

ALTAR TRAINING COURSE



Archdiocese of
Southwark

PARISH OF ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY SEVENOAKS



CHURCHES IN SEVENOAKS, OTFORD,
BOROUGH GREEN AND WEST KINGSOWN

Parish Newsletter

11th December 2022



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

Isaiah 35: 1-6, 10, Psalm 145, James 5: 7-19, Matthew 11: 2-11

Today is Gaudete Sunday (from the first word of the Entrance Antiphon) and rose coloured vestments are traditionally worn.

First Reading: although this third extract from the prophecy of Isaiah will give hope and courage to those who are downhearted or restricted in some way, when Isaiah refers to the blind, the lame, etc, he is talking of the whole community. The Christian sees this prophecy fulfilled in Christ, who came to restore us, as a community of faith, to wholeness and integrity. As is usually the case, the **Psalm** picks up the same theme as the *First Reading*.

Second Reading: St James says that like a farmer we must be patient as we wait for Christ's second coming. In the Bible the idea of harvest is often used as a picture for the Day of Judgement. We should wait patiently for this day and not make judgements ourselves about other people.

Gospel: John the Baptist sends his disciples to find out who Jesus is, if He truly is the Messiah. Jesus tells them to look at the evidence of their own eyes.

The reference to going to see 'a reed swaying in the breeze' means going to see someone important; because King Herod was forbidden by Jewish law to put his image on his coins, they portrayed reeds in the wilderness as his symbol. The point Jesus is making in the final sentence of this *Gospel* is that in the coming kingdom of God the little ones who believe in Jesus Christ will have the same standing as an important figure such as John.

Fr David

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.

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

Weekday Mass times:

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

Adoration:

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

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



JESUS BRINGS
US JOY!

Message
in a bottle

We can be God's messengers.
We can show everyone what
God's love is like. We can help
people, just like Jesus did.



Draw a picture in this bottle of
you helping someone this week.

A PRAYER TO SAY

Help me, Jesus, to make the
world a better place just like
you did. Help me to bring the
message of God's love to the
people I meet, through what I do
as well as by what I say. Amen.

John the Baptist is God's messenger. He has been telling everyone
about Jesus. Jesus is very special. He shows Jesus is special by
what he does. Jesus brings life and goodness to everyone he meets.

Happy

John the Baptist
believes in Jesus. He is
very happy. Jesus says
everyone who believes
in him is happy.
Draw yourself next to
John with a great big
smile on your face too!



Desert maze

People went into the desert looking for John. They wanted to listen
to him so that they could become better people. Can you help the
people through the desert maze so that they can find John?



Miracles

Jesus helped lots of people.
Answer the questions about his
miracles to fill the gaps.

1. The dead have new?
2. Deaf people could?
3. Lame people were able to?
4. Those who were blind could?

		M	
1.	I		
	R		
2.	A		
	C		
3.	L		
	E		
	4.S		

Answers: Miracles: 1. Life, 2. Hear, 3. Walk, 4. See.

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

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

TODAY

Second Collection for Christmas Flowers

At Masses today the Second Collection at each church will be for Christmas flowers for that church.

Supply Priests

We welcome Fr Bryan Wells and one of the Capuchin friars at the three chapels today.

11:15am Mass

The Traditional Choir leads our music today.

Service of Lessons & Carols at Most Holy Trinity

7:00pm at Otford, a Service to prepare for Christmas, led by the Music Group. All are welcome, not just Otford parishioners. 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.

THIS WEEK

Monday: The Pilgrims & Listening To You Advent Service of Carols and Readings

On Monday 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.

Deidre Thomas RIP

Funeral Mass at 1:00pm on Wednesday in St Joseph's, followed by Committal in Trottscliffe Cemetery.

Thursday:

St Thomas's Church pre-Christmas clean

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.

Thursday: St Thomas' School Carol Service

In St Thomas's at 7:00pm. Family members of the pupils are very welcome to attend.

Friday: St Thomas' School End of Term Mass

9:30am in St Thomas's. As always, parents and other family members etc are invited to attend.

Foodbank Collection

It is not too late to contribute to the Christmas cake collection! I will pick them up from church on Wednesday to be distributed on Thursday. Thank you for your generosity.

Isabelle Mercer

Saturday (17th)

We move into late Advent on Saturday. At Mass and in the Divine Office texts proper to the third week of Advent are omitted in favour of those for 17th December and following. These include the famous 'O Antiphons' at the *Magnificat* in Vespers.

NOTICES

Primary School Applications

Parents of children who were born between 1st September 2018 and 31st August 2019 can now apply for primary school places for their children. Applications should be made through the Local Authority and can be made online at www.kent.gov.uk/ola. Please note that the closing date for applications is 16th January 2023.

Families wishing to apply to St Thomas' Catholic Primary School in Sevenoaks will also need to complete and return a Supplementary Information Form to the school, which can be downloaded from the school website at <https://www.saintthomas.co.uk/admissions/>. Parents should then email Fr David to make an appointment for him to countersign the form.

Parents with children in the Nursery class at St Thomas' are reminded that their children will not automatically be given a place in the Reception class. They will have to make a formal application for a Reception place through the Local Authority and submit a Supplementary Information Form to the school.

PARISH AND OTHER NOTICES

If you have not already had a school tour, please contact the school office at office@st-thomas-sevenoaks.kcsp.org.uk or call on 01732 453921.

Christmas Offering

Envelopes are available in all four churches. Please note that if you make your parish contribution by monthly Standing Order this won't include the Christmas Offering to Fr David and Fr Peter. You can also make a bank transfer (to NatWest Bank, RCAS Sevenoaks, Sort Code 60-19-02, A/c No 25782002); please put Christmas Offering as the reference. This parish has a fine tradition of being very generous in the Christmas and Easter Offerings, and your priests thank you in advance.

New to the Parish?

Welcome! Please register as a parishioner, either by

- visiting the parish website (<http://www.sevrcparish.org.uk/>) and clicking on Parish Registration, or
- completing a blue Registration Form (available in each church Entrance).

Mass Intentions

We are fully booked for the remainder of this year. If you want an Intention to be offered on a particular date next year you are advised to contact Magda in the Parish Office or hand in a Mass Intention envelope as soon as possible. The Parish Office is open Monday to Fridays 9:00am to 12:00pm.

St Thomas's Sanctuary lighting

Several bulbs have failed, making the Sanctuary even more gloomy than normal. They are difficult (and therefore expensive) to access. In early January an expert church lighting company will be coming to install a new lighting system (at a cost, incidentally, of some £13,000), so we shall have to endure the gloom for a few more weeks.

Camino article

The byline in last week's Newsletter article about the Camino pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela was accidentally omitted. Some will have recognised from the photo that the writer was Gina Hartnett.

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.

Chaplaincy Apprentice (Part Time, Part Year)

Required at Christ the King Emmanuel Catholic Sixth Form College in Blackheath. For details of how to apply and a job description please visit the vacancies page of the website: <https://www.ck.ac.uk/vacancies/>.



From the Desk of the Parish Priest

The Virginal Conception of Jesus 3

The evidence from early history

Opposition to the virginal conception in the early Church seems confined to those branded as heretics by the orthodox theologians, such as the gnostics and manicheans and theologians like Marcion. More significantly many Jewish Christians regarded Jesus as the Messiah but declared he was of merely human origin.

But in general where early Christian writers consider the question they all seem to have accepted the doctrine of the virginal conception. A good example is Ignatius of Antioch (whose date of death could be anytime between AD 108 and 140) who described the virginity of Mary, the birth, and the death of Jesus as "three resounding mysteries wrought in the silence of God". Justin Martyr (mid 2nd century) also refers to the virginal conception as if it were commonly agreed.

The evidence from Scripture

This is clearly the most important source of evidence in our investigation. *Matthew* and *Luke* undoubtedly believed that in conceiving Jesus Mary remained a virgin. Moreover, as their sources are known to have been different, they affirm a common belief which derived from different communities or schools.

The witness of *Matthew* and *Luke* is sometimes questioned on the grounds that they (especially *Matthew*) are more based on folklore or myths (eg the angels and guiding star) than history or are trying to prove Jesus' position as the Messiah (hence His birth in Bethlehem). The silence of the rest of the New Testament is also a problem. We cannot tell if St Paul didn't mention the virginal conception because he was unaware of it or because it was not relevant to his arguments. *Mark* doesn't mention it, but does refer to Jesus as 'Son of Mary' but never as 'Son of Joseph'. *John* 1:13 does refer to Jesus as "born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God", but he doesn't even mention Christ's birth in Bethlehem.

The relative silence of most of the New Testament on the virginal conception doesn't in reality argue against it. It may be that some of the authors were unaware of it, but this doesn't disprove its historicity.

There are many accounts of miraculous births in various writings in the ancient world, not least *Luke's* account of the circumstances of John the Baptist's birth, where divine assistance made aged parents fertile, but there is no parallel anywhere for the virginal conception of Jesus; it is unique. If it in fact did not happen where did the early Christians get this strange idea from?

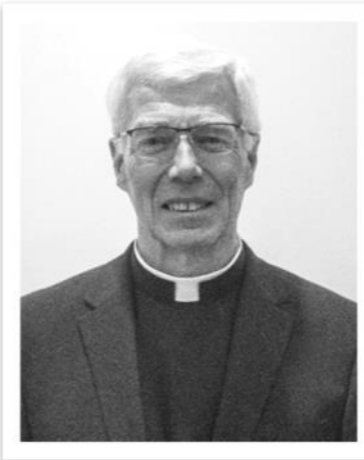
It would appear that Jesus was born rather soon after Mary and Joseph were married, sooner than the normal delay for the birth of a first child. If the virginal conception is not true, then the difficult conclusion would have to be that Mary and Joseph had an adulterous relationship, something strictly disapproved of by society at the time. Without the virginal conception it would have been difficult for the first Christians to promote Jesus if He were illegitimate and difficult to exalt Mary, whom 'all generations shall call blessed' (*Luke* 1:48).

Finally, there is *Isaiah* 7:14, the Greek (Septuagint) version of which appears to predict that 'the virgin shall conceive'. To the eyes of faith (and to the eyes of the earliest Christians) this text is proof of the virginal conception. However, it is fraught with difficulties. Can we be certain it is a reference to Jesus Christ? Even if it is, does it simply mean that someone now a virgin will conceive (in the normal way) in the future? And does the word ('parthenos' in Greek, 'hā-'al-māh' in the Hebrew version) mean a virgin or just a young girl? And is this text in *Isaiah* the origin of *Luke's* assertion (in which case it might be argued that *Luke* is trying to shore up Jesus' position by making Old Testament texts prove He is the Messiah) or a separate proof of *Luke's* statement?

NEW AUXILIARY BISHOP

Message from the Archbishop on hearing news of the appointment:

'I am very grateful to His Holiness Pope Francis for appointing a new Auxiliary Bishop to the Archdiocese of Southwark. I offer to Bishop-Elect Philip Moger the warmest of welcomes. He brings a vast array of experience to this new mission having served the Church as a priest for forty years. I know he will be such a great blessing to the people and communities in our Archdiocese, bringing gifts of joy, encouragement and personal warmth. He is a man of faith and prayer who loves Christ, his Church and his people. I very much look forward to working with him as we continue to shape our missionary Archdiocese in the service of the Gospel. I know that Bishop-Elect Moger will embody generosity and compassion as, together, we seek to make Christ known, loved and served. I ask everyone in our parish and school communities to pray for him as he prepares for this new mission among and with us.'



Message from the Bishop-Elect

'As well as being very surprised, I am humbled indeed by the Holy Father appointing me to be an Auxiliary Bishop of Southwark. I accept this calling with a glad and open heart. I shall, of course, be sorry to leave England's National Shrine of Our Lady, in Walsingham, and my home Diocese of Leeds, but I look forward to moving even further south, getting to know the Archdiocese of Southwark and working with Archbishop John Wilson, Bishop Paul Hendricks, and the clergy, religious and lay faithful in South London and Kent. Throughout my priesthood, and the various missions entrusted to me, I have much to thank God for. In Walsingham, England's Nazareth, I learned much from the many faith-filled pilgrims who sought to be wrapped in Our Lady's mantle of prayer. I have much to learn once more, and I depend on Our Lady's prayers and yours. Our Lady of Walsingham, pray for us.'

Date for Episcopal Ordination

The date for Bishop-Elect Moger's Episcopal Ordination is **Tuesday 21st February 2023** in St George's Cathedral, Southwark.

Brief Biography of Bishop-Elect Philip Moger

Born in 1955, Bishop-Elect Philip Moger grew up in Halifax, Yorkshire. His mother died when he was five and he was raised by his grandmother and father. He began his working life in banking and then entered St Cuthbert's Seminary at Ushaw in County Durham to begin studies for the priesthood.

He was ordained for the Diocese of Leeds in 1982 and was appointed an assistant priest at St Urban's, Headingley, also serving as a chaplain to the local school, a Sue Ryder home and a hospital for people with learning difficulties. In 1985 he was appointed to the Diocesan Pastoral Centre in Ilkley to serve the renewal of parishes and schools.

In 1992 he was appointed an assistant at Leeds Cathedral and was also appointed as Vocations Director. He served as Bishops' Secretary and as a Parish Priest in parishes in Bradford and Leeds. In 2008 he returned to Leeds Cathedral as Dean. He was appointed a Prelate of Honour, with the title Monsignor, and subsequently a Canon of the Cathedral Chapter. He chaired the Diocese of Leeds Liturgical Commission, was Director of Liturgy of the Diocese of Leeds Lourdes Pilgrimage and was also responsible for the liturgies during the Papal Visit of Pope Benedict XVI to Great Britain in 2010. In September 2020 he took up the appointment as the Rector of the National Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham in Norfolk.

MASS INTENTIONS

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

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*

Monday 12th *Feria*

8:00am

Tuesday 13th *S Lucy, V M*

9:30am

Wednesday 14th *S John of the Cross, Pr D*

8:00am

10:00am *Oxford*

1:00pm *Borough Green*

Thursday 15th *Feria*

10:00am *Borough Green*

12:00noon

Friday 16th *Feria*

8:00am

9:30am

10:00am *West Kingsdown*

Saturday 17th *Advent weekday*

9:30am

SUNDAY 18th 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 family

Fr Joseph Phillips RIP

Antonio Perello Mengual RIP

Paul Harris RIP

People of the Parish

Timothy John Crawley RIP

Chin Kimee Ayoung-Chee RIP

Canon Anthony Ford RIP

Fr Joe Andradi

Jeanny Brady RIP

Mary Fergar RIP

James & Carmela Gibson RIP

Deidre Thomas RIP

Good estate of Eileen Teevan

Noel Healy RIP

Safe travel

Shiromi Fernando RIP

Holy Souls

All dec'd of the donor's family

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (Year A)

Jeanne Brady and
the comfort of her family

People of the Parish

Dec'd members
of the Waite and Mernock family

Thomas Healy RIP (birthday)

Ken Connole RIP

Mary & Matthew Scott RIP

Archie Payne RIP

Michael Goodall RIP

Departed anniversaries

Margaret Salt, William Sherratt,
Dolly de Havilland, Eileen Mackey,
Martin Williams, Norah Salt, John
Gerelli, Therese Rucker, David
Cantwell, Ron Jones, Eileen
Fowley, Mary Parr, Daphne Gobel,
Allison Tilling, Andrew Henderson,
Mercedes Mora, Rev. Thomas
Quinn, Mary Gannon, Albert
Goldsmith, Bertie Jordan, Derek
Turpin, David Fowdrey, Eileen
Edwards, Peter Miah, Patrick
Donoghue, Mary Kitching, John
O'Neill, Dora Acott, Hannah
Cunningham, Sheila Lamb,
Margaret & James Chambers,
Claire Followes, Marjorie Lindsey,
Mary Lille, Canon Anthony Ford,
Brian Burns, Mary Chamberlain,
Yvonne Higgs, Harold Jaffa,
Thomas O'Leary.

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

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

LATIN ANTIPHONS

Entrance

Gaudete in Domino semper:
iterum dico, gaudete. Dominus
enim prope est.

Communion

Dicite: Pusillanimes,
confortamini et nolite timere:
ecce Deus noster veniet et
salvabit nos.