

# The Little Flower Messenger

Year B – SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT 6<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Welcome to our Parish Community of St. Theresa of Lisieux

The Presbytery, High Lane, Stansted Mountfitchet, CM24 8LQ

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**Gospel: Mark 1:1-8**

*'Make his paths straight.'*

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|----------------------------|---|
| <b>1st Reading:</b>        | <i>Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11</i>  |
| <b>Psalm 84:</b>           | <i>Let us see, O Lord, your mercy and give us your saving help.</i>   |
| <b>2nd Reading:</b>        | <i>2 Peter 3:8-14</i>   |
| <b>Gospel Acclamation:</b> | <i>Alleluia, alleluia! Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight, and all mankind shall see the salvation of God. Alleluia!</i> |
| <b>Communion Antiphon:</b> | <i>Jerusalem, arise and stand upon the heights, and behold the joy which comes to you from God.</i>                                       |

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## This Week's Good News

Dear Friends,

While Matthew and Luke start their Gospels by giving us a brief account of the conception, birth, and early boyhood of Christ, and John begins his Gospel by pointing to the eternal life of Christ as the Word of the Father, Mark opens his Gospel with the preparation for Christ's public life, in which the chief actor is John the Baptist. This wilderness prophet proclaims the "here-ness" of an event and person every Jew has been anticipating. "One more powerful than I," John announces, "is to come after me.... I have baptised you in water; He will baptise you in the Holy Spirit." The essence of the Baptist's message is "repent and return to the ways of the Lord." John preaches that the appropriate behaviour for those preparing "the way of the Lord" is to be baptised "as they confess their sins."

John recommended a baptism of repentance in the river Jordan to the Jews who were familiar with ritual and symbolic washings (Lev.11-15). The Jews insisted that when a male Gentile became a Jew, he had to do three things: i) accept circumcision as the mark of the covenant people; ii) offer sacrifice because he stood in need of atonement, and iii) undergo baptism by immersion in water, which symbolised his cleansing from all pollution. The most amazing thing about John's baptism was that he, a Jew, was asking fellow-Jews to submit to that which only a Gentile was supposed to need. John was convinced of the truth that even the chosen people needed true repentance and renewal of life to receive their long-awaited Messiah. We tend to think of repentance as feeling guilty about our sins, but it is more—much more. The Greek word, metanoia, means a change of mind or direction. It is related to the Hebrew word tesubah, used by prophets to call Israel to abandon its sinful ways and to return to God. Both words (metanoia and tesubah) imply "a total change of spiritual direction." The baptism of a Gentile was accompanied by a confession made to three different recipients as a sign of repentance for sin. (i) A man must make confession to himself because the first step in repentance is to admit his sin to himself. (ii) He must make confession to those whom he has wronged. This involves humiliation and is a test of real repentance since there can be no forgiveness without humiliation. (iii) He must make confession to God because it is when a man says, "I



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have sinned,” that God gets the chance to say, “I forgive.” John’s ministry was effective primarily because his life was his message: he lived what he preached. He was a man from the desert. In its solitude, he had heard the voice of God, and, hence, he had the courage of his convictions. His camel’s hair garment and leather belt resembled those of Elijah and other great prophets of Israel. His food, too, was very simple: wild locusts and honey. The Israelites had not had a prophet for four hundred years, and the people were waiting expectantly for one. John’s message was effective also because he was completely humble. His role was to serve Jesus and to serve the people. “He must increase, I must decrease,” he says elsewhere (John 3:30). That is why he publicly confessed that he was not fit to be a slave before the Messiah. He frankly admitted that he was the Messiah’s humble and obedient messenger, preparing a straight way for the Messiah in the hearts and lives of the Jews.

How can this assist us in this season of Advent? We need to make use of Advent as a season of reflection and preparation. We are invited by the Church to prepare for Christmas. Christmas is the time for reflection and personal renewal in preparation for the coming of Jesus into our lives. Through the section of his letter which we read today, St. Peter reminds us, on the one hand, of God’s great desire to come into our lives and, on the other, of our need to be prepared for that event when it happens. We want God’s help and comfort, but we are not always prepared to change our ways to enhance genuine conversion. For God to come to us, we also need to go to Him. We need to let every day become Christmas and the “Day of the Lord” for each one of us.

Deacon Des

### **Making an Act of Spiritual Communion**

**My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the most Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.**

### **Advent**

The liturgical season of Advent marks the time of spiritual preparation by the faithful before Christmas. Advent begins on the Sunday closest to the Feast of St. Andrew the Apostle (30<sup>th</sup> November). It spans four Sundays and four weeks of preparation, although the last week of Advent is usually truncated because of when Christmas falls.

The historical origins of Advent are very unclear. In its earliest form, beginning in France, Advent was a period of preparation for the Feast of the Epiphany, a day when converts were baptized; so the Advent preparation was very similar to Lent with an emphasis on prayer and fasting which lasted three weeks and later was expanded to 40 days. In the year 380, the Council of Saragossa, Spain, established a three-week fast before Epiphany. Inspired by the Lenten regulations, the local Council of Macon, France, in the year 581 designated that from 11<sup>th</sup> November, the Feast of St. Martin of Tours, until Christmas fasting would be required on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Eventually, similar practices spread to England. In Rome, the Advent preparation did not appear until the sixth century and was viewed as a preparation for Christmas with less of a penitential bent.

The Church gradually more formalised the celebration of Advent until finally, about the ninth century, the Church designated the first Sunday of Advent as the beginning of the Church year.



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The Catechism stresses the two-fold meaning of this coming : When the Church celebrates the liturgy of Advent each year, she makes present this ancient expectancy of the Messiah, for by sharing in the long preparation for the Saviour's first coming as a babe in Bethlehem, the faithful renew their ardent desire for His second coming at the end of time (CCC 524). In being able to celebrate the Mass again we are also reminded of the way Christ comes to us in each and every Mass, coming to us in Word and Sacrament.

## Parish News

**Christmas Masses:** Christmas Masses can now be booked via our Website or by phone via the Parish Office during opening times. Clair will be in the office on Monday, Wednesday, and Thursday of this week between 10am and 2pm. Bookings will be made on a first come - first served basis as numbers will be limited to maintain social distancing. You will be contacted and given your seat allocation number nearer the time. Please can we ask that you only attend one Mass, so please book for Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, not both. This is to make it fair for all and that everyone gets the opportunity to attend Mass. Bookings for these Masses will stay open until 23<sup>rd</sup> December. The Mass times are as follows:

Christmas Eve:        4:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m.  
Christmas Day:        8:30 a.m. & 10:00 a.m.

Unfortunately, the current restrictions prevent us from having carols this year and holding any activities for the children.

**Brentwood Diocesan Directory 2021:** Copies of this this year's directories are now available to purchase. This year's edition contains an obituary of Fr. John. Should you wish to purchase one please contact Clair. Ringbound copies are £4.00 and Paperback copies are £2.80. Thank you

**The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> December:** There will be an additional Mass on this day because the usual Mass of Tuesday is the Extraordinary Form at 8:00 p.m. This extra Mass will be celebrated at 2:00 p.m., all are welcome to both Masses.

**Sunday Coffee morning:** If you would like to socialise virtually then why not join us for a chat and a short fun quiz from the comfort of your own home? Held every Sunday at 11.10 a.m. via the following Zoom details: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83024819984> Meeting ID: 830 2481 9984 Password: CM24Thrsx - All are welcome.



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## Mass Times and Intentions

| SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT - Year B  |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| Saturday 5 <sup>th</sup> December   | Wedding: <b>2:30 p.m.</b><br>Confessions: <b>5:15 p.m. – 5:45 p.m.</b><br>Mass: <b>6:00 p.m.</b><br><i>Livestreamed</i>  | <b>Peter Bennett RIP</b><br>(Bennett & Dalzell Families)   |
| Sunday 6 <sup>th</sup> December   | Mass: <b>8:30 a.m.</b><br><i>Livestreamed</i><br><br>Confessions: <b>9:15 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.</b><br>Mass: <b>10:00 a.m.</b><br><i>Livestreamed</i><br><br>Mass (EF) (Latin): <b>12:00 p.m.</b> | <b>People of the Parish</b><br><br><b>Mary Liz Simon RIP</b><br>(C. Salvador)                              |
| Monday 7 <sup>th</sup> December<br><i>St. Ambrose</i>   | Confessions: <b>9:00 a.m.</b><br>Mass: <b>9:30 a.m.</b><br><i>Livestreamed</i><br>Reception: Peter Bennett RIP: <b>5:00 p.m.</b>   | <b>Fr. John Garrett RIP</b><br>(Rev. D Connors)  |
| Tuesday 8 <sup>th</sup> December<br><i>The Immaculate Conception of the BVM</i>   | Funeral: Peter Bennett RIP: <b>11:00 a.m.</b><br><br>Mass: <b>2:00 p.m.</b><br><i>Livestreamed</i><br><br>Confessions: <b>7:15 p.m.</b><br>Latin Mass (EF): <b>8:00 p.m.</b>                 | <b>Peter Bennett RIP</b><br><br><b>Deceased Friends and Family<br/>of F&amp;C Roberts</b><br>(F&C Roberts) |
| Wednesday 9 <sup>th</sup> December  | Confessions: <b>12:00 p.m.</b><br>Mass: <b>12:30 p.m.</b><br><i>Livestreamed</i><br><br>Rosary, Exposition of the Sacrament &<br>Benediction: <b>7:00 p.m.</b><br><i>Livestreamed</i>        | <b>Teresa Gannon RIP</b><br>(M&T Rhead)  |
| Thursday 10 <sup>th</sup> December  | Confessions: <b>9:00 a.m.</b><br>Mass: <b>9:30 a.m.</b><br><i>Livestreamed</i>   | <b>Patrick Mulligan RIP</b><br>(M&T Rhead)   |
| Friday 11 <sup>th</sup> December  | Confessions: <b>9:00 a.m.</b><br>Mass: <b>9:30 a.m.</b><br><i>Livestreamed</i><br><br>Rosary, Exposition of the Sacrament &<br>Benediction: <b>7:00 p.m.</b><br><i>Livestreamed</i>          | <b>Sgt. Matt Ratana RIP</b><br>(Rev. D Connors)  |
| THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT - Year B   |  |  |
| Saturday 12 <sup>th</sup> December  | Confessions: <b>5:15 p.m. – 5:45 p.m.</b><br>Mass: <b>6:00 p.m.</b><br><i>Livestreamed</i>   | <b>Bill Blythe RIP</b><br>(H. Bennett)   |
| Sunday 13 <sup>th</sup> December<br><i>1st Reading: Isaiah 61:1-2, 10-11</i><br><i>Psalm: Luke 1:46-50,53-54</i><br><i>2nd Reading: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24</i><br><i>Gospel: John 1:6-8, 19-28</i> | Mass: <b>8:30 a.m.</b><br><i>Livestreamed</i><br><br>Confessions: <b>9:15 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.</b><br>Mass: <b>10:00 a.m.</b><br><i>Livestreamed</i>   | <b>People of the Parish</b><br><br><b>K. Whiting &amp; Family</b><br>(E. Cassidy-Jones)                    |



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