



# St Francis of Assisi

## Parish Newsletter

".....we can celebrate the most beautiful Christmas ever. In one of your woods, in Greccio, there is a cave similar to that of Bethlehem. I would like to represent the Christmas scene and see with our eyes, the poverty in which the Child Jesus came into the world. I want to see how he was placed in a crib and lay between the ox and the donkey".



St Francis of



### **ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI**

*Grove Crescent Road, Stratford, London, E15 1BJ*

**SUNDAY CYCLE: YEAR B (MARK)**

**WEEKDAYS CYCLE: II**

### **3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT - 17TH DECEMBER 2023.**



Today's readings tell us that God's saving power reveals itself as naturally and as inevitably as the changing of the seasons. It unfolds through the faith of human beings who put their whole trust in God's will to redeem us.

#### Today's Readings

**Isaiah 61:1-2. 10-11:** This radiant song of praise reminds us that our experience of human love is a foretaste of the joy promised to those who open their hearts to God.

#### **Response to the Psalm: My soul rejoices in my God.**

**1 Thessalonians 5:16-24:** We are reminded that we can trust God to be alive and active in our world and in our lives, come what may.

**John 1:6-8. 19-29:** The story of John the Baptist reminds us that we also are called to give witness to Jesus and prepare a way for him wherever we are.

#### **"I am the voice of one crying out in the desert, 'Make straight the way of the Lord'"**

**John the Baptist made his appearance in the desert** announcing the coming of the Messiah. John came to testify, not to himself, but to the Messiah who was coming into the world. John declared that he was not worthy to untie the straps of the Messiah's shoes, the menial work of slaves.

A deputation of religious leaders came to interview John asking him who he was. But John declared who he was not. John was not the Messiah, but one who bore witness on his behalf. Neither was John the prophet Elijah, who was expected to precede the coming of the Lord. Nor did John claim to be a prophet like Moses. John explained who he was by saying that he was simply a voice crying out: "Make ready the way of the Lord". The religious leaders then asked John what gave him the right to baptise? John answered that he was only baptising with water; however, there was one among them who they did not recognise. John's function was to prepare the way for the one who would baptise with the fire of the Holy Spirit.



#### **DATES FOR YOUR DIARY:**

**SUNDAY 17TH DECEMBER 2023 – THE REPOSITORY WILL BE OPEN AFTER ALL SUNDAY MASSES**

**SUNDAY 17TH DECEMBER 2023 – FIRST HOLY COMMUNION MEETING – 2PM – IN THE CHURCH.**

**WEDNESDAY 10TH JANUARY 2024- NIGHT SHELTER BEGINS - IN THE LARGE HALL. SIGN UP SHEETS ARE AT THE BACK OF**

## THE CHURCH.

Pray for those who have died, and those whose Anniversaries occur around this time, also, please pray for the sick, and, remember the People of Ukraine. Our thoughts and prayers for the people of Turkey, Syria & Morocco, following the devastating earthquakes, also, the people of Libya who suffered floods recently. We also pray for peace in the Holy Land.

### **Catholics Can Receive A Plenary Indulgence By Praying Before A Nativity Scene**

This year, Catholics will be able to receive a plenary indulgence from Dec. 8, the solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, to Feb. 2, 2024, the feast of the Presentation in the Temple of Our Lord Jesus Christ, by praying before a Nativity scene in a Franciscan church. Earlier this year, on the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, the faithful gathered at the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi, Italy, to honour the beloved Italian saint and celebrate the 800th anniversary of the approval of the Rule of St. Francis (1223) and the creation of the Nativity scene in Greccio. As part of the celebration of this Franciscan Centenary, the Conference of the Franciscan Family asked Pope Francis for the approval of this plenary indulgence.

**What Is A Plenary Indulgence?** A plenary indulgence is a grace granted by the Catholic Church through the merits of Jesus Christ, Mary, and all the saints to remove the temporal punishment due to sin. The indulgence cleanses a person of all temporal punishment due to sin. However, it must always be accompanied by a full detachment from sin.

**Conditions To Receive A Plenary Indulgence In All Cases:** Detachment from all sin, even venial.

Sacramental confession, holy Communion, and prayer for the intentions of the Pope. Sacramental confession and receiving the Eucharist can happen up to about 20 days before or after the act performed to receive a plenary indulgence. It is appropriate that Communion and the prayer take place on the same day that the work is completed. One sacramental confession is sufficient for several plenary indulgences. However, for each plenary indulgence one wishes to receive, a separate reception of the Eucharist and a separate prayer for the intentions of the Holy Father are required.

### **FIRST HOLY COMMUNION MEETING**

Today, Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December at 2pm in the Church.  
**DIOCESE OF BRENTWOOD**

From Rt Rev Mgr Gordon Read, Diocesan Chancellor & Judicial Vicar.. If you know the whereabouts of Mr Simon Masey Robinson, please contact the Tribunal Office via Email – [tribunal@brcdt.org](mailto:tribunal@brcdt.org) – quoting reference number 16/23. Thank you.

### **CHRISTMAS CAROLS**

Our Carol Service is after the 6pm Mass this week. It begins at 7pm Saturday evening 16 December with the Blessed Cyprian Tansi Choir.



### **ADVENT & CHRISTMAS 2023 – 2024**

#### **Confessions**

Saturday 16 December 10.30 – 11.30am  
& 5.00 – 5.45pm  
Saturday 23 December 10.30 – 11.30am  
& 5.00 – 5.45pm

**Christmas Eve - Sunday 24 December**  
**Masses** 6pm (Saturday 23rd) 9am; 10.15; 2pm(Ukrainian)  
Priest available for Confessions AFTER  
12.15pm Mass Monday 18th to Friday 22nd December.  
Saturday 16 December 7pm

### **CHRISTMAS DAY**

(24<sup>th</sup>) 6pm 1<sup>st</sup> Mass of Christmas  
Carols 8pm leading into  
The Night Mass 9pm  
(25<sup>th</sup>) 9am; 10.15am; 12noon; 2pm (Ukrainian)  
Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup>: Mass 10am – followed by  
St Anthony Novena St Stephen's Day - Altar Servers.  
**Weekday Mass 26<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> 10am**  
**Monday 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024** (New Years Day)  
**Mary Mother of God – Mass at 10am.**  
**Weekday Mass 26<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> 10am**

#### **Grove Crescent Rd, Stratford, E15 1BJ Masses**

Monday to Friday 12:15. Tuesday, after Mass, St Anthony Novena. Saturday: Morning Prayer: 9:40am Mass 10am followed by Holy Hour Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament until 11:30am.  
Confession: Saturday: 10:30am - 11:30am & 5pm - 5:45pm  
Sunday: 6pm Saturday, 9am, 10:15am, 12 noon & 4:30pm (Ukrainian).

### **REPOSITORY AFTER ALL SUNDAY MASSES – 17<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2023.**

Fr Michael O'Grady, OFM (Parish Priest)

Fr Brian McGrath, OFM

Fr Yusuf Bagh, OFM

Address: The Friary, 160 The Grove, Stratford, E15 1NS.

**Parish Office: Monday to Friday 9:30am - 3pm** Parish Secretary:

Kathleen Allen Pastoral Assistant: Derek Hoddy Tel: 0208 534  
1964 Email: stratford@friar.org