



Dear parishioners,

Another update from the parish, as Christmas draws nearer.

1. When you come to church this Sunday, you will note that **the Christmas tree and the Crib are now up**. In some ways it is, of course, early – there are still two weeks to go before Christmas! – but this Sunday is ‘**Gaudete**’ Sunday, marking the mid-point of Advent – rose coloured vestments are worn as a sign of joy, and the third candle is lighted on the Advent wreath. From this time on, the Church’s liturgy focuses our minds more and more on the forthcoming birth of Jesus at Bethlehem. Amidst the pressures of the season, and the challenges of our own time, let us not lose sight of the true origin and meaning of Christmas.
2. With that in mind, we are now publishing our **Mass schedule for Christmas**. **We will have Masses on Christmas Eve at 5.30 pm, 9.00 pm and 12.00 midnight – and on Christmas Day at 8.00 am, 9.30 am and 11.30 am**. Entry to all the Masses will be on a ‘first come, first serve’ basis. Since we have more Masses than on a usual Sunday, we hope to be able to accommodate everyone who wants to take part – and we do look forward to seeing you.
3. There will also be **extra times for Confession** in the run-up to Christmas. In addition to our regular slots, on Saturday 19th December there will be Confessions from 10.30 – 11.30 am and again from 4.30 – 5.30 pm. On Christmas Eve, there will be Confessions from 10.00 – 11.00 am, from 4.30 – 5.30 pm and from 8.00 – 9.00 pm.

We are all encouraged to make a good Confession before Christmas, as part of our spiritual preparation for this great feast.

4. During the **Christmas Octave (Monday 28th December – Friday 1st January inclusive)**, daily Mass will be at 10.00 am (not 9.30) – to give everyone (including the priests!) a slight lie-in during the festive season. This Octave contains many beautiful feasts, so do make an effort to come along, as a continuation of the Christmas celebrations.

5. Envelopes for your '**Christmas Offering**' are now out at the back of church. The Christmas and Easter Offerings are your personal gift to the priests of your parish, and make up the bulk of their income for the year. Since the church was closed last Easter, due to lockdown, it was not possible to take an Easter Offering in the normal way, so you may wish to consider this when making your donation at Christmas.

6. **Our local SVP group** is trying to help one of our senior parishioners gain internet access at this difficult time to ensure they have contact with the outside world, in particular giving them the ability to stream Mass online. Crucial to this is sourcing a laptop or tablet. If you have one that you're no longer using and can spare, please contact Liz at liz.leelondon@gmail.com. Many thanks in advance for any help with this.

7. If you have a child starting school in September 2021, **now is the time to apply for places in Reception at our excellent Catholic primary school**. If you need Fr Richard to sign a supplementary form for you, please try to get this to him before the Christmas break – forms should be dropped off at the Parish Office, and you will be contacted when it is completed and ready to collect.

With our prayers and best wishes,

Fr Richard and Fr Giovanni