

**DIARY for WEEK BEGINNING 13th DECEMBER 2009**

**✕ THIRD SUNDAY of ADVENT (C) ✕**

<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>
<b>Mon 14</b>	St John of the Cross	9.00am	✕ Mass: Santan Alvares RIP
		10.00am	<i>School Nativity Play</i>
<b>Tue 15</b>	Feria	9.45am	<i>Morning Prayer</i>
		10.00am	✕ Mass: Emmanuel Muscat RIP
<b>Wed 16</b>	Feria	12noon	✕ Requiem Mass: Ben De Souza
<b>Thu 17</b>	Feria	7.00am	✕ Mass: Jack McIntyre RIP
		4.00pm	<i>Children's Christingle Service</i>
<b>Fri 18</b>	Feria	9.45am	<i>Morning Prayer</i>
		10.00am	✕ Mass: Intention of Ivy Muscat
<b>Sat 19</b>	Feria	10.00am	✕ Mass: Winifred Brown RIP
		10.30am	<i>Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Confessions</i>
		2.00pm	<i>Baptism: Rose Whitnall</i>

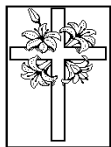
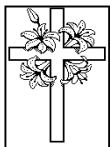
**✕ FOURTH SUNDAY of ADVENT (C) ✕**

<b>Sun 20</b>	Saturday	6.30pm	✕ Vigil Mass: Dec'd members Lee Family
	Sunday	9.30am	✕ Mass: Pro Populo
		11.00am	✕ Mass: Noel and Oliver Wheelan RIP

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

Susan Bishop, Alfred Dean, Norah Smith, Thomas Parsons, Estelle Flannery, Jack McIntyre, Mary Micallef and Frank Bromley.

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



**OUR LADY of GILLINGHAM**



2A Ingram Road, Gillingham, Kent, ME7 1YL  
 Phone (01634) 852979  
 Email: office@ourladyofgillingham.org  
 Website: www.ourladyofgillingham.org  
 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—

13th December 2009

**✕ THIRD SUNDAY of ADVENT (C) ✕**



**WORD of GOD**

I want you to be happy, always happy in the Lord.

*(Philippians 4:4)*

**WORD for TODAY**

Does your faith make you happy or is it a burden? Do you think of the presence of God in your life as something to rejoice over or something to fear? How does the practice of your religion boost your life?

**St JOHN of the CROSS (December 14th)**

St John of the Cross was born in Spain in the 16th century and along with St Teresa of Avila he founded the Discalced Carmelites. He is famous for his spiritual writings and his teaching on mysticism and prayer. Renowned for his contemplation, he left us a very simple prayer for inner peace that can be very helpful when things start getting on top of us and life begins to get stressful:

*O blessed Jesus,  
 give me stillness of soul in you.  
 Let your mighty calmness reign in me.  
 Rule me, O King of Gentleness,  
 O King of Peace.*



## AROUND the PARISH

**PARISH VISION** The notes from the Parish Vision meeting are now available on the windowsills in the porch. Please do take a copy so that you can stay in touch with what is being planned for our parish.

**CHRISTMAS POSTERS** Take a poster from the windowsill in the porch to display in your front window. ✠ Christmas timetables will be available next week.

**CHRISTMAS LUNCH** Just to remind you of the Parish Christmas lunch at 1.00pm next Sunday. We regret that the list is now closed.

**READERS** New lists starting February 2010 are in the pigeonholes in the sacristy. A couple of the readers for the Saturday evening Masses are unable to continue, so if you feel that you could help the parish by doing the reading once a month or so, please speak to Deacon Michael after Mass.

**SOUTHWARK DIRECTORIES** are also 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 ask and then forget, like *Communion more than once a day, the Eucharistic Fast, Holy Communion under both kinds* (p 148) and the new arrangements for *Holydays of Obligation* (p 150). £3.00: essential for those who celebrate Morning Prayer in common in church since it indicates which week of the four-week cycle the Church is following.

**FOR CHILDREN** 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 but all are welcome.

**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 the Diocese.

## 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. Bishop John Hine has been elected as Diocesan Administrator and has asked that we keep him in our prayers that he may serve us and the Diocese as well as possible until a new Archbishop is appointed.

**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 highlight 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, 22nd December, at 8pm.

**'ASSISTING SUICIDE'** The Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) has pub-

lished 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 say on 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 ([catholicchurch.org.uk](http://catholicchurch.org.uk)).

**FAITH IN FOCUS: HAPPILY EVER AFTER?** Today is known as Gaudete or Rejoicing Sunday, and St Paul is quite insistent that we should know what we are doing: I want you to be happy, always happy in the Lord! Happy is a strange word. Some people think they are happy but they're really only content. To be content means that we put up with something without complaining too much because we know things could be a lot worse. So we're content with our lot. Some people think they are happy but they're really only pleased. Something has happened that has given them a bit of a fillip. Perhaps their football team has won an unexpected victory. But it's hardly ecstasy! Some people think they are happy but they're really only in a good mood. Maybe they've been out to celebrate passing an exam or celebrating someone's birthday and they've had a lovely evening. But tomorrow this will only be a memory. Content, pleased, glad, cheerful, jovial, merry...all of this is good but it's not actually the same as happiness. To be happy means to be blessed. And to know that you are blessed makes you happy. Really happy. So at the root of happiness for a Christian is the knowledge that we are made in God's image, loved by him and held in that love every moment of our being. Although we stray from this im-

age of God we are constantly called back to the joy of our relationship with God and are redeemed through Christ's death and resurrection. This is the greatest blessing we could wish for: to belong to God. Pleasure is a fleeting thing. We can feel it today but it can desert us tomorrow. But Christian happiness is full of more than pleasure; it's coated with joy. And such happiness and joy can never be taken away from us, even though at times our vision of them may seem clouded. As we continue our Advent journey Paul advises us to be happy, for our God is very near and is coming to set us free. This deep-down happiness at the approach of our God is something that doesn't waver with every gust of the wind because it is at the heart of our loving relationship with God. In fact it's a real blessing.

**ATTENDANCE** Last week we welcomed **326** people to Mass in our church and we received **£1,355.92** in the offertory (this was augmented by a substantial quarterly cheque). Thank you. We are also grateful for an anonymous donation of **£1,000** towards the Building Fund. We received **£45.60** from Smurfit Kappa from our car park recycling (please remember this when disposing of all your Christmas wrapping paper, etc!). The APF boxes yielded over **£250** following the latest opening of the red boxes. **This week** there is a retiring collection to offset the cost of flowers and decorations for the altar at Christmas. *Thank you.*

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