**St Columba’s Church, Selsdon**

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**19 DECEMBER 2021**

**4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (YEAR C)**

**THIS SUNDAY’S MASS READINGS**

**Entrance Antiphon:** Drop down dew from above, you heavens, and let the clouds rain down the Just One; let the earth be opened and bring forth a Saviour.

**A reading from the prophet Micah: 5:1-4**

**Responsorial Psalm Ps 79:2-3. 15-16. 18-19. R v.4:** God of hosts, bring us back; let your face shine on us and we shall be saved.

**2nd Reading: A reading from the letter to the Hebrews: 10:5-10**

**Gospel Acclamation:** Alleluia, Alleluia! I am the handmaid of the Lord: let what you have said be done to me. Alleluia!

**Gospel: Luke: 1:39-44**

**Communion Antiphon:** Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son; and his name will be called Emmanuel.

**26 December Mass readings: The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph**

**Entrance Antiphon:** The shepherds went in haste, and found Mary and Joseph and the Infant lying in a manger.

**A reading from the first book of Samuel: 1:20-22. 24-28.**

**Responsorial Psalm Ps 83:2-3. 5-6. 9-10. R v.5**

**2nd Reading: A reading from the first letter of St John: 3:1-2. 21-24.**

**Gospel Acclamation:** Alleluia, Alleluia! Open our heart, O Lord, to accept the words of your Son. Alleluia!

**Gospel: Luke: 2:41-52**

**Communion Antiphon:** Our God has appeared on the earth, and loved among us.

**CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES**

Here are the times of Masses over the Christmas weekend.

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| Friday 24th Dec | 6pm and midnight *(note there will be no morning Mass on Christmas Eve)* |
| Saturday 25th Dec | 8am and 10am *(note there will be no evening Mass on Christmas Day)* |
| Sunday 26th Dec | 8am, 10am and 6.30pm |
| Monday 27th Dec | 10am |

Spot the lessons hiding in plain sight in Sunday’s account of the Visitation

DEACON PHILIP REFLECTS ON THE GOSPEL

The story is told of a teacher at Sunday school asking one of the children in the class this question.

What’s brown and furry, lives in trees and eats nuts? The child thought for a moment then replied:

‘Well, it sounds like a squirrel.

‘But I suppose the real answer must be Jesus.’

So it is with Sunday’s Gospel.

At first reading it sounds like a story about Mary and her visit to her cousin Elizabeth.

In fact, if you think about it, you will realise that the Gospel is actually all about Christ.

Mary, his mother, is simply God’s instrument, the perfect disciple, the one who leads us to Jesus.

Now we are all, I’m sure, very familiar with this Gospel account by Luke of the Visitation, as it’s called.

But its very familiarity can obscure the fact that, hiding in plain sight, are some astounding events. Firstly, just consider the fact that the pregnant Mary was probably no more than 14 years old.

Think about that.

Secondly, here she is making a journey to visit her very elderly cousin Elizabeth, who herself is pregnant.

Some suggest that Elizabeth was in her eighties. Think about that!

Mary’s journey involved travelling a long way, approximately 50 miles, using dirt roads across hilly country.

Mary couldn’t catch a bus or a train.

She would have had to walk.

So this arduous journey would have taken several days. Each way. And she did it all alone.

How happy would you be for your 14-year-old daughter, pregnant or not, to do such a journey unaccompanied?

If it had been one of my children, I would have been worried sick.

Especially as keeping in touch en route would have been impossible.

There were no mobile phones or indeed any phones in those days.

So what, for us, are the lessons of this Gospel?

One obvious lesson, clearly evident in the account of the Visitation, is the sense of urgency.

Luke says that Mary proceeded in haste, she went ‘as quickly as she could’. There was no time to waste. Likewise for us, the good news has to be shared with other people.

We need to do that and do it now. There should be no delays.

Then, in this Gospel, we’re reminded of the importance of believing.

As Elizabeth put it to Mary, ‘Blessed are you who believed.’

Our own inability to believe, truly believe, in the good news may be one obstacle we face at this time of year.

In the consumer-orientated society in which we live, there is so much emphasis on material things. Especially now in the run up to Christmas.

Buy. Buy. Buy is the constant message from the media.

There’s not much on trusting in the good news that Christ died and rose again from the dead to bring us eternal life.

Apart from Covid jabs, many of us have recently been vaccinated again influenza.

The real affliction we face is affluenza, the urge to be affluent, the pressure constantly to buy more, buy bigger, buy better.

Jesus is the perfect medicine for affluenza.

Finally, Mary, the perfect disciple, teaches us in today’s Gospel one final lesson on this last Sunday of Advent.

She teaches us that Christ is the perfect gift.

Notice that Luke makes no mention of any material gifts given by Mary to Elizabeth.

She brought only her love and care; her trusting presence. And by being fully present she revealed Jesus. That is a gift we can all give.

**MORNING PRAYER EACH WEEKDAY**

*Morning Mass is now preceded by Morning Prayer from the Liturgy of the Hours. It starts at 9.40am every weekday. No one requires a breviary because it is all projected on to the back wall of the sanctuary.*

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| **MASS INTENTIONS**  |
| Sat 18th  | 6.30pm | Michael Skinner, RIP |
| Sun 19th  | 8.00am | Derek Ah Quat,RIP, Nom Chong & the Ah Quat Family, well-being |
| Sun 19th  | 10.00am | Angela Lamell, RIP |
| Sun 19th  | 6.30pm | Pro Populo |
| Mon 20th  | 10.00am | C. K. Mathew, RIP |
| Tues 21st  | 10.00am | Graham Walsh, RIP |
| Wed 22nd  | 10.00am | Anne Page, well-being |
| Thurs 23rd  | 10.00am | Shirley Pitt, well-being |
| Fri 24th  | 6.00pm | Catholic residents of Langley Oaks, Joan, Elida, Maria & Anthony |
| Fri 24th  | Midnight | Pro Populo |
| Sat 25th  | 8.00am | Pro Populo |
| Sat 25th  | 10.00am | Judy Freegard, well-being |
| Sun 26th  | 8.00am | Margaret Olele, well-being |
| Sun 26th  | 10.00am | Mary Osai-Bobi, RIP |
| Sun 26th  | 6.30pm | Pro Populo |
| Mon 27th  | 10.00am | Ellen Everett, well-being |
| Tues 28th  | 10.00am | Rene Barrett, well-being |
| Wed 29th  | 10.00am | Rita Sandland, well-being |
| Thurs 30th  | 10.00am | Tommy McGuinness, RIP |
| Fri 31st  | 10.00am | Margaret Charman, well-being |
| Sat 1st  | 6.30pm | Veronica Moor, well-being |
| Sun 2nd  | 8.00am | Pro Populo |
| Sun 2nd  | 10.00am | Wyn Sayers, well-being |
| Sun 2nd  | 6.30pm | Margit Symons, well-being |
| Mon 3rd  | 10.00am | Peter Pearce, wellbeing |
| Tues 4th  | 10.00am | Holy Souls |
| Wed 5th  | 10.00am | Albert Kayatt, well-being |
| Thurs 6th  | 10.00am | Clifford Flynn, well-being |
| Fri 7th  | 10.00am | Holy Souls |
| Sat 8th  | 6.30pm | Holy Souls |
| Sun 9th  | 8.00am | Pro Populo |
| Sun 9th  | 10.00am | Patrick Lewis, well-being |
| Sun 9th  | 6.30pm | Holy Souls |

**REMEMBER THE SICK AND NEEDY**

Please pray for all those who are sick or in need: Lourdes Fernandes, Leslie Jeyadeva, Trevor Parker, Maria Fraggle, Teresa Madden, Jeffrey Wei, Nicola Gingell, Judy Freegard, Douglas & Yvonne Bruce, Margaret Bolton, Eddie Aldridge, Jean-Claude Anthony, Ellen Everett, Maureen Coffey, Patrick Acholonu, Christopher Onyeachom and sick residents at the four residential homes usually, in better times, visited by the parish St Vincent de Paul group.

**NAMES ON OUR SICK LIST**

Every Sunday a list of names of those who are very sick is read out during the Bidding Prayers so that we can all pray for them.That same list appears in this weekly-updated newsletter on the parish website.

A number of names have just been removed because they have been appearing literally for years and we do not know their situation or whereabouts.

If you know of anyone who is seriously ill and in need of our prayers but not on our list, please tell Fr Roy or Deacon Philip and we shall add them on.

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| **LITURGICAL CALENDAR**  |
| Sat 18th  | Weekday of Advent |
| Sun 19th  | 4th Sunday of Advent |
| Mon 20th  | Weekday of Advent |
| Tues 21st  | Weekday of Advent or St Peter Canisius, Priest, Doctor of the Church |
| Wed 22nd  | Weekday of Advent |
| Thurs 23rd  | Weekday of Advent or St John of Kanty, Priest |
| Fri 24th  | Weekday of Advent |
| Sat 25th  | The Nativity of the Lord |
| Sun 26th  | The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph |
| Mon 27th  | St John, Apostle, Evangelist |
| Tues 28th  | The Holy Innocents, Martyrs |
| Wed 29th  | 5th day of Christmas Octave, St Thomas à Becket, Bishop, Martyr |
| Thurs 30th | 6th day of Christmas Octave |
| Fri 31st  | 7th day of Christmas Octave |
| Sat 1st  | Mary the Holy Mother of God (Octave of the Nativity) |
| Sun 2nd  | 2nd Sunday after Christmas |
| Mon 3rd  | Weekday of Christmas or Most Holy Name of Jesus |
| Tues 4th  | Weekday of Christmas |
| Wed 5th  | Weekday of Christmas |
| Thurs 6th  | The Epiphany of the Lord |
| Fri 7th  | Weekday after Epiphany or St Raymond of Peñafort, Priest |
| Sat 8th  | Weekday after Epiphany |
| Sun 9th | Baptism of the Lord |

**CHRISTMAS SPRING CLEAN**

Thank you to the volunteers who assisted in Saturday’s special church-cleaning session (on the 18th) Your efforts are very much appreciated and the church looks all the better for the attention.

**CHRISTMAS TREES & CRIB**

Now assembled in the lady chapel is a memory tree, a variation on the theme of the Christmas tree.

The idea is that you write a little message and hang it on the tree.

It could, for example, be a prayer for a deceased family member or friend or a ‘thank you’ to God for favour received or a prayer for someone who is ill.

***COVID PRECAUTIONS: PLEASE NOTE THE NEW CHANGES***

There is no longer any requirement to fill in (or email) track’n’trace forms when coming to church.

However, given the latest developments with the Omicron variety of the virus, we still need to:

* Bring and wear a face mask covering the nose as well as the mouth when in church. Remember: this protects other people.
* Use hand sanitizer, provided, both when entering and leaving the church.
* Ensure plenty of social distancing in the church and in the benches unless you are in a family group.
* Offer each other the Sign of Peace at Mass but without shaking hands. Instead just exchange a bow.

**CHRISTMAS: BUY AT ST COLUMBA’S**

Christmas cards, children's books and calendars are all available in the repository/church shop at the back of St Columba’s.

**QUIZ NIGHT - COVID PERMITTING**

The Union of Catholic Mothers will be hosting a quiz night on the evening of 5th January at 7.30pm and all are invited.

Why not come along with family and friends and enjoy a fun evening?

There will be cheese and biscuits to tuck into and a chance to win a prize in a raffle. Guests will need to bring their own drinks.

All we ask is for a donation on the door and your company. So why not put the date in your diary and join us to make this a great night?

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| **SAFEGUARDING: BE RESPONSIBLE**We as a parish have a duty and responsibility to keep children and vulnerable adults safe when they are in church or attending church events and services.That’s what Safeguarding does. It’s active right across the diocese (and in all other dioceses as well) including here at St Columba’s.If you have any concerns or queries about possible abuse of children or vulnerable adults, contact Gill Tomei (g.tomei@btopenworld.com), Richard Mills or Claire Tucker in complete confidence. All their contact details can be found on the noticeboard at the back of the church. |  |  |

**WANTED: ALTAR SERVERS**

Ever since the pandemic began in early 2020, altar serving has been suspended.

But things are improving and it’s now time for our altar servers to return to the sanctuary.

If you were a server before the lockdowns, do come back: we would love to see you in the sanctuary.

Our MC, John Fennell, is drawing up a new rota so that we can, hopefully, return to having several servers at all four Sunday Masses.

Altar serving is an important and fulfilling role at Mass and we would welcome new servers, boys as well as girls. Contact John on thefennells60@gmail.com if you are interested.

Applicants must have made their first Holy Communion, so anyone aged eight or upwards is eligible.

**CELEBRATE ST COLUMBA**

Colmcille 1500 has been set up to commemorate the 1500th anniversary of the birth of our very own St Columba.

Anyone with any relevant photos, artwork or written components is invited to share them on social media platforms to celebrate the reach this saint has in 2021, 1,500 years after his birth.

For more information and to participate visit any of these three links:

[colmcille1500.com/english/](https://colmcille1500.com/english/)﻿

[www.facebook.com/Colmcille1500NW/](https://www.facebook.com/Colmcille1500NW/)﻿

[www.instagram.com/colmcille1500/](https://www.instagram.com/colmcille1500/)﻿

**CONFIRMATIONS**

Some 38 candidates including four adults received the sacrament of Confirmation at a special Mass held on Friday evening (the 17th) with Bishop Paul Hendricks officiating. Please remember all of the candidates in your prayers.

**WANTED: £581.20 FOR CRISIS**

The group of keep-fitters who meet and exercise regularly at St Columba’s have raised the excellent sum of £325 for the charity Crisis.

According to Crisis, “£581.20 could help 20 people take their first steps out of homelessness…”

Are you willing to help them do that?

You can donate to their JustGiving page by clicking here: <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Gilliantomei1WalkingChallenge?utm_source=Sharethis&utm_medium=fundraising&utm_content=Gillian-Tomei1WalkingChallenge&utm_campaign=pfp-email&utm_term=d42fd216166244b2a93f308782aa0a54>.
Donating through JustGiving is simple, fast and totally secure. Once you donate, they'll send your money directly to Crisis, so it's the most efficient way to give - saving time and cutting costs for the charity.

**REGINA COELI APPLICATIONS**

A message from Regina Coeli Catholic primary school in Pampisford Road, South Croydon…

“We are a friendly school with dedicated staff, hard-working and confident pupils, loyal parents, supportive governors and committed parish priests.

Our school is committed to developing both the personal and academic dimensions of a child in line with the School Mission Statement and the School Development Plan. Pupils achieve results well above the national average.

We are currently holding tours on Mondays and Tuesday and invite you to call the school office to make an appointment: 020 8688 4582”

**CAFOD HELP FOR AFGHANISTAN**

CAFOD, the Catholic Fund for Overseas Deveopment, is combining efforts with the DEC to launch the Afghanistan Crisis Appeal.

Eight million people in Afghanistan are on the brink of famine because of drought, a collapsing economy, food shortages, conflict and Covid.

CAFOD is supporting sister Caritas agencies to reach communities most in need with food, clean water and fuel. As we approach Christmas, let’s do all that we can to save lives.

You can help by donating on the CAFOD website: [cafod.org.uk/AfghanistanAppeal](https://cafod.org.uk/Give/Donate-to-Emergencies/Afghanistan-Crisis-Appeal) and please pray for the people of Afghanistan.

**KNOW OF ANYONE IN NEED?**

Are you aware of any parishioners living alone or in need? If so, as well as phoning them yourself occasionally to see if they need anything, let Fr Roy or Deacon Philip know of their situation. That way, we can work together to support and help them.

***GOING INTO HOSPITAL? TELL US***

If you or a member of your family go into hospital, ask the Ward Sister or Staff Nurse to notify the hospital’s Roman Catholic hospital chaplain direct.

That will enable you to receive Holy Communion (or any other sacraments) while in hospital.

Make sure also to let Fr Roy or Deacon Philip know beforehand if possible of your admission or that of a family member into hospital. We can then keep you in our prayers.