 880 8086 4348 with Passcode: 900236. Please see the poster for more information and details.

SJW PHONELINE: Please note that the phonenumber and answerphone at SJW are no longer checked on a regular basis, so to speak to Fr Simon please ring 024 7641 1900.

A MASS OF THANKSGIVING for Sarah Collins will take place on Thursday 19th December at 2.00pm in STM. Any parishioners, or parents of past pupils are invited to attend as we give thanks for all that Sarah has given to the school as Headteacher and wish her every blessing as she moves into this new chapter of her life.

DON'T FORGET to save all the stamps from the many Christmas cards you receive this year and bring them for the RNIB collections.

KINGDOM OF GOD PRAYER GROUP There will be no meetings over Christmas on Monday 23rd or 30th December. Meetings resume on Monday 7th January at 7.00pm. All welcome.

KNITTED BABY CARDIGANS are required by the University Hospital for premature babies. If you, or any friends can knit any, they can be given in at church, so that the Knights of St Columba will pass them to the Coventry Clothing Charity.

LOURDES PILGRIMAGE with the Archdiocese has now been announced and will take place from Saturday 24th – Friday 30th May 2025. There has been a great tradition of parishioners from both STM and SJW joining this pilgrimage, so please do make a note in your diary. If you haven't been, maybe the Jubilee Year of 2025 is the year to go. More information will be available earlier in the New Year.

HOUSE VISITS to the sick and housebound are an important part of the life of the church. Any parishioners who would welcome a visit, are asked to contact Fr Simon, Deacon Leo or Deacon David so a visit can then be arranged.

MASS INTENTIONS The Mass is the greatest prayer we can offer as Catholics since it is the 'source and summit' of the Christian Life. A Mass can be offered for several reasons: in thanksgiving, for the intentions of another person or as is most common, for the repose of the soul of someone who has died. Mass offering envelopes are available at the back of both churches. Please fill in the required information and hand it to Fr Simon or push through the Presbytery letterbox. The Mass will then be offered, and you'll see the details on the front page of this sheet. We ask that Masses be booked three months in advance of your required date. Preferred dates cannot be guaranteed—someone else might have asked for a particular day before you, but the nearest date will be offered.

OLD POSTAGE STAMPS: We are collecting stamps for RNIB in the boxes at the back of the churches. Please ensure that stamps are trimmed with 1cm of paper around the edge. Please separate British and Overseas stamps and do not include pre-printed postage marks.

DEANERY ENEWSLETTER: We have a new Deanery ENewsletter for Coventry and Nuneaton. To sign up for it, please visit www.coventry-catholicdeanery.org.uk.

LANTEN LIT CAROL SERVICE on Sunday 5th January 2025 at STM starting at 5.00pm. A chance to celebrate once more the Christmas story in word and song, followed by refreshments in the MRR. Please do come along.

GIFT AID GIVING: If you are a UK Taxpayer and would like to increase your weekly giving, at no extra cost to yourself, please consider Gift Aiding your donation. Through this scheme we are able to claim 25p on every £1 donated. More information available from Tony Curristan at STM and June Palmer at SJW.

GOING INTO HOSPITAL: Anyone going into hospital, needs to be sure to tell the ward staff they are a Catholic and would like to see the Catholic Chaplain. Please also notify the Parish Clergy, so a visit, either by them or the Chaplain can be arranged.

SAFEGUARDING: The Parish operates in accordance with Statutory Safeguarding Guidance and the National and Archdioceses policies and procedures at all times. Our Parish Safeguarding Representatives are Claire Rutter and Amanda Kelly at STM and Henry Whitney at SJW. They can be contacted using the emails below or alternatively the Diocesan Safeguarding Team can be contacted on 0121 230 6240 or email safeguarding@rcaob.org.uk if you have any concern.

ONLINE GIVING: If you were unable to give via the Offertory Collection at Sunday Mass, you can give online to either parish by scanning this QR code and following the instructions on the website.



Parish Administrator and Room Bookings
Amanda Kelly admin.stm.covty@rcaob.org.uk

Safeguarding Representatives

Claire Rutter and Amanda Kelly (STM) sg.stm.covty@rcaob.org.uk
Henry Whitney (SJW) sg.stjoseph.covty@rcaob.org.uk

Giving and Gift Aid

Tony Curristan (STM) ga.stm.covty@rcaob.org.uk
June Palmer (SJW) ga.stjoseph.covty@rcaob.org.uk

12 DAYS OF A CLIMATE-CONSCIOUS CHRISTMAS

A Partridge in a - more environmentally friendly- Christmas tree:

According to the Carbon Trust, real Christmas trees actually have a smaller carbon footprint than artificial trees, provided they are properly disposed of. This means planting it in your garden, having it chipped by your council or using Treecycle. You could also rent a tree that is replanted each year, use your old tree as a wildlife hotel in your garden or even look into ways to donate your tree to coastal erosion management schemes!

Two Turtle-ly Awesome Doves ways to reuse Christmas cards

Have a huge pile of Christmas cards destined for the recycling bin? Here are 2 ways to reuse them instead: Cut them up and make some new cards or gift tags to use next year. Get really creative and make some Christmas decorations out of your old cards (e.g. your own nativity scene, stars, tree decorations)

Three French Hens that have travelled from France sustainably:

Are you travelling to see family or friends this Christmas time? Or are you pushing the boat out and going on holiday? Here are some ways to make your transport more eco-friendly: walk or cycle, use public transport where possible (enjoy reading a book or watching our favourite film on the way), offset your carbon footprint if you do need to fly.

Four Birds Calling Out Poor Food Practice:

The amount of poultry thrown away each year in UK homes is enough to make 800 million Boxing Day curries (UK Gov, 2019). During the Christmas season: only buy what you'll eat. Eat up your leftovers. Buy local produce to reduce food miles. Buy food without packaging, where possible. Donate to your local food bank.

Five Gold Ring lights (or other assorted Christmas lights):

Christmas lights give a real festive feeling but as well as the cost of turning them on, they also carry environmental impacts. Consider setting them on timers to reduce the time they're on for and make sure they're all more efficient LEDs. While you're at it, why don't you check if all the lights in your home are energy- efficient too. Google the Energy Saving Trust for more information.

Six Geese-a-laying the foundations for the future:

"To suppose that all problems in the future will be able to be solved by new technical interventions is a form of homicidal pragmatism, like pushing a snowball down a hill," - Pope Francis, 2015 In 2015, Pope Francis warned against placing too much hope in carbon capture technologies. We need to act now to make real change.

Seven Swans a swimming in plastic-free waters:

Consider how you can make your Christmas plastic-free. You could: wrap presents without using Sellotape; buy unpackaged food buy presents with minimal packaging or make handmade decorations instead of buying plastic ones.

Eight Maids-a-milking Christmas presents a little bit too much:

Do you love giving and/or receiving presents? Do you try to find an excuse to buy everyone under the sun a little something? Take a moment to reconsider whether every present is necessary. Also investigate some more planet-friendly options like ethical gifts, charity donations and reusable presents that won't end up in landfill.

Nine ladies dancing because of climate progress:

Christmas is a time for rejoicing. And in that spirit here are some examples of progress this year: In September, the UK became the first G7 country to abandon coal power Glasgow is trialling eco-friendly electric wallpaper to heat its ageing homes. 6 European countries (including the UK) pledged €130 million to protect biodiversity.

Ten lords-a-leaping into action:

Instead, or as well as giving presents this Christmas, think about how you can give your time to charities. You could volunteer for your local food bank, a charity shop, your local wildlife trust or any other charity of your choice to make a difference in your local community.

Eleven Pipers Piping up on climate injustice:

How can you speak up for climate justice in 2025? Join marches, lobby your MP, sign petitions, talk to friends, family and colleagues. But remember, first do some research so you know what to say!

Twelve Drummers Drumming Banging on about their New

Years' Resolution: New year, new opportunity for new climate-friendly habits. Take some time to consider what you can do in 2025 to make an impact on the planet. For example, you could monitor how much plastic you use, try to eat seasonal foods or make your resolution to learn more and read some climate news/fiction every month!

READINGS FOR SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

FIRST READING

Zephaniah 3: 14 – 18a

'The Lord will exult over you with loud singing.' Sing aloud, O daughter of Sion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! The Lord has taken away the judgements against you; he has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall never again fear evil. On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: 'Fear not, O Sion; let not your hands grow weak. The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing. I will gather those of you who mourn for the festival, so that you will no longer suffer reproach.'

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Is 12:2-3. 4b-d. 5-6. R/3

R: Shout aloud and sing praise,
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel.

Behold, God is my salvation!
I will trust, and will not be afraid;
for the Lord is my strength and my praise,
and he has been my salvation.
With joy you will draw water
from the springs of salvation. *R*

Give thanks to the Lord, invoke his name;
make known among the peoples his deeds;
proclaim that his name is exalted. *R*

Sing to the Lord for he has wrought wonders;
let this be known through all the earth.
Shout aloud and sing praise, you who dwell in Sion,
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel. *R*

SECOND READING

Philippians 4:4-7

Brothers and sisters: Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia.
The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
he has sent me to proclaim good news to the poor.
Alleluia.

GOSPEL READING

Luke 3:10-18

At that time: The crowds asked John, 'What, then, shall we do?' And he answered them, 'Whoever has two tunics is to share with him who has none, and whoever has food is to do likewise.' Tax collectors also came to be baptised and said to him, 'Teacher, what shall we do?' And he said to them, 'Collect no more than you are authorized to do.' Soldiers also asked him, 'And we, what shall we do?' And he said to them, 'Do not extort money from anyone by threats or by false accusation, and be content with your wages.' As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Christ, John answered them all, saying, 'I baptise you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming, the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.' So with many other exhortations he preached good news to the people.