



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)

3rd December 2017 – 1st Sunday of Advent

Who Wants to Wait?

I think it must be a record for me for recent years, but to date – and we're now into December – I haven't received my first Christmas card. Let me hasten to add that that's not a complaint – more a sigh of relief! And I'll be quite happy also if I don't hear any 'happy Christmas's for a few more weeks. So it might seem strange that my next act is going to be to wish you all a Happy New Year! Yes we have entered a new year - a new Church year, that is. Advent is the beginning of the liturgical year – just as January is the beginning of our calendar year, and September is the beginning of the school year, and April is the beginning of the financial year. So yes – Happy New Year!

It may surprise you that I have recently learnt how to use self-check-out units in shops, without having the machines give out to me, or having to call to be rescued by the very helpful – and patient – assistants who are usually in attendance to deal with people like me. All you whizz-kids – and even whizz-grannies – will think nothing of this; you can probably operate them in your sleep. But waiting was never one of my favourite past-times, which is also among the reasons why Advent has never really been one of my favourite times of the year – Christmas cards, shopping for presents, etc. being among the other reasons. You know the way you hear people say – “I would love to go to sleep to-night and wake up for someone to tell me that Christmas is here”. That could be me!

Which would be a pity. Because it would be to miss the point of the whole Advent season. It is intended to be a time of faith-filled watching and waiting. Our Gospel passage today is encouraging us to 'stay awake' – which in reality should be the mark of our Christian lives at all times. Jesus invites us to see ourselves as servants, each with our own task, waiting for the return of the master. That's quite a challenge. Advent is not a time of waiting for the coming of the Christ child. He has already come, some 2,000 years ago. The meaning of the 'stay awake' is asking us to open our eyes, and see him already here – in those who are in need in any way. Yes, our Giving Trees are a wonderful way of reminding us, as our Gospel did last Sunday, that He is to be found in those who are hungry, thirsty, lonely, etc. Buying presents is very good – being present is even better!

We live in the present and in the divine presence. In the Advent season we call to mind again that the divine presence is revealed in the immense love that comes in the form of a vulnerable child. Advent invites us to stay awake and to watch for His presence - as we celebrate His birth, as we look forward to His coming again, and as we encounter others in our daily living, particularly those who are vulnerable, in need or less fortunate.

I hear someone at our letter-box. Just a moment Guess what!

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We pray for the sick and housebound of our parish - Clive Nero; we pray for those who have died recently - Patricia Hind (funeral 12.30pm Wednesday 20th December), Eileen Hickey, Anthony Mayers, Mary Bridgit McGovern, Mary Sullivan, Louise Roehr; and we remember those whose anniversaries occur at this time – Daniel Lucitt, Caren Chow, Cecily Roehr, John Landy.

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 – local families that our local branch of St. Vincent de Paul are in touch with, 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. 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. Gifts received by Friday 15th December will be in time for the Cardinal Hume Centre's Christmas Party on the Saturday (but later donations will still be welcome). 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. It's a very practical way to help them appreciate how lucky they are, and maybe spend a little of their own pocket money on a present for a child of their own age who is much less well-off.

Living Crib:

This year's Living Crib procession will be next Sunday, 10th 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.

Christmas Events:

Other Christmas dates for your diaries: our evening of **Christmas Readings and Carols** will be on Monday 18th December at 7.30pm, and St. Joseph's School will have their carol concert at 2.00pm on Thursday 14th December.

Christian Meditation:

The Meditation group will hold their last meeting before Christmas on Friday 8th December, and will recommence on Friday 12th January.

100 Club Results:

The November Draw for the 100 Club was held in the Monastery during the week. The number of entries was 106 and the winners were: £400 Denis Ryan (133), £100 Sue Prudo (123), £50 B. Traynor-Jones (141). The December draw will be held early, so monthly subscriptions should be paid by Sunday 17th December.

Church Cleaning Fest:

A most sincere thank you to those who took time out on Saturday to give the church a good cleaning in preparation for Christmas. Special thanks to Roxane for co-ordinating the whole thing, and providing the delicious refreshments.

Coffee Morning:

Our Parish Coffee Morning is today, 3rd December, in the Red Room, immediately after the 10.00 am. Mass. Why not avail of this opportunity, especially for new Parishioners, to meet fellow members of our Parish?

Youth Group:

Thanks to the initiative and enthusiasm of last year's Confirmation group, and the support given by Emma and Eve in particular, a new Youth Group, open to all between the ages of 13-17, has started up. Their next get-together will be on Friday, the 8th of December, with food and a Christmas theme! They will meet in the Red Room from 7pm till 9pm. If you wish to come, please use the entrance on Highgate Hill.

Christian Stewardship:

Last week's collection amounted to £1,371. In addition we receive an average of over £900 per week in standing orders. Thanks once again for your continuing generosity.

Cake Sale Next Sunday:

Much work has already gone into preparing for the setting up of a new playgroup – Bright Stars – based in the Parish Centre, for early in the New Year. To help with the initial funding and set-up costs, a cake sale will be held after the 10 o'clock mass next Sunday. Cake donations will be greatly appreciated by Lucy and Martina, who are setting up the playgroup. For further information their contact details are as follows: Lucy – 07798 797 390 lucymaryjackson@gmail.com ; Martina - 07474 734278 m.gerngross@gmx.net