

# Advent and Christmas Schedule 2023

Dear Friends,

## ***Prepare your heart for His Arrival***

“Let us reflect that the Word left heaven, and stooped to become man for us.” These words of St Philip Neri give us an insight into the Holy Season of Advent. It’s a chance to deepen our Faith in the Word Made flesh. With Joy let us prepare again our lives, our hearts and our homes for the coming of Christ Jesus this Christmas.

## ***Prepare your Home***

Sacred signs accompany the work of the heart. You could hang a wreath on your door from Advent Sunday, or get the children to make a Happy Advent poster for your window. You could have an Advent wreath with four candles and say your night prayers by it, and decorate your home with greenery. Advent is also a time to sort through the house and clean those long neglected corners. Consider delaying putting Christmas decorations up till after the Immaculate Conception. You will find at the end of this booklet a Christmas tree blessing for the household. Decorations can be brought down on Epiphany (6th January) and you can leave your Cribs and lights till 2nd February, the Feast of the Presentation of the lord.

## **CONFESSIONS DURING ADVENT**

30 minutes before, during and after if necessary at every Mass.

## **ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT**

Wednesdays and Saturdays, 11.30am with Benediction.

## **RORATE MASS IN HONOUR OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**

This Advent we will have Rorate Masses on Saturdays 9th, 16th and 23rd of December at 7.30 a.m. These Masses, offered only during Advent, are celebrated in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Traditionally they are celebrated at sunrise and are lit only by candlelight. There will be refreshments after the Masses.

## **THE FEAST OF SAINT NICHOLAS**

On 6th December at 6.15pm there will be a talk on St Nicholas, leading into the triduum for the Immaculate Conception. Refreshments after in the Rectory.

## **THE SOLEMNITY OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION**

On 5th, 6th and 7th December at 6.30pm, a period of silence, short sermon and prayers for the coming Feast of the Immaculate Conception. On 8th December,

the Solemnity, Sung Mass at 7am with Breakfast in the Rectory. There will also be Mass at 12.30pm as usual.

### **GIVE GLADLY**

Each year our parish contributes to the SSVP Appeal to support local foodbanks and provide gifts for families in need. Gifts should be placed in the boxes in the foyer. They should be wrapped & clearly marked with age & gender. The deadline for donations is Friday 15th December.

### **BAMBINELLI SUNDAY**

Bring your Baby Jesus from your home Nativity scene to Mass for Blessing on 17th December.

During the season of Advent you can slowly set up your Nativity in your homes. Remember to leave the Baby Jesus till the evening of Christmas Eve. This custom depicting the birth of Christ owes its origin to St. Francis of Assisi, who made the Christmas creche for Christ on Christmas Eve in 1223.

### **CHILDREN'S ORATORY**

On 16th December at 2pm we will have our first children's activity, including catechesis, craft – making an Manger for the Child Jesus – and making our hearts ready for His coming with Adoration and snacks.

### **THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

This year Christmas Eve, 24th December, falls on a Sunday. There will be a one-off Vigil Mass on Saturday 23rd December at 5.45pm. On Sunday 24th December there will be Masses at 9am and 11am, but no evening Mass at 4.30pm.

### **CHRISTMAS MASSES**

Christmas Eve, 24th December: First Mass of Christmas at 7pm. Blessing of Crib and Midnight Mass starting at 11.45pm.

Christmas Day, 25th December: Mass of the Shepherds at 9am. Sung Mass with a children's procession to the crib at 11am. Benediction with carols at 4pm.

(The Octave of Christmas and Hogmanay schedule will follow soon.)

St John Henry Newman reminds us that "Christ's coming is ever nearer than it was. O that, as He comes nearer earth, we may approach nearer heaven!" The stress of Christmas can break us, talk to us if you need help and remember to come to these holy events they will bring peace amidst the storm.

Viva Cristo Rey (Long live Christ the King)  
Fr Gerard and Fr Ninian