

ST AUGUSTINE'S DATCHET

St Augustine's
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DATCHET
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OUR LADY OF SORROWS ETON

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NEWSLETTER

Sunday 13th December 2020

Third Sunday of Advent (Year B)

MASS TIMES

ONLINE WEBINAR MASS: 11am on Sundays - for further details email office@staugustines.org.uk

ST. AUGUSTINE'S HALL: Saturdays at 6pm, Sundays at 9.30am and Tuesdays at 9.30am

ST. AUGUSTINE'S CHURCH PRIVATE PRAYER: Monday, Wednesday and Friday between 12noon and 12.30pm. Tuesday and Thursday between 5.30pm and 6.30pm

MASS INTENTIONS

Sat. 12th Dec. 6pm	People of the Parish	Tue. 15th Dec. 9.30am	Private Intention
Sun. 13th Dec. 9.30am	Patrick Stephens RIP	Wed. 16th Dec.	Carolyn Ansell RIP
Sun. 13th Dec. 11am	People of the Parish	Thu. 17th Dec.	Private Intention
Mon. 14th Dec.	Private Intention	Fri. 18th Dec.	Private Intention

SICK OF THE PARISH: Please pray for the sick in the Parish, especially James Ansell, Dorrie Keating, David Mendes, Walter Stanley and Michael Torpey. Please pray also for those who are caring for them.

ADVENT PENITENTIAL SERVICE: We will have our special Advent Penitential Service in the Hall at **7pm on Wednesday 16th December**. (See next pages of Newsletter for further information).

CORONAVIRUS: We remember those in our parish who may be suffering acutely from the effects of Covid. We think especially for those who are ill, those living alone - far from relatives, those whose jobs are at risk, those in Care Homes, those in difficult home environments.

And let's not forget to thank God for the progress being made towards a vaccination programme for COVID. We pray for the scientists and the medical personnel who have worked so hard towards its discovery, and we pray that it will be very soon available to all.

St. Augustine's Church is open every day for private prayer. (See days and times above). As the days and evenings are distinctly chilly now, rest assured that the Church is being heated.

MASSES AT CHRISTMAS: We have now finalised the times for Christmas Masses, which are based upon the responses received from Stewards as to when they are available. The times will be:

St. Augustine's Hall: Thursday 24th December 6pm and 9pm.

Friday 25th December 9.30am

Online Webinar Mass: Friday 25th December 11am

PLACES AT CHRISTMAS MASSES NEED TO BE BOOKED

We do not know how many Parishioners will wish to attend the Christmas Masses and due to social distancing requirements, there is a limited number we can accommodate in St. Augustine's Hall. Therefore, we are implementing a booking system for places in the Hall for these three Masses. We've decided against using an online booking system as this would swing the advantage towards those who are *quick off the mark* in going online. Instead, we are implementing a telephone based system, which will be run by XXXXXX and which will allow you to **request a place(s)**.

When phoning you'll be asked if you have a second choice of time. When the booking period closes, if we are over-subscribed for one Mass and under-subscribed for another, we'll allocate places accordingly. If we are still over-subscribed for places, then we will hold a draw to allocate places.

THE DETAILS OF HOW TO BOOK A PLACE HAVE BEEN REMOVED FROM THIS VERSION OF THE NEWSLETTER ON OUR WEBSITE. TO REQUEST A PLACE(S) AT A MASS, PLEASE EMAIL BEFORE FRIDAY 18TH AT 4pm, office@staugustines.org.uk GIVING YOUR ADDRESS AND POSTAL CODE AND OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION IN THE EMAIL. THANK YOU.

CHRISTMAS OFFERTORY COLLECTION

In keeping with tradition, the collection in Churches at Christmas and Easter is offered by Parishioners as a sincere and personal thank you for the dedication and service of their Parish Priest. There was a period, after Fr. Séan retired, when it was looking unlikely that we would again have our own Parish Priest, but this Parish has been greatly blessed by having Fr. Frank come and serve us as our Priest.

During Easter of this year, when we were experiencing the first lock-down, our Churches were closed and despite the alternative arrangements which were made, it was not possible for all to be able to contribute to the Easter collection. Currently our Church (St. Augustine's Hall) is open for Masses, but we have strict restrictions as to the number who can attend, therefore we are putting in place arrangements to ensure it is as straight forward as possible to make your Christmas Offertory over a period of a couple of weeks.

- 1. ST. AUGUSTINE'S HALL:** As of the Mass on Tuesday 15th December, there will be buckets in the Hall clearly marked **CHRISTMAS OFFERTORY**. Donations can be made in cash or by cheque made payable to **ST. AUGUSTINE'S**, (please do not make your cheque payable to Fr. Frank). The Christmas Offertory buckets will be in the Church Hall for donations from the Mass on Tuesday 15th December through to Mass on Sunday 3rd January 2021. Please note *any envelopes* placed in the general offertory buckets in the Hall, marked with the words CHRISTMAS OFFERTORY, will be treated as your personal donation to our Priest.
- 2. PRESBYTERY:** By posting an envelope through the letterbox of the Presbytery. The envelope does not have to be a special parish envelope. Any envelope will do! The **ENVELOPE** is to be clearly **MARKED CHRISTMAS OFFERTORY**.
- 3. Via our Parish Treasurer (details available via our office email address):** Either post an envelope through his letterbox or send it via Royal Mail. (Please only send cheques through the post).

If you have any queries or concerns about this process, please contact me via the office@staugustines.org.uk email address. Thank you. Pamela

STELLA MARIS (APOSTLESHIP OF THE SEA): Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the annual Sea Sunday second collection was delayed from July. We have decided to hold this collection in January. More information will be given in our Newsletter in January.

THE 100 CLUB: The recent winners of the monthly draw are Jan (December) and Lucia (November).

PENITENTIAL SERVICE (CONFESSION)

ADVENT and LENT are the special times in the year when the Church asks us to reflect on our lives and on return to the pathway of virtue and holiness. These are times when we say 'sorry' to God for our past failings and, with his help, renew our resolve to get back to a way of living that is more faithful to the ideals and values of Jesus. Perhaps the turmoil of this past year has made us more acutely aware of our need of God as the One who can 'deliver us from evil'. He can also consolidate those positive values of generosity and neighbourliness that have emerged in our community because of the pandemic.

On Wednesday, December 16th at 7pm, we have our special Advent Penitential Service in the Hall. **We will not have individual confession during the Service because of Covid restrictions.** The Service, which will be of approximately 30 minutes duration, is an opportunity for us, as a community, to acknowledge that we have failed God in many ways, and to ask for forgiveness. It is also a time to renew our resolve to let Jesus be more central in our lives. It is only in doing this that we really celebrate Christmas. For He is the One whom we call our Saviour – the One who can bring blessing and wholeness to our families, our community, and our world - that Peace which we all so much long for.

Sacrament of Reconciliation during the Pandemic. (Pope Francis)

At his early morning Mass during Lent this year, Pope Francis said that Confessions can take place without seeing a priest while the Vatican has issued new guidelines on forgiveness of sins during the coronavirus pandemic. He went on to say:

"Return to the father" and ask forgiveness of your sins even if individual confession with a priest is impossible. He went on to say: "I know that many of you go to confession... Many will say to me: 'But Father...I can't leave the house and I want to make my peace with the Lord...How can I do that unless I find a priest?'" Do what the catechism says. It's very clear. If you don't find a priest to go to confession, speak to God. He's your Father. Tell Him the truth: 'Lord. I did this and this and this. Pardon me.' Ask His forgiveness with all your heart with an act of contrition, and promise Him, 'afterwards I will go to confession.' You will return to God's grace immediately.

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Light and darkness is a key theme in today's Readings. Today we are told that John is a light bearer. He is not the light, but points to the light. He is a witness to the Light in our world – Jesus. Today we light the pink candle and we celebrate with joy. As our world continues to battle this pandemic, there is much fear about. People might not feel like celebrating or being joyful. But Nature shows us that Spring always follows Winter. It also tells us that Light follows darkness. Like John, we are called to be light-bearers. We are called to carry Christ's light and love to those we meet in our daily lives. And so let us pray:

Lord, there is so much darkness in society and in our Church at the present time. But we know that you are there as our beacon of Light and Hope. You show us this Light in the many people who are helping us to come through these difficult times. And you show it in the gift you have given to scientists to discover so quickly a vaccine for Covid, and in the tireless work of health-care people and others who are helping to make it available. For these we thank you, Lord, and we pray that their work will be fruitful. We know that they are your instruments in bringing light to the darkness of the world in this Christmas Season.

Fr. Frank