



ST FRANCIS XAVIER'S CATHOLIC CHURCH HEREFORD

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Dear All, The Third Sunday of Advent is called *Gaudete Sunday*. The term *Gaudete* refers to the first word of the Entrance Antiphon, "Rejoice." Rose vestments are worn to emphasize our joy that Christmas is near, and we also light the rose candle on our Advent wreath. As Christmas draws near, the Church emphasizes the joy which should be in our hearts over all that the birth of our Saviour means for us. The great joy of Christians is to see the day drawing nigh when the Lord will come again in His glory to lead them into His kingdom. The oft-repeated *Veni* ("Come") of Advent is an echo not only of the prophets but also of the conclusion of the Apocalypse of St. John: "Come, Lord Jesus," the last words of the New Testament.

Pope Francis, throughout his pontificate, has put much emphasis on joy and even dedicated an entire encyclical to the "Joy of the Gospel." He wrote in the opening paragraph about what should fill the hearts of every Christian.

The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ joy is constantly born anew. In this Exhortation I wish to encourage the Christian faithful to embark upon a new chapter of evangelization marked by this joy, while pointing out new paths for the Church's journey in years to come.

May these last days of Advent be a time when we open our hearts to God's beauty, peace and love. Let us bring the light of joy to all whom we encounter.

Fr James

Liturgical Calendar December 2024 Yr C Psalter Wk 3

Sat 14th	10.30am	St John of the Cross Doctor of the Church.	<i>The Pope's Intention</i>
Sat 14th	11.00am	Confessions and Adoration	
Sat 14th	6.00pm	3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT (GAUDETE SUNDAY)	<i>N K Kuriakose RIP</i>
Sun 15th	8.00am	3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT	<i>The Parish</i>
Sun 15th	10.00am	3RD SUNDAY OF ADVENT	<i>Socrate Bisconte RIP</i>
Mon 16th	9.30am <i>Rosary 9am</i>	3rd Week of Advent	<i>Persecuted</i>
Tue 17th	6.00pm	3rd Week of Advent Talk at 7.00pm	<i>Evangelisation</i>
Wed 18th	1.00pm <i>Adoration 12 noon</i>	3rd Week of Advent	<i>Kuruthukulan- gara- Jose Varghese Thanksgiving</i>
Thu 19th	09.30am	3rd Week of Advent	<i>Holy Souls</i>
Fri 20th	1.00pm	3rd Week of Advent	<i>Vocations</i>
Fri 20th	7.00pm	Reconciliation Service	
Sat 21st	10.30am	3rd Week of Advent	<i>Christopher Richards RIP</i>
Sat 21st	11.00am	Confessions and Adoration	
Sat 21st	6.00pm	4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT (VIGIL)	<i>Malcolm Wilson RIP</i>
Sun 22nd	8.00am	4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT	<i>The parish</i>
Sun 22nd	10.00am	4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT	<i>Leigh & Caron</i>

Come and say hello to Fr. James and Fr. John at an informal parish party after 10am Mass next Sunday, 15th December. Tea and Coffee and festive Advent fayre will be on hand! All welcome!

He has visited His people and set them free.
Advent talk by Fr. John on Tuesday 17th December at 7pm in the Parish Hall. Do make space in your busy Christmas preparations to come along to this Advent talk to hear about the real meaning of Christmas. Mass at 6pm, followed by tea and mince pies and talk. All welcome.



Sign up sheets for Welcomers, Readers and ministers of the Eucharistic are now in the sacristy. Please sign up as soon as possible. Thank you

We remember all who have died and those whose anniversaries occur about this time: Josephine MacDonnell, Mary Grisewood, Peter Nelson, Danny West, Leslie Prosser, Patrick John King, Mary Matley, Maria Meschi.



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

Pray for the Sick: Fr Keith, Ania Kuzba, Jan Beavan, Robbie Bell, Brian Symonds, Meg Furber, Ann Currie, Midad Jasari, David Madgen, Lynne Howells, Sarah, Katherine Melia, Christina James, Ana Rudnicki, Nicola Merrick, Martin O'Connor, Patricia Moroney, Margaret Skelding, James Spradbery, Teresa Bord Kathleen Spradbery, Ann Marie Hughson, John Moroney

The Suffering Church

During the Deanery meeting on Tuesday, we heard from Mr Stephen Riedlinger of 'Aid to the Church in Need' (ACN). Founded in 1947, this international charity supports suffering and persecuted Christians throughout the world. Pope Benedict XVI made it a 'Pontifical Foundation' of the Church in recognition of the vital work done by this organisation.

Unfortunately, we very rarely hear about Christian persecution in the news and media. Mr Riedlinger reminded us that **one in seven** Christians in the world are persecuted. He presented the ACN's report 'Persecuted and Forgotten? A report on Christians oppressed for their faith' which highlighted 18 countries where Christians are particularly suffering in the world today. This makes for harrowing reading and reminds us that, in the words of Pope Francis, "the age of martyrs is not yet over, even today we can say, in truth, that the Church has more martyrs now than during the first centuries."

Mr Riedlinger highlighted a few stories for us which have shown that many governments are not interested in protecting Christians and, in some cases, have been actively complicit in the persecution of Christians. For example, Erin Shehata, a young Christian woman, from Egypt was kidnapped at the start of year by the Muslim Brotherhood and has not been seen by her family since her disappearance. Hers is just one story among so many...

As we continue our Advent journey, let us remember in prayer our Christian brothers and sisters who face continued acts of violence and oppression for following the Christ child. One initiative of ACN is to 'Go to Mass for someone who can't' – what better present can we give than to go to Mass and stand in solidarity with those who truly suffer for the faith?

As a parish we might like to explore other ways we can help support the work of ACN. I look forward to hearing any suggestions.

Christ Jesus, light of the world, strengthen all Christians who are persecuted because of their faith in You.

Amen.

Fr John

Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist	Ministers of the Word
6pm Wendy Winterburn Sarah Slankauskas Vigeetha Joseph	6pm Philip Dixon
8am Vera McHale Frances Hetterley	8am Tracey Buckley
10am Lorena de Lima Auer Moses Obanimoh Noel Elegado	10am Audrey Fussell

Celebrating Christmas at St Francis Xavier

Christmas Eve: Tuesday 24th December:

5pm First Mass of Christmas
9.30pm Christmas Carols
10pm Mass of the Night (Midnight Mass)

Christmas Day: Wednesday 25th December

8am Quiet Dawn Mass
10am Mass of Christmas Day

Parish 200 Club. Renewals for 2025 due now.

Thanks to all who have supported the 200 club. We hope you will continue your subscription for 2025. Please send a cheque for £12 per number (payable to St Francis Xavier's 200 Club) to the church in an envelope with your name & 200 Club on it. If you pay by standing order you don't need to do anything. The easiest way to pay is to make a direct transfer: **Sort Code:09-06-66. A/c No: 42516221. A/c Name: St Francis Xavier's Church.** To enable us to keep track of payments, **please let us know if you make a direct transfer** email pejwilliams@gmail.com for details. Profits go to pay for extras in the Church.

There will be a **Christmas Carol Concert** at the Monastery of Poor Clares at Much Birch on Saturday 14th December at 7.00pm. All Welcome! Do come along and support the Poor Clares who continue to work and pray for us all and our parish.



Poetry for Pleasure in the Parish Hall on Thursday December 19th 10.30–12 noon. The theme is **Winter and Christmas**. Come and join us for some festive poetry! All welcome.

Volunteers to prepare the church for Christmas

If you can spare an hour please come along on Tuesday 24th December from 9am onwards to help clean and decorate the church for Christmas. **All are welcome!** The more the merrier! We also need holly and greenery which can be left in the Narthex from Monday morning.



Welcome to any new or visiting parishioners. Do come and introduce yourselves to the welcomers and **come along to the hall after the 10.00am Mass for coffee and cake.**



Collections 30/1st Dec
1st £429.51 The Parish
2nd £329.00 Renovation
Many Thanks



Parish Calendar– December 2024

Sun 15th	11.15am	Parish Christmas Party
Mon 16th	7.00pm	SVP in Parish Hall
Tues 17th	7.00pm	Advent Talk: He has visited his people and set them free
Mon 23rd	12.30pm	Carols on the Steps