



St. Edmund and St. Frideswide R.C. Church
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4th Sunday of Advent (Year C) – 19th December 2021

1st Reading – Micah 5:1-4

Psalm – God of hosts, bring us back; let your face shine on us and we shall be saved.

2nd Reading – Hebrews 10:5-10

Gospel – Luke 1:39-45

The Lord is coming to us from humble surroundings, from the least of the clans of Judah as prophet Micah says. He continues to live in a humble way in our midst, dwelling silently in our churches, knocking at the door of our heart and waiting for us to welcome Him. Things haven't changed that much over the last two thousand years. He still gets a mixed response – some welcome and others reject and ignore His message. His mission was a simple one and beautifully encapsulated by the author of the letter to the Hebrews: "God, here I am! I am coming to obey your will". Today's readings are another lesson in what our life is all about and what should guide our decisions: obedience to the Lord.

Obedience requires us to listen, to pay attention, and ultimately to accept what the Lord is saying. Living in a world where the individual is the one that really matters, we see what a challenge it is to be obedient. St. Francis also knew that his brothers would complain and say that they know better than the ones appointed to lead them, so why should they listen. Francis' answer was simple and demanding: you should obey because the Son of God came to do the will of the Father and not His own. This is what leads to humility, to freedom, to openness, and life. At the beginning of Advent, we prayed for a greater openness to the Word of God and our obedience to that Word is essential for any follower of Christ. There will be times of doubt and of struggle to accept God's Word as it is handed on to us by the Church, and as we go through all these experiences, let us call to mind the figures of Mary and Joseph. Their faith was tested to the very limits, they suffered tremendously from the very moment of saying "Yes" to God, and yet in their silent pondering over things they discovered the strength to persevere and remain at peace. No matter how our preparation for Advent has gone so far, let us persevere in hope.

Please note there will be no Saturday evening Mass at 6.30pm on the 25th December. Details of Mass times on the last page of the newsletter, as well as on posters at the back of the church, and our website.

Covid Update – Unfortunately due to the high number of infections at present we have decided to cancel our Carol Service this weekend and the coffee mornings after our Sunday morning Masses for the time being. The situation changes very quickly and we'll do our best to keep you updated on any changes. No official guidance has been given to the churches at present, apart from the compulsory wearing of masks introduced recently. We continue to celebrate Mass and other religious services as normal. Our side aisles and chapels are socially distanced. The priests will distribute Holy Communion on the hand only at this time. There is no obligation to attend Sunday Mass. If you feel unwell, or display any symptoms, please stay at home. Thank you for your co-operation and for doing what you can to be responsible for yourself and others around you when in church.

Advent Prayer Group – Next meeting is on Tuesday 21st December. Come to pray and meditate on the message of the Word of God for us this Advent. The theme this week is Mary, the woman who believed God's promises: "Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfil his promises to her!" (Lk. 1:45-56). The session will be led by Cláudia Azevedo, one of our parishioners - do join us if you can during this holy season.

House Visits / Blessings – An important part of my service to you as your parish priest is to come to know you, pray with you, and bless you. That is why I would like to invite myself into your homes! – not for a 3-course meal, not even a cup of tea required, but to meet you, chat, and pray. Don't be afraid – I won't turn up uninvited. If you'd like a visit, just get in touch in any way you can – speak to me after Mass in the sacristy, email, phone, fill out the form on the website, or fill in a card that should be available at the back of the church.

Cleaning the church volunteers – This week we thank all the volunteers who will be helping out with the cleaning of our church in preparation for our celebration of Christmas.

Accommodation for a family – A young family of four are in urgent need of accommodation in Oxford. They require two bedrooms and a rent of preferably no more than £1000 per month. Please contact the parish office if you can help.

Oxford Street Pastors - We are now recruiting more volunteers. It is great fun to be out in a team of four, enjoying the night-time atmosphere and feeling fully prepared to offer help. We have highly experienced team leaders on each shift and volunteers usually go out once every 3-4 weeks. Full training is provided and we are accredited by the Ascension Trust, meeting their high standards for operating as Street Pastors. Many of our volunteers choose to come out on a shift as an "Observer" as their first step, so they can see first-hand what it is like. Then they apply to join and start their training. The application process is simple and includes getting a reference from your minister / vicar. The first thing to do is to contact Petra, the Coordinator of the Oxford Street Pastors.

Email her on streetpastoroxford@gmail.com

Church & Hall Update – Still waiting for an exact date to start the works. It's been a long wait to begin the process of ensuring that our buildings are protected from damage caused by leaks, but at least if you keep praying long enough, things might be sorted soon. That means we can start looking ahead towards the details of what will be done with the parish hall. As soon as we have an update on those, we will let you know. We are planning on refreshing our space in the porch as you enter the church.

If you would like to make a specific donation towards the renovation of the parish hall, please specify that you wish that donation to go for that purpose. You can write a cheque made out to Capuchin Oxford Parish, or donate via bank transfer to the Capuchin Oxford Parish Account (Acc. No. 50154109 Sort Code 60-70-03). Thank you for your support and generosity.

Altar servers – If your child would like to serve at the altar, please get in touch with Br. Martin M or Br. Martin S. This is for children who have made their 1st Holy Communion and older. Training will be provided once we have a list of interested children.

Rosary Prayer Group on Fridays at 7.00 p.m. will resume on the 7th January.

Intercessory Prayer Group

If you would like us to pray for somebody or for anything else, please email GreyfriarsIntercessoryPrayer@gmail.com or phone 07384 116920. All requests will be treated in strictest confidence.

Mass Times and Intentions

Sunday 19th December 2021 4th Sunday of Advent (Year C)

6.30 p.m. (Sat) Mary Gaffey R.I.P.
9.00 a.m. Olga Brites Da Silva Saldanha
11.00 a.m. Richard Pinner R.I.P.
5.30 p.m. Parishioners

Monday 20th

7.30 a.m. Kathleen Corcoran R.I.P.

Tuesday 21st

7.30 a.m. Rory McLoughlin R.I.P.

Wednesday 22nd

7.30 a.m. Chris Tierney R.I.P.

Thursday 23rd

7.30 a.m. Stephen Bowen

Friday 24th

7.30 a.m. Margaret & Timmy Joyce &
Family

6.00 p.m. Sabrena Collins R.I.P.

Midnight Parishioners

Christmas Eve Mass

Christmas Midnight Mass

Saturday 25th

***The Nativity of Our Lord
Jesus Christ***

9.00 a.m. James Begley R.I.P. Anniv.

11.00 a.m. Winnie & Christy Joyce

Please pray for those members of our community who are sick, especially **Therese O'Malley, Linda Parrott, Aline Beaupiere, Margaret Corcoran, Oonagh Clarkson**. If you are aware of somebody in our community who is sick and in need of our prayers, please ask them to contact the parish or let us have their contact details.