

**PARISH OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL & ST SIMON STOCK, CARMELITE CHURCH**  
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**Priests in the Parish:** Fr Thaddeus Ekuma ocd, Fr Matt Blake ocd,  
Fr John McGowan ocd, Fr Tijo Xavier ocd, Fr Theophilus Nyamali, ocd

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**First Sunday of Advent – 28<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

**Does Christ Still Need to Come (1)?**

Today we begin our journey into Advent – a period of expectation for the coming of our Saviour. It is important to note the way the word ‘advent’ is rendered. It carries within it the idea of constancy, not just a one-time event. So we believe there are three ‘comings’ of our Lord.

The first coming happened over 2000 years ago when Jesus came in human form, born in Bethlehem to the family of Mary and Joseph. This is the historical event which we celebrate at Christmas. But, although this coming happened in the past, we celebrate it in a real way not just as an event in the past. I know that for some of us, Christmas is just a commemoration of Christ’s birth, in which case Christ is not really born in our days, it is just a commemoration. However, we actually celebrate this event liturgically as an event that is taking place really and in the present, not just a commemoration. But we can only celebrate it in this way if as individuals we have cause to believe deep within us that Christ still needs to come. That is, if there are situations in our life that make the coming of Christ necessary, situations from which we need to be liberated.

The second coming of Christ will happen at the end of time. But no one knows when will be the end of time, neither the angels nor the Son, as Jesus tells us, but only the Father who knows. We hear many warnings in scriptures about the need to prepare for this time, especially because we do not know when. St Luke describes that time in our Gospel today as a time when terrifying things will happen and *People will die of fright in anticipation of what is coming upon the world. But when these signs begin to happen, stand erect and raise your heads because your redemption is at hand.* Sometimes in our life we have terrifying experiences such as in sickness or loss of loved one, or we come to situations which are extremely difficult, when we are terrified and feel like everything is coming to an end for us. Such situations may well feel like the coming of Christ for us because we yearn for God’s intervention. Ultimately, the end of time happens to each of us individually at the moment of our death when God calls us back to himself.

The third Coming of Christ relates to our everyday experiences when our Lord reveals himself to us in the everyday events of life. For instance, we encounter Jesus in a special way in the Eucharist and other sacraments. Jesus could also come to us through our neighbours’ words or actions that liberate us or bring us consolation. When we become attentive to our everyday experiences, we find that Christ is constantly coming to us.

In all three ‘comings’ of Christ, there is one common element – that of expectation, which arises out a predicament in which the world finds itself. In the Old Testament, we hear that the Israelites longed for the coming of the Messiah because of the situation in which they found themselves. In spite of God’s age-long promises to Abraham for a lasting peace for the people, Israel was still plundered episodically by neighbouring nations and taken into exile several times. In the midst of this, we hear the people’s cry through the prophet Jeremiah asking God if he has forgotten his

people Israel. Such were the sentiments that surrounded the expectation of a Saviour who would redeem Israel.

Do we feel anything such as the Israelites felt? Do we find reasons in our world today, in our communities, families, in our personal lives, why we feel Christ needs to come? Do we feel we have any situation that badly needs redemption? If so, we are on the right road in preparation for Christmas, *stand erect and hold your head high because your redemption is at hand*. Let us bring all those situations to our prayers during this period.

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## NOTICES

### **Third Session of our Parish Synodal Pathway**

This week's Wednesday, 1<sup>st</sup> Dec we will hold the third and final session of listening to each other's experience in our synodal pathway. The session will begin at **6.30pm** (just after evening mass). We will try to synthesize all our previous contributions. Once again, everyone is invited to this discussion as each person's experience counts. Please do come along and let us together forge a way into the future of our Christian community.

### **Parish Advent Retreat - Preparing for Christmas with Carmelite Saints**

Monday December 13th to Friday December 17th, 5.00 - 6.30pm. The retreat will consist of a short talk at 5.00pm followed by exposition of Blessed Sacrament and end with mass at 6.00pm. Everyone is welcome to join either in person or on live-stream or YouTube. The retreat is led by Fr. Matt Blake OCD

### **Volunteers' Evening**

The 6.00pm Mass on the 8<sup>th</sup> of December, which is also the conclusion of the Year of St Joseph, will be a Thanksgiving Mass for volunteers, readers, Eucharistic ministers and all those who help in the parish. After the Mass there will be drinks and munchies in the hall to celebrate the work of all our volunteers, ministers and helpers. Please do mark the date while we continue to monitor the developing COVID situation.

### **Memorial Mass for Rita McDonagh RIP**

Rita's funeral took place December 16th, 2020 but due to Covid restrictions most people were unable to attend. **December 12th, Sunday Evening Mass 6.00pm** will be a memorial mass for Rita. This will be an opportunity for all of us to pray for Rita and to give thanks to God for Rita's enormous contribution to this Church. Please pass the word around to Rita's many friends.

### **Advent Series: The Invisible made Visible**

During a series of three, weekly (one-hour) online workshops, British artist **Alex Roberts** will join Fr Tony Parsons o.c.d. to share how making, viewing and experiencing works of art can offer pause for personal reflection. Mark up your diaries for these Saturdays during **Advent: 4<sup>th</sup> 11<sup>th</sup> 18<sup>th</sup> December from 5pm-6pm**. Online registration needed: <https://www.carmelite.uk.net/courses/the-invisible-made-visible/>

### **A Course on the Eucharist**

You are invited to an online course on the Eucharist in which Father Paulson Veliyannoor, a Claretian missionary, theologian, and clinical psychologist, explains how the Eucharist transforms us individually and collectively. Please see detailed information and how to register on the notice board.

Please, we require **volunteer singers for our 6.00pm mass choir**. If you'd like to join please email [enquiries@carmelitechurch.org](mailto:enquiries@carmelitechurch.org) or speak to one of the priests.

<b><u>Collections Last Sunday</u></b>	Offering	£1236
	Gift Aid Envelopes	£112

Thank you for your generosity

Fr. Thaddeus, OCD