

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

Fathers' day off:

Fr Vipin: **Monday**
Fr Piotr: **Tuesday**



Granville Road,
Sevenoaks TN13 1ER

Parish Office: Magdalena Wiacek
Mon. Wed. Thurs. Fri.
8:30am - 12:15pm
Tuesday closed
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

Headteacher:
Ms Geraldine Leahy
Tel: 01732 453921

GIVE A LITTLE



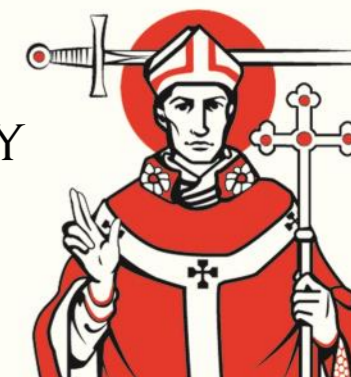
GIFT AID FORM



Archdiocese of
Southwark

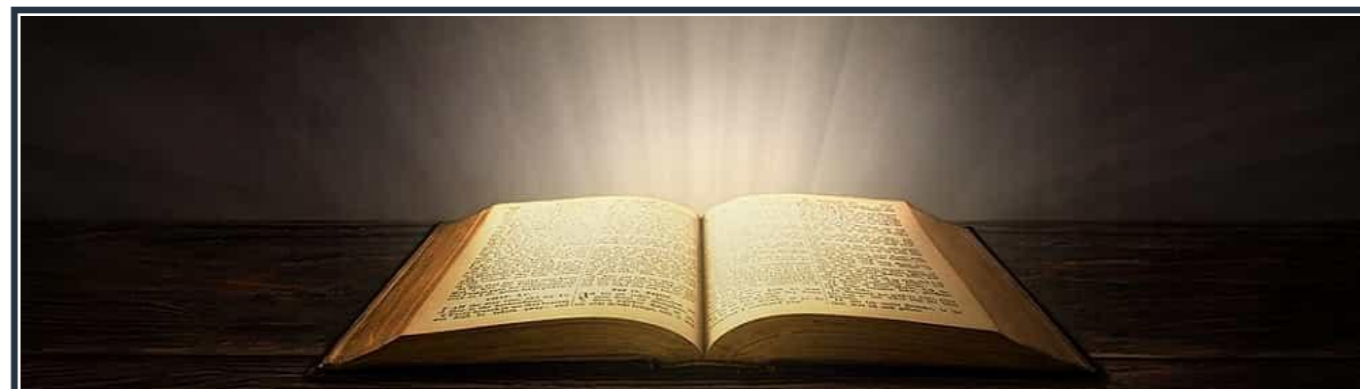
PARISH OF ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY SEVENOAKS

CHURCHES IN SEVENOAKS, OTFORD,
BOROUGH GREEN AND WEST KINGSDOWN



Parish Newsletter

17th December 2023



In this sacred season of Advent, as we anticipate the birth of Christ, the figure of John the Baptist becomes increasingly significant. His role, as delineated in recent readings, is not about who he is in himself but rather who he is not. He is not Elijah returned, nor the prophet foretold by Moses, nor the Messiah. Instead, he is the one who prepares the way for the Lord. But what truly resonates in these readings is the concept of light. John came to testify to the light, a call that extends to each of us. Yet, in the face of societal pressures and personal fears, testifying to this light can be daunting, even among long-standing friends and within our own hearts. We must confront our own darkness, not with pride or resignation, but with a determination to seek the light.

This pursuit of light is not a solitary endeavour. It involves turning to God to rekindle the brightness within us, to enhance our faith, hope, and love. Gratitude plays a crucial role here, serving as a beacon in our souls. It's about acknowledging our struggles – the disappointments of life, our personal battles with sin, and the weariness of daily existence – and seeking divine assistance to overcome these challenges.

John the Baptist, a paradigm of trust, knew his role in God's plan and focused solely on it without being overwhelmed by the bigger picture. His every appearance in the Bible urges us to deepen our trust in God, to discern our role in His design, especially as it evolves with the changing seasons of our lives. Seeking clarity in our purpose is a journey grounded in trust.

Trust, the virtue of the day, is not just a passive belief but an active reliance on God's ability, reliability, and integrity. It's about echoing the plea of the father in the Gospel who sought healing for his son, "Lord, I believe, help my unbelief." This mantra, repeated earnestly, becomes a powerful tool in strengthening our faith. The gospel of Jesus Christ remains as radical and relevant today as it ever was. Our challenge is to step into the world with a trust in God that astonishes others. But more than that, it's about being more than just ourselves; it's about striving to be the best versions of ourselves, fully realising the potential that God has planted within each of us.

As we journey through Advent, let us embrace the light that John the Baptist heralded, the light that Christ brings into the world, and let that light shine brightly in our lives, dispelling the darkness that so often seeks to envelop us.

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 Peter Kucharski piotrkuharski@rcaos.org.uk

Assistant Priest: Fr Vipin James, vipinjames@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, Wednesday, Thursday & Friday 8:30am - 12:15pm, **Tuesday - closed**

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: sevenoaksadoration@rcaos.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: sevenoaks@rcaos.org.uk

Oxford, 9:30am Mass:

Catherine Bennett: 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: jamesmcsharry@hotmail.com

Church Flowers (St Thomas's)

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

Catherine Tan: sevenoaksfhc@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

Loaves and Fishes Foodbank

Isabelle Mercer: h.imercer@btopenworld.com

Mothers' Prayers

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

01959 532505

Parent & 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

Open after Mass on Sunday: 8:00 am & 11:15am

RCIA

For adults becoming Catholic:

Andrew Wilkinson: sevenoaksrcia@rcaos.org.uk

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)

Can help financially, practically, and through visits to the

isolated or housebound. Contact Paul Boyle 07796564018 or

Kathie Gonzalez sevenoakssvp@gmail.com

Union of Catholic Mothers (UCM) (West Kingsdown)

Monica Biggs: mmdbiggs@outlook.com

Webmaster

Barry Authers: sevenoakswebmaster@rcaos.org.uk

GETTING READY FOR CHRISTMAS

Soon, after the busyness of Advent, comes the much-expected and joyful Christmas. Decorated Christmas trees are everywhere you look. Presents crowd for space under the tree and families come together for a turkey feast. Undeniably Christmas is one of the most important Christian and cultural holidays of the year, but what is the true meaning of Christmas? Is it the gifts? Is it the family coming together? Or maybe the fun time we have?

Why do we celebrate Christmas? Is it not because of Jesus, the Son of God, who came to save us from our sins?

Christmas literally means *Christian Mass*. It's a shortened form of Christ's Mass. Christmas is a time of spiritual reflection on the important foundations of the Christian faith. It's also a *celebration*. It's when Christians celebrate God's love for the world through the birth of the baby Jesus. The Bible tells of his birth hundreds of years before, fulfilling prophecies; and is recorded in Luke 2:4-19.

Jesus was born in order to pay the price for the things we have done wrong: sin. God sent his only son to be the atonement for all our sins so that we would not be separated from God. Without Jesus, we would all die for our sins. We inherited our sinful nature from the first human beings God created, Adam and Eve. While being fully God and yet fully man, Jesus came into the world as an infant to save us all.

Although people worldwide celebrate Christ's birth on December 25th, it was likely that he was born on a different month and date. The church in the 4th century chose December 25th as it coordinated with the Solstice on the Roman Calendar.

For Christians, the true meaning of Christmas is the celebration of the Saviour, Jesus Christ. We know that through belief in Christ we are daughters and sons of God. Heaven will one day be our home. Perhaps this will help you look at the Christmas season differently this year. A chance to truly take in the wonder and awe of the season.

Most Christmas traditions vary in significance and symbolic meaning. For example, we exchange gifts because God sent us the most precious gift: his only Son. Also, three wise men visited Jesus and brought gifts as well. We focus on so many aspects of Christmas that when the time comes to say a Christmas dinner blessing, we do not necessarily make the most of the opportunity. While we may feel like simply breathing a sigh of relief, maybe it's time to look at those few moments before we eat and take it up a notch. Why not make it thoughtful and meaningful? Why not take a little time to plan it out? So, what will you pray about / for at your Christmas family dinner?



PARISH AND OTHER NOTICES

ADVENT

From December 17th, the second phase of Advent shifts our focus more directly to the Nativity of Jesus, deepening our preparations for celebrating His birth at Christmas.

⇒ **SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION (Confessions):** Monday 18th December (8.30-9.30am), Tuesday 19th December (6.00-7.00pm), and with two priests available on Saturday 23rd December (10.00- 11.00am) at St Thomas', Sevenoaks.

⇒ **RORATE CANDLE MASS:** On Wednesday 20th December at 7.30pm, we will hold a special Rorate Caeli Mass. This traditional Advent Mass, dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary, is celebrated by candlelight, symbolizing Mary's role in bringing the Light of the World into our darkness. The Mass will include a reflection on the meaning of the Christmas Season. These special events are designed to help us prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ. We warmly invite each one of you to join in these moments of prayer, reflection, and reconciliation, as we journey together towards the joyous celebration of Christmas.

CHRISTMAS OFFERING TO OUR PRIESTS

The collection taken at the Christmas Masses together with donations placed in the Christmas Offering envelopes constitutes your personal gift to the Parish clergy. This collection with the Easter collection forms the major part of the priest's income. This covers all their personal expenses – like holidays, leisure activities, books etc. Please be generous as possible. This collection is a sign of our appreciation for the priestly ministry in all our communities in a large geographical area with four churches.

You can also donate by cheque - payable to RCAS Sevenoaks (please write at back of the cheque Christmas offering) and pop into the Presbytery, or by bank transfer to NatWest Bank, RCAS Sevenoaks, Sort Code 60-19-02, A/c No 25782002). We would like to thank all parishioners and Friends of St Thomas' Parish for your generosity and all the financial support in the past year. May God bless you. (Parish Clergy and the Parish Finance Committee)

CHRISTMAS EVE 'CRIB SERVICE' - 5:30pm

Calling all budding actors and narrators! On Christmas Eve there will be a very short Crib Service at the church, for which narrators are needed, as well as the following roles to act out: Mary, Joseph, Gabriel, Roman Soldier, Donkey, Shepherds, Angels. We'd love as many children as possible to be involved.

If you/your child would like to be involved, please contact caroline.stockmann@gmail.com or on 07826 543693. The younger children will likely be the acting (non-speaking) parts, and we need some good readers as narrators and to lead the prayers. Those with spoken parts would need to be at church at 4.45pm, and all others by 5pm, to have a run through before the service.

ALTAR SERVERS

Meeting held on Friday the 22nd of December at 7:00pm in the church. Your presence and participation are crucial to the success of this celebration. We look forward to seeing you at the rehearsal.

CHRISTMAS CAKE

Like every year, St Thomas' Parish is responsible for providing Christmas Cakes to the people who are attending the Foodbank. We have between 40 and 50 clients for the moment and we are trying to give them the best Christmas possible. Cakes can be left in the Foodbank boxes at church. Thank you in advance for your generosity. *Isabelle Mercer*

PARISH OFFICE CHRISTMAS BREAK

Please note, that the Parish Office will have a break from Friday 22nd December and will resume on Wednesday 3rd January. Please make sure that all the urgent enquiries and Mass bookings are completed before the Christmas break.

LISTENING TO YOU

There will be no meeting on Monday but if you would like to see us please call the Parish office so we can arrange meeting if needed in December.

MASS INTENTIONS

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

SUNDAY 17th 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 18th Feria

8:00am

Tuesday 19th Feria

9:30am

Wednesday 20th Feria

8:00am
10:00am *Oxford*
7:30pm

Thursday 21st Feria

10:00am *Borough Green* Safe holiday travels of donor's and family
12:00noon Sylvia & Kenneth Shore RIP (anniversary)

Friday 22nd December Feria

8:00am Brendan Meegan RIP
10:00am *West Kingsdown* Josie Kiernan (birthday)

Saturday 23rd Feria

9:30am Heather Bohan RIP

SUNDAY 24th December

6:00pm (Sat)
8:00am
9:15am
11:15am
9:30am *Oxford*
9:30am *Borough Green*
11:00am *West Kingsdown* Good estate of Nolie Simmonds

SUNDAY 24th December

6:00pm
11:30pm
8:00pm *Oxford*
10:00pm *Borough Green*

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Eileen & Michael McSharry
Heather Bohan RIP
Theresa Gould
Good health and wellbeing of John Power
Anne Cecilia Kayo Inoue RIP
Mary Tyler RIP
People of the Parish
Bertha & Ruth Lett RIP

Marion Shephard RIP - post-funeral

The grateful gift of Lyla

Michael Castelli RIP
Katherine Lester RIP
Rorate Mass

Safe holiday travels of donor's and family
Sylvia & Kenneth Shore RIP (anniversary)

Brendan Meegan RIP

Josie Kiernan (birthday)

Heather Bohan RIP

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

In thanksgiving
People of the Parish
Holy Souls
Sr Mary John
Jill Tall RIP
Private Intentions
Good estate of Nolie Simmonds

CHRISTMAS EVE

VIGIL MASS - Children's Crib Service at 5:30pm
~ Donor's Intention
MIDNIGHT MASS - Carols at 11:00pm
~ Holy Souls
FIRST MASS of CHRISTMAS
~ David Catteck RIP (birthday)
MASS of CHRISTMAS NIGHT
~ Holy Souls

FOR YOUR PRAYERS RECENTLY DEPARTED

Gwen Farrell

*Eternal rest grant unto them,
O Lord, and let perpetual light shine
upon them.
May they rest in peace.*

THE SICK

Sue Spilstead, Valerie Dias, Elizabeth Sherratt, Philip Hardaker, Paulina Andrea, Zamora Hernandez, Mavis Mitchell Lambert, Tony Barrett, Frank Easterbrook, Lynne Stanley, Veronica Williams, Yvonne Bollen, Peter Ringham, Ann Steven, Lilian Spragg, Mary & Chris Scott, Sean Cloke, Ann Farren and all in care and nursing homes in the Parish.

ANNIVERSARIES IN DECEMBER

Mary Chamberlain, Yvonne Higgs, Harold Jaffa, Thomas O'Leary, Clifford Holmes, Beatrice St Clare Hill, Dennis Goodall, Mrs Henriques, Pat Coakley, Josephine Coakley, Peter Jones, Catherine Bond, Anna Anderson, Michael Goodall, Margaret Knowles, Joseph Ford, Rosamund Montagu, Michael Castelli, Mary Gatenby, June Smith, John Kerr, Phyllis Claydon, Vincent Askew, Stanley Suwala, Kenneth Shore, Catherine Spice, Lucia Boreose.

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.