

OUR LADY of GILLINGHAM



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Registered Charity 235468

DIARY for WEEK BEGINNING 12th DECEMBER 2010			
✠ THIRD SUNDAY of ADVENT (A) ✠			
Sun 12	Saturday	6.30pm	✠ Mass: Pro Populo
	Sunday	9.30am	✠ Mass: Pearl Mathias RIP
		11.00am	✠ Mass: Eugenio Grosso RIP
Mon 13	St Lucy	9.30am	<i>Holy Rosary (daily, before Mass)</i>
		10.00am	✠ Mass: Rose Ward RIP
Tues 14	St John of the Cross	10.00am	✠ Mass: Fred Weller RIP
Wed 15	Feria	10.00am	✠ Mass: Holy Souls
Thu 16	Feria	7.00am	✠ Mass: Norah Smith RIP
		4.00pm	<i>Christingle Service</i>
Fri 17	Feria	10.00am	✠ Mass: Jack McIntyre RIP
Sat 18	Feria	10.00am	✠ Mass: Philomena Breach RIP
		10.30am	<i>Confessions</i>
		4.00pm	✠ Nuptial Mass
✠ FOURTH SUNDAY of ADVENT (A) ✠			
Sun 19	Saturday	6.30pm	✠ Mass: Dec'd members of Lee Family
	Sunday	9.30am	✠ Mass: Pro Populo
		11.00am	✠ Mass: Winifred Brown RIP
		4.00pm	✠ Mass: Malayalam Community

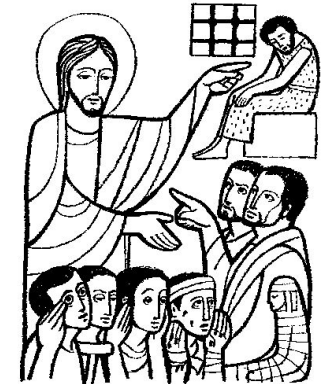
12th December 2010

✠ THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT (A) ✠

WORD OF GOD

Look, your God is coming,
 he is coming to save you.

(Isaiah 35:4)



WORD FOR TODAY

Today's a day for rejoicing. Known as "Gaudete Sunday" (from the Latin word for "rejoice") it is Advent's midpoint when we pause to recollect that the coming of our God is something which should bring us only joy. To be a Christian is to await the coming of a God whose only desire is to save rather than condemn.

GAUDETE The 3rd Sunday of Advent is also called *Gaudete* Sunday. This is because Advent was originally a 40-day season of fasting in preparation for Christmas (sometimes called "St Martin's Lent" because it began the day after his feast). The word "gaudete" is Latin for "rejoice" and it is this word that is used for the opening song of the Mass, as the mood of rejoicing pervades the whole celebration on this day.

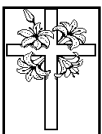
So *Gaudete* Sunday was seen as a break in what was a penitential period, and it can even result in the wearing of pink or rose vestments (though most clergy jib at that!). ✠ **Advent** is a time of waiting. The one we await is coming not to haul us over the coals but to save us and to offer us the chance to be all that we can become. As we journey towards our meeting with Jesus, our prayer at today's liturgy is the ancient one of the psalmist: Come, Lord, and save us!



Please pray for the following whose anniversaries occur this week:

Mary Kinnear, Susan Bishop, Alfred Dean, Norah Smith,
 Thomas Parson, Estelle Flannery, Jack McIntyre,
 Mary Micalcuff and Arthur Ryan.

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



AROUND the PARISH

CHRISTMAS HAMPER RAFFLE Tickets will be on sale after Mass for the next two weeks. All proceeds will go towards raising funds for the annual outing to Joss Bay.

TABLE SALE after the 9.30 and 11am Masses today.

PARISH CHRISTMAS TIMETABLES are available this week - *don't leave Mass without a copy.*

A CHRISTINGLE SERVICE will take place in the church on Thursday 16th December at 4.00pm. Also a children's nativity service will be held in the church on Christmas Eve at 4.00pm. Everyone is welcome to both or either of these events.

EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS Rotas for January to June 2011 are now ready. Please collect from your pigeon-hole.

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

CHRISTMAS CARDS may be left in the pigeon holes in the sacristy. Please check and collect your cards.

SOUTHWARK DIRECTORIES are now available from the repository, just a few, containing all you ever wanted to know about the Diocese and Catholic life but were afraid to ask, or frequently asked and then forgot, like *Communion more than once a day, the Eucharistic Fast, Holy Communion under both kinds* (p 146) and the new arrangements for *Holydays of Obligation* (p 148). £3.00.

CATHOLIC TRUTH SOCIETY There are some new publications relating specifically to Advent, together with a variety of pamphlets (including a prayer book in Polish and English, with trans-

lations of the Mass) available on the windowsill in the porch. There you will find traditional aids to our faith such as prayer books and devotions, but in addition you will find challenging and topical subjects. All are reasonably priced so please have a look, and if you wish to purchase any the money can be put in the red box on the back wall marked "Newspapers". If you would like a pamphlet giving guidance on any particular issue, please leave a note in the office and it can be included, if available, in the next order sent to CTS.

NEXT YEAR Fr James Clark will be taking a small group of young people to Rome, 12th-15th April. 4 days' B&B in a wonderful hotel close to St Peter's. Free tour guide, insurance and flights for £285. This trip is open only to those aged 16-21 and is fully supervised by Fr James and trained youth team workers; the best behaviour will be expected from those attending. Daily Mass in the major Basilicas, tour of the Vatican and historic sights of Rome all included. If you are interested please email Fr James as soon as possible at revjamesclark@hotmail.com as the first payment of £150 is due shortly.

AROUND the DIOCESE and BEYOND

ADVENT THEME The *Latter Days of Advent* begin this week (17th December) when the liturgy is more directly addressed to preparation for the celebration of the birth of Our Lord. Listen out for the 'Great O' antiphons, used in Vespers and indicated in our parish timetable for the days running up to Christmas Eve. These antiphons high-light titles for the Messiah (*O Wisdom, O Lord, O Root of Jesse*) referred to in the prophecies of Isaiah and familiar to us from that Advent hymn proper to

these latter days: 'O come, O come, Emmanuel.'

DEANERY PENANCE There will be an Advent Penitential Service at St Thomas of Canterbury, Rainham, on Tuesday, 21st December, at 8pm.

CAFOD WORLD GIFTS Christmas Catalogue is available at the back of the church. Capture the true spirit of Christmas and make a lasting difference to someone fighting poverty.

CABRINI CHILDREN'S SOCIETY We have received the following email: 'You are all invited to attend Cabrini Children's Society Carol Service on Wednesday 15th December in the presence of Bishop John Hine. The event starts at 6.30pm at St George's Cathedral, Westminster Bridge Road, Southwark. For more information contact Ann Hoggan on 020 8668 2181, email ann.hoggan@cabrini.org.uk or Caroline Bennett on 07866 695183, email caroline.bennett@cabrini.org.uk. We look forward to seeing you there.'

DIVINE MERCY APOSTOLATE have published their recent issue of the Messenger of Mercy magazine. Copies available at the back of the church.

FAITH IN FOCUS: RAISING EXPECTATIONS Non-religious people can be forgiven for thinking that Christians are consumed with a religion of fear. In fact, elderly people sometimes remark that their own religious upbringing was characterised by fear of punishment. "Wait till your father gets home" was transferred into threats about what would happen when God came to judge the living and the dead. If this were true, then Advent would be a miserable season. It would be the time when we all prayed with our lips for the coming of Christ but in our hearts we hoped that it would not be during our

lifetime. Should we be tempted to go along with this in our own practice of faith, then today's scripture ought to make us think twice. For it forms part of the "Gaudete Sunday" ("Rejoicing") Advent message: the coming of our God is something to yearn for rather than to dread. We are encouraged to rejoice because our God will come not to condemn us but to set us free. It's a prize to be grasped, not a plague to be shunned. Advent is not a palliative against the futility of existence; it's an endorsement of the very meaning of life. It's a period of great expectations, for when Christ comes, it is to bring fullness of life. Isaiah tells us that the coming of our God is like an oasis in the desert, like a cure for those who are crippled and struck down. And John the Baptist reminds us that if we want to know whether God really is close by, then we only need to look around us and see the wonders that can happen when the Good News is proclaimed. And this coming of our God is not merely some distant thing in the future that can have no effect on our lives today. God comes every day. We meet Christ in those whose lives touch ours, both friend and stranger. He looks out on us through the eyes of our smiling grandchildren as much as the tears of the widow and orphan. The coming of our God is nothing to fear. It is something to look forward to eagerly, both now and at the end of time.

ATTENDANCE 376 people attended Mass here last week and we received **£607.32** in the collection. Donations amounting to **£60** were received towards the Building Fund. ♦ **This week** there will be a retiring collection to offset the cost of flowers and decorations for the altar at Christmas. Thank you.