

Parish of St. Theresa of Lisieux Stansted

The Little Flower Messenger

Year A - THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT - 11th December 2022

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Gospel: Matthew 11:2-11

'Are you the one who is to come, or have we got to wait for someone else?'

Mass book (P. 88)

1st Reading:

Isaiah 35:1-6, 10

Psalm 145:6-10:

Come, Lord, and save us.

2nd Reading:

James 5:7-10

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia! The spirit of the Lord has been given to me. He has sent me to bring good news to the poor. Alleluia!

Communion Antiphon: (P. 90)

Say to the faint of heart: Be strong and do not fear. Behold, our God will come, and he will save us.

A thought from Fr Liam...

Dear Friends

During the week I came across this insightful piece from Sr Joan Chittister which I thought I would share with you as our journey of Advent continues.

Our liturgical year does not begin at the heart of the Christian enterprise. It does not immediately plunge us into the chaos of the Crucifixion or the giddy confusion of the Resurrection. Instead, the year opens with Advent, the season that teaches us to wait for what is beyond the obvious. It trains us to see what is behind the apparent. Advent makes us look for God in all those places we have, until now, ignored.

Advent is about learning to wait. It is about not having to know exactly what is coming tomorrow, only that whatever it is, something hard, something uplifting, is a sign of the work of God alive in us. We are becoming as we go. We learn in Advent to stay in the present, knowing that only the present well lived can possibly lead us to the fullness of life.

Life is not meant to be escaped, we learn, as the liturgical year moves from season to season, from feast to feast. It is meant to be penetrated, to be plumbed to its depths, to be tasted and savoured and bring us to realize that the God who created us is with us yet. Life, we come eventually to know, is an exercise in transformation, the mechanics of which take a lifetime of practice, of patience, of slow, slow growth.

Waiting hones our insights. It gives us the time and space, the perspective and patience that enable us to discriminate between the good, the better, and the best. It is so simple to go through life blind to the wealth of its parts, swallowing life whole, oblivious to its punctuation points. Then we fail to call ourselves to the small, daily demands of compassion or choice, trust



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or effort. If we do not learn to wait, we can allow ourselves to assume that one thing really is as good for us as another. Then we forget that life is about more than this life. We race over the top of it, satiating ourselves with the obvious, unmindful of its depths. We become stale of soul. We fail to grow spiritually.

It is waiting that attunes us to the invisible in a highly material world. In contemporary society, what counts is what we can get and what we have. Instead of listening for the voice of God in the winds of change around us, we can come to hear only our own. The function of Advent is to remind us what we're waiting for, as we go through life too busy with things that do not matter, to remember the things that do. When year after year we hear the same scriptures and the same hymns of longing for the life to come, of which this one is only its shadow, it becomes impossible to forget the refrains of the soul.

Advent relieves us of our commitment to the frenetic in a fast-paced world. It slows us down. It makes us think. It makes us look beyond today to the "great tomorrow" of life. Without Advent, moved only by the race to nowhere that exhausts the world around us, we could be so frantic with trying to consume and control this life that we fail to develop within ourselves a taste for the spirit that does not develop within ourselves a taste for the spirit that does not die and will not slip through our fingers like melted snow.

It is while waiting for the coming of the reign of God, Advent after Advent, that we come to realize that its coming also depends on us. What we do will either hasten or slow, sharpen or dim our own commitment to do our part to bring it about.

I wish you and yours a blessed third week of Advent,

Liam

This Week's Good News

Dear Friends,

Today is Gaudete Sunday, a day when we are encouraged to rejoice and be glad.

The pink candle on the Advent wreath is lit and traditionally pink or rose vestments are worn by the celebrant if available. The reason for our Joy is found in the entrance antiphon:

Rejoice in the Lord always; again, i say, rejoice. Indeed, the Lord is near! (Phil, 4:4-5)

The nearness of Our Lord is the reason of our joy. At the same time, Scriptures also reminds us that the true and lasting object of our happiness is nothing else but God. Rejoice in the Lord always!

Pope Benedict XVI commenting on these words of St. Paul said:

"If the loved one, love, the greatest gift of my life, is close to me, if I can be convinced that the one who loves me is close to me, even in situations of suffering, JOY THAT REMAINS IN THE DEPTH OF MY HEART IS EVER GREATER THAN ALL SUFFERINGS (Benedict XVI, FIRST GENERAL CONGREGATION OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS, Oct. 3, 2005)."

This joy is because the Lord is not only close to each of us but is with us already. He is with us when we receive his grace in the blessed sacrament and the sacrament of confession. When we humbly come before him, accepting our brokenness, and looking for his healing touch. He is with us in our daily lives, especially during our darkest moments when we feel we are alone.

When we feel lost, we can compensate for this isolation by finding solace in earthly compensation, but this does not last. Often we will end up feeling worse, sad, angry, resentful.



We must not forget that authentic happiness here on earth is the result of three inseparable elements:

Union with God, interior struggle to overcome and forget oneself for the love of God and others and living a life of service for others.

Behold, *“I knock at your door, listen to me, open up to me (Rev 3:20).”*

Let us not be deaf to Our Lord who invites us to attain real happiness.

Only can we hear his invitation if we silence the mundane noise brought about by a worldly mindset and lifestyle.

Only when we clean our heart inside out, purifying it from sin and removing what is not essential, can the Lord have a place in our heart.

“O God, who see how your people faithfully await the feast of the Lord’s Nativity, enable us, we pray, to attain the joys of so great a salvation, and to celebrate them always with solemn worship and glad rejoicing (Opening Prayer, Mass of 3rd Sunday of Advent).”

Deacon Des

Advent Reconciliation Service

Our Parish **Advent Reconciliation Service** will be held on **Tuesday 20th December at 7.30 pm** in our parish Church. This is a beautiful and gentle way to celebrate this sacrament of healing and forgiveness as we prepare to celebrate Christmas, that also offers us the opportunity to support each other in our community as we journey together.

All are welcome.

Christmas 2022

Our parish masses over the weekends of Christmas and New Year are as follows:

Solemnity of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Saturday 24th December 2022 *Mass during the Night* **6.00 pm**

Sunday 25th December 2022 *Mass During the Day* **10.00 am**

Solemnity of Mary Mother of God

Saturday 31st December 2022 *Vigil Mass of Sunday* **6.00 pm**

Sunday 1st January 2023 *Mass During the Day* **10.00 am**

Everyone is welcome

Parish News

Christmas Flowers: We shall be holding a collection over the next couple of weekends for our Christmas flowers. Should you wish to donate please put your donation into an envelope marked ‘Christmas Flowers’ and place into the baskets when leaving the church or through the Presbytery door. If you wish the church to claim Gift Aid on your donation, please write your name and address on the envelope and ‘yes to Gift Aid’. You do not need to have completed a Gift Aid declaration; you only need to be paying tax on your income. Thank you.

Children's Service and Christmas Party Saturday December 17th 2022: The Children's Christmas Service will be on Saturday 17th December at 12:00 noon and will be followed by the



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Christmas Party in the Parish Centre. All are very welcome to the service but please let us know if your child / children wish to attend the party so that we may cater for everyone. Please email us at helenhall5@yahoo.co.uk or phone 01842 879766 with your child's name and age as soon as possible. A voluntary donation of £3.50 can be given on the day of the party. We are very excited because Fr. Christmas has contacted us to say that he will prioritise a visit during this very busy time for him. There are invitations at the back of the church with further details. Please let Helen and Mark know asap.

Parish Charity Our Place: A big thank you for the amazing donations of toothpaste, shampoo, soap, shower gel etc. This weekend will be our last for collecting items so that we can transport everything to the charity before Christmas. Could we ask to avoid donating razor blades and aerosols. The collection box is located inside of the church for you to place your donations into. Thank you again.

Churches together Celebration of Christmas: Please join us for readings and carols along with the Bishops Stortford Brass Band at 4:00 p.m. on Saturday 17th December in the Memorial Gardens Chapel Hill Stansted. Please bring a chair if required and a torch or lantern. Suitable for all ages.

Catholic Social Action - Thought for the day.

“When I speak of solidarity, I mean much more than the promotion of philanthropic works or financial assistance to help those who lose out. Because solidarity is not sharing of crumbs from the table, but to make space at the table for everyone. The dignity of the people calls for communion: for the sharing and multiplying of goods, and for the participation of all for the sake of all.”

— Pope Francis, *Let Us Dream: The Path to a Better Future*

Deacon Des

Mass Times and Intentions

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT - YEAR A		
Saturday 10 th December	Confessions: 5:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. Mass: 6:00 p.m. <i>Livestreamed</i>	People of the Parish
Sunday 11 th December <i>Gaudete Sunday</i>	Service of Word & Communion: 8:30 a.m. <i>Livestreamed</i> Mass: 10:00 a.m. <i>Livestreamed</i>	Ronnie Jackson R.I.P. (The Jackson family)
Wednesday 14 th December <i>St John of the Cross</i>	Mass: 12:30 p.m. <i>Livestreamed</i>	
FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT - YEAR A		
Saturday 17 th December	Confessions: 5:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m. Mass: 6:00 p.m. <i>Livestreamed</i>	People of the Parish
Sunday 18 th December <i>Expectant Mothers</i>	Mass: 10:00 a.m. <i>Livestreamed</i>	Ronnie Jackson R.I.P. (The Jackson family)

PLEASE TAKE THIS NEWSLETTER HOME WITH YOU AND DISPOSE OF IT RESPONSIBLY. THANK YOU.



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