

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

*working in partnership with the Catholic Chaplaincy of Warwick University*

## St Thomas More

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

22<sup>nd</sup> December 2024

## FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

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

Day	Feast/Event	Time	Parish	Mass/Event	Special Occasion
Saturday 21 <sup>st</sup>	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	Bridie Lawlor (Anniv)
		11.00am	SJW	Mass	Katie Aubrey (RIP)
Monday 23 <sup>rd</sup>	Advent Feria			No Mass	
Tuesday 24 <sup>th</sup>	CHRISTMAS EVE	5.00pm	STM	Vigil Mass with Carols	Patrick McClean (Anniv)
		8.00pm	SJW	Vigil Mass with Carols	Danny Harrington (RIP)
		Midnight	STM	First Mass of Christmas with Carols	Frank Roberts (RIP)
Wednesday 25 <sup>th</sup>	CHRISTMAS DAY	9.00am	STM	Mass of the Dawn with Carols	Mgr Thomas Gavin (RIP)
		11.00am	SJW	Mass of the Day with Carols	Pro Populo
Thursday 26 <sup>th</sup>	St Stephen	11.00am	STM	Mass	Stephen Whelan (Anniv)
Friday 27 <sup>th</sup>	St John	11.00am	STM	Mass	Dec'd of the Ward and Baker families
Saturday 28 <sup>th</sup>	Holy Innocents	11.00am	SJW	Mass	Mary Meehan (RIP)
					followed by Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament
	FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY	4.15pm	STM	Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Confessions	
		5.00pm	STM	Vigil Mass	Jean Davenport (RIP)
Sunday 29 <sup>th</sup>	FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY	9.00am	STM	Mass	Dec'd of O'Brien and O'Shea families
		11.00am	SJW	Mass	Charles, Martha and Dolores Connolly (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.*

The Fourth Sunday of Advent brings us closer to the birth of Jesus and invites us to reflect on important themes. Through the readings from Micah, Hebrews and Luke, we learn about God's promise, the importance of humble beginnings, obedience to God's will, and recognizing Jesus in our lives.

Our Gospel reminds us to be always looking for signs of God's presence in our lives. The Visitation, where Mary visits Elizabeth, is full of joy. Elizabeth recognizes Jesus when her baby, John, leaps in her womb. This moment shows us the importance of being open to God's presence in everyday moments.

Elizabeth could have dismissed her baby's movement as just another kick. Instead, she saw it as a sign of something bigger. She recognized it as a moment of grace and the closeness of redemption. This teaches us to see God's hand in small, everyday events.

Jesus came to us as a baby in Bethlehem, but He also comes to us in our daily lives. If we only see Him in the nativity scene, we miss many moments of grace. We need to be ready to encounter Him in our interactions with each other. Through prayer and the sacraments, we prepare ourselves to recognize and welcome Jesus every day.

Let us pray. Lord, help us to see Your presence in our daily lives. Guide us to be humble and obedient to Your will. May we recognize and welcome Jesus in every moment. Amen.

**STM and SJW Website:** [stmcov.org/wp/](http://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](http://www.coventry-catholicdeanery.org.uk)

### OFFERTORIES

**Collections STM:** £664.00 | **SJW:** £210.00

*Thank you for your continued generosity*

**WE PRAY FOR THE SOULS OF Fr Fred Sheldon, Fr Jacob Lewis, John Lucas, Catherine Brookes, Cathal Kelly, 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 Cuninghame, 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.

**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.

**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 on Sunday in the MRR. If you are able to pop in after Mass, please do.

**CATHEDRAL CAROL SERVICE** is taking place on Sunday evening at 5.00pm in Coventry Cathedral. This is a traditional carol service lit by hundreds of candles with a chance to sing your favourite carols and hear stunning singing from the Cathedral Choirs with a sequence of the Christmas readings. Doors will open at 4.00pm to give people plenty of time to get seated as it is first come first served.

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

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

**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 22<sup>nd</sup> December.

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

**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](http://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.

**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 £2623.00 was raised. The raffle winners can be found on the list at the back of STM.

**THANK YOU** to the pupils of St Thomas More School and Bishop Ullathorne School who presented their Carol Services in church and school this last week. Through word and song, they presented the Christmas story in a beautiful, prayerful and meaningful way. We wish them and all the staff a peaceful and restful Christmas holiday.

**WE PRAY FOR** Sarah Collins, our former Headteacher at STM School as she prepares to begin a new chapter in her career after Christmas. We thank her for the hard work and dedication which she has shown to the school during her times as Headteacher.

**NEW YEAR'S DAY MASS:** The New Year begins with the Solemnity of Mary the Mother of God. Coming to Mass on New Year's Day is a lovely and poignant way to begin the New Year. In the prayers of the Mass, we seek Our Lady's intercession, and we ask for the grace of God to sustain us in the joys, sorrows and challenges that may come our way. The Mass on Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> January will be at 11.00am

**KINGDOM OF GOD CHARISMATIC PRAYER GROUP** will begin meeting again on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January in the MRR from 7.00pm – 8.30pm. All are welcome to come along.

**PLEASE NOTE** that Masses on Thursday, Friday and Saturday are at the later times of 11.00am.

**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.'

**LANTERN LIT CAROL SERVICE** on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> 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.

**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.

**THE MASSES OF CHRISTMAS**, many years ago, were called by different titles and their liturgies were especially designed to emphasise a distinct part of the Christmas story. Each mass includes ancient antiphons, a special symbolism of light, and highlights the glory of this most holy of events.

The First Mass is the Midnight Mass or the Angel's Mass. This Mass celebrates, traditionally, the hour that Christ was born and is the one with longest history. The Gospel in this Mass comes from Luke 2: 1-14. It centres around the announcement of the angels, in glory, to the shepherds in the field, and is a very joyful mass. The darkness of midnight is meant to be a symbolic reminder of the lack of true light in humanity before Jesus was born.

In the Second Mass, known as the Mass at Dawn or the Shepherd's Mass, Luke's Gospel continues (Luke 2:15-20). It narrates the shepherds hastily going to meet the newborn Messiah and glorifying the Lord for this miracle. This Mass is typically focused on the introduction of light with Jesus's birth and invites us to proclaim the Good News of Christ's birth just as the shepherds did.

The Third Mass is the Mass of the Day or the King's Mass. The liturgy now turns to the Gospel of John 1:1-18. This reading not only highlights the imagery of light once again in the birth of Christ (echoed from the previous Masses), but also focuses on the mystery of the Incarnation of the King of Kings.

**TURKEY LEFTOVERS:** If you find you still have leftovers from the Christmas lunch – don't panic, Christmas isn't over on 25<sup>th</sup> December. Christmas is just too important a celebration to limit to a single day, and so we are asked to celebrate the Christmas Octave. We spend four weeks of Advent preparing for the Christ child to be born, and therefore have the Christmas Octave to celebrate the good news. Why not consider coming along?

**CHRISTMAS CRIB APPEAL** this year will be in aid of Friends of the Holy Land (FHL). Though Christmas celebrations may be cancelled in Bethlehem, our brothers and sisters there share our hope in Christ, which is very much alive. With your help, we can ensure that hope shines brightly through the remarkable Christians who continue to serve so bravely. Any donations can be left in the baskets by our cribs in church. Thank you for your generous support.

**DID YOU KNOW?** From 1558 until 1829, Roman Catholics in England were not permitted to practice their faith openly. Someone during that era wrote a carol as a catechism song for young Catholics. It has two levels of meaning: the surface meaning plus a hidden meaning known only to members of the Church. Each element in the carol has a code word for a religious reality which the children could remember. The "True Love" one hears in the song is not a smitten boy or girlfriend but Jesus Christ, because truly Love was born on Christmas Day. The partridge in the pear tree also represents Him because that bird is willing to sacrifice its life, if necessary, to protect its young by feigning injury to draw away predators. The two turtle doves were the Old and New Testaments. Three French hens stood for faith, hope, and love. The four calling birds were the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Five golden rings represented the first five books of the Old Testament, which describe man's fall into sin and the great love of God in sending a Saviour. The six geese a-laying stood for the six days of creation. Seven swans a-swimming represented the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit - Prophecy, Serving, Teaching, Exhortation, Contribution, Leadership, and Mercy. The eight maids a-milking were the eight beatitudes. Nine ladies dancing were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit. The ten lords a-leaping were the Ten Commandments. The eleven pipers piping stood for the eleven faithful Apostles and the twelve drummers drumming symbolized the twelve points of belief in The Apostles' Creed.

**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 FACILITIES** 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.

**FIRST HOLY COMMUNION AND CONFESSION PREPARATION** will begin in the New Year on Saturdays from 3.30pm – 4.30pm in the MRR. Please speak to Fr Simon for more information.

**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 23<sup>rd</sup> or 30<sup>th</sup> December. Meetings resume on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> 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 will take place from Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> – Friday 30<sup>th</sup> 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. 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.

**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.

**YEAR OF JUBILEE:** Pope Francis has declared that 2025 will be a year of Jubilee. The theme is 'Pilgrims of Hope' and is a year of hope for a world suffering the impacts of war, the ongoing effects of COVID-19 pandemic, and a climate crisis. The Jubilee Year is a time to re-establish a proper relationship with God, with one another, and with all of creation. The concept of Jubilee or 'Holy Year' was used to declare special years for forgiveness and reconciliation. The Year will run from the opening of the Holy Door in St Peter's Basilica in Rome, on Tuesday 24 December 2024 to the Feast of Epiphany 2026.

**JUBILEE COMPANION BOOKLETS** will be available in the coming weeks. The Companion Booklet is designed to help us ponder and pray, focusing on the great themes of the Holy Year: hope and forgiveness, the Apostles Peter and Paul and their Basilicas in Rome, and the key places of prayer and repentance. It also includes numerous articles on being a Jubilee pilgrim, the Jubilee Icon, reflections, prayers and hymns.

**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.

**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** for Coventry and Nuneaton. To sign up for it, please visit [www.coventry-catholicdeanery.org.uk](http://www.coventry-catholicdeanery.org.uk).

**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](mailto: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.



## 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)

## READINGS FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

**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!

### FIRST READING

**Micah 5: 2 – 5a**

Thus says the Lord: You, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days. Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labour has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel. And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. And he shall be their peace.

### RESPONSORIAL PSALM

**Ps 80(79)**

*R:* Bring us back, O God;  
let your face shine forth, and we shall be saved.

O shepherd of Israel, hear us,  
enthroned on the cherubim, shine forth.  
Rouse up your might and come to save us. *R*

God of hosts, turn again, we implore;  
look down from heaven and see.  
Visit this vine and protect it,  
the stock your right hand has planted,  
the son you have claimed for yourself. *R*

May your hand be on the man at your right hand,  
the son of man you have confirmed as your own.  
And we shall never forsake you again;  
give us life that we may call upon your name. *R*

### SECOND READING

**Hebrews 10: 5 – 10**

Brothers and sisters: When Christ came into the world, he said, 'Sacrifices and offerings you have not desired, but a body have you prepared for me; in burnt offerings and sin offerings you have taken no pleasure. Then I said, "Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me in the scroll of the book." ' When he said above, 'You have neither desired nor taken pleasure in sacrifices and offerings and burnt offerings and sin offerings' (these are offered according to the Law), then he added, 'Behold, I have come to do your will'. He does away with the first in order to establish the second. And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia.  
Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord;  
let it be to me according to your word.  
Alleluia.

### GOSPEL

**Luke 1: 39 – 45**

In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.'

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### Parish Administrator and Room Bookings

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### Safeguarding Representatives

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### Giving and Gift Aid

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