



ST. JOSEPH'S HIGHGATE PARISH BULLETIN

St Joseph's Church, Highgate Hill, London N19 5NE

Tel. 020 7272 2320 Fax. 020 7281 9433

e-mail: joseph.highgate@gmail.com : website: www.stjosephshighgate.org.uk

Registered Charity 1173084



Fr. Pat (pfc44@yahoo.com) Fr. George (gaskoloth@hotmail.com)

Masses: Sunday: (7pm Saturday) 8am, 10am, 12noon, 1.30 (Polish), 7pm.

Holydays: 6.30pm vigil, 9.30am, 11am, 6.30pm

Weekdays: 9.30am, 6.30pm. **Saturday:** 9.30am, 7pm. **Bank Holiday:** 9.30am

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday 10-10.30am, 6.30 -6.45pm

Weekdays: immediately after Mass (on request)

16th December 2018 – Third Sunday of Advent

'TIS THE SEASON ...

There's no getting away from it, this is a lovely time of the year! It's all very well to talk about all the hassle that's involved – the shopping, the card-writing, the preparations for special meals, the hanging of the decorations, and even the many extra functions that have to be attended – but there is something in the atmosphere that really lifts the spirit and encourages smiles on faces. The weather may be cold and wintry, but there's a different kind of warmth in the air that is about joy and home and family and peace – and all the things that really matter.

It's especially wonderful to be around children at this time of the year. There is an unquenchable spirit about them as they enter into the story of the first Christmas. I've seen quite a few Nativity plays in my time, and just to see the joy on the children's faces as they tell the story and sing the carols – one would have to be very hard-hearted not to be touched by their simple innocence. It's hard to imagine that the angel Gabriel was any more enthusiastic and happy that first Christmas than the hosts of trainee angels – some still to get their wings! – who've enthralled and entertained us during the past weeks.

And that's a lovely way to prepare for Christmas. And preparing for Christmas is what this present season of Advent is about. Preparing for the coming of Christ was what John the Baptist, who features in our Gospel today, was all about. We find him today answering a variety of questions from the people who were flocking to him to be baptised – people who reckoned that they needed to make changes in their manner of living. You'll notice that John the Baptist's answers are substantially along the lines of "whatever you're about, be it that you're well-off, or maybe a tax-collector or a soldier, always treat the people you have to deal with fairly and kindly." Very sound advice, and thank God we live in a world where probably the majority of people live by those principles.

But then the episode takes a twist. We hear that some of the people are beginning to wonder if John might not in fact be the Messiah they were waiting for. He has no hesitation in putting them right on that score, explaining that the one to come would be more powerful, and would baptise with the Spirit and with fire. And of course we know that His message would go further than the advice given out by John – yes, be fair and kind, but not just to your own narrow circle of family, friends, clients, whatever, but in fact to the whole world. And add another dimension to it as well – love them as you would love yourself.

Watching the children at this time of year, one can't but love them, and be touched by and share in the joy that exudes from them. The pride and joy that one sees in their parents' eyes are the kinds of feelings that we're invited to be able to feel towards others, particularly, as Jesus constantly reminded us, those in need – the poor, the sick, the hungry, the lonely etc. It will only happen when they're loved as much as the children are! Asking too much? Jesus didn't think so! Maybe this Christmas?

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We pray for the sick and housebound of our parish, particularly – Monica Vandenberg, Mike Walsh, Gale Willner; **we remember those who have died recently** – Mary Dolores Cooke (funeral 10.30am Wednesday 19th December), Tracy Jennings (funeral 12.30pm Friday 21st December), John Fitzgerald, Florence Cass, Ann McLena Mitchell; **we remember those whose anniversaries occur at this time** – Joan Fox, George Barulis, Ida Webster, Bridie Thompson, Michael Muldowney Joan Coupland, Erimias Mehari, Alan Slow, Tom McManamon, Sheila McCormack, Evelyn McCamley, Anthony & Joe McNulty, Raymond Hogan, Ethelreda Carlisle.

Giving Tree:

First of all let me say a more sincere ‘thank you’ to all who have given in such a generous amount of gifts already. Be assured that all gifts will be distributed to needy children, families and adults before Christmas – if given in in time, or otherwise as soon as possible afterwards. For those of you who may be new to the parish, or haven’t come across this exercise before, the idea is very simple, and very much in the proper spirit of Christmas. Instead of the usual decorations our trees are bedecked with lots of tags – well, a lot less now after two week-ends – on each of which has been written a suggestion for a Christmas gift to be given to the poor of our city – local families that our local branch of St. Vincent de Paul are in touch with, and also for the Cardinal Hume Centre, which does outstanding work with families in distress and with the homeless. We invite you to take a tag from the tree, and then during the week – earlier, rather than later, please, as we’re running out of time – to purchase the item suggested. Items, which should be gift-wrapped should then be brought to the church as soon as possible, with the tags stating what gift is in each parcel attached to them. (Don’t worry, the tags will be removed before the gifts are distributed.) Many of the items on the tags are of a practical nature, like warm socks, gloves and so on, but there are also suggestions for small non-essentials, like biscuits, toys, books, games, etc – items which for us we’re inclined to take for granted, but for others are a luxury that they could never afford to buy for themselves. We particularly invite you to encourage your children to become involved. It’s a very practical way to help them appreciate how lucky they are, and maybe spend a little of their own pocket money on a present for a child of their own age who is much less well-off.

Statement on the Settlement Scheme for EU citizens:

The Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales have issued a statement on the Settlement Scheme for EU citizens who have made their homes here. This scheme is of major significance for EU citizens – other than Irish – living here, who will have to apply to continue to reside here. Copies of the Statement are available in the porch. We point you for further information to - <https://www.gov.uk/settled-status-eu-citizens-families>
The scheme will open on 30th March 2019, affecting those who wish to stay here beyond 31st December 2020.

Christmas Carol Singing in the Whittington:

The Whittington Chaplaincy Department, is looking for volunteers who will help out in the Christmas Carol Singing in the wards. This is to help give the patients who will not be celebrating Christmas with their families a feel of Christmas. Carol services on the 24th December 2018, will begin by 7:30pm to 9:00pm. Meet at the Chaplaincy department, Level 3, Kenwood wing. You can reach us (Fr. Oliver, Sr. Aideen) at 02072885337.

Christian Stewardship:

Last week’s collection amounted to £1,594. In addition to that we receive an average of over £900 per week in standing orders. Thank you for your continuing generosity.

A Highgate Christmas: an Advent Evening of Readings and Carols:

Join us this Thursday 20th December at 7.30pm for a flavour of Christmas given by extracts and poems from some of the great writers associated with Highgate, as well as readings from Holy Scripture and beautiful music from our own choir, and our organist Alberto Brigandi. Mulled wine and mince pies to follow.

Other Christmas Dates:

Also this week: St. Aloysius will be having carols by candlelight at 4.30 on the 18th, and LSU will be having their carol concert on the following evening, the 19th. And of course we will have our usual singing of carols before the midnight mass on Christmas Eve, starting at 11.30pm.

Christmas at the Repository:

Christmas Cards, Advent Calendars, and 2019 Calendars and St. Joseph’s Parish Diaries are all now available at the Repository shop at the back of church, as well as the usual range of cards, books and devotional items, and the weekly Catholic papers.

100 Club:

The December draw for the 100 Club will take place during the week. Would any members who have not yet handed in their subscriptions please do so as soon as possible. Thank you once again to all who support the parish in this way.

Prayer Group Holidays:

The Charismatic Prayer Group meets as usual in the Monastery at 7.30pm this Tuesday 18th December. There will be no meetings during the Christmas season. Meetings resume at 7.30pm Tuesday 15th January 2019.

Job Vacancies in St. Aloysius College:

Once again St. Aloysius College is advertising a number of vacancies in various posts – teaching, mentoring and assistant Premises manager, etc. Please contact mcdonagh.d@sta.islington.sch.uk for more information and application forms.