

Christmas Cards

The Farm Street Christmas card is available for sale in Reception during the week and in the Arrupe Hall after the 9.30 and 11.00 Masses. Cards are priced at £2.50 individually and at £12.00 for a box of six.

THANK YOU FROM CHESTERTON'S

Chesterton's is extremely grateful for the parish's participation in its recent winter-coat drive. Over 6,000 coats were collected by the company and will be distributed by Calling London to about thirty charities that help those most in need of warm clothing: the homeless, the elderly, victims of domestic abuse, refugees and many others. The Mayfair office of Chesterton's (North Audley Street) came out third across the entire company in the number of coats collected -- 185!

Cana Lunch Café

On Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, a café lunchtime café operates in the Cana Lounge at 114 Mount Street. Freshly made sandwiches and soup are available for a very reasonable suggested donation. The café operates between 12 noon and 2pm. **The café will be closed from the 8th December and will re-open on the 9th January.** We look forward to seeing you in the new year!

Icon Exhibition – On Earth as it is in Heaven

An exhibition of icons and contemporary art by Irina Bradley will be displayed in the Ground Floor Gallery at 114 Mount Street from 2nd December to the 15th January 2024. 10am-7pm, Monday to Friday; 9am – 3pm Saturday; By appointment on Sunday. www.irinabradley.com

Night Shelter Volunteers

Farm Street Church is intending to participate in a night shelter during the coldest winter months. This will involve having homeless guests sleep in various venues around the city and will be modelled on the winter night shelter that we ran at 114 Mount Street from 2015 to 2019. Volunteers will be needed for this. If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Fr Dominic or send an email to centrallondoncatholicchurches@gmail.com

Monthly Memorial Prayer Vigil for refugees and asylum-seekers

On the 3rd Monday of every month outside the Home Office SW1P 4DF from 12.30pm – 1.30pm. Praying for:
*Those who died trying to reach the UK
*Victims of current wars
*Those in detention & who are homeless
*The UK to be a more welcoming nation
Sign up to receive email news & alerts of changes or cancellations at: homeofficevigil@gmail.com

Christmas Mass & Service Times

Christmas Eve

(Sunday 24th December)

08:00, 09:30, 11:00 & 12:30 Masses as normal
16:00 First Mass of Christmas with carols
18:00 Mass with Children's Nativity Play
No 19:00 Young Adult Mass
23.30 Christmas Carols (Doors open 23:00)
00:00 Midnight Mass with Farm Street Choir

Christmas Day

(Monday 25th December)

08:00 Mass with carols
09.30 Family Mass with carols
11:00 Solemn Mass with choir
12.30 Mass with carols
17:30 Mass with carols

Boxing Day to Friday 29th December

Church opens at 11:00
12:00 Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament
13:05 Mass
Church closes immediately after Mass

Saturday 30th and Sunday 31st December

As normal

Monday 1st January

Church opens at 11:00
12:00 Mass
Church closes immediately after Mass

Tuesday 2nd January

Normal schedule resumes

Catholic Listeners

Catholic Listeners is a confidential telephone helpline service. A Diocese of Westminster initiative, it has been set up for those who are returning to the faith. The helpline is all about listening to others, listening to those who might have become isolated due to the pandemic. This service is based on the Landings ethos of compassionate listening. Although not a counselling service, the helpline is staffed by a professional team of volunteers who are trained to signpost callers to other services and agencies. Sometimes just communicating with someone who listens and understands can help clarify a way forward. Simply talking about a problem can ease a burden. We aim to help those in need of a safe space to talk.
Operating three days a week from 4pm-7pm on Mondays, Tuesdays and Fridays calls are free on **0800 448 0704** For further information please email us at Catholiclisteners@gmail.com or visit our website at www.CatholicListeners.com.

Catholic Listeners are here to listen.



Jesuit Church of The Immaculate Conception

FARM STREET

Welcome to Farm Street Church, our vibrant and engaging Catholic Parish in the heart of London

www.farmstreet.org.uk



Third Sunday of Advent 17th December 2023

Gaudete Sunday

YEAR B TODAY'S RESPONSES

ENTRY

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

RESPONSE

My soul rejoices in my God.

ACCLAMATION

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

PARISH OFFICE

ADDRESS: 114 Mount Street, London, W1K 3AH

TELEPHONE: 020 7529 4829

E-MAIL: farmstreetoffice@rcdow.org.uk

PARISH CLERGY

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

REGULARLY ASSISTING CLERGY

Fr Michael Barnes SJ; Fr David Birchall SJ;
Fr Peter Gallagher SJ

SAFEGUARDING OFFICE

Debbie Martin, Email:
farmstreetsg2@safeguardrcdow.org.uk

CHURCH OPENING HOURS

Monday to Saturday: 7.30am - 6.30pm
Sunday: 7.30am – 7.00pm

MASS TIMES

Monday to Friday: 8:00 | 13:05 | 18:00

Saturday: 8:00 | 18:00 (vigil)

Sunday: 8:00 | 09:30 (Family) | 11:00 (Solemn), 12:30 | 17:30 | 19:00 (Young Adult, 18-35)

Join us for a coffee after the 9:30 and 11:00 Mass.

All Masses can be viewed on our

livestreaming page

<https://www.farmstreet.org.uk/livestream>

EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

Monday to Friday: 12:00-13:00

CONFESSIONS

Monday to Friday: 12:00 – 12:55

Saturday: 10:00 to 12:00; 17:45 – 17:55

Sunday: Fifteen minutes before every Mass

Also by appointment



GAUDETE – “REJOICE”

Today is the day when the Church encourages us to *rejoice*, the third Sunday of the time of preparation that we call “Advent”. And what are we to rejoice about? Well in the first place, you may feel inclined to rejoice that, at least for today, you do not have to continue your Advent penance.

But what we are *not* being invited to do is rejoice at having been able to persuade one of my “loved ones” to buy exactly that present which I have been coveting for a while. That is not what the season is about; nor is it even the (perhaps rather more creditable) satisfaction of having tracked down precisely that gift that will do nicely for another “loved one”. Nor does our joy come at this time because we have been able to organise a spectacularly extravagant meal, with immense quantities of the best food and drink.

So where are we to find our joy this week? Well, our task is always to look for joy in the scriptures, the word of God that is the source of all that is good for us. And can we find it there? We can, and as we do so, we may wish to notice that today, December 17th, is the day when the Church enters the deeper, second, period of Advent, with the “Great O” Antiphons; so this is the time to go more deeply into the reality of the feast that is coming, though of course it has not yet arrived, and will not do so until we come to next Sunday evening, when we shall start our Christmas celebration. By then we hope to have entered more profoundly into the identity of the one whose birth we are about to celebrate. And what might today’s readings have to tell us about this person?

Certainly, Jesus himself seems to have made the connection, for the first reading is quoted by him in what Luke offers us as the beginning of his preaching, in the synagogue at Nazara, “where he had been brought up”. He recites these lines, and then preaches a sermon on them, the shortest in history: “Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your ears.” Then the reading ends, with immense joy, possibly one of the sources of Mary’s beautiful Christmas hymn, the “Magnificat”: “I rejoice greatly in the Lord; in my God is the joy of my soul”, and the poet imagines what Jerusalem is going to be wearing when the Lord comes: “like a bridegroom adorned with a diadem, like a bride bedecked with her jewels”. Then we are invited to imagine what the Lord’s new world will look like: “as the earth brings forth its plants and a garden makes its growth spring up, so will the Lord God make justice and praise spring up before all the nations.” There is unmistakable joy here, as indeed there is in today’s responsorial, which is precisely that “Magnificat”.

And of course, there is immense joy in today’s second reading, which is from the very first

document in the entire New Testament, where we hear Paul telling his Thessalonians to “rejoice all the time...give thanks in every respect”. And then he offers us the grounds for this rejoicing: “you see – this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for all of you”. Do you see how our rejoicing comes from knowing who Jesus is?

And that is what today’s gospel brings us, part of the extraordinary opening chapter of John’s gospel. It starts with a glimpse of John the Baptist, but it is carefully organised to make it clear that what matters here is not John but Jesus, for it is Jesus, not John, whose function is to “bear witness to the light”, and indeed actually to be the Light. Then we go deeper into who Jesus is, and who John is: John makes it utterly clear that “I am NOT the Christ”, nor “the Prophet”; instead, he points to the person who really matters at this time, and that is, of course, Jesus, of whom the Baptist says “I am not fit to undo the thong of his sandal” (which would of course be a slave’s job). So that is where our joy lies at this time, identifying who Jesus is, and also recognising that we are not God.

Could you manage that, this Christmas time?

Fr Nicholas King SJ

Sunday Refreshments

Refreshments are normally served in the Arrupe Hall after the 9.30am, 11am and 5.30pm Sunday Masses (second & fourth Sunday only for 5.30pm).

Liturgical Calendar

Sun:	Third Sunday of Advent (<i>Gaudete Sunday</i>) Isaiah 61:1-11; I Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-28
Mon:	Advent feria Jeremiah 23:5-8; Matthew 1:18-24
Tue:	Advent feria Judges 13:2-25; Luke 1:5-25
Wed:	Advent feria; St Peter Canisius, Priest & Doctor Isaiah 7:10-14; Luke 1:26-38
Thu:	Advent feria Song of Songs 2:8-14; Luke 1:39-45
Fri:	Advent feria; St John of Kanty, Priest (<i>Friday abstinence</i>) I Samuel 1:24-28; Luke 1:46-56
Sat:	Advent feria Malachi 3:1-24; Luke 1:57-66
Sun:	Fourth Sunday of Advent & Christmas Eve II Samuel 7:1-16; Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38

Parish Prayer List

We pray for those in the parish who are sick: Debra Minty Baker, Marie Carroll Copestake, Felicity Ann Croft, Kyllikki Edelhain, Christian Engelhart, Asoka Fernando, Lady Antonia Fraser, Christopher Halliday, Caroline Harkink, Erin Lillis, Nikhin, Laura Marani, Donald Mathieson, Robert McCormack, Helen Murphy, Millon Nigusie, Otilie, Graziella Pirovano, Mrs Katerina Porter, Sarah Esparza Regalado, Ian Rice, George Tabor, Francis Walsh, Natalie Williams, Anna Wright, & Michael Wymes

The LORD sustains him on his sickbed; in his illness you restore him to full health. Psalm 41:3

We pray for those in the parish who have recently died. *Requiescant in pace*

Prayer intentions

Please consider asking for particular prayer intentions at Mass and the lamp before Our Lady of Farm Street. Contact the Parish Office or speak to the sacristan for information on how to make your requests. Details of Mass intentions are on the notice board outside of the sacristy.

The lamp this week is lit for the repose of the soul of Nicholas Glover.

Christmas No. 1

‘Hard Times’ is the new single from London-based band Ooberfuse and American rapper, Snoop Dogg. The proceeds from sales will go to support the work of Central London Catholic Churches based at Farm Street Church. This is a **very** exciting project for us at Farm Street, and we hope it will go a long way to raising awareness for the plight of the homeless and supporting the good work that takes place here at Farm Street. Help us to get this single to No. 1 by downloading on Amazon and iTunes.

Synod Day of Prayer

Farm Street Synod Team would like to invite you to a Day of Prayer, facilitated by Farm Street Parishioners and Oxford University Chaplaincy: **Date:** Saturday 30th December **Time:** 10-4:30 **Place:** Cana Lounge, basement of Mount Street Come and spend some in prayer and reflection: An opportunity to reflect on the year as 2023 draws to a close. Program to be published on the Synod Page of the website shortly.

Welcome

If this is your first time here, we would like to especially welcome you to Farm Street, our vibrant and engaging Catholic parish in the heart of London. We aim to welcome all who come to our church to share in our faith and fellowship. Please do introduce yourself to a member of the clergy. You will always be most welcome here.

Fr. Dominic Robinson, SJ
Parish Priest

ADVENT SYNOD ARTICLE

Synod: December 11, 2023

This is a time when we would hope to be focused on preparing for a joyful and important birthday party near the end of the month. And yet, at the same time, it’s impossible to ignore the seeming crescendo of worldwide suffering, especially the savage, intractable wars, caused by mankind, seemingly without any reasonable hope of solution. One wonders, in spite of notable advances in civilization, whether we have really made any progress over centuries or millenia, whether there is any real hope for the future.

One can ask, “How does a good Christian deal with this state of affairs, where there seems so little cause for hope and such great cause for despair.” The bible is full of hints and messages: Jesus’s parables contain repeated calls to action to show up to do the work of the Lord, to act as a neighbor to our neighbors; the New Testament directs us to follow up faith with deeds; and, when actual action seems absurdly ineffective or irrelevant, to bear our troubles with patience and enduring fortitude, following the example of Christ. The Synod process is a recognition that all of this is most possible, and perhaps only possible, if we all actively try to do together what our Church was founded for, to answer Christ’s call to faith and action.

The Synod purpose, as I understand it, is to include as many people as possible in conversation as to the mission and processes of the Church, to draw in those seemingly outside the tent, also engaging all those inside the tent. In the Synod meetings I’ve attended, we’ve had the chance to share our experiences and views, spiritual needs and aspirations, a valuable, empowering, and satisfying experience.

Pope Francis has given us the opportunity and the incentive to participate in the life of the Church. The chance is there for us to work to help heal the wounds of the world. For it to work, the Synod process needs the participation of as many of us as possible.

Merry Christmas to all.

Martin Lucente,
Farm Street Parishioner