

**PARISH OF ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY**

**Address:** Holy Rosary Presbytery, 2 Grosmont Drive, Billingham, TS23 2EP

**Website:** www.rcdhnbillingham.co.uk

**Telephone:** 01642 553 118



Ei



**FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

**Week Beginning: 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2023**

**Prayer Week: 1**

www.facebook.com /rcdhnbillingham

www.diocesehn.org.uk

<b>Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December</b>	<b>10:00am</b>	Parishioners	Holy Rosary
<b>Monday 4<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>10:00am</b>	Cooling Family	Holy Rosary
<b>Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>10.00am</b>	Antony Arogyanathan Vijoy	ST. JOSEPH'S SCHOOL
<b>Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> December</b>	<b>10.00am</b>	Veronica Webster (Requiem)	St John's
	<b>7.00pm</b>	Jack Devine Jr	Holy Rosary
<b>Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> December</b> <i>St Ambrose</i>	<b>10:00am</b>	John Huitson	Holy Rosary
<b>Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December</b> <i>Immaculate Conception</i>	<b>10:00am</b>	The Church	St John's
	<b>12.00pm</b>	Andre Zaluski (Requiem)	Holy Rosary
<b>Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December</b> <i>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent (Vigil)</i>	<b>5.00pm</b>	Mary Scott.	St John's
<b>Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December</b> <i>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent</i>	<b>10:00am</b>	Parishioners	Holy Rosary

**Please pray for the sick and everyone who is ill:**

Rev. Dan Mckie, Sarah McAllister, Max Simpson, Carol Brownlee, Grace Ollie, Judy Houchen, Peter Smith, Cai Rive, Avril Wordsworth, Lily Ward-Thurlbeck, Rose Wall, Peter Chapman, Christine Rooney, Brian Kane, Margaret Hitchinson, Helen Webb, Jim Hodgson, Fr Stephen Dye, Judith Sowerby, Kate Williams, Faustina Morgan, Maureen Maddren, Daisy Elliott, Andre Zaluski, Maureen Braithwaite, Baby Cassian

**Please remember those lately dead or with anniversaries:**

**SEASON OF ADVENT**

Once again we begin a new year in the Church' calendar. The first two weeks the Church orients us towards the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Our Lord and then in the last wee (this year there are only 3 weeks of Advent) we have the readings and prayers preparing us for the Christmas feast.

Advance notice: Christmas eve Mass Sunday 24<sup>th</sup>: Holy Rosary 5pm  
St John's 7pm  
Christmas Day Monday 25<sup>th</sup>: Holy Rosary 10am

**THIS SUNDAY-** Ecumenical Advent Service, St Aidan's church, 3pm. All welcome!

**Christmas at Middlesbrough Cathedral-**  
Festive songs with the group "Cantabile", 8<sup>th</sup> December,  
6.30pm Christmas stalls/ Entertainment 7.30pm cf. poster.

**Ushaw Christmas Carols:** December 11, 12, 14 & 20. 7.30-9.45pm 0191 373 8500

*CONFESSIONS: ST. JOHN'S SATURDAY, 10.30 - 11.00*

Our parish SVP is sponsoring a buffalo project. This will provide the animals for the Joseph Peta parish in India.

The Northern Cross- DECEMBER issue available, £1.50p

**Statue of Our Lady**

For many years the statue was available to parishioners to have in their homes for a week. DECEMBER list now on noticeboard. Please sign up.

400 Club: November Draw £100 (40) M. Toth/ £100 (315) B. Prior  
£50 (137) M. Wilkie/ £50 (295) S. Hodgson  
Christmas Draw £100 (448) W. Nolan/ £100 (71) C. Foley  
£50 (123) E. Hughes/ £50 (6) T. Larkin

WORLD GIFTS (Cafod) Catalogue of possible gifts available at back of church.

**On Thursday evening** this week some of our schoolchildren will be celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation, going to confession for the first time. Please keep them and their families in your prayers.

**St Michael's invites parishioners to:**

Afternoon tea on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2-3pm. There are 20 places. Please ring 01642 870003 to book a place, **and** The Advent Liturgy & Carol Service on 19<sup>th</sup> December 5.45-7pm adults £2/children £1. Refreshments available. Please ring 01642 870003

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON**

Cf. Ps 24:1-3

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.

**THE COLLECT**

Grant your faithful, we pray, almighty God,  
the resolve to run forth to meet your Christ  
with righteous deeds at his coming,  
so that, gathered at his right hand,  
they may be worthy to possess the heavenly Kingdom.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
God, for ever and ever.

**FIRST READING**

A reading from the prophet Isaiah 63:16-17; 64:1. 3-8

You, Lord, yourself are our Father.  
Our Redeemer is your ancient name.  
Why, Lord, leave us to stray from your ways  
and harden our hearts against fearing you?  
Return, for the sake of your servants,  
the tribes of your inheritance.  
Oh, that you would tear the heavens open and come down  
– at your Presence the mountains would melt.  
No ear has heard,  
no eye has seen  
any god but you act like this  
for those who trust him.  
You guide those who act with integrity;  
and keep your ways in mind.  
You were angry when we were sinners;  
we had long been rebels against you.  
We were all like men unclean,  
all that integrity of ours like filthy clothing.  
We have all withered like leaves  
and our sins blew us away like the wind.  
No one invoked your name  
or roused himself to catch hold of you.  
For you hid your face from us  
and gave us up to the power of our sins.  
And yet, Lord, you are our Father;  
we the clay, you our potter,  
we are all the work of your hand.

The word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**PSALM**

Ps. 79:2-3.15-16.18-19. R. v4

**R) God of hosts bring us back;  
let your face shine on us and we shall be saved.**

O shepherd of Israel, hear us,  
shine forth from your cherubim throne  
O Lord, rouse up your might,  
O Lord, come to our help. **(R)**

God of hosts, turn again, we implore,  
look down from heaven and see.  
Visit the vine and protect it,  
the vine your right hand has planted. **(R)**

May your hand be on the man you have chosen,  
the man you have given your strength.  
And we shall never forsake you again;  
give us life that we may call upon your name. **(R)**

**SECOND READING**

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians 1:3-9

May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ send you grace  
and peace.

I never stop thanking God for all the graces you have received  
through Jesus Christ. I thank him that you have been enriched  
in so many ways, especially in your teachers and preachers;  
the witness to Christ has indeed been strong among you so that  
you will not be without any of the gifts of the Spirit while you are  
waiting for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed; and he will keep  
you steady and without blame until the last day, the day of our  
Lord Jesus Christ, because God by calling you has joined you  
to his Son, Jesus Christ; and God is faithful.

The word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

**Alleluia, alleluia!** Ps 84:8  
**Let us see, O Lord, your mercy  
and give us your saving help.**  
**Alleluia!**

**GOSPEL**

Mark 13:33-37

The Lord be with you.  
**And with your spirit.**

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.  
**Glory to you, O Lord.**

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Be on your guard, stay awake,  
because you never know when the time will come. It is like a  
man travelling abroad: he has gone from his home, and left his  
servants in charge, each with his own task; and he has told the  
doorkeeper to stay awake. So stay awake, because you do not  
know when the master of the house is coming, evening,  
midnight, cockcrow, dawn; if he comes unexpectedly, he must  
not find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Stay  
awake!'

The Gospel of the Lord.  
**Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

**PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS**

Accept, we pray, O Lord, these offerings we make,  
gathered from among your gifts to us,  
and may what you grant us to celebrate devoutly here below,  
gain for us the prize of eternal redemption.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**COMMUNION ANTIPHON**

Ps 84:13

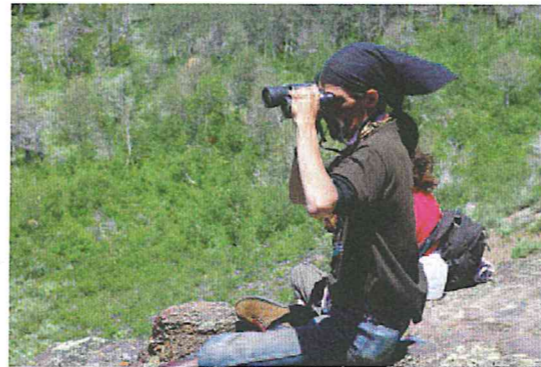
**The Lord will bestow his bounty, and our earth shall yield  
its increase.**

**PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION**

May these mysteries, O Lord,  
in which we have participated,  
profit us, we pray,  
for even now, as we walk amid passing things,  
you teach us by them to love the things of heaven  
and hold fast to what endures.  
Through Christ our Lord.

# Our Faith on Sunday

## GOSPEL REFLECTION



The only certainty in life is death. And yet we often live our lives as if we going to live forever. In today's Gospel Jesus reminds us that we must always keep the fact of our death, and the fact that we don't know when it will come, at the front of our minds. This doesn't mean that we should have a morbid

awareness of death, but rather a realistic one: we don't know when it will come, so - be ready. And how can we be always ready? By living God's will as well as we can in each present moment. However hard we try, we will find ourselves wandering away from what God wants of us because of our flawed human nature. So what should we do when we have wandered off the track? Get back on it as soon as we can. One good way to do this is to take advantage of the gifts God has given us to help us 'start again' when we have fallen. The Sacrament of reconciliation is that gift. Through this very special gift, we are reconciled with God and with our brothers and sisters and all our

sins, our mistakes, our selfishness is consumed in God's mercy. When we come out of the confessional we are like new people, ready to start again on our journey towards God. Some people say they don't see the point of confession because they always have the same sins. Think of it this way: if I only clean my windows once a year, by the end of the year I won't see much through them; if I clean them once a month, I will have a clear view most of the time.



### EVANGELII GAUDIUM (JOY OF THE GOSPEL)



## POPULAR VS. POPULIST

158. Here, there can be a misunderstanding. "People" is not a logical category, nor is it a mystical category, if by that we mean that everything the people does is good, or that the people is an 'angelic' reality. Rather, it is a mythic category... When you have to explain what you mean by people, you use logical categories for the sake of explanation, and necessarily so. Yet in that way you cannot explain what it means to belong to a people. The word 'people' has a deeper meaning that cannot be set forth in purely logical terms. To be part of a people is to be part of a shared identity arising from social and cultural bonds. And that is not something automatic, but rather a slow, difficult process... of advancing towards a common project".<sup>132</sup>

132. ANTONIO SPADARO, S.J., *Le orme di un pastore. Una conversazione con Papa Francesco*, in JORGE MARIO BERGOGLIO – PAPA FRANCESCO, *Nei tuoi occhi è la mia parola. Omelie e discorsi di Buenos Aires 1999-2013*, Rizzoli, Milan 2016, XVI; cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013), 220-221: AAS 105 (2013), 1110-1111.

## The Fire of Love\* CONVERSION IS A LONG PROCESS

It is obvious that those who are in love with God do not attain the heights of devotion straight away. They experience the sweetness of contemplation only sporadically. Hard work is needed to prepare the ground, for only then can we feel some joy in loving God.

We can be very virtuous and yet not experience the warmth of God's love and be able to sing in our hearts the song of divine praise. It is rare for anyone to be raised to the level of jubilant song. This song is that which is constantly sung in heaven, full of harmony and sweetness. Those who experience it are the true contemplatives. Having sat long in solitude they have kept company with angels, exulting and rejoicing in Jesus.

\*The Fire of Love by Richard Rolle Published by Aeterna Press

