

## DIARY for WEEK BEGINNING 6th DECEMBER 2009

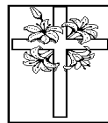
### ✠ SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT (C) ✠

<b>Sun 6</b>	Saturday	6.30pm	✠ Vigil Mass: Intention of Weller Family
	Sunday	9.30am	✠ Mass: Norman Williams RIP
		11.00am	✠ Mass: Pro Populo
		12.30pm	<i>Baptism of Jack Michael O'Connor</i>
		4.00pm	<i>Benediction</i>
<b>Mon 7</b>	St Ambrose	8.00am	✠ Mass: Viktor Gekish
<b>Tue 8</b>	Immaculate Conception of the Bl. Virgin Mary	9.00am	✠ Mass: Wellbeing of Greta Hyde
<b>Wed 9</b>	Feria	9.45am	<i>Morning Prayer</i>
		10.00am	✠ Mass: Alice Cassidy RIP
<b>Thu 10</b>	Feria	7.00am	✠ Mass: Carlton Aubert RIP
<b>Fri 11</b>	Feria	9.45am	<i>Morning Prayer</i>
		10.00am	✠ Mass: Welfare of the Starkey Family
<b>Sat 12</b>	Our Lady of Guadalupe	10.00am	✠ Mass: Ben De Souza RIP
		10.30am	<i>Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Confessions</i>
<b>✠ THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT (C) ✠</b>			
<b>Sun 13</b>	Saturday	6.30pm	✠ Vigil Mass: Pearl Mathias RIP
	Sunday	9.30am	✠ Mass: Pro Populo
		11.00am	✠ Mass: Christopher Clement Walker <i>(Also baptism of Ryan Evans)</i>

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Ben De Souza, recently dead, and for the following, whose anniversaries occur this week:

Bryon Pennington, Ralph Trutwein; Robert Jenkin,  
John Knight, Harry Hazelden, Pearl Mathias, James Kitney,  
John Cochraine, Anna McCarthy, George Kavanagh,  
John Gay and Mary Kinnear.

*May their souls and the souls of all the ✠ faithful departed  
through the mercy of God rest in peace.*



## OUR LADY of GILLINGHAM

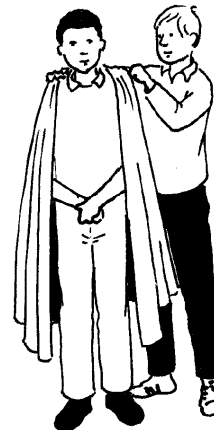


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 Parish Priest Fr Geoffrey Pointer  
 Parish Deacon Rev Michael Knight [574404]  
 Hospital Chaplain Fr James Clark [830000]

—Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Southwark - Registered Charity 235468—

6th December 2009

### ✠ SECOND SUNDAY of ADVENT ✠



#### WORD of GOD

Jerusalem, take off your dress of sorrow and distress, put on the beauty of the glory of God for ever, wrap the cloak of the integrity of God around you, put the diadem of the glory of the Eternal on your head.

*(Baruch 5:2)*

#### WORD for TODAY

Although Christmas is still a way off yet, today's liturgy whets our appetite by hinting at a let-up in the daily grind of life, at a promise of glory and at an eternal reward for those who trust in the Messiah who is about to come.

#### BABY TALK (8th, 12th and 20th December)

Three dates in the Church's December calendar remind us of childbirth (not to mention Christmas Day):

**8th December**, the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, recalls the unique role Mary had in the history of salvation, having been specially chosen from birth to become the Mother of God by giving birth to Jesus at Bethlehem.

**12th December** is a major feast in Central America (especially Mexico) and in the United States where Our Lady of Guadalupe is recalled. After her 16th century apparition to a Mexican peasant, Juan Diego, she is regularly depicted in a dress with a sash that shows her to be pregnant.

And on **20th December** (the Fourth Sunday of Advent) the Church asks us to remember all those women who are expecting a baby in the forthcoming months. Beginning to feel broody?



## **AROUND the PARISH**

**GUEST APPEARANCE** For this week's Sunday morning Masses we welcome Fr Michael Adams, Parish Priest of Parkwood and Wigmore. He and Fr Geoffrey are doing a straight swap. Welcome, Fr Michael!

**INDIAN INDULGENCE LUNCH** Many thanks to all of those who organised and assisted in this event. It was a thoroughly enjoyable occasion with some authentic Indian cuisine; we are all looking forward to the next one!

**ADVENT** There is a selection of booklets on the table in the porch. 'My Day by Day' and 'Walk with me' are both great aids to our observance of this season. The price is only £1, which should be put in the box marked 'papers' in the wall. We also have Junior editions to help you see your children through this season. ✠ There is to be a **Christingle Service** in the church on Thursday 17th December at 4pm and a **Nativity Service** on Christmas Eve, also 4pm, both especially for children and parents.

**CHRISTMAS HAMPER RAFFLE** There will be a raffle for two Christmas Hampers: the proceeds go towards the annual parish outing next August. Raffle tickets will be on sale after all Masses this weekend and next.

**FIRST HOLY COMMUNIONS 2010** The first learning session for children will be this Saturday, 12th December, at 5.50pm in the McMahan Hall.

**MASSES** This year's diary is full and next year's diary is beginning to fill up. If you wish to book a Mass, please see Fr Geoffrey or John Alli-

son after Mass, or call into the parish office on a Friday morning.

**PARISH VISION** We hope to have the notes of the recent parish meeting available this weekend.

**YEAR of PRIESTHOOD** For the remainder of this year for priests (which concludes on the Feast of the Sacred Heart, 11th June 2010) we shall be exposing the Blessed Sacrament on most Saturdays after the morning Mass for the duration of Confessions. There are prayer lists for priests on the windowsills in the porch. Please take one, and also a list of the priests in Dioceses (sorry they were not available last week).

**ALTAR SERVERS** Lay members of the Church are encouraged to engage in active participation in the Mass and parish life. If there are any people who have made their First Communion and wish to become altar servers, they are welcome to join the Guild of St Stephen. Please see Fr Geoffrey or John Allison, the parish M.C. Thank you.

## **AROUND the DIOCESE and BEYOND**

**ARCHBISHOP KEVIN** Our thoughts and prayers are with the Archbishop as he is forced to resign from office as a result of serious health issues. We pray for the diocese and for those whose task it is to find a worthy successor.

**'ASSISTING SUICIDE'** The Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) has published guidelines governing the prosecution of cases of assisting suicide. It is very important that Catholics should know what these guidelines say and make their views known to the DPP. A short briefing note

'HAVING YOUR SAYON ASSISTING SUICIDE' can be found on the notice board in the church porch, explaining what this is all about and what you can do about it. There are also details online at [www.catholicchurch.org.uk](http://www.catholicchurch.org.uk)

**FAITH IN FOCUS: TWO REASONS TO HOPE** When God first agreed to be our ancestors' God, by signing the covenant, he said it would be based on two things: "hesed and emeth". These two Hebrew words mean "steadfast love and faithfulness". Even a fool can see that our ancestors didn't take long to break their side of the agreement. They soon forgot that their "special relationship" with God depended on how they behaved, how they responded to God's favour by the way they treated him and other people. So you might think that God would have torn up the covenant and declared it null and void. But God remembered his part of the bargain, those two things: steadfast love and faithfulness. God never stopped being loving and faithful, whatever his people got up to. No matter how far people strayed, God remained steadfast and faithful. This dual characteristic of God, steadfastness and faithfulness, is the reason why Christians trust God. It is the basis of Christian hope. Our Advent liturgy today invites us to deepen this sense of hope. Don't be miserable, says the prophet Baruch, don't go around sad and distressed because your God is coming to set things right. Advent looks forward to the fulfilment of the promises that God has made to us. And God is steadfast and faithful. But Christian hope is not merely

about the future. It's not like the vague hope that one day we might win the lottery. It affects how we live our lives today, because the seeds of the future are based on my relationships here and now. Hope shines a new light on this reality. It's a dynamic gift that stops us from closing in on ourselves and instead spurs us on to new beginnings, to new challenges and to new life. We live by faith; we continue through charity; we flourish in hope. The hope we entertain is not simply an optimism that Jesus will return at the end of time, but is a conviction that here and now he can come into our lives as Messiah and can set us free from whatever weighs us down. And come he will if we invite him. For he is steadfast and faithful.

**ATTENDANCE** Last weekend **360** people came to Mass in our church. The encouraging news is that during the last year our Mass attendance has risen slightly according to the annual Diocesan Mass count which takes place each October. Thank you to those who take the count each week. The collection last weekend came to **£502.20**. The Cathedral collection came to **£207.80**, and the Building Fund benefited by the magnificent sum of **£680.56** raised by the Indian Indulgence lunch, along with a further **£100** thanks to various donations. Football parking yielded a further **£206.50** and the winner of last month's 50/50 club was B. McIntyre who won £47.50 with ticket number 116. **Next week** there will be a retiring collection to offset the cost of flowers and decorations for the altar at Christmas. *Thank you.*