



ST. JOSEPH'S HIGHGATE PARISH BULLETIN

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Registered Charity 234436



Fr. Pat (pfcp44@yahoo.com) Fr. Tiernan (tiernanpc@gmail.com)

Masses: Sunday: (7pm Saturday) 8am, 10am, 12noon, 1.30 (Polish), 7pm.

Holydays: 6.30pm vigil, 9.30am, 11am, 6.30pm

Weekdays: 9.30am, 6.30pm. **Saturday:** 9.30am, 7pm. **Bank Holiday:** 9.30am

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday 10-10.30am, 6.30 -6.45pm

Weekdays: immediately after Mass (on request)

4th December 2016 – Second Sunday of Advent Hope And Expectation

I don't know how it is with you, but I have to say that this having of the First Sunday of Advent in November doesn't quite work for me. You can surround me with all the Christmas trees and decorations and lights you like, but I'm not really ready for thinking "it's almost Christmas". Of course I haven't been helped by having the sun shining almost every day of the week – not that I'm complaining, mind – it's certainly much better than having deal with wind and rain, and even snow and ice. But for me sun and Christmas don't really go together – they're not quite in the 'horse-and-carriage' bracket. Which reminds me that 'love-and-marriage' were very much in the air last week-end as we had our pre-marriage course here for sixteen – sweet sixteen? – couples shortly about to commit their lives to one another in the bond of marriage. Pre-marriage courses, among other elements, are reminders that the couples are not simply preparing for a day – when the wedding takes place – but for a lifetime partnership together where that love that is so manifest now will hopefully continue to grow and mature and produce many fruits of joy and happiness, not just for themselves but for the wider community that is our world.

And as I think of that it reminds me that we could say something similar about the season of Advent – it's not simply a time of preparation for that one day, Christmas, but for the year ahead where we hope to grow ever deeper into our relationship with Christ, also in a joyful and happy way. And our readings these Sundays are meant to assist us in reflecting on that hope – in fact hope is very central to all our three readings this Sunday. But it's not a blind hope, like – 'I hope my favourite team will win the league this year' (some hope!), or 'I hope so-and-so will win strictly'. (And no, I don't watch it!) They're the kinds of hope that I can do nothing about. Our Christian hope is based on the fact that if we do our bit in bringing that hope to fulfilment, then the Lord assures us of our success.

One of my hopes this Advent is that in the midst of all the distractions – even in our church, what with scaffolding and so on – and which hopefully will be away by next Sunday – that you have noticed the trees in our porch. Well, I know some of you have, as we already have received a considerable number of gifts for distribution to the less well-off this Christmas. The notice on the other side gives a bit more of an explanation of the idea. This year there need be no excuse, because we've had almost a week extra to do our Advent good deed. Not that I for a second believe that anybody is looking for excuses – your generosity in previous years, and already this year, are proof enough of that. I often meet people – visitors maybe – who will say things like 'it must be much less rewarding being a priest nowadays, you know, fewer people at mass, mostly old folk', and so on. And I always assure them that I seem to have fallen on my feet, as I live and work in a Parish with good attendances, no old folk – some upper middle-aged, maybe – and lots of young, vibrant, committed families, full of the loving spirit of Christ.

Surely that is a great reason to have hope for the future? But that hope can be a delicate plant! It needs constant nourishment with that deep resource of love that is so manifest among you. And the genuine-ness of that love is proven in its outreach to the needy. So, if you're getting a little frustrated with all the shopping and cooking and card-writing and present-wrapping and...., just think of all the love behind it, and smile!

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We pray for those who have died recently – Kathy O'Brien, Wallace Baker, Vincent Harvey, Jordean Lynch; **we remember those whose anniversaries occur at this time** – Caren Chow, Joan Fox, Brendan Nolan, Nora Gallagher.

Giving Tree:

For those of you who may be new to the parish, or haven't come across this exercise before, the idea is very simple, and very much in the proper spirit of Christmas. Instead of the usual decorations our trees are bedecked with lots of tags, on each of which has been written a suggestion for a Christmas gift to be given to the poor of our city – in particular the many poor families that our local branch of St. Vincent de Paul assist, and also for the Cardinal Hume Centre, which does outstanding work with families in distress and with the homeless. We invite you to take a tag from the tree, and then during the following week to purchase the item suggested (please ensure food items are in date!). Items, which should be gift-wrapped should then be brought to the church the following Sunday, with the tags stating what gift is in each parcel attached to them. (Don't worry, the tags will be removed before being given to any individual.) We promise you that all items will be distributed before Christmas.

Many of the items on the tags are of a practical nature, like warm socks, gloves and so on, but there are also suggestions for small non-essentials, like biscuits, toys, books, games, etc – items which for us we're inclined to take for granted, but for others are a luxury that they could never afford to buy for themselves. We particularly invite you to encourage your children to become involved in this project, which is a very practical way to help them appreciate how lucky they are, and maybe spend a little of their own pocket money on getting a present for a child of their own age who is much less well-off.

Coffee Morning:

We will be having a coffee morning immediately after the 10 o'clock mass this Sunday. Please take a little bit of time out from your busy schedule to avail of the opportunity to get to know your fellow-parishioners a little better, and make new members of the Parish feel welcome.

Living Crib:

This year's Living Crib procession will be next Sunday, 11th December, beginning at 3.00 pm in Pond Square. This Highgate tradition is a lovely way of preparing for Christmas. We have children taking the roles of Mary and Joseph, but having nobody to play the role of the donkey, we have a real live one instead! We particularly welcome any local (real?) angels, shepherds and wise men –and wise women won't be turned away! All are invited to simply turn up on the day appropriately dressed – no need to enrol beforehand. The procession ends here at St. Joseph's with a brief candle-lit Carol service followed by mulled wine and mince pies.

St Joseph's School Christmas Fair:

St. Joseph's School will be having their Christmas this coming Friday, 9th December, from 3.15 to 6.00 pm. Come and enjoy the fun of the Fair – and maybe pick up some Christmas presents at the same time. Some key times to note – at 3.45 the school choir will be singing; Santa says he will do his best to be there for 4.30. There will be a wide variety of stalls - Class Craft; Christmas Tree Sales; Food Stalls; Art & Crafts; Face Painting; Alcohol & Chocolate Tombola; Rides & Christmas Inflatable & much more

Christmas Readings and Carols:

Our evening of Readings and Carols is on Thursday 15th December at 7.30pm. Followed by even more mulled wine and mince pies!

Christian Stewardship:

Last week's collection amounted to £1,634. In addition we also receive approximately £1,900 in standing orders each month. Thanks again for your continuing generosity.

Christmas at the Repository:

Christmas Cards, Advent Calendars, and 2017 Calendars and St. Joseph's Parish Diaries are all now available at the Repository shop at the back of church, as well as the usual range of cards, books and devotional items, and the weekly Catholic papers.

School References:

Some Secondary schools demand of parents that they get a reference from the priest of their Parish. Parents enter on the application form the name of their Parish Priest, and the school then sends a form to the priest. At present I have one such form, and haven't the foggiest idea who the child involved is, and so clearly cannot give the required reference. If you know who this might be, then please let me know immediately. It may very well be someone I see every week, but can't put a name to! (Please do not confuse this with the Certificate of Religious Practise which I seem to sign for hundreds of people after the Sunday Masses! Which, by the way, is the best time to come with them.)

In case you are admitted to hospital:

In light of data protection please indicate on entering hospital that your details are to be passed to the RC Chaplain. Also let them know that you would like the RC Chaplain to visit you.