



# SUNDAY NEWSLETTER

Third Sunday of Advent

17<sup>th</sup> December 2023

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

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**Mass Times Sundays:** Vigil (Sat.) 6.00 p.m., 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 (All Masses):** [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, Fr Matt Blake, Fr Tijo Xavier, Fr John Williamson,  
Fr Kelvin Ekhoegbe, Fr Joseph Odiahi

**Safeguarding Rep:** Franca Bren (Email: [kensington2sg1@safeguardrcdow.org.uk](mailto:kensington2sg1@safeguardrcdow.org.uk))

## Reflection

## GAUDETE (REJOICE)!

As we come into the last week of our advent journey, the theme of 'Rejoicing' is introduced in an emphatic way into our liturgy. Today's liturgical colour – rose – attests to this joy, hope and feeling of expectancy which we celebrate. Why are we told to rejoice? On the one hand, it is to encourage us in case we have already grown tired of our journey. And on the other hand, it is to highlight the imminency of the fulfilment of our hope for the coming of our Lord. Joy is the ultimate arrival point of all our life's striving. It is our ultimate goal, in the sense that it will be our permanent disposition when we finally arrive at that final goal of our life – our union with God. We are told to rejoice because the coming of our Lord is near. As Christians, every year we are given the opportunity to be united with God in a real way through the Christmas

liturgy. Our God comes, and uniting with Him is the ultimate joy of our life.

Advent is a celebration of the virtue of hope. Hope is a marvellous thing. It is one of the three theological virtues (with faith and love). It is the anticipation of something yet unrealized. As we await Christ who comes into our world and into our hearts, this anticipation naturally brings joy because our hope is that Christ is going to transform everything in our lives, that is, if we 'make way' for Him.

As human beings, we tend to look for obvious signs – verifiable indications that the Lord is present in our lives. But often, God works within us and among us in ways that may not be so perceptible as we would expect. This is the case in our Gospel today, and it is a

warning for us to watch out our own expectations when our Saviour comes. Long before the appearance of Jesus in 1<sup>st</sup> century Palestine, most any devout Jew was expecting the Christ, and they had a blueprint of what they expected him to be, based on prophesies. Because of the signs associated with John the Baptist who was preaching and baptising, the Jews assumed he was the Christ. John had to openly declare his own unique role – he was not the Christ but a witness to Christ. More importantly, he added, 'I baptise with water; but there stands among you – *unknown to you* – the one who is coming after me... He will baptise with the Holy Spirit.' By this, John the Baptist already indicates the way in which our Lord is among us and the way He works in and among us – unknown to us. The first sign of this is at His birth, born in a

manger, in an insignificant town – not what the Jews expected of the Messiah, the King and Lord of the universe.

While we wait, therefore, let us bear in mind that it is not always easy to find Jesus mainly because we have an expectation of who and where he should be. As one commentator notes, “We can easily become so wrapped up in our own troubles and worries that we fail to recognise the one figure

who can bring their solution, although he is standing among us, the one who ‘has the words of eternal life’. He may come to us in a way we do not like, as a corrective, blocking or diverting the way we had chosen. He may come as suffering, disappointment, failure or bereavement. All of these may be acts of God’s love, to show us the way, though we cannot see it at the time.”

Let us, therefore, open the eyes of our minds and review our expectations so that we might meet our Saviour when He comes and not pass by Him searching where he is not. He will come among us unknown to us. He is always among us, unknown to us. Those times when we come to a point of despair, we should always remember these words of John the Baptist: The one you are waiting for stands there among you, unknown to you.

## NOTICES

### PRE-CHRISTMAS RETREAT (Led by Fr Matt Blake, OCD)

Tuesday, December 19th  
Wednesday, December 20th  
Thursday, December 21st

**Please note that the talks will hold in the Church at 7.00pm**

(Talks will be livestream for the house-bound and those unable to come)

### CHRISTMAS MASS

Christmas Eve (Sunday 24th Dec.) 6.00pm (Vigil Mass of Christmas)

Christmas Nativity Mass (Midnight) 12.00 midnight (Professional Choir starting with carol at 11.15pm)

*Note: There may be no bus service after the Mass but there is free parking around the church on this day.*

Christmas Day (Monday 25<sup>th</sup> Dec.) 8.30am, 10.00am, 12.15pm & 6.00pm

You may make your offering or donation by scanning this QR Code with your mobile phone  
Thank you and God bless!



<b><u>Collections Last Sunday:</u></b>	Offering	£1370
	Gift Aid Envelopes	£147

Thank you for your generosity!

*Fr Thaddeus*

*To see other announcements please scan the QR Code:*

