

**Christmas Masses and Services**

Monday 18 <sup>th</sup> December	6.30pm	Confessions at Blessed Sacrament
Thursday 21 <sup>st</sup> December	4pm - 8pm	Confessions at MOG
Saturday 23 <sup>rd</sup> December	10.30am-1pm	Confessions at MOG
Christmas Eve 24 <sup>th</sup> December	10.30am	English Mass
	5.45pm	Christmas Carols
	6pm	English Mass
Christmas Day- 25 <sup>th</sup> December	10pm	Syro-Malabar Mass
	10.30am	Holy Mass

The third candle symbolizes joy and is called the "Shepherd's Candle." To the shepherd's great joy, the angels announced that Jesus came for humble, unimportant people like them, too. In liturgy, the color rose signifies joy. This candle is colored pink to represent joyfulness and rejoicing.

**Sunday 24th December - Fourth Sunday of Advent** - Jesus tells John the Baptist of the signs of the kingdom that are being worked through him and praises John as more than a prophet.

**Monday 25th December - The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas) Mass at Dawn** - The shepherds found Mary and Joseph and the infant in the manger.

**Please keep in your prayers all the sick and housebound people of the parish. We continue to pray for Ukraine and its people, for the people of Israel and Palestine and for all the war-torn countries in the world. Let's also pray for all the people that have been affected by climate change and have lost their home and livelihood.**

 **Advent Prayer for peace: one family**

Lord God, Father of all,  
 We, your children, are all members of the same human family, your family.  
 We implore you to help us to accept your peace,  
 To be at peace with ourselves and to live in peace with others.  
 Help us to seek wisdom and justice in all we do.  
 Help us to be more understanding and compassionate when dealing with others,  
 To be ready to forgive when wronged, To be willing to love when hurt and  
 To strive for harmony and peace when threatened.  
 Eternal Father, in your mercy, hear our prayer  
 And grant us your everlasting peace.


**Amen.**

*Diana Ng-Sutherland, CAFOD supporter*



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	Our Schools: Christ the King Primary - 0116 2857261 - <a href="http://www.ckleicester.co.uk/">www.ckleicester.co.uk/</a> English Martyrs' Secondary - 0116 2428880 - <a href="http://www.emschool.co.uk/">www.emschool.co.uk/</a>	

Parish Hall Bookings: please contact 07586700914

	<b>Third Sunday of Advent</b> <b>Gaudete Sunday</b> 17 <sup>th</sup> – 24 <sup>th</sup> December 2023	The angel Gabriel visits Mary to announce the birth of Jesus.
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Sunday 17.12	6.30am 10.30am 4pm	Mass in the Syro- Malabar rite Holy Mass - Mick & Kathleen Quinn RIP Holy Mass in the Syro- Malabar rite	<b>The Pope's prayer intentions for December 2023. For persons with disabilities. We pray that people living with disabilities may be at the centre of attention in society, and that institutions may offer inclusive programs which value their active participation.</b>
Monday 18.12	No Service	6.30pm Confessions at Blessed Sacrament	
Tuesday 19.12	9.30am 10am	Silent Adoration Holy Mass - Jean Hidelaratchi RIP	
Wednesday 20.12	5.30pm 6pm	Silent Adoration Holy Mass - Ouseph & Mariamma Thomas RIP	
Thursday 21.12	9.30am 10am 4/8pm	Silent Adoration Holy Mass - St Peter Canisius, priest & doctor. Confessions	
Friday 22.12	9.30am 10am	Silent Adoration Holy Mass - Francisco Lopes, Maria Xavier & Jose Lopes RIP	
Saturday 23.12	9.30am 10am 10.30am/1pm 5.30pm	Silent Adoration Holy Mass - St. John of Kanty, priest. Confessions Syro -Malabar Mass	
Sunday 24.12	10.30am 5.45pm 6pm 10pm	Holy Mass - David Collins RIP Christmas Carols English Mass Mass in the Syro- Malabar rite	

**Cycle of prayer: during Advent and Christmastide we pray for these intentions: Migrants and Refugees, Expectant Mothers.**

Please note:

- Holy Water Fonts/Stoops are filled. Please use them.
- Christmas Greeting Cards from Fr. Hans, with Christmas programme are kept at the entrance. Please take one copy.

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**Christmas Offerings**

This year, Father Hans would like the Christmas offerings to go towards the maintenance of the hall. Please be generous. Thank You.

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## Background on the Gospel Reading John 1:6,19-28

John gives testimony that he is preaching and baptizing in order to prepare for the coming of another.

This Sunday's Gospel invites us to continue our reflection on the person and mission of John the Baptist. Today we depart from the Gospel of Mark and read a selection from the Gospel of John.

The Gospel for today combines a brief passage from the prologue to John's Gospel with a report about John the Baptist. As in Mark's Gospel, the Gospel of John contains no birth narrative. Instead, John's Gospel begins with a theological reflection that has come to be called the "prologue." This prologue places the story of Jesus in its cosmological framework. It speaks of Jesus' existence with God since the beginning of time. In John's Gospel, Jesus is presented as the fulfilment of the Old Testament and the culmination of the Word, the light that is coming into the world's darkness.

Following this prologue, John reports on the ministry of John the Baptist. We learn about the attention that John the Baptist received from the Jewish authorities. Messengers from the Jewish priests, the Levites and the Pharisees question John about his identity and the meaning of the baptisms that he is performing. John's Gospel uses these questions to establish the relationship between Jesus and John the Baptist. John the Baptist is not the Messiah, nor is he Elijah or the Prophet. In John's denials, we hear echoes of the kind of messianic expectations that were common in first-century Palestine.

The only affirmative response that John the Baptist gives is when he quotes the prophet Isaiah. Upon answering the next question, John announces that the saviour they seek is already among them, but as yet unrecognized. John's response highlights for us an important Advent theme: Jesus has already come into the world as our saviour. During Advent, we pray that we will be able to recognize Jesus' presence in our midst. Advent also reminds us that Jesus will come again to fulfil the promise of salvation. We pray that we will continue to be watchful as we anticipate that great day.

The third Sunday of Advent is also called *Gaudete Sunday*. *Gaudete*, a Latin word which means "rejoice," is taken from the entrance antiphon for Sunday's Mass. This theme is echoed in today's second reading from the first Letter to the Thessalonians. It is a reminder that Advent is a season of joy because our salvation is already at hand.

**Mass Intentions.** To request a Mass please use the envelopes found at the back of the church. Please state if the Mass is for a deceased person, birthday or any special intentions. **Please note: If intention is for a living person, they must sign the envelope for permission to print their name on newsletter or intention will be listed as Private Intention and initials of intention.**

**CAFOD World Gifts for Christmas.** Choose an ethical charity gift this Christmas and make a life-changing difference to people living in poverty. World Gifts are CAFOD's range of virtual charity gifts that will delight your friends and family, but are also a great way of rediscovering what it really means to share the love, peace and joy of Christmas. Each gift you buy comes with a beautifully illustrated gift card for you to pass on to your loved one, which describes the difference it will make to communities living in developing countries. **Please see leaflets in church porch.**

**The CAFOD 2023 online Advent calendar** of daily prayer and reflection will offer an opportunity to pause, reflect, pray and take action as we prepare for Christmas. <https://cafod.org.uk/Pray/Advent-calendar>.

**From CAFOD:** Your latest donation for Family Fast Day was £159. "We are incredibly grateful to you for thinking of us and helping. It's so heart-warming to know we have friends who are there for us when we need it most." Thank you again.

**300 Club Draw 10<sup>th</sup> December:** £50 E C (126). £25 P L (215), R F (218).

**The Year of Prayer... 2024** being the second year of preparation for Jubilee Year 2025. Reflections from Pope Francis for the Year of Prayer: To God who blesses, we too respond by blessing – God has taught us how to bless and we must bless – through the prayer of praise, of adoration, of thanksgiving. The Catechism writes: "The prayer of blessing is our response to God's gifts: because God blesses, the human heart can in return bless the One who is the source of every blessing" (n. 2626). Very often it happens that we do not pray, we don't feel like praying, or many times we pray like parrots, with the mouth, but our heart is not in it. This is the moment to say to the Spirit: "Come, come Holy Spirit, warm my heart. Come and teach me to pray, teach me to look to the Father, to look to the Son. Teach what the path of faith is like. Teach me how to love and, above all, teach me to have an attitude of hope." The diocese is producing a monthly podcast for the Year of Prayer called Encounter Prayer. Each month a different type of prayer will be showcased; this first episode is given by Bishop Patrick who introduces the Year of Prayer, his hopes for it, and shares insights from his own prayer life. The Podcasts can be found on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google Podcasts, Amazon Music and Audible by searching Diocese of Nottingham; they are also on the diocesan website: [www.dioceseofnottingham.uk/yearofprayer](http://www.dioceseofnottingham.uk/yearofprayer)

**SCHOOL ADMISSIONS** to Catholic Primary Academies (Reception Year). Children born between 01/09/2019 and 31/08/2020. The deadline for submitting your application for a school place is 15th January 2024. Application forms are available on your home Local Authority website. For every Catholic school you apply for if you wish your child to be considered and ranked under a faith criterion you should also complete a supplementary information form, and return this form to the school by the deadline, (forms are available from the LA and the school). You **MUST** also include the supporting evidence as required with this form, eg baptism certificate (photocopies acceptable). Failure to supply the required supporting evidence will mean your child is ranked in a lower criterion which may affect your chance of a place.

**Retrouvaille: A Programme for Couples Struggling in their Marriages.** Retrouvaille is a programme to support couples who have difficulties in their marriage. It brings a positive focus, new hope and helps nourish and grow your marriage. Tens of thousands of couples headed for divorce have successfully saved their marriages by attending and using the tools provided. The programme helps spouses uncover or re-awaken the love, trust and commitment that originally brought them together. It helps them through difficult times whether they are disillusioned or in deep misery. There is no group therapy or group work. For confidential information about 'Retrouvaille' or to register for the next programme commencing with a Virtual weekend on 8 - 11 February 2024 or a Face-to-Face weekend in Welwyn Garden City on 14-16 June 2024, call or text 07887 296983 or 07973 380443 or email [retrouvailleukinfo@gmail.com](mailto:retrouvailleukinfo@gmail.com) - or visit [www.retrouvaille.org.uk](http://www.retrouvaille.org.uk).

**Heaven's Road Catholic Online Radio** [www.heavensroadfm.com](http://www.heavensroadfm.com) is an online radio broadcasting features like prayers, interviews and music to appeal to a Catholic audience - they also have many podcasts and broadcast over 40 daily live Masses from 15 churches in England and Ireland from their website [www.heavensroadfm.com](http://www.heavensroadfm.com).