



# 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 there between the ox and the donkey".



St Francis of

Assisi.

### ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Grove Crescent Road, Stratford, London, E15 1BJ

SUNDAY CYCLE: YEAR B (MARK)

WEEKDAYS CYCLE: II

1<sup>st</sup> SUNDAY OF ADVENT - 3<sup>RD</sup> DECEMBER 2023 -

### MIGRANTS' DAY



The coming of the Messiah to save the world, so longed for, so anticipated by the prophets, has been fulfilled by the coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Jesus calls us to be alert and eager to fulfil the tasks he has given us to do. As we seek to do this, let us in sorrow acknowledge our failures, and appeal to his love and mercy.

#### Today's Readings:

**Isaiah 63:16-17; 64:1. 3-8:** The Prophet cries out for God to tear the heavens open and come down to save us.

**Response to the Psalm:** God of hosts, bring us back; let your face shine on us and we shall be saved.

**1 Corinthians 1:3-9:** St Paul constantly thanks God for the graces his converts received in Corinth.

**Mark 13:33-37:** Jesus entrusts the Church, his followers, with our own special tasks as we live out our personal Christian vocations.

#### **"Watch, therefore; you do not know when the lord of the house is coming"**

Mark, whose Gospel we concentrate on this year, wrote his gospel to encourage Christians who were suffering persecution for their faith. In chapter 13, Mark used an "apocalyptic" form of writing that was popular during times of crisis. This style borrowed images from the Hebrew Scriptures that depicted a time of turmoil and tribulation before the great "Day of the Lord." The author's purpose was not to instil fear, but to inspire hope in God's ultimate triumph over evil. While no one knows the exact "day or hour" of Christ's return, God's servants have got to be vigilant for his inevitable coming. As we begin Advent, God invites us all to reflect on our readiness to bring the Christ, Son of God and Son of Mary, to our world today. We are invited to "wait in joyful hope" for the Lord's coming in each and every day of our lives.



First Sunday of Advent

Original image from <http://cruzblanca.org/hermanoteon/>

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to

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

**FRIDAY 8<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2023 - PENSIONERS CHRISTMAS DINNER IN THE LARGE HALL.**

**SATURDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2023 - MEETING FOR MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION - 2PM IN THE CHURCH.**

**SATURDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2023 - TANSI CHOIR CAROL SERVICE.**

**SATURDAY 16<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER - ALTAR SERVERS MEETING 1PM IN THE CHURCH**

**SUNDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2023 - FIRST HOLY COMMUNION MEETING - 2PM - IN THE CHURCH.**

**WEDNESDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> 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.

## **GRECCIO: 800 Year Anniversary: 1223 – 2023.**



This year we celebrate 800 years since St Francis recreated the events of the first Christmas.

He did this at Greccio in the year 1223. Since then, nativity scenes (Christmas Cribs) began to emerge in homes and in churches in celebration of the birth of Jesus.

This wonderful Franciscan tradition continues to this day as we once again build and recreate the scenes of that first Christmas night.

Pope Francis, at Greccio, reflected on how St Francis recreated the Christmas scene for the first time at Greccio in 1223:

“The nativity scene is like a living Gospel rising up from the pages of sacred Scripture.

As we contemplate the Christmas story, we are invited to set out on a spiritual journey, drawn by the humility of the God who became man in order to encounter every man and woman. We come to realize that so great is his love for us that he became one of us, so that we might, in turn, become one with him. In a particular way, from the time of its Franciscan origins, the nativity scene has invited us to “feel” and “touch” the poverty that God’s Son took upon himself in the Incarnation.

It invites us to follow him along the path of humility, poverty and self-denial that leads from the manger of Bethlehem to the cross. It asks us to meet him and serve him by showing mercy to those of our brothers and sisters in greatest need”.

## **MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION - MEETING**

On **Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December at 2pm**, there will be a meeting, in the Church, for the Ministers of Holy Communion in preparation for Christmas.

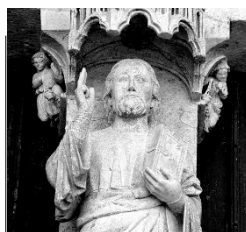
## **ALTAR SERVERS MEETING**

On **Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> December 2023 at 1pm**, there will be a meeting for all Alter Servers in the Church,

### **ADVENT:**

### **A TIME OF JOYFUL EXPECTATION**

Advent is the start of the liturgical year in the Roman Catholic Church. This year, in the Liturgical cycle, is Year B, in which we concentrate on the Gospel of Mark. Advent is a period of preparation, extending over the four Sundays, before Christmas. The Latin word ‘adventus’ is a translation of the Greek word parousia, referring to the Second Coming of Christ. During this holy season, we prepare for three comings of Christ. **The 1st Coming of Christ** - when he came to us as a baby in Bethlehem and died for us on the cross. This is what we celebrate on Christmas Day and throughout the Christmas season! **The 2nd Coming of Christ** - is the certainty that Christ is with us in our daily lives. And just as the future world in Christ has already begun, this also provides the certainty of hope. **The 3rd Coming of Christ** – is at the end of time when Christ will come and be seen in glory and majesty.



Advent 1B opens with a great cry, and a great promise:

“Oh that you would tear the heavens open and come down!” is the cry, of a people who need God. “...The master is coming” is the promise, not to breed fear, but to answer our cry. Advent begins, not with thoughts of the past, with

the coming of the Lord we celebrate at Christmas, but with the future, and the promise that He is coming back. We are encouraged to treat every day as the day the Lord will come; we do not do this out of fear for a Master who beats his servants, but out of love of a Master who always treats us with love and mercy. Nevertheless we must always be watchful, because we can grow sleepy and complacent, saying that we can leave this prayer or that confession or the other change in the way we live to tomorrow. Even as we look forward to the tomorrow of the Lord’s coming, we must remember that it might be **today!**

### **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).

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

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