



**ST CLEMENT'S CHURCH, EWELL**  
**Parish Priest: Fr. Graham Bamford**  
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**St. Clement's Primary School: 020 8393 8789**  
**St. Andrew's Secondary School: 01372 277881**  
 Roman Catholic Diocese of Arundel and Brighton  
 Charity No. 252878



**All Masses are now live-streamed. Access via the Parish Website**

**Second Sunday of Advent**

**Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2022 Psalter Week 2 Cycle A**

Saturday (Vigil)	6.00 pm	Patrick & John Walsh RIP
<b>Sunday 04 Dec</b>	8.30 am	All Parishioners
	10.30 am	Pat & Michael Bamford RIP
Wednesday	10.00 am	Dec'd of the Bruce and Ward Families
Friday <b>Immaculate Conception (Trans from Thursday)</b>	10.00 am	Wellbeing – Mary Schneider

**Third Sunday of Advent**

**Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2022 Psalter Week 3 Cycle A**

Saturday (Vigil)	6.00 pm	In Thanksgiving – Providence of God
<b>Sunday 11 Dec</b>	8.30 am	Michael Haigh RIP
	10.30 am	Theresa Lim RIP
Wednesday	10.00 am	Holy Souls
Friday	10.00 am	Evan Lawrence RIP
Saturday (Vigil)	6.00 pm	William & Joanna O'Halloran RIP
<b>Sunday 18 Dec</b>	8.30 am	Patrick Brennan RIP
	10.30 am	All Parishioners

**FEAST DAYS: 4<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER – 10<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER**

Wednesday: St Ambrose, Bishop, Doctor

Thursday: **The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Transferred to Friday)**

**ANNIVERSARIES: 4<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER – 10<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER.**

Catherine Chalupka, Elizabeth Moore, Dina Rega, Bernie Sullivan, Tony Bellino.

**COFFEE AFTER 10.30AM MASS:**

Parish Funds - Win & Lawrence Chu and Pat Russell

**FEAST DAYS: 11<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER – 17<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER**

Tuesday: St Lucy, Virgin, Martyr

Wednesday: St John of the Cross, Priest, Doctor

**ANNIVERSARIES: 11<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER – 17<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER**

Patricia Jones, Colin Massey, Mary Burke, Bobby Kendal, Anne Gibbons, Leslie Prince Wright, Michael O'Connell.

**COFFEE AFTER 10.30AM MASS:**

Parish Funds - Eunice Onyeonoro Akomah

**SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION: Saturday, 10.30 am – 11.00 am or by appointment**

**RECOVERY AND WELL-BEING:** Please pray for: Steve Kamm, Chris Williamson, Mary Frost, Jocelyn Bowen, Joseph Ewing, Maritina Savage, Jimmy Finn, Mel Alvarez, Mary Schneider, Raymond Davis, John Stratford.

**ST ANTHONY PASTORAL GROUP:** If you know of anyone who is housebound and who would welcome receiving the Eucharist at home – or indeed having a friendly social call from one of our group – then please telephone the presbytery office at: 020 8393 5572

**EPSOM & EWELL FOOD BANK:** Please place any non-perishable items you wish to donate in the marked boxes in the narthex. Last week's collections: 23.11.22 10.1kg £10.00 donation

**NOVEMBER 200 CLUB WINNERS:** Bill Eburne No.111 £30 Sian Green No.190 £20 Congratulations!

**DAYTIME ADVENT REFLECTION GROUP:** Based on the Sunday readings, meets in the Tivey Room on Wednesdays at 11.15am .

**ADVENT ONLINE COURSE** - An online Advent based on a CAFE course called Belong and Believe and using our Celtic spiritual heritage as inspiration. Those who wish to take part should register via the parish website so the zoom link can be sent to you.

**THE SYNODAL CHURCH:** Following the Parish Open Meeting (see minutes October 23<sup>rd</sup>) we need 10 to 12 volunteers to develop and prepare the 3 month phase 1 element of the Synodal Plan for the Parish. See Parish Website.

**ST CLEMENT'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS FAYRE, Saturday 10th December 12-3pm.** Free entrance, games & prizes, grand draw, festive BBQ and refreshments. Christmas carol singing, bottle tombola and much more....we look forward to welcoming everyone from our parish.

**PARISH WINTER FAYRE:** Many thanks to all who came and enjoyed the wonderful atmosphere. It was good to have the Fayre back after the pandemic. Special thanks to Rod O'Connor for his leadership and all who helped and contributed. £3,390.85 was raised.

**REFLECTION – Second Sunday of Advent: "Prepare a way for the Lord"**

Most of us are not prophets or preachers as John the Baptist was, but each of us can seek to do as the Baptist demands. Through repentance we can rediscover the mercy of God. Through sorrow for our sinful ways, a sorrow that is eager to put right what we have disrupted, we can make straight the way of the Lord. The best way to judge ourselves is not by what rules we do or do not keep, but by the fruits of the Spirit growing within us.

see his creatures dissolve, get lost, crumble. He goes out of his way to save us, restore our integrity and our beauty. If there is a fire that Jesus brings, it is that of the Holy Spirit: not a fire that burns and devours us, but a fire poured into our hearts to transform them from stone into flesh. The Holy Spirit is not a destructive fire, but the fire of love that warms hearts.

When we cry out for revenge, are tempted to complain at the Lord for his inertia, let us remember that what we need most from him is this patience. Let us remember that the weapons with which the Lord has chosen to fight evil are not axe, fire, revenge or punishment, but patience, exhortation, example, forgiveness and the cross. Evil is overcome by forgiving those who harm us and praying for our enemies, that the Lord might not impute evil to them, but rather change their hearts. This we should be mindful of in this time of Advent: if we want to recognise the Lord who comes we must learn to forgive, not to return evil for evil, and to pray for those who harm us.



## Mass text

### ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

**O people of Sion, behold, the Lord will come to save the nations, and the Lord will make the glory of his voice heard in the joy of your heart.**

### FIRST READING **Isaiah 11:1-10**

### PSALM **Psalms 71**

**RESPONSE In his days justice shall flourish and peace till the moon fails.**

1. O God, give your judgement to the king, to a king's son your justice, that he may judge your people in justice and your poor in right judgement. **R.**
2. In his days justice shall flourish and peace till the moon fails. He shall rule from sea to sea, from the Great River to earth's bounds. **R.**
3. For he shall save the poor when they cry and the needy who are helpless. He will have pity on the weak and save the lives of the poor. **R.**

4. May his name be blessed for ever and endure like the sun. Every tribe shall be blessed in him, all nations bless his name. **R.**

### SECOND READING **Romans 15:4-9**

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Alleluia, alleluia! Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight, and all mankind shall see the salvation of God. Alleluia!**

### GOSPEL **Matthew 3:1-12**

### COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**Jerusalem, arise and stand upon the heights, and behold the joy which comes to you from God.**

### Next Sunday's Readings:

Isaiah 35:1-6. 10  
James 5:7-10  
Matthew 11:2-11



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## THE GOOD FARMER

Even though he is the greatest of all prophets, the closest to the Messiah, John the Baptist is confused by the way Jesus behaves. This John, who had prophesied in his mother's womb, prepared the Lord's immediate coming, made him known to the world, does not understand. This is how the Messiah should behave according to him: he should be "the axe... lying at the root of the trees; every tree... that does not bear good fruit is cut down" (Luke 3:9), or he should come with a "winnowing-fork... in his hand, and he will clear his threshing-floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire" (Matthew 3:12). Instead, Jesus acts in the exact opposite way. He describes his "style" through the parable of the good farmer: to the master who wants to cut down the tree that brings no fruit, the gardener – that is, Jesus – replies, "Sir, let it alone for one more year, until I dig round it and put manure on it. If it bears fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down" (Luke 13:8-9). Far from bringing an axe with him, Jesus comes with a hoe and fertiliser: he does not come to cut down but to heal and make us grow, not to judge and condemn, but to comfort and restore.

John is like so many of us who, in the face of the injustices of the world, of evil, of those who sin undisturbed, who act unjustly, expect the Lord to inflict punishment, wish for the axe that cuts or the fire that purifies. We are all too ready to judge and accuse. The Old Testament seems to corroborate John's approach: "he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked" (Isaiah 11:4). We, too, feel entitled sometimes to ask the Lord to act decisively against evil at last.

Instead, the Lord continues to postpone the moment of retribution and punishment and confines himself to repeating ceaselessly: "Repent!" The Gospel, the Good News, is this: the Lord has decided to have patience with us, to give us more time, invite us to conversion, because he does not find any joy or satisfaction in death or punishment. He created us for life and does not want to

## God with us



Dr Luigi Gioia continues these reflections on the Advent season.



4 DECEMBER 2022

2ND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

YEAR A

DIVINE OFFICE WEEK II

blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them" (Matthew 11:4-5). We might think that this answer means: "Go and report to John the miracles I perform." In reality, what Jesus is saying to John is this: "Go and tell John that finally people are able to see, to listen, to hear the call of the Father – people who, when they see me, see the Father through me, have faith in me, follow me. And those who follow me are not the righteous, but the most unexpected of all people: the lame, the deaf, even the dead! And prostitutes, tax collectors, public sinners!"

If Jesus had to answer this same question today, he might say this: "Come to any parish and see the people gathered to listen to the word, to eat the bread of life – come and witness the miracles of conversion and of faith, meet these people who see the invisible." We take faith for granted, do not realise what miracle it represents and the change it implies in a person's life. What Jesus is really saying to John, then, and to us today is that, yes, he is the Messiah, that God's decisive intervention in history is indeed happening: the Lord is present, is near, acts in his Church and beyond the Church; seeds of his grace are active everywhere in the world.

We should not be fooled by appearances. The evidence of the Lord's presence and action in the world is our own faith and the way it inspires us to behave, and to be more forgiving and loving in our lives.

## Mass text

### ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

**Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice.  
Indeed, the Lord is near.**

### FIRST READING Isaiah 35:1-6. 10

### PSALM Psalm 145

RESPONSE **Come, Lord, and save us.**

Or **Alleluia!**

1. It is the Lord who keeps faith for ever, who is just to those who are oppressed. It is he who gives bread to the hungry, the Lord, who sets prisoners free. **R.**
2. It is the Lord who gives sight to the blind, who raises up those who are bowed down, the Lord, who protects the stranger and upholds the widow and orphan. **R.**
3. It is the Lord who loves the just but thwarts the path of the wicked. The Lord will reign for ever, Zion's God, from age to age. **R.**

### SECOND READING James 5:7-10

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Alleluia, alleluia!  
The spirit of the Lord has been given to me.  
He has sent me to bring good news to the poor.  
Alleluia!**

### GOSPEL Matthew 11:2-11

### COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**Say to the faint of heart: Be strong and do not fear.  
Behold, our God will come, and he will save us.**

### Next Sunday's Readings:

Isaiah 7:10-14  
Romans 1:1-7  
Matthew 1:18-24



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## A QUESTION OF FAITH

From his prison, as a last act before his impending execution, John the Baptist sends some of his disciples to ask Jesus a puzzling question: "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" (Matthew 11:3). How can such a question come from the greatest of all prophets, from the very person who had recognised in Jesus the Messiah when he had stated: "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29), and had invited his disciples to leave him to follow Jesus? Who more than John should have known the answer to the question he asks Jesus? In all likelihood, John the Baptist's question to Jesus does not express a doubt but is a way of prodding Jesus, of telling him: "If you are the Messiah, act like a Messiah, behave like a Messiah!"

John the Baptist had his own idea of how Jesus should have fulfilled his mission. He advocated for a strong Messiah, who should eliminate evil with axe, winnowing-fork and fire (Matthew 3:7-12). John was finding Jesus too weak. They had contrasting styles. John was dressed in camel skins; Jesus like everyone else. John ate honey and grasshoppers; Jesus dined at the houses of tax collectors and sinners and took part in wedding banquets. John thought that justice should be restored with judgement; Jesus instead appealed to people's hearts, did not want to force, judge or condemn anyone. John uttered words of fire; Jesus spoke lovingly, was "gentle and humble of heart" (Matthew 11:29).

For a while John manages to contain his surprise, perhaps his disappointment. Maybe he thinks that this is a provisional tactic on Jesus' part, and that the axe and the fire will eventually be deployed. At the moment in which his relentless denunciation of injustice is about to cause his death, however, John is not able to countenance Jesus' attitude any longer.

Jesus' response betrays the understanding that exists between him and John. It is an encrypted answer, unintelligible to those who report it but not to its recipient. He sends the disciples back with these words: "Go and tell John what you hear and see: the

## God with us



Dr Luigi Gioia reflects on today's Gospel.



11 DECEMBER 2022

3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

YEAR A

DIVINE OFFICE WEEK III