

New Lectionary-Advent 2024- Taking donations for anyone who would like to contribute to this cost (£695). A label detailing the list of sponsors will be printed in the front of our new lectionary. **Thank you to those that have made very generous offers.** We have also had to purchase new mass books to reflect the changes, which we will be doing over a phased period, but this is at a cost of over £2000 in total so any donations really would be really appreciated.

Advent Rosary in the City- Saturday 14 December 12 noon, Birmingham City Centre

Rosary in the City is run independently of the Archdiocese of Birmingham.

In the season of Advent, we are calling all men, women and children to publicly pray and witness to our faith in centre of Birmingham.

We will pray for the conversion of our city and nation, protection and blessing of family life, a culture that values all life from conception, the domestic church and men to live out their God given vocation.

Rejoice this Gaudete Sunday - Third Sunday of Advent : When did you last feel real joy?

Whatever the cause of that joy, what links all joyful experiences is forgetting the burden of time. In today's readings God really has turned on the joy tap. The prophet Zephaniah invites us to "Rejoice and exult with all your heart" and St Paul wants us to "rejoice in the Lord always".

These readings, though, sit uncomfortably next to the bed of the dying, or the lonely, or those waiting for medical test results, those unsure about who they are and where they're going in life. But there, right there, when life hurts, God's promise remains: I want to renew you with my love. The blessedness that God pours into our hearts, even when we don't feel it, is something real and concrete, but it isn't magic. God doesn't rub out the difficult aspects of experience, otherwise we'll be living a Disney-fied life, rather than a human life.

The joy we are reflecting on today does not mean we are skipping around with a smile on our faces like in dental adverts. It's a joy built upon hope. To quote the poet Seamus Heaney: "hope is not optimism, which expects things to turn out well, but something rooted in the conviction that there is good worth working for".

Our waiting is hopeful, even joyful, and it's never in vain.

Father Ryan Service
Holy Trinity and Sacred Heart, Sutton Coldfield

Third Week of Advent Blessing:

Give us the blessing of insight, Lord, to understand your purpose for our lives.

Give us the blessing of the eyes of faith, Lord, to see beyond the difficulties of this moment to the joys that await us.

Give us the blessings of a desire, Lord, to see others as you see them.

Make this your Christmas gift to yourself!- Confessions- Saturday 21st December 9.00am-11.00am at St Gerards.



Authentic conversion begins with prayer, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you, I am no longer worthy to be called your son"(Luke 15:18-19)

We can't conjure up this kind sorrow or contrition which leads to conversion and change. It is truly a movement of grace, the work of the Holy Spirit. The Sacrament of Confession is the sacred space in which God's forgiveness and mercy is made real and present. God's mercy is limitless, deeper than the ocean, higher than the mountains, as far as the east is from the west. Bless me Father, for I have sinned, grant me pardon, peace and absolution in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Advent/Christmas Fundraising

CAFOD World Gifts- Please pick up a leaflet showing the wonderful gifts we can buy for someone in this country that benefits someone in another country- remember our World Gift Village from a few years ago? Maybe we could start a new village.

Christmas Bonus Ball draw. Please see Ailish if you would like to take a number.

 **Christmas Raffle:** Sarita and Bernie have kindly agreed to organise our Christmas raffle again this year. Any donations of bottles, chocolates, small gifts would be very welcome. Please leave these on the back of church over the next few weeks. Raffle tickets will be sold in the two weeks leading up to Christmas. 



Parish of St. Gerard, Castle Vale
(Part of the Erdington Cluster which includes The Abbey, St Peter and St Paul's and St Mary and St John's)

part of the Archdiocese of Birmingham—Registered Charity No. 234216

Parish Priest: Father Mathew Pinakkattu: 07788790928 Email: stgerard.bham@rcaob.org.uk

Presbytery: 2 Renfrew Square, Castle Vale, Birmingham B35 6JT T: 0121 747 7390

Web: www.stgerardschurch.co.uk



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O God, who see how your people faithfully await the feast of the Lord's Nativity, enable us, we pray, to attain the joys of so great a salvation and to celebrate them always with solemn worship and glad rejoicing.

Mass Times

Sunday 15th December
Second Sunday of Advent

Confession 9.30am
Mass 10.00am for Simon
Byrne RIP

Monday 16th December

Mass 10.00am

Tuesday 17th December

Mass 10.00am

Wednesday 18th December

Mass 10.00am

Thursday 19th December

Carols 9.30am followed by
Mass 10.00am

Friday 20th December

School Mass 9.00am

Saturday 21st December

Confessions
9.00am-11.00am
Mass 5.00pm

Sunday 22nd December
Fourth Sunday of Advent

Confession 9.30am
Mass 10.00am



Christmas Mass Times

Christmas Eve: Carols
6.00pm followed by Vigil
6.30pm **Christmas Day:**
Mass 10.00am **St Stephens**
Day: Altar Servers Mass
10.00am 🌟

Parish Mission Statement

We, the members of St Gerard's R.C. Church, are baptised in Jesus Christ, empowered by the spirit, nurtured in community, and nourished by prayer, word and sacrament. Therefore, for the greater glory of God, we proclaim for all people the saving message of the Gospel, and joyfully share our time, talent and resources, in works of mercy and justice, both within and beyond our parish community.

Advent is a time of preparation and joyful expectation. As we prepare for the birth of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, these weeks provide a wonderful opportunity to slow down and reflect. We look forward to the coming of Christ: celebrating His birth, His renewed coming into our lives this Christmas, especially through the Eucharist, and His second coming at the end of time. Advent marks the start of the Church's liturgical year.

Advent comes from the Latin adventus, meaning 'arrival' or 'coming'. Each Gospel reading during Advent has a distinctive theme: the Lord's coming at the end of time (First Sunday of Advent), John the Baptist (Second and Third Sunday), and the events that prepared immediately for the Lord's birth (Fourth Sunday). A period to "Prepare and be ready, Watch and wait". We get impatient with God's plan. We wander. We choose our own plans instead. God is faithful though. He calls us to return to Him. God's plan is not about getting what we want. It is about God restoring the whole world to himself. In our lives we will experience events which we don't understand. There will be senseless tragedies and undeserved triumphs. We must be vigilant and ready for those, especially for trials and difficulties. There are always uncertainties in life. We must be ready at all times to serve Christ when we encounter the Lord in our daily lives. The four Sundays of Advent each have a specific theme or focus- Hope, Love, Joy and Peace.

As we light our third candle on our Advent Wreath, the candle of Joy, we remember that the third Sunday of Advent is called "Gaudete" Sunday. Each Sunday in the season of Advent is supposed to be feast day, a celebration, but this week is especially so. The third week of Advent is a time of joy, a time of being thankful for all that has been given—the promise of the Saviour who has come, who is present, and who promises a return.

Monday 16th December 6.00pm - Carol Service at Erdington Abbey.

Thursday 19th December 7.00pm - Cluster Mass at Erdington Abbey

Cathedral Carol Service- St Chad's Cathedral, Sunday 22 December 5pm- Please come along and listen to our magnificent cathedral singers under the direction of Professor David Saint sing a variety of Christmas Carols and motets interspersed with reading from the Scriptures. **No booking required. Refreshments in the Grimshaw Room afterwards.**

Recently died and those whose anniversaries occur at this time: Cornelius O'Regan RIP: Eternal rest grant unto him O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace. Amen.

The sick: George Harris, Sarah Purcell, Theresa Floyd, Pat Bonner, Kath McMullen, Margaret Ludlow, Rose Cogan, Andrew Trueman, Eileen Morrissey, Frances Irwin, George Irwin, Debbie Johnson and all the sick priests of the diocese. May the Lord grant them the healing they require.

Mass Intentions: on behalf of a family member, a friend or a deceased loved one, to remember a birthday or anniversary, envelopes are available at the back of church or email Fr Mathew.

Offertory

1st December 2024 and
8th December to be
announced

