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THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT/GAUDETE SUNDAY (YEAR A) – PAGE 88

Sunday 14th December 2025

Third Sunday of Advent/Gaudete Sunday

- 08.30 Mass for Dora & Robert Turner RIP & Richard Slaney RIP (Fr L)
- 10.30 Mass for Patsy & Neil Taylor (Diamond Wedding Anniversary) (Fr M)
Children's Liturgy
Refreshments in the hall where the Parish Draw will take place after 10.30 Mass
- 12.00 Fire Marshall Training
- 17.30 Derek Butler RIP (Fr L)

(Saint John of the Cross, Priest & doctor of the Church)

Monday 15th December 2025 **Feria of Advent**
NO Mass

Tuesday 16th December 2025 **Feria of Advent**
 09.00 Mass for Bridget Hewitt RIP (Fr L)
 followed by the Rosary

The second part of Advent begins on 17th December

Wednesday 17th December 2025 **Feria of Advent**
 09.00 Mass for Private Intentions (Seema) (Fr L)
 followed by the Rosary

Thursday 18th December 2025 **Feria of Advent**
 09.00 Mass for Deceased Family & Friends (Hensman) (Fr L) followed by the Rosary

Friday 19th December 2025 **Feria of Advent**
 09.00 Mass for Pete Beasley RIP (Bird) (Fr M)
 Adoration until 10.00am
 Confessions straight after the Blessed Sacrament is Exposed

Saturday 20th December 2025 **Feria of Advent**
 10.00 Mass for Deceased Coroi Family Members (Fr L)
 Confessions

Sunday 21st December 2025

**Fourth Sunday of Advent/
 Day of Prayer for Expectant Mothers**

- 08.30 Mass in Thanksgiving and Honour to Our Lady of Lourdes (Guilbert) (Fr M)
- 10.30 Mass for Joe Mendes RIP (D'Costa) (Fr L)
Children's Liturgy
Choir Practice for Christmas after Mass
Refreshments in the hall
- 17.30 Mass for Mary McGinty RIP (Family) (Fr M)

Second Collection for flowers for Christmas

Readers' Rotas: January-February 2025: These are available in the porch to collect.

Today is Gaudete Sunday when we rejoice that the Lord's birth is near. We wear rose vestments and light the pink candle on our Advent wreath. We can also have a few flowers. On 17th December we enter the second part of Advent and move from focussing on the Second Coming of Jesus to his First Coming at Christmas. The weekday readings are special to each day and build up to the Christmas story. Gaudete means rejoice and so we do!

The Jesse Tree: Today at Children's Liturgy the children will be colouring in symbols of David (Harp), Emmanuel (Lamb/Wolf) and Micah (City).

The Second Part of Advent begins on 17th December when we have special prayers each day as we prepare for the coming of the Saviour. In the Divine Office we say the "O Antiphons" at Vespers. They are addressed to Jesus using various images taken from the Bible and express our longing for the coming of Jesus. The hymn "O Come, O come Emmanuel" contains these Antiphons. For example: O Come thou Dayspring from on high, O Come, thou key of David.

Congratulations to Ifunanyachukwu Jasmine Onyejiukwa who was baptised last weekend.

Donations of Holly: Now is the time to bring in your donations of holly to enable us to decorate the church. Please put in a black bag and leave in the room where the servers get ready. Thank you.

Poinsettias: As in previous years, we would like donations of Poinsettias in memory of a loved one. Please leave donations in the porch or servers' room. Thank you.

The Christmas Collection: Fr Michael writes: I don't usually say much about this but now we have two priests I felt I should. This collection goes to your priests. It forms a major part of their income. Priests do not get a salary but rely on the Christmas and Easter Collection, Mass Intentions and donations for funerals, baptisms and marriages (Stole fees). This parish has always had one priest until the past three years. But now we have two. Fr Luke has a small monthly income from the parish (£148) and in addition Mass Stipends. In the past the Christmas collection has been generous enough for one priest but now we need to ask you to be more generous. Every priest is entitled to £3,500 at Christmas and if the collection falls short of this he can claim the remainder. This used to be given by the Diocese but now the parish has to make up the shortfall. I have never claimed this money. Our expenses with two priests have risen considerably over the past three years with food, heating etc. so can I ask you to bear this in mind when you give your donation at Christmas. With grateful thanks.

Decorating for Christmas: We will be decorating the church and tree on Monday 22nd December at 10.00am. If you can spare some time, please do come along and join the festivities as we prepare the Way for Our Lord.

Volunteering at Christmas: Our lists are on the noticeboard in the porch for you to sign up as a Welcomer, Reader, EM and Altar Server for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. We are also looking for people to read the poems at our 9.30pm Carol Concert. We encourage you to put your name down. Thank you in advance.

Music Group Appeal – Singers are required for the **6pm Children's Christmas Eve mass**, the **Carol service/10pm Christmas Mass** and the Christmas Day Mass. We will also require readers for all the Christmas masses and the Carol service.

There will be a quick rehearsal after the 10:30am Sunday mass on the 21st December for singers who will be attending the Carol Service. Please support your parish. Thank you.

The Knights of St Columba will be handing out Christmas Posters after each Mass today and next Sunday (21st)

Radio Maria is a global network of 24-hour Catholic radio stations that broadcast religious programming to support listeners' spiritual lives. <https://radiomariaengland.uk/>

<p>Please pray for the sick and those in special need of your prayers: John Yates, Meta James, Tracey James, Baby Teddy, John Smith, Tom C, Susan, Adelina Braganza, Stelian, Claire Wansbury, Alan and Rene Fisher, Baby Jemima Rita James, Fr Jeff, Shirley Angerer, Josephine Treloar, Jacqueline Downey, Steve Smith, Annie and Gerry McDonagh Snr, Gerry McDonagh Jnr and Martin McDonagh, Keith Smith, Samantha Butler, Carole, Mrs Chris Lynch, Ashleigh, Fr Michael, Kathy Blakemore, Kirsty, Robin Robinson, Alice, John Moore, Pauline Viegas, Deirdre Collins, Susan Dassanyake, Nuala Pawley, Helena Riley, Richard Whiteside, Sally Pain, Florrie Pereira, Jo O'Donnell, Matthew Butler, Nadia Sheehy, Steve Pitt, Little Buster Sprules, David Collison, Christine Edwards, Santana Fernandes, Maria Pereira, Leonie Viegas, Paul Robson, Jack Goodrich, Gloria Slaney, Andy Wansbury, Josephine da Silva and Roy Miller.</p>
<p>Hiring of Hall: Please contact Cath Bird: 07989 156111 or email: bexleyheath@rcaos.org.uk</p>
<p>Receiving the newsletter online: In order to reduce paper wastage, if you would like to have our weekly newsletter emailed to you, please contact the parish office bexleyheath@rcaos.org.uk and it will be sent to you weekly.</p>
<p>HOW TO MAKE YOUR OFFERTORY DONATION: Donations for the Offertory Collection can be made in the usual way via the basket. Alternatively, you can donate via BACs to our bank account (details below). Payments can be made for Masses this way too. You can also make payments via our card machine, located in the porch. You can also pay for Repository items, Second Collections and Candles via this method too.</p> <p>Please remember to Gift Aid if you are tax payer. Forms are situated in the porch on the lefthand side as you enter.</p> <p>Payment online: Account No: 21089620 Sort Code: 51-70-14 Account Name: RCAS Bexleyheath</p>
<p>Crib Donations: This year, our Crib donations will be going to The Bethlehem Care and Hospice Trust. This Trust was established following a request from Bethlehem Christians for help in establishing a hospice. Bethlehem has the highest reported number of cancer cases in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) and cancer is the second highest contributor to Bethlehem deaths, with over 150% rise between 2000 and 2020. This is a registered charity in the UK and is also a registered NGO in Palestine. It is the only licensed palliative care provider in the OPT.</p> <p>In Bethlehem, it has a strong infrastructure; an operations board with supporting financial and clinical governance committees. Last year The Bethlehem Care and Hospice Trust nurses made over 2,000 home visits, providing end-of-life care and family support for 85 patients. There are a great many more people in need, whom the charity cannot reach without vital donations to support its ongoing work. The charity urgently needs support to enable sufferers to end their days pain free and with dignity.</p> <p>To provide donations, please go to https://bethlehemcareandhospicetrust.org/</p>
<p>Christmas Raffle: Please join us in the hall today after 10.30 Mass for the draw of the Christmas Raffle. It's not too late to purchase tickets, but please remember to write your name/number on each ticket and put in the box in the porch along with your money. Thank you.</p>
<p>EVERYONE IS WELCOME... to become a welcomer at one of the three Sunday Masses. The more people who volunteer will enable us to start a rota and consequently the more people on the rota means there are fewer times you have to do it. The parish needs you to help it continue to grow and for Father Michael and Father Luke to provide you with Spiritual help and guidance. Support your parish. It needs you.</p>
<p>Counters needed for Offertory Collections: We need some more volunteers to come and help count the weekly collection, usually on a Tuesday morning. If you feel you could help, please email bexleyheath@rcaos.org.uk or speak to either Fr Michael or Fr Luke. Thank you in advance.</p>
<p>Job Vacancy – CriBS School Worker: See poster on noticeboard. If you have any questions or would like further information, please email slt@cribsonline.org</p>
<p>Donations for Local Foodbanks: We have now resumed collecting donations for the foodbanks. Items needed are cereal, sugar, tea, coffee, UHT milk, toilet rolls, tinned meat, tinned vegetables, tinned fruit, soup etc. We've also been made aware that hats and gloves are in urgent need too, so if you could supply these also, it would be greatly appreciated. Thank you for supporting this.</p>
<p>Day with Mary: Our Lady Help of Christians, Cresswell Park, Blackheath, on Saturday 20th December (see poster for more information)</p>
<p>Wintertime 2026: Friday 2nd-Sunday 4th January: Cost £139: For aged 11-15. This initiative is an offshoot of Summertime 2025. For altar servers and those who attend Sunday mass regularly aged 11-15. See poster for details. Forms will be available, or you can contact Fr. Stephen Boyle, dartford@rcaos.org.uk. It takes place at Westminster Pastoral centre, Pinner. Names need to be known by 15th December, and forms received by Fr. Stephen Boyle by the 20th December. There are limited numbers, so we recommend booking early to book a place. A coach will be put on from St. Anselm's Dartford at a cost of £20 return.</p>
<p>Retrouvaille helps marriages. It can bring hope and healing to relationships. Next date: 12th February 2026. www.retrouvaille.org.uk Tel: 07887 296983</p>

MASSES AT CHRISTMAS

Christmas Eve: 6.00pm First Mass of Christmas (especially for children) (Fr M)

9.30pm Carol Service & 10.00pm Christmas Night Mass (Fr L)

Christmas Day: 9.30am The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ (Fr M/Fr L)

Please note there is no Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve and no evening Mass on Christmas Day. Please ensure you take a copy of the Christmas Programme.

Children are encouraged to dress up for the 6.00pm Mass on Christmas Eve as Mary, Joseph, Shepherds, Sheep, Angels, Stars and not forgetting a Donkey!

Fr Luke will be away to visit his family in Nigeria from 1st January until 4th February. Fr Michael will be on his own and will try to say Mass on Fridays, Saturdays and Sunday 8.30 & 10.30. One of the priests from Erith will celebrate the 5.30pm Mass. There will be Services of the Word with Holy Communion on a couple of weekdays but watch the newsletter for these. There are no baptisms during January. If we have funerals with burials the local priests of the Deanery have shown their willingness to help. The 6th January is the Solemnity of the Epiphany and a Holyday of Obligation. We will have Mass here at 10.00am but no evening Mass. Fr Michael writes: please God I don't fall ill or fall over during January. We also have the First Communion Programme starting. Another point: I wear an alarm in case I fall over. When it goes off or I press it the Care team have a list of contacts. Fr Luke is on that list but will not be here. Is there someone who lives nearby who could join Cath and Maura on the list? I am praying we do not have ice to deal with!

WITH THE FLU VIRUS GOING ABOUT, PLEASE ENSURE YOU SANITISE YOUR HANDS UPON ENTERING AND LEAVING CHURCH.