**St Columba’s Church, Selsdon**

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**6 DECEMBER 2020**

**SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

**(YEAR B)**

**THIS SUNDAY’S MASS READINGS**

**Entrance Antiphon:** O people of Sion, behold, the Lord will come to save the nations, and the Lord will make the glory of his voice heard in the joy of your heart.

**1st Reading from the prophet Isaiah: 40:1-5. 9-11**

**Responsorial Psalm Ps 84:9-14. Rv.8:** Let us see, O Lord, your mercy and give us your saving help.

**2nd Reading: from the first letter of St Peter: 3:8-14**

**Gospel Acclamation:** Alleluia, alleluia! Prepare a way for the Lord. Make his paths straight, and all mankind shall see the salvation of God. Alleluia!

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

**Communion Antiphon:** Jerusalem, arise and stand upon the heights, and behold the joy which comes to you from God.

**CHRISTMAS MASSES: YOU NEED TO BOOK IN ADVANCE**

Christmas Masses will go ahead as usual but with no carol singing and less seating than in previous years. Because of Covid-19 a maximum of 90 people are allowed in church. So it will be necessary to book your places in advance.

To make sure no one misses out, there will be two additional Masses, making six in total. Times are as follows. Christmas Eve: 5pm, 7.30pm and midnight.

Christmas Day: 8am, 9.30am and 11am.

To book your places email [selsdon@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:selsdon@rcaos.org.uk) giving your name, phone number and the total number attending (including any children).

Alternatively, telephone 020 8657 3747 and leave a message with the same information.

**THE CHALLENGE OF ADVENT: TO SMOOTH OUR PATH TO GOD**

**A REFLECTION ON THE READINGS FOR THE SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT BY FR ROY**

In the first reading this Sunday the prophet Isaiah prophesies to the exiled people of Israel that they are going home.

After 70 years of exile, the time has come for them to return to their homeland.

Isaiah tells the Israelites, his own people, to prepare the way for the Lord.

Now Babylon was to the east of Israel. The road back, with its valleys, cliffs and mountains, was difficult to traverse.

The best thing, Isaiah says, is for them to ‘straighten it out’. To smooth their way.

That rough terrain, those valleys, cliffs and mountains, are a metaphor for the roughness of our souls.

It represents the sins that we have committed in the past and which have scarred our souls.

The challenge for us then during this season of Advent is to straighten out our spiritual lives. To smooth our path to God.

Like the exiled Israelites, we have been hardened by past experiences, experiences that alienated us from God.

Now we have to accept that to mend our relationship with God, we need to humble ourselves.

And we must do our homework according to the prophet Isaiah.

To be able to welcome our saviour we must ensure that the road to our hearts is smooth and welcoming. Not full of potholes.

So the first step is for each of us to recognise and accept the state of our soul: that is crucial to the arrival of Jesus.

We cannot simply allow nature to take its course. We have to be proactive in our effort to welcome Jesus.

That means using our time wisely to rid our lives of barriers and obstructions blocking our access to God.

John the Baptist gives us an excellent example: he lived a life devoid of material things. His was a simple life, spent in the desert.

It reminds us that what matter most is one’s relationship with God. And material things can taint that relationship.

Remember the different temptations that Jesus encountered in the desert...

So, during this Advent, let us review our attitude to the usual suspects: wealth, honour, pleasure and power.

And as we do so, we must nourish our prayer life so as to open ourselves up to the Lord. Only then will we be able to smooth the way of the Lord.

***THE LATE JOHN SMITH RIP***

Please pray for the soul of the late John Smith, brother of Marion de Souza, who died on Friday. He was 83 and had suffered much ill health over recent times. We place him in God’s loving hands. May John rest in peace.

**ALL OUR MASSES ARE LIVE STREAMED**

Follow Fr Roy celebrating Mass live on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCYVyZ2Xpfs0NiuU3bxAjsCQ/live>

***DON’T FORGET WHEN YOU COME TO CHURCH…***

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 and don’t congregate in the car park.

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

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| **LITURGICAL CALENDAR OF THE WEEK** | |
| Sat 5th | Weekday of Advent |
| Sun 6th | 2nd Sunday of Advent |
| Mon 7th | St Ambrose, Bishop, Doctor of the Church |
| Tues 8th | The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary |
| Wed 9th | Weekday of Advent, St Juan Diego Cuahtlatoazin |
| Thurs 10th | Weekday of Advent, Our Lady of Loreto, St John Roberts, Priest< Martyr |
| Fri 11th | Weekday of Advent, St Damascus I, Pope |
| Sat 12th | Weekday of Advent, Our Lady of Guadalupe |

**REMEMBER THE SICK AND NEEDY**

Please pray for all those in great need at this time including: Cora Litchfield, Sean Walsh, Lily Wei, Judy Freegard, 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.

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

There have been a number of typhoons and cyclones 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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| **MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK** | | |
| Sat 5th | 6.30pm | Pro Populo |
| Sun 6th | 8.00am | Holy Souls |
| Sun 6th | 10.00am | Elizabetta Niewiadomski, RIP |
| Sun 6th | 6.30pm | Intention of the Alvarez Family |
| Mon 7th | 10.00am | The Uridge Family |
| Tues 8th | 10.00am | Padraig Jordan, RIP |
| Wed 9th | 10.00am | Private Intention |
| Thurs 10th | 10.00am | Ronan O’Dwyer, RIP |
| Fri 11th | 10.00am | Mary Williams, RIP |
| Sat 12th | 6.30pm | Colleen Hiett, RIP |
| Sun 13th | 8.00am | Thanksgiving for & blessings on St Columba’s 'Covid Helpers' |
| Sun 13th | 10.00am | Pro Populo |
| Sun 13th | 6.30pm | Pat Delaney, wellbeing |

**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.



**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) |  |  |

**A ZOOMING UCM CHRISTMAS PARTY**

The UCM had their Christmas Party on Wednesday (December 2) via Zoom and 14 participants took part in a fun evening singing carols, watching videos and photographs of past parties and a guessing-the-baby -photo competition.

It didn’t stop there, either. We also had a mini play and a poem acted out by the committee - all great fun!

Our Zoomers were dressed up in Christmas jumpers and hats and entered into the spirit of the festivities. Father Roy and Deacon Philip also attended for part of the party giving us prayers at the beginning and end of the Zoom meeting.

After two hours we were exhausted but felt it was great fun. It was certainly different from the norm. We hope next year will be back to ‘normal’ in the church hall with all our UCM friends and guests.

Our next meeting will be on Wednesday 6th January 2021 when we will play Bingo on Zoom - let Anne Rodrigues know if you would like to take part. Meanwhile the UCM subs are due asap at a reduced rate of £10. Please send your subs to Deirdre Turner (Treasurer) with cash or a cheque before the end of next week.

Please also see the website for a further UCM news update.

**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.

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**SIGN UP FOR DAILY ADVENT REFLECTIONS TO PREPARE FOR CHRISTMAS**

We are beginning an Advent season like no other, leading up to a Christmas celebration that may be different from those we are used to.

To help focus your daily prayer the Southwark Diocesan Spirituality Commission is offering a brief reflection on one of the readings of the day, delivered by email for personal use at a time to suit you.  
At the end of this challenging year the weeks may feel even darker than usual.

However, this presents an opportunity to discover Advent in a new and deeper way: waiting for a light to grow in the darkness, longing for the coming of our Lord, and of God’s Kingdom.

Maybe this is a time to embrace the darkness and the loneliness and allow them to open us up to a deeper longing as we wait.  [Sign up here](https://rcsouthwark.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=a40ab1a35eac7236d856fe882&id=8ef73c8076&e=087693309e)  for the Advent Reflections or visit [https://aec.rcaos.org.uk/advent](https://rcsouthwark.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=a40ab1a35eac7236d856fe882&id=6c840687d8&e=087693309e)

**LOOKING FOR PEACE AND HOPE…?**  
After a year of uncertainty, we all need the hope, peace and true comfort and joy that the Advent season can offer.

CAFOD has a range of online resources and events which can help. Try  [A journey to the Manger](https://rcsouthwark.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=a40ab1a35eac7236d856fe882&id=c9935d5365&e=087693309e):gentle prayers on Sunday night during Advent.  This is an opportunity for Catholics to come together online to pray and reflect as we prepare for the coming of our Lord   
CAFOD also offers a number of different versions of their virtual [Advent Calendar](https://rcsouthwark.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=a40ab1a35eac7236d856fe882&id=8bbfa3ac72&e=087693309e) for all ages, with prayers and reflections for each day of the season.  
For general information about the agency and for ways of supporting it visit [cafod.org.uk/parishes](https://rcsouthwark.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=a40ab1a35eac7236d856fe882&id=0f4501ac35&e=087693309e).

**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.