

**PARISH OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL & ST SIMON STOCK, CARMELITE CHURCH**  
**41 KENSINGTON CHURCH ST., LONDON W8 4BB**

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**Mass Times:** Sun: Sat Vigil 6.00 p.m., Sun. 8.30 a.m., 10.00 a.m., 12.15 p.m. & 6.00 p.m.

**Weekdays (including Bank Holidays):** 8.00 a.m., 12.15 p.m. & 6.00 p.m.

**Livestream:** [www.carmelitechurch.org](http://www.carmelitechurch.org) & YouTube: "Kensington Carmelite Church"

**Confessions:** Sat: 11.30 a.m. – 12.15 p.m. & 5.00 - 5.50 p.m. Weekdays: 5.40 p.m. - 6.00 p.m.

**Priests in the Parish:** Fr Thaddeus Ekuma ocd, Fr Matt Blake ocd,

Fr Tijo Xavier ocd, Fr Theophilus Nyamali, ocd

**Safeguarding Reps:** Franca Bren

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**Christmas Sunday – 25<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

*Who am I that you care for me?*

The mystery of Christmas – God being born to us as a Saviour – confronts us with one important question: Who am I that God cares for me?

We know that the value of a gift lies not only in the gift but also in how it is given. That is why, for instance, people look for the most breath-taking moment to make a marriage proposal. We are confronted with the mystery of God who comes to save us in the most confounding and breath-taking way possible. The book of Genesis recounts how God created the entire universe by His Word, perhaps simply by willing that things should be. This gives an indication that it would have taken God no more than a command for human beings to be saved from their sins. Or He could simply do away with cause of sin. In fact, going by God's infinite capabilities, demonstrated in the creation of the world, there are countless imaginable ways by which He could have saved us.

Yet, the mystery of Christmas that we are confronted with is that God chose to become human in order to save us. Why did God, out of the infinite number of ways, more divine ways, like creation by His Word, chose the most unlikely of divine options to save us? Born as a human being, He was subject to the political and environmental crisis that human nature in its fallenness creates. More than that, He was born in the lowliest possible conditions a baby could be born? We are confounded by not just the magnanimity of God's Gift of salvation but how God in His unfathomable wisdom has chosen to deliver this Gift. Quite understandably, many people who awaited God's promise of salvation found it, and still find it, difficult to accept that Jesus is that promised salvation. For this reason, the East Gate in Jerusalem remains closed to this day in the belief that only the true messiah will open it when he comes.

For us who believe, although this Gift must be overpowering, we rejoice at Christmas and celebrate with unbounded joy because we acknowledge the length to which God has gone in order to show that He cares for us. And in recognising God's inestimable Gift in Jesus our Saviour, we accept what he has, in turn, made us – children of God saved from their sins. In accepting this gift, we also accept its responsibilities, as the words of Pope Saint Leo the Great reminds us: "Christian, remember your dignity, and now that you share in God's own nature, do not return by sin to your former base condition. Bear in mind who is your head and of whose body you are a member. Do not forget that you have been rescued from the power of darkness and brought into the light of God's kingdom."

Let us therefore join the angels in eternal praise of our Lord. The joy of Christmas never ends because the Gift of Salvation remains forever with us. It is given to us that we may live in joy. Our

Christian life, I suppose, is nourished and sustained by constantly keeping in mind God's Gift and living out the joy that Salvation necessarily bestows. This would mean that our whole life is affected by it, so that even when the burden of living bears upon us, when the demands of daily living bring a dark cloud over us, when our world seems to be going in the wrong direction, when our faith is on low tide, we remember what great Gift God has bestowed on us. Yes, even in those times of difficulty and uncertainty, that Gift remains with us, for Jesus is God-with-us.

It is for our sake then, that God in His wisdom chose to reveal our Salvation in the way that He did. A Virgin in an unknown town gives birth in a manger to Baby who is God and greeted by shepherds; that is, God hidden in the lowly and in unlikely circumstances. It is indeed for our sake that He has done this, if only we can pay attention. God is always hidden while He manifests Himself in unlikely ways. Therefore, when we are plunged into the dark places of life, let us remember that God is with us, for that is the meaning of our salvation. To realize this is to conquer the darkness of sin, loneliness and despair. This realization not only liberates us, but also compels us to tell, to proclaim to those who are yet to realize it, that Salvation is available; that God is with us.

May the joy of Christmas remain always with us. We wish you a Merry Christmas!

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## NOTICES

### **Merry Christmas To You All**

The Carmelite Priory wishes to thank you all for your generosity and support throughout this year. It has been a journey together with you all. We pray that the blessing of Christmas may abide with you all.

**Merry Christmas!**

### **Adoration and Confessions During Octave of Christmas**

During the week after Christmas (from 25<sup>th</sup> December – 1<sup>st</sup> January) our adoration will be before the crib of our new-born Saviour, and there will be no exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. Also, during this week, confessions will be by request only.

### **New Year's Eve**

Our Vigil Mass (6.00pm on Saturday) on New Year's Eve will be a special Mass of thanksgiving for the Year 2022 and prayers to usher in the Year 2023. You are invited to come and pray with us.

Masses next Sunday (New Year Day) will be as usual on Sundays.

### **Confirmation Classes beginning January 2023**

Confirmation classes for the academic year 2023 will start on Sunday the 15th of January 2023 from 4.30 pm to 5.45 pm. Children between the age of 13 to 17 are eligible to apply. Please note that all applications must reach the parish reception on or before the 15th of January 2023. Paper application forms are available at the back of the church. You may also complete the form on our website <https://carmelitechurch.org/activities/catechism-classes/> Classes are due to start in January.

### **World Youth Day Lisbon 2023**

Are you a young person trying to discern what God is calling you to do? Do you want to meet other Catholic young adults from across the globe? Come with the UK Carmelite friars as we travel from Avila to Fatima to Lisbon. We journey from 24th July to 6th August 2023. See the poster on the Notice Boards for more information.

### **Collections Last Sunday**

Offering	£1295
Gift Aid Envelopes	£98

Thank you for your generosity

*Fr. Thaddeus, OCD*