

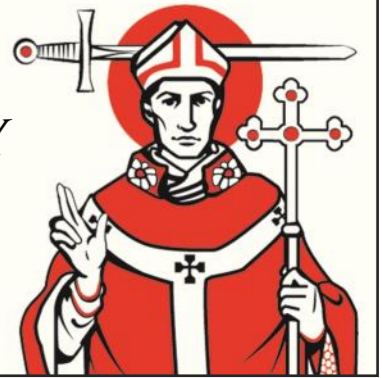
WILLIAM HUDSON RAY CELEBRATING HIS CONFIRMATION ON 19TH NOVEMBER



Archdiocese of
Southwark

PARISH OF ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY SEVENOAKS

CHURCHES IN SEVENOAKS, OTFORD,
BOROUGH GREEN AND WEST KINGSDOWN



Parish Newsletter

4th December 2022

Peace

2nd Sunday of Advent



SMALL NOTICES



Charming family run B & B
situated in a quiet private road
close to St Thomas' Church.

Open all year.
Longer stays welcome.

Tel: 01732 452988

E: stablecottage7oaks@gmail.com

PA/nanny needed

We are looking for a nanny for my
sweet and gentle 15 years old son
with special needs. The person
must be reliable, patient and
active. A clean driving licence is a
must. ASD experience would be
preferred, but is not essential.

8-16 hours a week. Flexible days
(Monday-Saturday).

We live in Sevenoaks
£15 an hour + petrol + holiday
Tel. 07985 752145
blublugia@gmail.com

**How do I advertise
my business or
get my ads in the
Newsletter?**

Please email:
[sevenoaks@
rcaos.org.uk](mailto:sevenoaks@rcaos.org.uk)
for further details.

Today's Mass: SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT (Year A)

Isaiah 11: 1-10, Psalm 71, Romans 15: 4-9, Matthew 3: 1-12

First Reading: Isaiah predicts the coming of the Messiah – who will be of the line of David (which is what “*from the stock of Jesse*” means) - and lists the gifts he will have. These gifts are remarkably similar to six of the seven-fold gifts of the Spirit. He will also bring in an age of peace. *Note to readers: the sc in ‘scion’ is pronounced as in ‘scientist’.*

The **Psalm** is one of the psalms known as royal psalms, and continues the *First Reading’s* foretelling of the Messiah, who will be king and saviour.

Characteristically, in the **Second Reading** St Paul suggests a practical outcome of our belief in Christ, namely that we should treat each other as Christ has treated us. In this way will glory be given to God.

Gospel: the great Advent figure of St John the Baptist appears. He is the last of the Old Testament prophets, preaching repentance and dressing like Elijah. He is also the first New Testament saints, preparing a way for Christ. Like the Baptist we too should prepare a way for Christ, both for Him to come into our own lives and also for other people to receive the good news of Christ.

Fr David

ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY SEVENOAKS

Sunday Mass times:

Saturday
6:00pm

Sunday
8:00am (Latin)
9:15am (Children's Liturgy of Word)
11:15am
6:00pm

Adoration:

Monday 8:30am - 9:30am
Tuesday 6:00pm - 7:00pm

Weekday Mass times:

Monday 8:00am
Tuesday 9:30am
Wednesday 8:00am
Thursday 12:00noon
Friday 8:00am
Saturday 9:30am

Sacrament of Reconciliation:

Saturday 10:00am - 10:30am,
5:15pm - 5:45pm



Granville Road,
Sevenoaks TN13 1ER

Parish Office: Magdalena Wiacek
Monday - Friday
9:00am - 12:00noon
Tel: 01732 454177
sevenoaks@rcaos.org.uk
www.sevrcparish.org.uk



High Street, Otford
TN14 5PH

MOST HOLY TRINITY OTFORD

Mass times: Sunday 9:30am
(with Children's Liturgy of the Word)
Wednesday 10:00am
Holy Days of Obligation 10:00am
Adoration: Thursday 7:30pm - 8:30pm
Friday 11:00am - 12:00noon

Church contact:
Barry Authers
Tel: 01959 524362
sevenoaksmht@rcaos.org.uk



Western Rd, Borough Green
TN15 8AG

ST JOSEPH'S BOROUGH GREEN

Mass times: Sunday 9:30am
(with Children's Liturgy of the Word)
Thursday 10:00am
Holy Days of Obligation 6:00pm

Church contact:
Antoni Offert
Tel: 07513 041075
sevenoaks@rcaos.org.uk



Fawkham Rd, West Kingsdown
TN15 6JP

ST BERNADETTE'S WEST KINGSDOWN

Mass times: Sunday 11:00am
Friday 10:00am
Holy Days of Obligation 11:00am
Adoration: Wed 12:00noon- 1:00pm

Church contacts:
Jill & John Gobel
Tel: 01474 853676
sevenoaks@rcaos.org.uk



ST THOMAS' CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

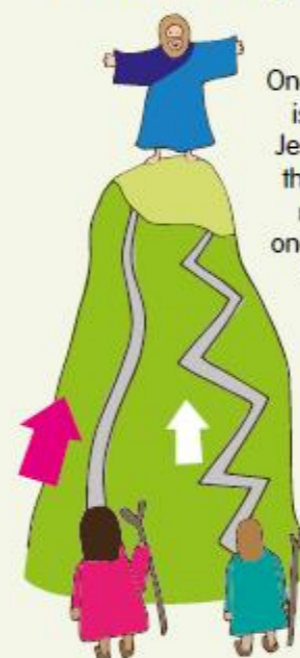
South Park,
Sevenoaks, TN13 1EH
www.saintthomas.co.uk

Executive Head:
Mrs Katherine Sexton
Academy Principal:
Ms Geraldine Leahy
Tel: 01732 453921

GOD LOVES HIS CHILDREN MASS ACTIVITY FOR CHILDREN



Which way?



One traveller is going to Jesus along the straight road, and one is going along the crooked road.

Which one will get to Jesus first?

John the Baptist is the prophet sent by God to tell us all to get ready to welcome Jesus. John asks us to repent, to turn away from anything that is bad and turn towards God. Anyone who is loving and kind is turning towards God and their hearts will be ready to welcome Jesus. Make Jesus' paths straight!

Spot the difference

Can you spot five differences in these pictures of John the Baptist?



PREPARE THE WAY

Good fruit

John wants everyone to stop doing bad things and do good instead. We show we are sorry and want to change by the good fruit in our lives.

Draw inside these fruits some of the good things you will do this week.

A PRAYER TO SAY

Jesus, help me to make it easy for you to come into my life. Help me to turn away from bad things and turn towards you. Amen.

Sorry

I want to say sorry to

I made the wrong choice when I

I forgot to

Fill in the gaps

Draw a picture of you feeling happy.



Answers: The differences: Height, hair, buckle, staff and sleeves.

CONTACTS & ORGANISATIONS

Parish of St Thomas of Canterbury, Sevenoaks

Presbytery and Parish Office: 12 Granville Road, Sevenoaks, TN13 1ER
Website: www.sevrparish.org.uk **Tel:** 01732 454177

Parish Priest: Fr David Gibbons, KCHS davidgibbons@rcaos.org.uk

Assistant Priest: Fr Peter Littleton peterlittleton@rcaos.org.uk

Parish Deacon: Rev'd Neil Philipson neilphilipson@rcaos.org.uk

Parish Secretary: Mrs Magdalena Wiacek sevenoaks@rcaos.org.uk

Parish Office hours: Monday - Friday 9:00am - 12:00noon

Safeguarding Rep: Ken Baines sevenoakssgl@safeguardrcaos.org.uk

The Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator can be contacted on 020 7261 1606; in an emergency dial 999

Adoration

Barry Authers adoration@sevrparish.org.uk

Altar Servers (St Thomas's)

Catherine Ingram Ingramfamily15@yahoo.com

Catenians

Social club for Catholic men

Aiden O'Mahony aidan.omahony@btinternet.com

Children's Liturgy of the Word, Sunday Mass

Sevenoaks, 9:15am Mass:

Mark O'Prey sevenoakscrow@rcaos.org.uk

Otford, 9:30am Mass:

Magdalena Wiacek sevenoaks@rcaos.org.uk

Borough Green, 9:30am Mass:

Fiona Newton - fionanewton321@btinternet.com

Choirs

Music Group:

Lonnie Christophers lonniechr@hotmail.com

Traditional Choir: Barbara Page 01732 454729

Borough Green: Chris Hurl chris.hurl@outlook.com

Church Cleaning (St Thomas's)

James McSharry jamesmsharry@hotmail.com

Church Flowers

Kate Travers katetravers521@hotmail.com

Confirmation Programme

Gabrielle Ellis sevenoaksconfirmation@rcaos.org.uk

Parish Finance Committee

Secretary: Mary Scott 3maryscott@gmail.com

First Holy Communion & Reconciliation Programme

Fr Peter Littleton: peterlittleton@rcaos.org.uk

Gift Aid:

Sean Corrigan sevenoaksgac@rcaos.org.uk

Holy Trinity Committee

Secretary: Barry Authers sevenoaksmht@rcaos.org.uk

Lectio Divina

Kathie Gonzalez 01732 761253

Listening to you (Bereavement Support)

Third Monday, 10:30am in Parish Room

Ronnie Campbell 01732 452988, Sarah Harrison 01959

522357, Kate Travers katetravers521@hotmail.com and Ann

Livingston annlivingston@hotmail.co.uk

Loaves and Fishes Foodbank

Isabelle Mercer: h.imercer@btopenworld.com

Sort code: 60-60-04, A/N: 46076484

Account name: St Vincent de Paul Society

Mothers' Prayers

Mondays, 11:30am at Star House, Star Hill Road

01959 532505

Baby & Toddlers Group

Tuesdays 10:00am - 12:00noon, Parish Centre

Mary Hunt 07890 229794

RACET (Rural Africa Children's Education Trust)

MaryAnn Perasso 01959 522337, www.racet.org

Readers, Ministers & Welcomers Rota (St Thomas's)

Andrew Pembroke st.thomas.rota@gmail.com

Repository

Saturday 6:00pm, Sunday: 8:00 am, 11:15am

Sophie McBrien sophiemcbrien@yahoo.co.uk

RCIA

For adults becoming Catholic

Andrew La Trobe andrew.latrobe@gmail.com

Retreats

Catherine Roger c.rodger@btinternet.com

St Bernadette's Committee

Secretary: Jill Gobel jill.gobel@btinternet.com

St Joseph's Committee

Secretary: John Foley johnandmariefoley@gmail.com

The Pilgrims

For retired parishioners

Jackie Pembroke 01732 450197

Scripture Fellowship

Reading a Gospel together

Andrew Wilkinson andrewwilkos@gmail.com

St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP)

Paul Boyle 07796564018

Kathie Gonzalez sevenoakssvp@gmail.com

Union of Catholic Mothers (UCM)

West Kingsdown UCM:

Monica Biggs mmdbbiggs@outlook.com

Webmaster

Barry Authers sevenoakswebmaster@rcaos.org.uk

PARISH NOTICES

NEW AUXILIARY BISHOP

His Holiness Pope Francis has appointed Mgr Philip Moger, until now Rector of the National Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham, as an Auxiliary Bishop for the Archdiocese of Southwark. He will be Ordained Bishop on Tuesday 21st February 2023 in St George's Metropolitan Cathedral, Southwark. He will work in the South-east and South-west London areas of the Archdiocese.

TODAY

Supply Priests

We welcome Fr Bryan Wells and one of the Capuchin friars at St Thomas's.

THIS WEEK

Thursday: Solemnity of the Immaculate

Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Our Lady, under this title, is a principal patron of our diocese. The Mass Readings emphasise the role of Mary, mother of the Saviour, in the history of our salvation. In addition to the 10:00am Mass at St Joseph's and the midday Mass at St Thomas's, there is also, as usual, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at Most Holy Trinity at 7:30pm.

Next Sunday:

Service of Lessons & Carols at Most Holy Trinity

At 7:00pm next Sunday at Otford, a Service to prepare for Christmas, led by the Music Group. All are welcome, not just Otford parishioners. Never mind Christmas shopping! Come and prepare spiritually for the great Feast to come. It will be followed by mulled wine and mince pies. This event (lasting about 45 minutes) is suitable for all the family. A retiring collection will be taken in support of SVP and the Sevenoaks Food Bank.

Next weekend:

Second Collection for Christmas Flowers

At Masses next weekend the Second Collection at each church will be for Christmas flowers for that church. We thank the flower arrangers in advance.

NOTICES

The Pilgrims & Listening To You

Advent Service of Carols and Readings

On Monday 12th December in St Thomas's at **12:30pm**. All ages are welcome to come and sing in preparation for the Birth of Christ. Refreshments afterwards in the Parish Room.

St Thomas's Church pre-Christmas clean

Thursday 15th December 10:00am - 11:00am. Could you spare just one hour to ensure 'Our Lord's House' looks its best for Christmas? If so, just turn up on the day; no experience or cleaning materials required. Thank you so much.

James McSharry (07917 032024).

Christmas cribs in shop windows

We are contacting our participating local shops mainly in central Sevenoaks who put a crib in the windows. Then we deliver and collect after Christmas. We are seeking help just to deliver and collect for this quiet form of witness. Offers, enquiries, suggestions email to bobandpat.harman@gmail.com or 01732 453902.

The Holy Father's endorsement: "I wish to encourage the custom of setting it up in the workplace in schools, hospitals, prisons and town squares..." (Apostolic Letter *The Meaning and Importance of the Nativity Scene*).



PARISH AND OTHER NOTICES

Parish Holy Land Pilgrimage

22nd - 29th June 2023

We shall stay in Bethlehem, Tiberias (for the Sea of Galilee) and Jerusalem, with daily Mass at a holy place. The Pilgrimage will be led by Fr David. The price is £1,945; this includes flights, half board accommodation (Breakfast and Dinner) and two Lunches, luxury coach, and a local English speaking guide. Single room supplement: £600; travel insurance £94 per person. Obtain a booking form from the Parish Office or contact sales@tangney-tours.com. Don't delay: book your place now.

Christmas Eve 'Crib Service'

We are hoping to restart this short Liturgy for children before the Vigil Mass on Christmas Eve at St Thomas's, but we shall need some parents to help organise it as well as children to participate. Please contact Magda in the Parish Office if you can help.

Christmas greenery

St Thomas's Flower Group would like to ask parishioners for donations of greenery for the Christmas flower arrangements. These can be left by the green door entrance to the Parish Centre (through the gate) during the few days before 23rd December. This is a good opportunity to prune your garden! Any queries to Kate Travers (01732 668706).

Formed.org

Don't forget that as a parishioner you have full and free access to an immense collection of videos, TV programmes, discussions, course, audiobooks, and children's content. Simply

1. go to www.formed.org and click 'sign up'
2. click 'sign up as parishioner'
3. search for 'St Thomas of Canterbury Sevenoaks'
4. enter your name and email address, and click 'sign up'.

Advance notice: Racial Justice Sunday

Mass at 10:00am in St George's Cathedral on Sunday 5th February 2023, organised by the Commission for Promoting Racial and Cultural Inclusion. Those attending are encouraged to wear cultural dress.

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St Thomas's Repository

Please take a look at what's new on the shelves after Mass. You can find there lovely Christmas gifts for your loved ones. Come and see what we have! Also, if you would like to help to manage the Repository after the 9:15am Mass, just for ten minutes contact Magda in the Office.



From the Desk of the Parish Priest

The Virginal Conception of Jesus 2

The evidence from Authority

First, let us remind ourselves that Catholics understand Authority not as some definitive statement composed at some point in the past and thereafter unchanging, nor as the capricious views of a man in white in Rome who must be obeyed. Rather the historic Christian Tradition is a living and growing organism, the voice of God the Holy Spirit speaking in Christ's Body the Church, preserving the doctrines previously revealed by God but developing them in accord with changing times and new insights. This doctrine, referred to as the indefectibility of the Catholic Church, means that the Church's teaching will never become corrupt in faith, morals, authority, or sacraments, even though its members may err.

The evidence from Authority goes right back to the earliest Creeds, which speak of Christ's birth from the Virgin Mary. This was stressed to counter the docetic and gnostic heresies which questioned Jesus' humanity and the Apollinarians who did not admit of the completeness of His humanity. There are also some official statements on this subject of what we call the magisterium, including a letter of Pope St Leo I, statements made by the Lateran Council of AD649 and the Council of Toledo in 675, and a Papal Bull issued by Pope Paul IV in 1555.

But the main point is that the virginal conception of Jesus, in a biological sense, was universally believed from about AD 200 onwards; this is what we technically refer to as the ordinary magisterium of the Church. As St Jerome put it: "we believe that God was born of a virgin because we read it".

Authority as evidence for the virginal conception only gets us so far. In part it rests on accepting the infallible teaching of the Church – a position not everyone accepts – and just because most Christians have believed it over two millennia is no guarantee that it is correct. Mind you, it is a powerful argument: most people in the history of the world have regarded

murder as wrong, and we could argue that this is because of a God given morality (conscience) which is part of our created nature, and the fact of such a universal view is powerful.

The evidence from interlocking doctrines

We cannot consider the virginal conception of Jesus in isolation; it is closely related to other tenets concerning Christ and Mary. The sanctity of Mary is one such: the extraordinary nature of Christ's birth can be said to reinforce Mary's special position as the 'favoured one of God' (Luke 1:28). Another related doctrine is the sinlessness of Jesus (see Hebrews 4:15 and Chalcedon's description of Jesus as "similar to us in all things except sin"). His virginal conception helps to explain how he did not inherit original sin.

Is the virginal conception consistent with the pre-existence of the Son of God? Not a problem if we think of a sequence in which the pre-existent Word or Son of God took flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary and became man.

Is the virginal conception consistent with the true humanity of Jesus? Again this does not conflict: witness His strange habit of addressing God intimately as 'Abba'.

We must remember that we are dealing with something unique and also that our human thought and words are limited. There is a danger of believing mutually conflicting doctrines at the same time, like the queen in *Alice in Wonderland*, who said "sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast". We cannot push doctrines too far; they express as best as we can beliefs about Christ and about God, but they can often be held in tension, like our fundamental doctrine that Jesus Christ is both true God and true man.

In summary the virginal conception fits in with other doctrines as a part of the whole, like a jigsaw, but this doesn't in itself provide conclusive proof of the doctrine.

PILGRIMAGE -CAMINO DE SANTIAGO

This is a small reflection on Pilgrimage - having completed a pilgrimage to Santiago di Compostela in Spain. Pilgrimage is about both the journey and the challenge - for so many parts of oneself: physical, mental, emotional, spiritual. And for me, the Camino did not disappoint!

The first week of my Camino - on the Camino del Norte, through the Basque Country, from Irun to Laredo - I found emotionally and physically challenging: difficulties with accommodation, getting used to carrying 10kg on my back up and down steep hills, restless sleep, and life back in Sevenoaks racing in my head. Late in the week, I suffered mild food poisoning — when I recovered, I felt I had turned a corner. I walked into Laredo, a seaside town, and stayed in a convent, where the nuns gave a beautiful pilgrims' blessing: I left feeling free.



Week two - via Santander to Llanes - was renewal and refreshment: my backpack no longer seemed to weigh anything, and I walked with fellow pilgrims from all over Spain, the world. Routine was established: leave the albergue whilst still dark, walk 25km or so, find the next albergue, wash the day's clothing, find sustenance and Mass, and off to sleep. As days wore on, my sleep was deep no matter how noisy the hostel was. Week three took me from the edge of the Asturias and into Galicia - I dropped down, away from the coast to the Camino Primitivo. It is named this not through any "primitive" characteristic but rather because it was from beautiful Oviedo that King Alfonso II of Asturias, in 814 started Camino - the first pilgrimage to Santiago di Compostela - over the mountains from Asturias to Galicia, to where the remains of St James had been found. This included a hike up and over the Ruta Hospitales, named for the ruins of three medieval hospitals which were, the day I walked it, above the clouds.

By the time I reached the beginning of my fourth week, I felt sad that there were a mere 150km to go. Through the Roman-walled city of Lugo, and down to join the Camino Frances, at Melides - more pilgrims joined the route, and the feeling of camaraderie amongst the much smaller group of pilgrims, was lost, but the sense of proximity palpable. By the time I finally reached the outskirts of Santiago, I was overwhelmed with emotion and trepidation - what would it feel like to go to Mass in the Cathedral? It was indeed momentous - like so many in the Praza do Obradoiro, I just rested on my backpack on the ground, gazing up at the towers of the Cathedral soaring into the azure sky.

One of the (many) reasons for my Camino was to simply "unplug" myself from the everyday: from timetables, from meeting schedules, from the expectations of my environment, of others. To wake up in the morning and simply think "I am going to walk" - and just walk as the road takes you - is a gift in itself. The delight of sights, sounds, smells along the road is only part of the gift; the ability to allow your mind to wander as your feet walk the miles, to mull over deepest thoughts in your mind, to pray, to muse - and to engage in conversation with fellow pilgrims.



The absolute freedom of Pilgrimage opens one up to encounters that can only occur on pilgrimage: people you meet, things that "just happen". One morning, in torrential rain, I walked into Villaviciosa with two companions, and we needed sustenance: a local woman took us to her favourite panaderia (breadshop), and loaded us up with empanada to warm us up – both physically and spiritually. Countless stories of generosity, tested faith, physical challenge and personal growth – this is Pilgrimage. And then, at last, to be home – in my own bed, and with my family.

MASS INTENTIONS

ALL MASSES ARE AT ST THOMAS'S CHURCH UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED

SUNDAY 4th December

6:00pm (Sat)
8:00am (Latin)
9:15am
11:15am
6:00pm
9:30am *Oxford*
9:30am *Borough Green*
11:00am *West Kingsdown*

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT (Year A)

Peace in the World
Mary Edith Hibling RIP
R J Hilton RIP
Jim Cairney RIP
John Gibson RIP
Timothy John Crawley RIP
People of the Parish
Canon John Bailey RIP (birthday)

Monday 5th *Feria*

8:00am Kenneth D'Souza RIP (anniversary)

Tuesday 6th *Feria*

9:30am Canon Philip Donnelly RIP

Wednesday 7th *S Ambrose, B D*

8:00am Anna Mullan RIP
10:00am *Oxford* Holy Souls

Thursday 8th *The IMMACULATE CONCEPTION of the BVM*

10:00am *Borough Green* Dec'd parents of the donor
12:00noon Joseph & Josephine Brown RIP

Friday 9th *S Juan Diego Cuauhtlatotzin*

8:00am Valerie Hooper RIP
10:00am *West Kingsdown* Peace in the World

Saturday 10th *Our Lady of Loreto*

9:30am Parish Priests

SUNDAY 11th December

6:00pm (Sat)
8:00am (Latin)
9:15am
11:15am
6:00pm
9:30am *Oxford*
9:30am *Borough Green*
11:00am *West Kingsdown*

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT (Year A)

Dec'd members of the Jones & Sausman families
Mary Edith Hibling RIP
R J Hilton RIP
Jim Cairney RIP
John Gibson RIP
Timothy John Crawley RIP
People of the Parish
Canon John Bailey RIP (birthday)

Baptism

Welcome to

Matilda Rigglesworth

who was Baptized at St Thomas', Sevenoaks

Departed anniversaries

James Kyte, Lilly Davis, Diana Osborne, Fr John Hennessey, Victor Johnson, Norah Leahy, Tim Leahy, Bert Spokes, Gabriel Nye, Kathleen Smith, Robert Angibault, Tony Stevenson, Maureen Hantan, Molly Suwala, Edward Hibling, Margaret Colson, Hazel Molloy, Rowland Connolly, Ignace Van Kan, Bernard Holland, Theresa Hart, Mark Otto.

Eternal rest grant unto them,

Please remember the sick who have been commended to our prayers, especially:

Lynne Stanley, Yvonne Bollen, Peter Ringham, Deidre Thomas, Ann Steven, Lilian Spragg, Jane Tabor, Ken Holmes, Mary Scott, Sean Cloke, Ann Farren and all in care and nursing homes.

LATIN ANTIPHONS

Entrance

Populus Sion, ecce Dominus veniet ad salvandas gentes; et auditam faciet Dominus gloriam vocis suae in laetitia cordis vestri.

Communion

Ierusalem, surge et sta in excelso, et vide iucunditatem, quae veniet tibi a Deo tuo.