

Church of the Immaculate Conception - Farm Street



Gaudete Sunday 12th December 2021

PARISH CLERGY

Fr Dominic Robinson SJ, Parish Priest
Fr Nicholas King SJ; Fr Michael Holman SJ

REGULARLY ASSISTING CLERGY

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Fr Laco Sulik SJ; Fr Michael Bossy SJ

PARISH STAFF

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MASS SCHEDULE

Monday to Friday: 8am, 1.05pm, & 6pm

Saturday: 8am & 6pm

Sunday: 8am, 9.30am (Family), 11am (Latin), 12.30pm,
5.30pm, & 7pm (Young Adult, 18-35)

All Masses can be viewed on our livestreaming page
<https://www.farmstreet.org.uk/livestream>

EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Monday to Friday: 12 noon to 1pm

CONFESSIONS

Monday to Friday: 12 noon - 1pm

Saturday: 10am to 12 noon; 5.45pm – 6pm

Sunday: Fifteen minutes before every Mass
Also by appointment

BAPTISM AND WEDDINGS

By appointment.

CHURCH OPENING HOURS

Monday to Saturday: 7.30am - 6.30pm

Sunday: 7.30am – 7.00pm

YEAR C

ENTRY

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice.
Indeed, the Lord is near.

RESPONSE

Sing and shout for joy, for great in your midst is the
Holy One of Israel.

ACCLAMATION

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me.
He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor.

COMMUNION

Say to the faint of heart: Be strong and do not fear.
Behold, our God will come, and he will save us.

GAUDETE SUNDAY

Traditionally, the third Sunday of Advent is 'Gaudete Sunday'. Originally, it comes from the opening antiphon of the Mass, "*Gaudete in Domino semper*" ("Rejoice in the Lord always", Philippians 4:4,5). To mark this, the Church slips from the purple of mourning, fasting and repentance into the more gentle shade of rose. We are invited to rejoice because Christ really is near and his coming is close at hand. The vigil of Advent is drawing to its climax in the great feast of Christmas.

Again, within the rhythms of our normal time, the liturgy inscribes God's time. Throughout Advent we have been listening to the voices of the prophets and apostles. While they have been inviting us to prepare and purify our hearts and minds to receive the grace of the Christ-child, they also have been urging us to 'rejoice'. It runs through all time of waiting; the time of our struggles and our suffering, our disappointments and our hopes. It runs through the whole history of the Church no matter how dark or scarred. The Spirit always summons the Church to a hymn of joy. Neither an act of denial or defiance nor a boasting triumphalism, this song of joy persists in the heart of the community. It has nothing to do with anything in ourselves but arises from our knowledge that God has truly bestowed himself upon us in his Son, Jesus Christ. In him is our hope; he is our joy in life and in death. It is a joy which never loses the memory of the cost. For this reason it is a double rejoicing: not only in Christ's victory through the cross, but also the joy of knowing how deeply, securely, are we and all creation loved.

In every authentic Christian life, and in the life of the Church, one can always detect this song of the Spirit; a quiet descant to all the other songs we are forced to sing. When we allow the Spirit to teach us this song, no matter how softly we sing it, we also grow in patience; we know that we do not wait in vain. But the song does not always silence our questions.

Was my waiting in vain? Have I made a mistake about you? These are the questions that haunt the Baptist as he faces his final uncertain hours in prison. Even facing death, John is still the one that points the way; still the one who teaches us. 'Whether in the moments of extremity or in the routines of an undisturbed life, the questions still come. No matter how strong it is, until faith gives finally sees him 'face to face', it will always be vulnerable to doubt. Often, it is at the end when there is everything to lose, not at the beginning that the need to know becomes more urgent. Was it true or was it all an illusion? Has my life been wasted? Are you really the one in whom I can trust in life and in death, in joy and in pain, in despair and in hope?

Jesus does not despise John's question. In his response we hear again the energy and mounting expectation of the kingdom unfolding before our eyes. Our senses and our hope are not deceived: only hear and see, all around you God is doing wonderful things. He is here, in the midst of our world. He has not abandoned us. In Jesus, in his very flesh and blood, in his deeds and his words, we can touch the truth, hear his words, see his face. The promise is, indeed, fulfilled and in our time not some future time. Yet Jesus' reply is not a simple reassurance: it sweeps away all the alternative hopes and seductive dreams. There are many different versions of the Messiah. One of the most popular is that of a King who will crush the enemies of his people, restore the tribes and bring them material as well as spiritual blessings. In short, a saviour who is an ideal military and political leader. He is the one to claim our votes and our lives as he leads us into the lost Utopia.

These are not the signs that Jesus uses to identify himself he deliberately avoids them. His, indeed, is a majestic work of restoration and blessing beyond imagining but it is not a continuing of the old familiar order. Nor is the Father's kingdom the offer of Utopia. Like, John, our hope is not in vain and our lives are not wasted if we believe in Christ, but he will not be the prisoner of our noble lies. We meet him on his own terms or not at all. This is how Jesus meets John and this is why John can face his destiny with hope. John shows us that even the prison of our doubts can be a place of grace; he is the witness that they can lead to him. But he challenges us to be genuine. Our doubts must be no clever game or dinner-table amusement; no philosophical cover for our pride. If we trivialise our doubts then we trivialise our lives. But if we can ask with the humility of the genuine seeker, and if we are prepared to be surprised, then we will receive a response. It will be one that changes our terms of reference and calls us to something, *someone*, greater than we could ever have imagined.

John is the one who also waits for us on that journey. He points the way with his life. Everything about the Baptist is about letting go. He allows us to understand that this is not surrender to death but to life. The decreasing is for the sake of an increasing. Handing over his disciples to the Lord is a gesture filled with generosity as well as grace. He desires their good not his glory. He wants them to find their heart's desire and through their witness he already prepares the way for the Church grow. John, the one who prepared the way, was himself being prepared for this moment, deepest of all mysteries in following Christ: surrendering our lives to him and for his sake, we receive his life. Even in his death John already knows something of the Eucharistic movement of the Divine life/ the life of the world which is nothing less than Love.

Jesus knows that both he and John will be rejected by a world disappointed long ago by messianic kings; a world that has lost faith in faith. Yet, even this knowledge cannot stop him loving; it cannot stop him being who he is.

At the centre of every Advent lies the mystery of surrender. It is the time when we learn again how to let go; to give not just receive. This is not an easy thing for us but once we see that he is the One we have been waiting for, then we can take the risk even if it is painful. In Him we know that somehow in making this gift, life is not diminished but flourishes; that in His increasing and our decreasing there is a strange and lasting joy.

Fr James Hanvey SJ

From the archives. First published on the 12th December, 2010.

Liturgical Calendar

Sun: Third Sunday of Advent
(Gaudete Sunday)
Mon: St Lucy, Virgin & Martyr
Tue: St John of the Cross, Priest & Doctor
Wed: Advent feria
Thu: Advent feria
Fri: Advent feria
Sat: Advent feria
Sun: Fourth Sunday of Advent

Daily Bible Readings

Sun: Zephaniah 3:14-18; Philippians 4:4-7;
Luke 3:10-18
Mon: II Corinthians 10:17-11:2; Matthew 25:1-13
Tue: I Corinthians 2:1-10; Luke 14:25-33
Wed: Isaiah 45:6-25; Luke 7:19-23
Thu: Isaiah 54:1-10; Luke 7:24-30
Fri: Genesis 49:2-10; Matthew 1:1-17
Sat: Jeremiah 23:5-8; Matthew 1:18-24
Sun: Micah 5:1-4; Hebrews 10:5-10;
Luke 1:39-45

The Pope's Monthly Prayer Intention

In the month of December, Pope Francis encourages us to pray for catechists, summoned to announce the Word of God. Let us pray that they may be its witnesses, with courage and creativity and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

A Gaudete Sunday Prayer

Let's pray today especially for all those who around the world who are sick and suffering, asking for the healing and peace that comes from our Heavenly Father.

Advent Raffle

As we did last year, we shall be holding an online raffle in aid of the Catholic Children's Society and Wateraid. The Catholic Children's Society were extremely grateful for the help that they were able to give destitute families with the £2400 we sent them last year, and have asked us for our help once more. Prizes include vouchers for Restaurant 34 Mayfair and the Royal Albert Hall, Dinner at Delfinos, memberships of art galleries and of the Chelsea Physic Garden.

For more information and to buy tickets visit go.rallyup.com/farmstreetaffle2021. The raffle will be drawn on Monday 20th December.

Living Stones Tour of the Church

This Advent, the Living Stones London Community invites you to a contemplative visit of Farm Street Church, focusing on images of the Annunciation. The tour will take place at 1.30pm on Sunday 12th December and will last around 45 minutes. Meet at the back of the church at the main entrance. Free - no need to book. All welcome.

Living Stones (Pietre Vive) is an international mission of the Jesuits, forming young adults through intellectual and spiritual development on the art and architecture of historic churches. For more information visit pietre-vive.org

ADVENT MUSIC

Farm Street Church will be hosting a number of Advent carol services in the upcoming weeks:

- ***Monday 13th December** – 7pm – Farm Street Church carol service
- ***Tuesday 14th December** – 7pm – Young Adults Ministry carol service
- ***Thursday 16th December** – 7pm – Knights of the Holy Sepulchre carol service
- ***Friday 17th December** – 7.30pm – Friends of Bolivia Christmas concert (Tickets required. To book, visit the 'Upcoming Events' page on the Farm Street website.

For more information about these events, please visit the 'Upcoming Events' page on the Farm Street Church website.

Please note that the Aid to the Church in Need carol service, due to take place at Farm Street Church on Wednesday 15th December at 7pm, will now be taking place at the Brompton Oratory.

Christmas Mass & Service Times

Christmas Eve

(Friday 24th December)

16:00 First Mass of Christmas

18:00 Christmas Mass with Children's Nativity Play

23.30 Christmas Carols (Doors open 23:00)

00:00 Midnight Mass with Farm Street Choir

Christmas Day

(Saturday 25th December)

08:00 Mass with carols

09.30 Family Mass with carols

11:00 Solemn Latin Mass with choir

12.30 Mass with carols

No 6pm Vigil Mass

Boxing Day

(Sunday 26th December)

08:00 Mass

09.30 Family Mass

11:00 Solemn Latin Mass

12.30 Mass

17:30 Mass

Monday 27th to Friday 31st December

Church opens at 11:00

12:00 Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

13:05 Mass

Church closes at 14:00

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

(Saturday 1st January 2022)

Church opens at 10:00

12:00 Sung Mass

18:00 Vigil Mass

Sunday 2nd January

As normal

Monday 3rd January

Church opens at 11:00

12:00 Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

13:05 Mass

Church closes at 14:00

Tuesday 4th January

Normal schedule resumes

Christmas Activities for Children

1) Children's Christmas Play (6pm Mass on

Christmas Eve): If you wish your child/ children to take part in the Christmas play, which is an integral part of the 6pm Christmas Vigil Mass, please fill the form (available at the back of the church and at the reception) and submit it to Leninha Assis (Catechist), by the 12th December. The rehearsal dates for the play are: 23rd December from 10.30am-11.30am and 24th December at 5pm leading into the 6pm Mass.

2) **Christmas Gifts:** The offering of the gifts for children at Christmas last year was a great success. This year, all gifts will be given to **The Catholic Children's Society**. If you would like to join us in a gesture of generosity to make the Christmas of poor children a bit better, please donate a new gift in its original packaging, labelling with the appropriate gender and age of the intended recipient, to be collected during the offertory, at the 9:30 Mass, on 12th December (Gaudete Sunday).

London Jesuit Centre

The London Jesuit Centre is a place for the teaching and discussion of theology, the study and practice of the spiritual life, and engagement with issues of social and environmental justice, for the greater glory of God and the common good. It offers a programme of events, courses, and retreats. It is also a centre for individual spiritual direction and training and professional development in spiritual accompaniment. All are welcome to participate in the London Jesuit Centre programme. For more information and to sign up to their mailing list for regular updates on events, please visit <https://londonjesuitcentre.org/>. For more information, contact Anne Paolino at apaolino@jesuit.org.uk.

Face Covering Notice

In order to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and to respect the safety of all, we request that you wear a face covering in the church, unless you are exempt from doing so. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sunday Refreshments Suspended

Refreshments served in the Arrupe Hall after the Sunday 9.30am, 11am & 5.30pm Masses are currently suspended due to refurbishment work on the ground-floor kitchen.