**St Columba’s Church, Selsdon**

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**29 NOVEMBER 2020**

**FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

**(YEAR B)**

**THIS SUNDAY’S MASS READINGS**

**Entrance Antiphon:** To you, I lift up my soul, O my God. In you, I have trusted; let me not be put to shame. Nor let my enemies exult over me; and let none who hope in you be put to shame.

**1st Reading from the prophet Isaiah: 2:1-5**

**Responsorial Psalm Ps 121:1-2.4-5.6-9. Rcf.v1:** I rejoiced when I heard them say: ‘Let us go to God’s house.’

**2nd Reading: from the first letter of St Paul to the Romans: 13:11-14**

**Gospel Acclamation:** Alleluia, alleluia! Let us see, O Lord, your mercy and give us your saving help. Alleluia!

**Gospel: Matthew: 24:37-44**

**Communion Antiphon:** The Lord will bestow his bounty, and our earth shall yield its increase.

***ST COLUMBA’S TO REOPEN AGAIN ON THURSDAY***

On Thursday (December 3) St Columba’s reopens so that we can once again come together in church for the celebration of Mass. Weekly Tuesday exposition and adoration (from 10.30-11.30am) will resume on the 8th.

Fr Roy will celebrate Mass every day at 10am except Saturdays when Mass will be at 6.30pm. There will also be Mass at 8am and 6.30pm on Sundays. We will update you with changes via this newsletter as and when they happen. See overleaf for more details.

**FIRST, WE NEED TO RECOGNISE OUR NEED FOR A SAVIOUR…**

***A reflection on this Sunday’s readings by Fr Roy***

Advent, like Lent, is a penitential season.

It’s a season during which the celebration of the coming of our Saviour should lead us first to recognise the need for a saviour. Unless we do so, Advent and Christmas will make hardly any impact on our lives.

In previous years Advent and Christmas may have appeared simply to be part of the Church’s normal liturgical cycle.

That’s because arguably there was not much awareness of the need for a saviour.

Things are different now. The pandemic has helped us to recognise our helplessness.

This Advent should bring us humbly to accept that we really do need someone to change the course of our lives.

The change that we need to make is, to be honest, beyond our personal capacity.

We require help. And no one is better able to provide that help than a saviour.

In other words, we need to feel the need of a saviour to appreciate the coming of the Saviour.

Such genuine longing will help us to understand our own handicaps.

This Sunday’s first reading, from Isaiah, gives us a series of images evoking a sense of loss, pain and helplessness.

Unless, we enter into the power of these images we will not know how to long for our saviour.

Those images help us reflect on several key issues.

* “Why do you let us wander O Lord from your ways?” To commit sin is to get lost; to wander away from the straight path. We need to be aware that we are lost. Only then can we begin to recognise our need for the help of a saviour.
* “Why do you let us harden our hearts so that we fear you not?” God is in the business of shaping our hearts so that we can become the person he wants us to be. Paul said; “It is no longer I who lives in me but Christ lives in me.” Hearts can be brittle. Hardness of heart can mean our heart becomes like clay so that when God attempts to shape it, our heart breaks. What God desires is a heart ready to be shaped. Are you resisting what God wants you to be; whatHe wants you to do?
* “Behold, you are angry and we are sinful.” We cannot avoid the image of God being angry in the Bible. It is a metaphor to express God’s passion for setting things right. Our own anger comes from our knowledge that we are sinners. We are angry at ourselves. When we experience God’s anger we feel alienated from Him; a sad state of affairs where we become insensitive to God’s sensitivity. “I’m ok: who needs a saviour..?” Our strong sense of independence from God is a recipe for disaster. We are all sinners so let us acknowledge our sin and beg our saviour to be merciful.
* Our good deeds are like soiled rags. We ourselves are like leaves carried away by a winter storm; withered, lifeless, cut off from God. Everything in our lives is to some degree tainted by sin. My guilt makes me lifeless.
* Yet, O Lord, you are our Father. We are the clay: you are the potter. If we allow ourselves to be shaped by God we can become the people He wants us to be. So, to conclude, get in touch with the hardness of your heart. Be open to the grace that will come this Christmas. If we are open to Him, God can shape our hearts and our lives to make us the way He wants us to be.

***ST COLUMBA’S TO REOPEN ON THURSDAY FOR PUBLIC MASSES***

On Thursday (December 3) St Columba’s will reopen after the latest lockdown. We shall once again be able to celebrate Mass together in the church.

Mass times will be the same as before the lockdown: at 10am every morning except Saturday plus 6.30pm on Saturday and 8am and 6.30pm on Sunday. Exposition and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament will resume on Tuesdays (10.30-11.30am)

But this ‘new normal’ comes with restrictions that we would have thought unthinkable last year.

So don’t forget, whether coming to Mass or to Tuesday Adoration, that we must all comply with the following ‘Ten Commandments’:

1. Remember to bring and wear a face mask.
2. Enter the church via the side door leading into the Sacred Heart chapel/confessional, observe the one-way system and leave via the centre back door.
3. Provide a written note – and this applies every time you come to church for whatever reason – of your name and contact details (phone number or email or postal address) plus the date and, if relevant, Mass time. To save queuing and filling out a form, why not send an email to selsdon@rcaos.org.uk?
4. Use hand sanitizer, provided, both when entering and leaving the church.
5. Do not move the chairs which have replaced our benches and are at 1m intervals to ensure the necessary social distancing.
6. Don’t expect to find Mass or prayer books or any other shared items: bring your own. That applies to readers as well.
7. Remember that singing is not allowed.
8. Don’t forget that Holy Communion is silent.
9. Before leaving the church (i.e. before you come up to receive Holy Communion), turn your chair back to front so that the stewards know which ones to clean afterwards.
10. Unless staying for Adoration, on Tuesdays, leave the church straight after Holy Communion.

* ***Please note: the toilets at church cannot be used.***

**THE PHILIPPINES: IT’S ONE DISASTER AFTER ANOTHER – CAN YOU HELP..?**

There have been a number of typhoons in the Philippines this year. And in recent weeks it is my home island which has been worst affected, with well over 50 people killed, dozens injured and missing and huge numbers left homeless.

The flooding has been

extensive, several churches have been destroyed and a huge proportion of homes have been raized to the ground. With the agreement of Archbishop John, I am launching an appeal for the victims and myself donating money received to celebrate my 25th anniversary of ordination last month. If you too can help, please contact me. And remember the many victims in your prayers. – Fr Roy

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| **LITURGICAL CALENDAR OF THE WEEK** | |
| Sat 28th | Feria |
| Sun 29th | 1st Sunday of Advent (Year B) |
| Mon 30th | St Andrew, Apostle, Patron of Scotland |
| Tues 1st | Weekday of Advent |
| Wed 2nd | Weekday of Advent |
| Thurs 3rd | St Frances Xavier, Priest |
| Fri 4th | Weekday of Advent, St John Damascene, Priest, Doctor of the Church |
| Sat 5th | Weekday of Advent |
| Sun 6th | 2nd Sunday of Advent |
| **MASS ONLINE DAILY FROM ST COLUMBA’S** | |
| Follow Fr Roy celebrating Mass live on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYVyZ2Xpfs0NiuU3bxAjsCQ/live> | |

**DEACON PHILIP: HE WILL SOON BE BACK**

Deacon Philip is at home recovering following his triple heart-bypass. He thanks everyone for their prayers and support: they were much appreciated. He plans to return to light duties next week.

**REMEMBER THE SICK AND NEEDY**

Please pray for all those in great need at this time including: Judy Freegard, John Smith, Elena Sandland, Imogen Fernando, Joan Charman, Roger Fenton, Deacon John Letley, Joan Cunningham, John Davis, Noreen Lawlor, Solveya La Marina, Chris Jones, Maria Reece, Margaret Bolton, Eddie Aldridge, Ellis Warburton, Mary Marks, Jean-Claude Anthony, Ellen Everett, Maureen Coffey, Albert Khayyat, James Patrick Guckian, Elizabeth Sensano, Margit Symons, Stephen Beck and sick residents at the four residential homes usually, in better times, visited by the parish St Vincent de Paul group.

**MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK**

Sat 28th: 6.30pm Mrs Rose Saminathar, RIP

SUN 29th: 10am Christopher Sampson, RIP

Mon 30th: 10am Kathleen & Geoffrey Weston, RIP

Tues 1st: 10am Sean O’Neill, wellbeing

Wed 2nd: 10am Ellen Everitt, wellbeing

Thurs 3rd: 10am Margit Symons, wellbeing

Fri 4th: 10am Liz & Roy Oliver & family, RIP

Sat 5th: 6.30pm Pro Populo

Sun 6th: 8am Holy Souls

Sun 6th: 10am Elizabetta Niewiadomski, RIP

Sun 6th: 6.30pm Intention of the Alvarez Family

**GIFT AID ENVELOPES**

We have not been able to distribute new Gift Aid envelopes because of the coronavirus.

There is a way round that, however, to ensure that St Columba’s continues to benefit from Gift Aid which adds an extra 25p to parish income for every pound that you give to the Offertory collection.

All you need to do is to put your offering in any blank envelope on which you then write ‘Gift Aid’ plus your name.

Then place that envelope in the Offertory collection box/basket at church. Better still, set up a standing order. (See ‘Make A Pledge For Our Parish’.)

**MAKE A PLEDGE FOR OUR PARISH**

The dramatic fall in the numbers attending Mass the last lockdown has, not surprisingly, had a knock-on effect on parish finances. With significantly fewer people at Mass on Sunday and no one there during the lockdown, the Offertory collection is much reduced.

But regular parish bills still have to be paid and the amount of money available from the Offertory collection to do so is now much less than it was a year ago, before the pandemic.

So, to ensure the future financial wellbeing of St Columba's, we are asking all parishioners to review their offerings to support the work and mission of the parish. This, of course, is in the light of the fifth commandment of the Church which is 'To contribute to the support of our pastors.'

There are various ways of giving, whether you are coming to church or not. As well as cash in the basket at Mass, they include payment by cheque and standing order. For taxpayers, there is also the option of signing up for Gift Aid which boosts your offering by 25p for every £1 you pay - and at no extra cost to yourself.

Below is a form inviting you to make a pledge of support for St Columba's and which also sets out all the options. It includes a standing order form.

Do give some thought to this: we all need our church, we all need to support the work and mission of the parish - and we all need to take responsibility for supporting St Columba's financially.



**PRAYING FOR THE HOLY SOULS**

We were unable to have our traditional gathering at Greenlawns Cemetery for the blessing of the graves on Remembrance Sunday this year.

However we are encouraged to continue to pray for all who have died with these particular instructions we have received from Archbishops House…

The plenary indulgence for those who visit a cemetery and pray for the departed, which is normally applicable between 1 to 8 November, will now apply to the entire month of November and need not be on consecutive days.

The plenary indulgence of All Souls’ Day, 2 November, whereby the faithful may visit a church, chapel or oratory to pray the Our Father and the Creed, can be transferred not only to a successive Sunday but may now also be gained on any other day within the month of November.

Those faithful who are shielding, or for whatever genuine reason are unable to leave their homes, may also achieve the plenary indulgence by offering prayer for the departed and offering up any hardships they may presently be enduring.

The following provisions would also apply: spiritually uniting themselves with all other faithful; detachment from sin; and having the intention as soon as possible to meet the three usual conditions of sacramental Confession, Holy Communion and prayer for the intentions of the Holy Father.

**WARNING - CYBERCRIME**

Please be aware of the increasing risk of cybercrime and online fraud. Only this week several parishioners have received emails asking for money and purporting to come from Fr Roy. They didn’t.

You can tell by checking the sender’s email address against the one at the head of this newsletter. If it is not the same the email is almost certainly fraudulent.

If in doubt telephone 0208 682 7880 to verify that the email is genuine and not a scam.



***SHOP ONLINE AND HELP ST C’S AT NO EXTRA COST TO YOURSELF***

Thinking of buying something online? Anything? A new washing machine or fridge or freezer or tumble dryer or any other white goods? Or perhaps you need a new vacuum cleaner or intend ordering a book or dvd or, in fact, other items. If you do it online you can help St Columba’s finances, depleted by the lockdown, at the same time and at no cost to yourself. More and more parishioners are signing up for this scheme. It means that you can turn your everyday online shopping into free donations to our parish. It’s simple. It’s straightforward. And it will cost you nothing. All you have to do is visit the website [www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk), register (which is quick and easy) and then go shopping online at whichever retailer you choose. Each time you buy something – anything – a small donation is made to St Columba’s.

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| There are more than 4,000 retailers to choose from including lots of big names such as Argos, John Lewis, Amazon, M&S and Sainsbury’s. Have a look at this link to find out more: [https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/stcolumbasldn/?invite=ZTUSO0%26referral-campaign=c2s%26utm\_campaign=admin-trigger%26utm\_content=nst](http://t.e.easyfundraising.org.uk/r/?id=h2ef6bab4,257a256b,25302fff&utm_source=adobecampaign&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=referral-2018&utm_content=trigger-supp-referee-raised-2018&origin=RTNS2&p1=stcolumbasldn&p2=ZTUSO0) |  |  |

**ZOOM IN ON THE UCM CHRISTMAS PARTY**

Please put in your diaries the Christmas Party for the UCM via Zoom to be held on Wednesday (2nd December) at 7:30pm. Please join us if you can. It’s very heart warming to see our friends on the screen and know they are keeping well.

All you have to do is download the app Zoom.us then click on the link (<https://zoom.us/>) and “connect with audio” – at the proposed time of the meeting.

**MAKE YOUR OFFERING GO FURTHER**

If you are a taxpayer and not already signed up for Gift Aid (which, at no cost to you, enables St Columba’s to reclaim from the Government tax you have already paid on the money you put in the Offertory collection) contact Fr Roy or Deacon Philip for details of how to join the scheme.

**THE NEWSLETTER: ANY FEEDBACK?**

Comments, suggestions, contributions: all are welcome. Items for publication should be emailed to kyrabarone@aol.com by Thursday evening at the latest.

