



2020 is the 10th anniversary of *Verbum Domini* – Pope Benedict XVI's Apostolic Exhortation on 'The Word of the Lord' and the 1,600th anniversary of the death of St Jerome, one of the Church's greatest scripture scholars. These dates have inspired the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales to dedicate a year to focus especially on the Bible and 'The God Who Speaks' - The Year of the Word.

WEEKLY EVENTS

COFFEE AFTER MASS

Sundays in the Church Porch after the 9.00 am Mass

CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD

Sundays in term-time during the 11.30 am Mass

SOCIETY OF ST VINCENT DE PAUL

Tuesdays : 7.00 pm in the Church Sacristy

CHURCH CLEANING TEAM

Wednesdays at 9.30 am inside the church

CHURCH GARDENING TEAM

Meets Wednesdays at 9.30 am outside the church

4TH COLLIER ROW SCOUT GROUP

Beaver Scouts
Wednesdays 5 - 6.15 pm in the Parish Centre Hall

Cub Scouts
Wednesdays 6.30 - 8.00 pm in the Parish Centre Hall

Scouts
Wednesdays 8.00 - 9.30 pm in the Parish Centre Hall

THURSDAY CLUB

(for the over 60s – open to all)
1.15 - 3.15 pm in the Parish Centre Hall

OUR LADY'S

PRAYER GROUP

Thursdays : 7.30 – 9.00 pm at 10 Norman Close

DIOCESAN DIRECTORY

The 2020 edition is now available; you will find copies on the newspaper table – priced at £2.80.

THE GOD WHO SPEAKS

There are a small number of booklets, produced by the Bishops' Conference of England & Wales in conjunction with The Bible Society. They are free – please take one if you are interested.

POCKET GOSPELS

Also available are a small number of copies of the Matthew Gospel. Pope Francis has said he would like Catholics to become more familiar with the Bible and suggests one way to do this is to carry a pocket-sized gospel that you can dip into in spare moments on the train or 'bus. Take a copy if you would use it.

CHURCH REPOSITORY

On sale in the Church Porch: religious Christmas Cards, Advent Candles and Calendars, Christmas Candles, Nativity Sets, Calendars and Gifts, all reasonably priced.

CLASS TEACHER VACANCY

St Vincent's Catholic Primary School in Dagenham is looking to recruit a class teacher to join our School team in January 2020. This post would be suitable for NQTs or experienced teachers. Visits to the school are welcome. Please contact the school office to arrange a visit 020-8270 6695. Closing date: Friday 6 December 2019. Interviews: Tuesday 10 December 2019. Visit: www.st-vincent.barking-dagenham.sch.uk

CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

St Patrick's PTA are happy to announce that their Christmas Bazaar will be held on Friday 13 December from 15:15 to 17:15 in the School Hall at St Patrick's School. Everyone is welcome. Entrance is £2. A range of food will be served including international dishes along with our standard sweet treats, mulled wine and hot drinks. We will have games, novelty stalls and Santa's Grotto. Please come and support our school and enjoy the festivities with us.

SUMMER LOURDES 2020

with the Brentwood Catholic Youth Service

Open to anyone currently in school year 10-13. We travel on Saturday 25 July, return Saturday 1 August 2020. Cost £600 includes return coach travel, hotel accommodation, insurance and all meals in Lourdes. This amazing experience comes just once a year – full details are at <https://bcys.net/events/summer-lourdes-2020-pilgrimage/>. Applications open Sunday 27 October 2019 and close on 10 January 2020; places will be allocated on 14 January and no deposit is required until then. Bursary support is available for those in financial hardship.

SACRED HEART OF MARY GIRLS' SCHOOL SIMS MANAGER AND EXAMINATIONS OFFICER

see noticeboard for further details of this vacancy

CALAIS LIGHT

Calais Light are taking volunteer bookings now for our next Convoy - January 31st-2nd February 2020. We plan a long way ahead so don't delay. We're the car-sharing Refugee action convoy which takes a bunch of like-minded, friendly volunteers to

Calais to work for the weekend with refugee charities! Make it your New Year's Resolution to volunteer! Come with us! Sign up now at www.calaislight.com or our facebook page.

YEAR OF THE GOD WHO SPEAKS – THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

Fr Adrian Graffy will lead an exploration of the Gospel of Matthew, the lectionary gospel for Sundays in 2020, from 7 pm until 8.30 pm on Wednesday 15th (changed from 22nd) January, and Wednesday 29th January at the Catholic Church of Christ the Eternal High Priest, Gidea Park. Admission is free, but please book your place by email to GPstudydays@gmail.com Copies of the recently published 'Revised New Jerusalem Bible' will be on sale for £30 (reduced from the normal price of £39.99). Full details and video of earlier talks available on www.whatgoodnews.org

In the Gospel given this second Sunday of Advent, John the Baptist's invitation resounds: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" (Mt 3:2). With these very words, Jesus begins his mission in Galilee (cf. Mt 4:17); and such will also be the message that the disciples must bring on their first missionary experience (cf. Mt 10:7). Matthew the evangelist would like to present John as the one who prepares the way of the coming Christ, as well as the disciples as followers, as Jesus preached. It is a matter of the same joyful message: the kingdom of God is at hand! It is near, and it is in us! These words are very important: "The kingdom of God is in our midst!", Jesus says. And John announces what Jesus will say later: "The kingdom of God is at hand, it has arrived, and is in your midst". This is the central message of every Christian mission. When a missionary goes, a Christian goes to proclaim Jesus, not to proselytize, as if he were a fan trying to drum up new supporters for his team. No, he goes simply to proclaim: "The kingdom of God is in our midst!" And in this way, the missionaries prepare the path for Jesus to encounter the people.

But what is this kingdom of God, this kingdom of heaven? They are synonymous. We think immediately of the afterlife: eternal life. Of course this is true, the kingdom of God will extend without limit beyond earthly life, but the good news that Jesus brings us — and that John predicts — is that we do not need to wait for the kingdom of God in the future: it is at hand. In some way it is already present and we may experience spiritual power from now on. "The kingdom of God is in your midst!", Jesus will say. God comes to establish his lordship in our history, today, every day, in our life; and there - where it is welcomed with faith and humility - love, joy and peace blossom.

The condition for entering and being a part of this kingdom is to implement a change in our life, which is to convert, to convert every day, to take a step forward each day. It is a question of leaving behind the comfortable but misleading ways of the idols of this world: success at all costs; power to the detriment of the weak; the desire for wealth; pleasure at any price. And instead, preparing the way of the Lord: this does not take away our freedom, but gives us true happiness.

Pope Francis, *Angelus Address*, St Peter's Square, Sunday 4 December 2016

CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE

Sunday 22 December at 6.00 pm at St Edward's in the Market Place
A traditional Service of Nine Lessons & Carols

EPIPHANY CAROL SERVICE

Sunday 12 January at 6.00 pm at Corpus Christi, Collier Row
A Service of Lessons & Carols marking the end of the Christmas season

THE LITURGICAL CALENDAR THIS WEEK . . .

Monday is the **Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary** – this year the feast is transferred from its usual date (8 December) which is the Second Sunday of Advent. From the very first moments of her existence, in the womb of her mother, St Anne, Our Lady was preserved from the state of Original Sin: she was 'full of grace'. Saint Pope Paul VI wrote that this feast, falling as it does early in Advent, is also the 'basic preparation for the coming of the Saviour, as well as the happy beginning of the Church, without spot or wrinkle'.

Friday is the **Memorial of St Lucy** - another of those martyr-saints from the early Church, so popular in their own time, but about whom we have few details now.

Saturday is the **Memorial of St John of the Cross** - one of the many saints who came forward after the Reformation upheaval. With St Teresa of Avila he renewed the great Carmelite Order. His poems and other writings – spiritual classics – are still widely read.