

## ST MATTHEW CATHOLIC CHURCH, WEST NORWOOD

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West Norwood

[www.stmatthews-westnorwood.org.uk](http://www.stmatthews-westnorwood.org.uk)

London SE27 9JU

21 December 2025

### Parish Newsletter

### FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (A)

**TODAY'S MASS READING:** Parish Mass Book, from page 91

**1st Reading** (Is. 7:10-14) **2nd Reading** (Rom. 1:1-7) **Gospel** (Mt. 1:18-24)

Readings Next Sunday: 1st Reading (Sir. 3:2-6, 12-14). 2nd Reading (Col. 3:12-21). Gospel (Mt. 2:13-15, 19-23)

As we come to the Fourth Sunday of Advent, we are standing right at the door of Christmas. The waiting is almost over. Today's Gospel, however, does not rush us to the manger. Instead, it invites us to pause and reflect on a quiet but powerful figure in the Christmas story: **Saint Joseph**. Joseph's world collapses when he discovers that Mary is pregnant. For a righteous man in his time, this was a moment of deep confusion, shame, and heartbreak. Joseph could have reacted with anger, fear, or self-protection. He had the legal right to expose Mary publicly. Instead, the Gospel tells us that he planned to dismiss her quietly. This already shows us something important: Joseph was a man of compassion, restraint, and love, even before he fully understood God's plan. Then comes the turning point: "*Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife.*" These words—*do not be afraid*—appear again and again in Scripture. God knows how fear can paralyse us, especially when life takes an unexpected turn. Joseph's Advent journey is not about having all the answers; it is about trusting God enough to move forward in faith. Joseph listens. He does not argue with the angel. He does not demand proof. He wakes up and does exactly as the Lord commands. This is quiet obedience, not loud or dramatic, but steady and faithful. Joseph teaches us that holiness often happens in silence, in ordinary decisions made with extraordinary trust. The angel also reveals the child's name: Jesus, meaning "God saves," and Emmanuel, meaning "God is with us." This is the heart of Christmas. God does not remain distant from human confusion, pain, or uncertainty. He enters it. Through Mary's yes and Joseph's obedience, God comes to dwell among us—not as a powerful ruler, but as a vulnerable child. As Christmas draws near, this Gospel invites us to ask ourselves: Where is God asking me to trust, even when I do not fully understand? What fears do I need to place in God's hands? And how can I, like Joseph, make room for Christ through quiet faithfulness? In a world that values noise, speed, and recognition, Saint Joseph reminds us that God often works through those who listen, trust, and act with love. As we prepare to welcome Christ at Christmas, may we open our hearts as Joseph did—so that Emmanuel, God-with-us, may truly dwell in our lives. Amen.

**Parish Priest: Fr Celestine Ekwueme**

**Email: [celestineekwueme@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:celestineekwueme@rcaos.org.uk)**

## PARISH INFORMATION AND FAITH NEWS

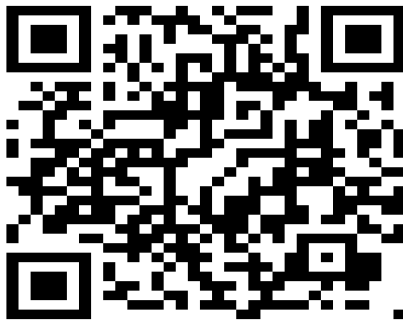
**Pope's December prayer intention:** For Christians in areas of conflict

Let us pray that Christians living in areas of war or conflict, especially in the Middle East, might be seeds of peace, reconciliation, and hope.

### PARISH NOTICES

**Parish Christmas Card Announcement:** Our Parish Christmas card, which includes the programme for the Christmas season and the New Year, is now available at the back of the church. We kindly invite each family to please take **one card** after Mass. Thank you.

**Christmas Message from Archbishop:** In his annual Christmas message, Archbishop John Wilson said: "The beautiful truth of Christmas is that because of God in Christ we are never lost. God chose to be near us, to stay close to



us always, to draw us to himself, always. In his endless mercy, the Lord Jesus chose to love us, so we could know and believe that "God is love" (1 John 4:16). In turn, all the Lord Jesus asks of us is to not be afraid and to say yes to him, to draw close to him, to love him". You can watch and read the full message at [rcaos.org.uk/christmasmessage2025](https://rcaos.org.uk/christmasmessage2025).

**Join our pilgrimage to Lourdes** travelling overnight by luxury coach from 9 to 14 February 2026. It is always a beautiful and deeply spiritual experience soaking in the Spirit of Jesus as we travel to honour Our Blessed Mother. Leaving Slough and Ealing Broadway on 9 Feb 2026 and departing Lourdes on 13 February for a visit to the Shrine of the Miraculous Medal in Rue de Bac, Paris on 14 February morning and arriving in London later on 14 February 2026. Full board, exciting festival devotional program, experience the Blessed Sacrament Procession of the Sick, the Candlelight Marian Rosary Procession and the International Mass on the Feast Day followed by Stations, Confessions and Adoration with Hour of Mercy. Travel, full board and program cost £590. Call millie on 07957594646 for more info.

**Jubilee Year:** The Jubilee Year concludes in just six weeks. There is still time for individuals, groups and parishes to visit the designated shrines and churches across the archdiocese and to receive the plenary indulgence. For a full list of places:

<https://rcaos.org.uk/faith/jubilee-2025/designated-jubilee-churches-and-shrines/>

**Your Christmas Offering** – as you may know, your Christmas offering is your donation to your priest. It constitutes our main income. Christmas offering envelopes are available at the back of the church for this purpose. You can as well make donation through the cashless machines or transfer to the parish account with the narration 'Christmas Offering'. Thank you as always for your generosity and support over the years

**Bishop Richard Moth appointed Archbishop of**

**Westminster:** Pope Leo XIV today, 19 December, appointed the Right Reverend Richard Moth as Archbishop of Westminster. Ordained to the priesthood for the Archdiocese of Southwark on 3 July 1982, Archbishop-elect Moth has served as Bishop of Arundel and Brighton since 2015. Prior to that, he was the Catholic Bishop of the Forces from 2009 to 2015. Archbishop-elect Moth will become the 12th Archbishop of Westminster, succeeding Cardinal Vincent Nichols, who has served in the role since 2009. Cardinal Nichols will now become Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Westminster until Archbishop-elect Moth is Installed at Westminster Cathedral on Saturday, 14 February 2026.

**MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK****PARISH MINISTRY****Saturday 20** Vigil, 4th Sunday Advent

6:30pm Patrick Sullivan RIP

**Sunday 21** 4th Sunday of Advent

9am Clive Moniz RIP

11am Marian Fuller RIP

**Monday 22** Feria

9:30am No Mass

**Tuesday 23** Feria

9am Adoration

9:30am Edward and Irene Tissier

**Wednesday 24** Feria

9:30am Mary Terese Gbei RIP

**Christmas Eve**

6pm Parish Children

10pm Ebele Opene-Isamah, t/giving

**Thursday 25** **Christmas Day**

9am Pro Populo

11am Arinze Nwokedi, in thanksgiving.

**Friday 26** Feria

9:30am Geneoleve &amp; Tyque; wellbeing

**Saturday 27** Vigil, 4th Sunday Advent

6:30pm Annie D'Souza, RIP

**Sunday 28** 4th Sunday of Advent

9am Gerry Gleeson RIP

11am Alan Blaquiere, in thanksgiving.

**READERS:****20th/21st****27th/28th****6:30pm** Preetha**9am** Eliza/Kene/Ariel**11am** Anne-Lise/**Eucharistic Ministers****6:30pm** Ann Jenny**9am** Zena Albertina**11am** Patience Yvonne**Church Cleaning:****Justine/Justina** Catherine/Noelie/Hugo

**The Season of Advent** - Advent has a twofold character, for it is a time of preparation for the Solemnities of Christmas, in which the First Coming of the Son of God to humanity is remembered, and likewise a time when, by remembrance of this, minds and hearts are led to look forward to Christ's Second Coming at the end of time. For these two reasons, Advent is a period of devout and expectant delight.

**CYCLE OF PRAYER** - Intentions for Advent and Christmas Time:

Migrants & Refugees (especially on Migrants' Day 3rd December)

WE REMEMBER IN OUR PRAYERS THOSE WHO HAVE RECENTLY DIED IN OUR PARISH COMMUNITY ,  
AND THOSE WHOSE ANNIVERSARY OF DEATH OCCUR AROUND THIS TIME, MAY THEY REST IN PEACE.  
AMEN.

James Joseph Bohan RIP

**HOSPITAL CONTACTS:** If you or a member of your family are admitted to our local hospitals, do please let the hospital's Catholic chaplain know.

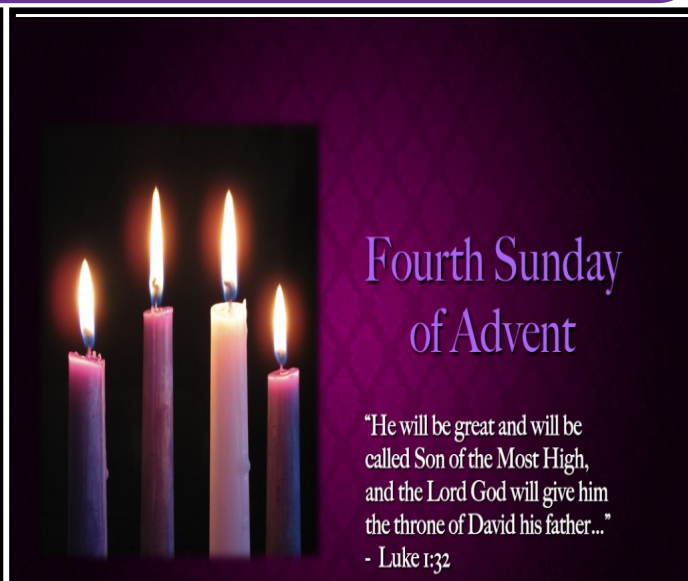
**St George's Hospital:** 02087253069 / 02086721255)

**Kings Hospital:** If outside hospital—02032993522. inside the hospital call extension 33522

**Croydon University Hospital:** 02084013105

**St Thomas' Hospital:** 02071881187/02071881186

**Guy's Hospital:** 02071881185/02071889576



## PARISH SCHEDULES

### Sunday Mass Times :

6:30pm (Sat), 9am and 11am

### Week Day Mass Times:

Tuesday ; 7pm

Wednesday & Friday; 9:30am

Thursday; 11am @ British Home

First Fridays; 12noon.

### Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:

Tuesdays; 6:00pm

**Baptisms, Marriage, Funerals:** Contact the Parish Office.

### Youth Club:

4:30pm Every 3rd Saturday

**RCIA:** Contact Parish Office

### RECONCILIATION/CONFESSIONS

Saturdays: 5:30pm to 6:15pm and on call.

### PARISH OFFICE HOURS

**Open Office:** Fridays 10am to 12:30pm and 2:30pm to 4:30pm.

***Other days with appointment, please.***

### UCM:

12noon Every First Friday

### CHOIR REHEARSALS:

Wednesdays; 7:30pm @ the Church.

### DIVINE MERCY GROUP

Sundays; after 11am mass @ the Divine Mercy Altar

**We are grateful for all you do to support the parish.**

**Setting up a Standing Order is the most efficient way to make a donation to the parish without incurring fees. You can use the following details for one-off donation or to set up a Standing Order or Direct Debit. NatWest Bank: Account Name: RCAS Norwood West, Sort Code: 60-23-19; Account Number: 44115369. Thank You!**