

Please pray for the soul of the oldest member of our congregation, **Dora O'Toole**, who died suddenly on Thursday at the great age of 104. Details of her funeral here are yet to be arranged. **RIP**

Drinks after 10.30am Mass continue this Sunday – all are welcome but more volunteers are needed to help with service and cleaning up afterwards ...

The **Repository** (presently located in the Memorial Chapel) has Christmas cards, 2022 diaries, as well as a selection of prayer cards, rosaries and devotional items. Do visit - all proceeds benefit St James's. We would like to be open on a more regular basis - *if you would be willing to offer some time - combining this with an "Information and welcome desk" service* - please contact the Parish Office.

It is very good to welcome **Father Malcolm King** back as the regular celebrant of the 4pm Sunday Mass. After lockdown in Morden College and various heart procedures he returns to us fit and strong – *ad multos annos*.

One of our families will be bringing a relic of **Saint Charbel Makhlouf** for veneration after the 7pm Mass this Sunday. The Saint was a Maronite born in the Lebanon in 1828 and dying there in 1898 who is greatly loved by Eastern Rite Catholics (and many others). Saint Charbel was known in his lifetime as a great wonder worker: as a monk, and for the last 23 years as a hermit, he was renowned for his profound union with God. Pope St Paul VI said he was an "*admirable flower of sanctity blooming on the stem of the ancient monastic tradition of the East*".

Many of the regular congregation spend Christmas away from London: this year, again, we are providing two occasions on which we can come together to celebrate the Incarnation: on Wednesday 15th December we shall have the **PARISH CAROL SERVICE** at 7pm, and then on Saturday 8th January at 4.30pm an **EPIPHANY CAROL SERVICE** followed by a party in the rectory. Tickets for the Epiphany drinks party costing £10 will be on sale on a first come first served basis. Contact Lisa Proctor (07740 798472) in the social centre after 10.30am Sunday Mass.

Permission has now been given (due to our listed building status) for a plaque to be carved in memory of **Monsignor Freddie Miles**. If anyone would like to contribute towards the cost please contact the parish office. It is good that Monsignor Miles' long ministry at Spanish Place should be marked in this way: many in the congregation have cause to thank God for his faithful example.

If you can help the parish by a one-off donation or by a commitment to regular giving, it would be greatly appreciated.

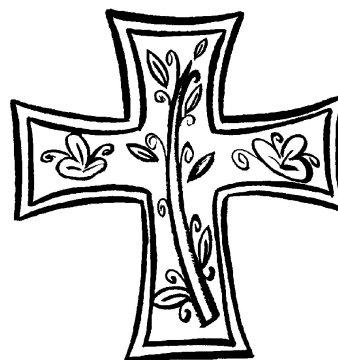
More information from the parish office or use the bank details set out below:-

HSBC 69 Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5EY

Sort code: 40-05-20 Acc no: 91094394 WRCDT Spanish Place

St James's Roman Catholic Church

- *Spanish Place* - 22 George Street, W1U 3QY



"The Lord is our righteousness."

TODAY'S LITURGY

Jeremiah 33:14-16

I will make a virtuous Branch grow for David.

**To you,
O Lord,
I lift up my soul.**

1 Thessalonians 3:12-4:2

May the Lord confirm your hearts in holiness when Christ comes.

St Luke 21:25-28,34-36

Your liberation is near at hand.

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

28th November 2021

Latin texts for the 10.30am Mass on pages 77/78 of the Parish Mass Book

[online] Click [here](#) for live stream and **Universalis** for readings.
In Church - The Parish Mass Book page 82 or in *foreign languages (6)* - *all available at the back.*

The Week Ahead

Weekday Mass at 12.30pm & 6pm

M 29th Advent feria

T 30th **S ANDREW**

W 1st Advent feria (**Funeral at Noon**)

T 2nd Advent feria

F 3rd **S Francis Xavier**

S 4th **S John Damascene**

10am (*Holy Hour from 4.45pm*)
6pm (Vigil)

Sunday 5th December

Second Sunday of ADVENT

8am, 9am [EF]

10.30am [Solemn Latin]

Midday, 4pm & 7pm.

The Reverend Christopher G. Colven (Rector)

The Reverend Mark Elliott Smith (in residence)

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Part of the Westminster Roman Catholic Diocese Trust

Registration No: 233699

The Rector writes

“Advent tells us Christ is near: Christmas tells us Christ is here”: a line from a children’s hymn sums up so simply all that we begin to celebrate this weekend. In the weeks leading to Christmas we shall hear once more the ancient prophecies (leaning heavily on the insights of Isaiah) and then contemplate their fulfilment in the birth of Mary’s Child. It is easy to sentimentalise (and secularise) this season as we cannot remain unaffected by its immediate context - which for us at Spanish Place includes the lights and consumerism of Oxford Street with *“Winter Wonderland”* in all its gaudy attractiveness on the edge of the parish in Hyde Park. Acting as something of a counterbalance, the dominant Scriptural figure of these early days of Advent is Saint John the Baptist. Jesus’s immediate forerunner (and his cousin) is an uncompromising figure with his focus on the need for conversion in preparation for God’s moment.

Speaking at the conclusion of the long line of prophets who had prepared a way for the Messiah, John’s witness and his call to a baptism of repentance had an immediate relevance for his own times with the birth of the Christ at Bethlehem, but his voice continues to echo down the centuries to our own times. John brings home to us the need to change and warns us against complacency: we can never, and must never, take our individual salvation for granted. Saint John Henry Newman built on this theme when he wrote: *“to live is to change, and to change often is to become more perfect”*. The Baptist’s call to conversion had the strongest impetus in that Christ’s appearance was imminent – his preaching was all about the here and now.

For us, though we are committed to the belief of a Second Coming, it is hard to see this as anything other than a future projection beyond imaginable fulfilment. What then has to provide our motivation, for change, for growth, for the perfection of the Gospel? Perhaps Thomas Aquinas answers the question for us: *“nothing could so provoke us to love God than that his very Word, through whom all things were made, should assume our nature, for its healing, and be himself both God and man. We have, in fact, the greatest sign of his love for us, and to know oneself to be loved so strongly urges us to love in return”*. It was right for John the Baptist to preach as he did, with the call to obedience, but once the nature of the Godhead is fully revealed in Jesus then the idiom has to change. *“In love there can be no fear, but fear is driven out by perfect love: because to fear is to expect punishment, and anyone who is afraid is still imperfect in love”* (I John 4:18).

Respect and awe are central to the creature’s relationship with the Creator but if we are afraid in any way of the One who was prepared to lay down his life for us and names us as his friends then we are missing the

point entirely. Like Saint John the Baptist of old, the Church in every age is committed to preaching a message of salvation, but perhaps our concentration should be less on salvation *from* and rather more on salvation *for*. People of our own generation with all the emphasis on individual autonomy do not react well when confronted with the Christian understanding of original sin and its consequences. Most of those around us feel that their lives are, at least, adequate and are not given overmuch to introspection: while the general existence of evil is not to be denied it is rarely accepted as having personal significance. Western societies, though, are particularly aspirational and it is here, surely, that our catechetical emphasis should lie. The Church contains within its own living experience the perfection of human being in the Son of Mary: as Benedict XVI has said so aptly: *“the happiness you are seeking, the happiness you have the right to enjoy, has a face and a name: it is Jesus of Nazareth”*. This is the insight we have to share.

The call to change which must always remain at the heart of the Gospel proclamation is an invitation to become what we are meant to be. When we are finally called to give account of our lives the balance will be weighed not so much by our sins of commission but of omission: not so much on what we got wrong but on all that gift and potential which has remained locked away, undeveloped. *“If you would really pray to God for conversion, it would be granted to you”* (Saint John Vianney).

Christopher Colven

NOTICES

The body of **Father David Irwin** will be brought into church in time for a Requiem Mass (with hymns) at 6pm this Tuesday (30th November): Father David Evans, a contemporary of Father Irwin will preach. The **Funeral Mass** will be offered by Bishop Alan Hopes of East Anglia (another contemporary) at **Midday on Wednesday** (1st December). Cremation will follow and the ashes will be interred in the churchyard at West Grinstead on 9th January 2022. Everyone is welcome to attend either or both of these Masses. **RIP**

Governments are not the only people to do U turns. The Bishops of England & Wales have now revised their stipulations about the **Sunday obligation** to attend Mass. In a statement called *“Honouring Sunday”* (available at the back of church) they express the hope that every Catholic will be at Sunday Mass where that is at all possible but recognise that while Covid 19 is still rampant and felt to be a threat individual conscience should be followed. In other words, you should come to Mass, but you don’t have to!!