



The Catholic Parish of Our Lady & St John, Goring-on-Thames & Christ the King, Woodcote

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SUNDAY 5 DECEMBER 2021 SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

*Our Lady conceived without sin
pray for us*

		Goring (Latin)	8.00am Garry Bennett (anniv.)
		Goring	10.00am Private intention (Fr JL)
		Woodcote	11.30am Parish & people
		Woodcote	4.00pm <i>Vespers & Benediction</i>
Monday 6	St Nicolas	Goring	7.30am Rose Metcalf (operation)
Tuesday 7	St Ambrose	Goring	6.00pm Jennifer Kelly (ill)
Wednesday 8	IMMACULATE CONCEPTION	Goring	9.30am Private intention
		Woodcote	12.00pm The Fathers of the London Oratory
Thursday 9	Feria	Woodcote	12.00pm David Bevan (funeral)
Friday 10	St Edmund Gennings	Goring	9.00am <i>Holy Hour</i>
		Goring	10.00am Magnus O'Callaghan
		Goring	2.00pm Requiem Mass for Gwen Bruce RIP
Saturday 11	St Damasus I	Goring	12.00pm Nuptial Mass
		Goring	5.00pm <i>Confessions; 1st Vespers of Sunday at 5.35pm</i>
		Goring	6.00pm Charles and Sarah Coupland
Sunday 12	ADVENT III	Goring (Latin)	8.00am Garry Bennett (anniv.)
		Goring	10.00am Private intention (FrJL)
		Woodcote	11.30am Private intention (FrKM)
		Woodcote	4.00pm <i>Vespers & Benediction</i>

The priests are always delighted to receive requests for Mass intentions. Please let us know about the ill and housebound. The Rosary is prayed 15 minutes before the daily Mass. A daily Mass is streamed on the parish page on Facebook. Thank you for your generosity to the Catholic Church in so many ways, not least financial. A warm welcome to you all.

GWEN BRUCE, RIP

Please pray for the soul of Gwen Bruce who died two weeks ago in the Royal Berkshire Hospital after a short illness. Gwen has not been able to come to Mass during the pandemic but she was a devoted parishioner, driving up from Whitchurch and helping the choir lead the singing for many years. We extend our sympathy to Ian, her husband, and to their whole family. Her Requiem Mass will be celebrated in Goring on Friday at 2pm after which she will be laid to rest in the churchyard in Whitchurch. All friends are very welcome at the Mass. The burial will be a family event and friends are invited to a reception after Mass in the village hall in Whitchurch. May she rest in peace.

CONGRATULATIONS

Many congratulations to Rebecca and Conal O'Callaghan on the birth of Magnus last Saturday. Rebecca and Magnus came home to Manor Road in the middle of last week and it is lovely to welcome them back.

GALILEE SOUND SYSTEM

This will be connected this week. My thanks to the OPS music department for the portable system which we have borrowed thus far.

THE VOTIVE LAMPS

... burn during the month of December for Tina Rapinet, for Garry Bennett and for the Mofett and Brown families. Please ask if you would like to sponsor another.

ADVENT

We will keep the penitential season with a few variations. The two sung Masses will begin with Asperges—the rite of sprinkling with Holy Water—in place of the Penitential Rite. We will also restore the singing of Vespers at 4pm for which we will use Christ the King as Fr Antony did in years gone by. It was one of the casualties of the lockdown and the enforced absence from Christ the King.

Please take one of the *Walk with me* books with daily meditations for adults and/or the sheet with daily activities for children.

CHURCH CLEANING

Is anyone available after Mass on Friday for a blitz before Saturday's wedding?

PLEASE PRAY ...

... among the sick for William, Margaret, Jeanie, Rosemary, Anne-Marie, Elizabeth, Mary, John, Gill, Joan, Lavinia, Lyall, Tony T, Patricia, Kevin, Dora, Tony C, Grazyna, John, Linda, Patsy, Annabelle, John B, Emily, Rose, Ivor, Ilene, Richard, Catherine, Patrick, Anne, Malcolm, Ida, Charlotte, Denis, Henry, Teresa, Peter, Margaret, Jennifer.

... for those who have died recently, among them David Bevan and Gwen Bruce.

... for those whose anniversaries fall this week, among them Michael McMahon, Mary Sammons and Patrick Walsh.

... for Sarah Toupal and Charles Coupland to be married here on Saturday.

WEDNESDAY is the Solemnity of Our Lady's Immaculate Conception. Although not a formal Day of Obligation in this country, it is one of the great feasts of the year. There are two Masses in the parish: 9.30am in Goring and noon in Woodcote.

As I said last week, my 2021 pocket book which contains pretty well everything I need went missing for a week or so. It has now turned up but I fear that, having spent that week jotting things down on scraps of paper, I run the risk (and live in fear of) missing something. In particular I have a fear of missing Mass intentions which may have been requested. If this applies to you, **please tell me as soon as you can**. May I apologize profusely in advance?

SUNDAY COFFEE AFTER 10am MASS

After all our best resolutions, I fear that the only responsible thing to do in the face of the Omicron variant is to delay this until the new year. The new urn and the new coffee maker (not to mention the volunteers) were ready and raring to go but it is more challenging to manage social distancing in the Galilee and Conlon Room than in the body of the church.

A WORD FROM THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS

For the first time since the pandemic began, the bishops of England and Wales were able to meet face-to-face last week. They have sent a document about the centrality of Sunday Mass for our faith. The Sunday Obligation has not been restored in the old way as many thought likely but they have given some important pointers for us all to contemplate after so many pandemic months. Here is a small section of their letter:

At this time, we recognise that for some people there may be certain factors which hinder attendance at Sunday Mass. The pandemic is clearly not over. The risk of infection is still present. For some, there is legitimate fear in gathering together. As your bishops, we recognise that these prevailing circumstances suggest that not everyone is yet in the position to fulfil the absolute duty to attend freely Sunday Mass.

Responding to the Gift

We now encourage all Catholics to look again at the patterns which they have formed in recent months with regard to going to Mass on Sundays. This would include consideration and reflection about what we might do on Sundays, such as sports or shopping, or other leisure and social activities. This review, and the decisions which arise from it, fall to every Catholic and we trust this will be done with honesty, motivated by a real love for the Lord whom we encounter in the Mass.

ROSE BORDER

Phil and Graham Sadler have not only collected but planted the last few roses to complete the border. I will produce a guide with links to the people in whose memory they have been given once checked off.

At Woodcote this seems to be working well and the natural "doorways" formed by the frames of the props and braces prove an obvious route to help us avoid bumping into each other. The high-level windows are open to give a good circulation of fresh air.

At Goring the winter weather may soon mean that our lap of the church is in danger of becoming impractical and unsafe. When this happens, may I suggest that we come up as pews and spread out along the Communion Rail, suitably distanced? This will mean two things: we can speed up the process just a little and those who wish to kneel may do so more easily. I know that some people appreciate this opportunity.

OBSERVING ADVENT

Advent has always been my favourite season of the Church's year and we will keep Christmas well if we keep Advent well. Unfortunately we will not be able to have an ecumenical study group this year. I very much hope that this will be back next year. Why not make the daily Mass and Vespers and Benediction on a Sunday part of your December pattern? Or subscribe to *Magnificat* through the *Catholic Herald*?

TIMINGS FOR HOLY HOUR

I gather that this has been a recurring question for many years. Numbers attending have been dropping off, even if the Friday Mass at 10am has had good numbers. Is there a better time in the week for Holy Hour? Do let me know what would be convenient. I have the glimmer of an idea. Thank you to those who responded to my question last week.

CHURCH BOOKSTALLS

These were early victims of the lockdown as we were not supposed to be handling things more than we could possibly avoid. There is a CTS one at Goring with a new one coming for Woodcote as soon as the stock is in the warehouse.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The three churches in Goring have once again produced a joint Christmas card to go to every letterbox in Goring, South Stoke and Streatley. All help will be gratefully received. They are in folders inside the door of St Thomas's, organised by streets. My thanks to our friend Rev Ben Phillips for organising this. There are some spares at the back of the church in Goring.

KEEP THE DATE

The Sunday in the Christian Unity Octave will see Vespers and Meditation with particular intention for Christian Unity at 4pm to which all are most welcome. Did you know that the week starts on the old feast of the Chair of St Peter and ends on the Conversion of St Paul and was first kept in 1909.

Next year we plan to revert to the pattern of celebrating this on Trinity Sunday, 12 June. Please see me with any names. We have 3 already. I will also start thinking about Confirmation plus a refresher course.

LETTER TO SANTA CLAUS

Our two churches, a bit like little children, have been wondering what Fr Christmas may be bringing. They don't want a new bicycle or an X-box but they have been dreaming wistfully about one or two bits and pieces. The Galilee has whispered the words "baby changing unit" in my ear. Thank you so much to the generous people who have given things already, including the gleaming urn in the corner of the kitchen. I will come up with a full list of ideas with a range of possibilities. In another place the wish-list started with a box of tea and ended with a spire. That was optimistic! A serious idea for our two churches includes new kneelers for Woodcote and pew runners for Goring. I have sent for estimates this week.

GALILEE THOUGHTS

Before Christmas a box of soft biblical-themed soft toys for little children will arrive and Fr Tom's Needs Box will finally re-emerge after its spring clean. I await news of the new chairs but the PA speakers should be here this week. The wooden floor continues to be under discussion.

DIOCESAN EMAIL SYSTEM

As you know, I have changed my email to the one which is supplied by the diocese. This makes the diocese legal under the current GDPR legislation. There is a downside however in that I cannot guarantee that they are 100% secure. For anything confidential, please telephone me in the first instance.

THINGS FOR THE FUTURE

... include a Parish meeting for 2021 (I haven't forgotten!); reflection on diocesan material about the Pope's Synodal Pathway; a Retreat, hopefully at Douai; new parish contact forms so that we are up-to-date and legal.

CHRISTMAS MASSES ETC.

Of course things may change swiftly but at the time of writing I am planning to offer the same pattern of services as last year. It may help you plan your Christmas if you think about this sooner rather than later:

22 December - grand church cleaning sessions to include sandwich lunch.

23 December - Confessions at Woodcote at noon; Confessions at Goring at 6pm.

24 December - Mass at Goring at 5pm (carols); Mass at Woodcote at 8pm (carols.)

25 December - Mass at Goring at 7am (Latin), 8am, 10am (carols) & 6pm; Mass at Woodcote at 11.30am (carols.)