SUNDAY NEWSLETTER

Second Sunday of Advent (C) **8th December 2024**

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

Web: www.carmelitechurch.org Email: enquiries@carmelitechurch.org
Tel. 0207 937 9866 Mobile: 0770 8203 595
@kensingtoncarmelitechurch on Facebook, Twitter & Instagram

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 & 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 John Williamson, Fr Joseph Odiahi
Safeguarding Rep: Franca Bren

Reflection

HAVE WE YET STARTED?

We have now completed the first week in this season of Advent. We now have two of our Advent candles lit indicating our progress – we have moved into the second week. A quarter of the season for this year has now passed. Perhaps at this juncture, as we launch into the second week, as we light our second candle, we might ask ourselves how our first candle burned. We might ask ourselves, what have we done with Advent so far? What have we done in response to that call in the first week:

"Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord
to the Temple of the God of Jacob
that he may teach us his ways
so that we may walk in his paths…"?

Have we done anything to bring ourselves closer to Jesus than we were one week ago? Anything at all? Or has the week just passed normally? Have we, in fact, wasted this first week completely? Symbolically, you'll find that our first candle is still burning while we light the second one in addition. Can we keep the first burning until we light the fifth one?

If we are not at least thinking of questions like this during Advent, then our preparation is probably not going too well. And if we are still looking for a reason to start we may listen again to the vision of Isaiah for the 'day of the Lord' read out for us today. It begins with the qualities which the Ruler we await at Christmas will possesses. All of the qualities we know as the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit and more are found in full in Him. Seven is a biblical symbol for perfection or completeness. Hence He will be One before whom we can stand in complete confidence that his judgment and his work of salvation will be in accord with the divine order, and its aim is to restore us, and indeed all things, to that original intention of God at creation. The transformative effects of our Saviour's charisma are seen throughout the Gospel: in the disciples abandoning everything they had, including their means of livelihood, to follow Him; in the trembling of evil spirits and sicknesses before him; in the forgiving power of his word and in the submission of the elements of nature to his power. Ultimately, our Saviour comes to restore the natural order, to bring back the peace of the Garden of Eden where the wolf lives with the lamb, calf and lion feed together, and the infant plays over the cobra's hole. No more hostility or hurt for the world will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord. He comes to baptise with the Holy Spirt and fire.

If this is the future we want for ourselves and for our children, what we are asked to do is to prepare a way the coming of this Saviour. The word, as we heard in the Gospel is 'Repentance' on our part. Although this word often connotes the negative

idea that we are doing some particular things wrong, it is a wholly positive word that calls for a change in attitude, behaviour or direction. When John the Baptist first called the people to repentance in the wilderness of Judea, he invited them to a change of behaviour. He enjoined them to adopt a way that would lead to the revelation of God, in those terms that Isaiah prophesied, which we talked about above; that is the restoration of the peaceful, natural order of Eden. It was a call to a change of values – values of the Kingdom of God.

John the Baptist's attire is described in some detail in the Gospel. And this is for a reason. You see, John chose to show what he was preaching by adopting the clothing of the great prophet, Elijah who was to return to announce the final coming of the Lord. And John proclaimed his message in the Jordan desert, along the merchants' route to the East. Such quest for wealth which necessarily involved the use of slaves and the oppression of the poor was precisely what he called for to be changed.
Like John the Baptist, we must also prepare a way for the Lord in the wilderness of our world. We must tell everyone of this vision of the future and that the time is near. There is, therefore, so much to do. We know how unaware people are of the true significance of Christmas. We are to proclaim the message by changing our own values and then be able to tell others of that hope which has inspired our life.

To follow the Mass Readings on your phone, please scan the QR Code:

NOTICES

3 DAYS ADVENT RETREAT WITH ST JOHN OF THE CROSS

Feast of St. John of the Cross: Saturday December 14th

Our parish Advent retreat will hold on **Wednesday 11th, Thursday 12th** and **Friday 13th** December. This retreat also prepares us for the Feast of St John of the Cross on Saturday, 14th Dec. Each day will begin with a Mass at 6.00pm followed by Talk by Fr. Matt Blake OCD at 7.00pm in the Church.
Talks will be available on live stream and You Tube

Saturday 14th: Solemn Mass in honour of St John of the Cross at 12.15pm

ADVENT SPECIAL SPECIAL ADORATION

@6.45pm on 20th December
All are invited

OUR PARISH CHRISTMAS PARTY/CAROL

You are all invited to our parish Christmas party and carols this year on 15th December after the 6.00pm Mass. It will be our opportunity to thank all our esteemed volunteers who have served us throughout this year.

CHRISTMAS DINNER IN THE PRIORY

A group of volunteers in our church are organizing a dinner on Christmas day at 3.00pm for those who are alone and would otherwise have no one with whom to celebrate Christmas. If you would like to come to the dinner, please putting down your name on the sign-up sheet. The organisers need to know those attending by 15th December.

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS PROGRAMME

We have now published this year's Advent and Christmas programme. Please pick a card at the back of the church to keep informed of events and Mass times during this period.

ADVENT RETREATS WITH THE CARMELITE FRAIRS IN OXFORD

The Carmelite Friars in Oxford are offering three retreats for Advent. (1) The online **'Advent journey with the women in Jesus' lineage**' will explore the stories of Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba as touchstones for discerning how God works through our (hi)stories to realise his hopes for us. (2) The online **'Advent Meditations with Poetry and Art, through lectio and visio divinas**' will guide you in pondering the mysteries of Annunciation and Nativity. (3) '**An Advent journey with St. John of the Cross'** is a residential retreat that will take place at Boars Hill, Oxford. This retreat will help us to encounter Christ in a new way.

To join any of these online and in-person retreats, kindly email admin@carmelite.org.uk and visit our website www.carmelite.uk.net to find out more.

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

Collections Last Sunday:	Offering	£1619
	Gift Aid Envelopes	£160

Thank you for your generosity!

Fr Thaddeus, OCD