

St Thomas of Canterbury

Archdiocese of Southwark CIO

Registered Incorporated Charity Number 1173050



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3rd SUNDAY OF ADVENT (A), 14 December 2025

Sat 13 St Lucy, Virgin

4.45-5.15pm Confessions

5.30pm Thanksgiving (PH)

Sun 14 3rd SUNDAY OF ADVENT (A)

Gaudete Sunday

2nd collection for Christmas flowers & decorations

9am Maura Griffin RIP

11am People of the Parish – Fr Michael Gwinnell RIP

Refreshments after both Masses in the Becket

Centre – all welcome

Mon 15 Funeral Mass

10.30am Frans Nitzsche RIP

1.30pm Burial, Rye, East Sussex

Tues 16 Feria of Advent

9.30am Aidan Kelly RIP (CW)

Wellbeing of Justine Sweeney

7pm Advent Reconciliation Service with individual confessions – St Thomas'

Wed 17 Feria of Advent – O Sapientia (Wisdom)
No Mass today

6.50pm Advent Course 4: Golf Road Comm Centre

Thurs 18 Feria of Advent – O Adonai (Lord)

12noon Jean Ellis RIP (SD)

Fri 19 Feria of Advent - O Radix Jesse (Root of Jesse)

12noon Ints of Elizabeth Ejoh & Family

Sat 20 Feria of Advent–O Clavis David (Key of David)

4.45-5.15pm Confessions

5.30pm People of the Parish – Fr Francis Parkinson RIP

Sun 21 4th SUNDAY OF ADVENT (A)

O Oriens (Dawn of the East)

9am Kate, Sidney, Noel & Colin Sturla RIP

11am Stanley Kent RIP (MB)

Refreshments after both Masses in the Becket

Centre – all welcome

3rd Sunday of Advent (A), p9

1st reading: Isaiah 35:1-6a.10

Response Ps 146: Come, Lord, and save us.

2nd Reading: James 5:7-10

ALLELUIA, ALLELUIA. The Spirit of the LORD is upon me; he has sent me to proclaim good news to the poor.

ALLELUIA!

GOSPEL: Matthew 11:2-11

Pope Leo's Prayer Intention for December 2025, for Christians in areas of conflict: Let us pray for Christians living in areas of war or conflict, especially in the Middle East, to be seeds of peace, reconciliation and hope.

Parish News

Please pray for the repose of the souls of Frans Nitzsche, Jean Ellis and Gerard McQuillan. The Funeral Mass for Frans is here on Monday 15 December at 10.30am, followed by burial in Rye, East Sussex. Please also pray for Corry, his wife, and for their family. The Funeral Mass for Jean was celebrated here on Thursday 11 December. Please also pray for Sue, her daughter, and the wider family. Gerard died on 11 December. Please keep his family in your prayers. Funeral arrangements have not yet been made.

Sick & housebound parishioners: Please keep in your prayers all who are sick and housebound, all who care for them, and all who have requested our prayers: Mary Collins, Mike Sykes, June Bartels, Josie O'Keeffe, Graham Edwards, Maureen Sipek and Paul Dale. Please continue to pray for the good health of HM The King.

Congratulations to Mary Collins who celebrated her 94th birthday on 12 December 2025.

Tuesday Rosary at Sacred Heart Chapel will resume on Tuesday 13 January 2026 at 11am. Many thanks to Jim Davenport and to all members of the Rosary Group for this important prayer ministry in our parish.

The Forward Trust is immensely grateful for the warm welcome last weekend. Diana spoke movingly about her life and how the **Forward Trust** has been vital in helping her to turn her life in a new direction. Thank you for your generosity in the 2nd collection: £435.50 was raised in cash donations and £355 on the Dona machine. **Total: £790.50** Very many thanks. More information on the Forward Trust can be found at www.forwardtrust.org.uk

The Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill is now in the **House of Lords** for scrutiny. **The Catholic Union** has [21 suggested points](#) 'to put in your own words in letters to your local newspaper, or newsletters of organisations which you belong to' or to our local MP: mike.tapp.mp@parliament.uk

There is very helpful guidance on writing to a Peer on our Bishops' website: [How to write to Peers in the House of Lords - Catholic Bishops' Conference](#)

Children's Liturgy: all children are warmly invited to come to the 5.30pm Mass on Christmas Eve dressed as Nativity characters (Mary, Joseph, Shepherd, Angel, or donkey) for the Blessing of the Crib and the placing of the Child Jesus in the crib.

CHRISTMAS LUNCH: St Thomas' Day, Monday 29 December at 12:45pm, following Mass at 12noon. The lunch is primarily for our senior citizens and those who are by themselves over the Christmas period. We have room for 40 guests. There is no charge. **Today, Sunday 14 December, is the final day to book.**

Ben Bano is organising a pre Christmas collection for the hundreds of migrants who are stuck in Calais in appalling conditions as winter sets in. The items most needed are men's coats and jackets in good condition sizes small and medium. Toiletries also welcome, as well as sleeping bags. If you can help please contact Ben on **07887 651117** or email him on benbano@aol.com to arrange collection.

Red Missio Boxes 2025 Thank you all who have returned the collections from the Missio boxes. To date this has raised £644.42. The final total will be higher, once all online donations have been added from the parish. We will know the final total in the Spring of 2026. With thanks, as always, to John Letts for his organisation of donations and red boxes.

Christmas flowers and decorations: there is a 2nd collection this weekend for flowers and decorations for Christmas. Many thanks.

Summary of Offertory Giving for November 2025: Cash and bank total: £2,484.67, standing orders £4,568.08, Dona contactless £992.94, Total £8,045.69, of which £1,113.63 is Gift Aid. Included in the overall figure of £8,045.69, was £156.73 for the Archbishop's appeal and £275.31 for the Catholic Youth Services, £66 for Advent books and £100 for heating costs. Thank you all for your continued generosity!

The Christmas Offering 2025 Priests in our diocese do not receive an annual salary. Fr Brian's parish income comes from the Christmas & Easter offerings and stipends for Masses, Baptisms & Funerals. Of all these, the collection taken at Christmas is usually the largest single amount. Your December Standing Orders do not go to Fr Brian, so unless you make a specific payment at Christmas he will not benefit. There are several ways you can make a Christmas Offering: [1] By cash/cheque (cheques should be made payable to 'RCAS Deal': please place your contribution in a Christmas Offering envelope (available at the back of the church), including your name and address if you wish to Gift Aid. The Gift Aid goes to the parish and not to Fr Brian. The envelope can be dropped in to the offertory basket at Mass or posted through the presbytery door. [2] By using the card machine in the church. [3] By using the DONATE button on our website. [4] By bank transfer to NatWest: Account Name: RCAS Deal Account No: 09658378 Sort Code: 52-30-23 Reference: Christmas Offering

ADVENT 2025

Advent reflection 4:

Wednesday 17 December opens the second phase of the Advent season when our focus shifts to the birth of the Christ child in Bethlehem and we sing the great O antiphons at Vespers, the evening prayer of the Church. In the English speaking world they are best known in their combined form as the hymn, *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*. The first letters of the titles, from last to first, appear to form a Latin acrostic, **Ero cras**. The phrase is created by taking the first letter of each of the last of the seven titles of the O Antiphons and reversing them: Sapientia (Wisdom), Adonai (Lord), Radix (Root of Jesse), Clavis (Key of David), Oriens (Dayspring), Rex (King), Emmanuel (Emmanuel). When reversed, these letters spell out **Ero cras**, which translates 'I will be (there) tomorrow' or 'I will come tomorrow'. The phrase is a powerful message of hope and anticipation during Advent, with Christ promising to come at Christmas, fulfilling prophecies and human longing.

Today is GAUDETE SUNDAY when we REJOICE that the Lord is near. The rose candle on the Advent wreath is lit. The illuminated church Christmas tree is blessed at all Masses this weekend. The Crib is in the Lady Chapel and will be blessed at the evening and night Masses on Christmas Eve. The Crib collection is shared between the Southwark Catholic Children's Society and Friends of the Holy Land. The Crib will remain in place until the Feast of Presentation of the Lord, 2 February 2026.

Tuesday 16 December 2025: Advent Reconciliation Service with individual confessions at 7pm at St Thomas'. This is a joint service with Mongeham & Sandwich parish. There are some leaflets at the back of the church to explain the sacrament and how to make a good confession.

Advent Course: The third Advent Talk, a live-streamed presentation from Catholic speaker Mauro Iannicelli, was again well attended and encouraged some interesting conversation. Thanks to all who attended. The final meeting will take place between 6.50pm and 8pm on **Wednesday 17th December** at Golf Road Community Centre. Please come along to find out what great depth there is in Scripture and as support for our Advent journey. The Gospel reading will be that of the 4th Sunday of Advent - **Matthew 1:18-24** All are very welcome. For more information about Mauro and his ministry: www.comeandsee.org

CHRISTMAS 2025 - Mass times

Wednesday 24 December Christmas Eve: Masses at 5.30pm and 10pm (Carols at 9.30pm)
PLEASE NOTE: NO MIDNIGHT MASS
Thursday 25 December CHRISTMAS DAY
Mass at 11am

Monday 29 December, Solemnity of St Thomas of Canterbury Mass at 12noon, followed by Christmas lunch in the Becket Centre.

Prayer for Peace & Justice

O God of peace, who are peace itself, and whom a spirit of discord cannot grasp, nor a violent mind receive, grant that those who are one in heart may persevere in what is good and that those in conflict may forget evil and so be healed. Amen.



What brings joy to your life? An important question on Gaudete Sunday!

As Pope Francis reminded us: *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. We become fully human when we become more than human, when we let God bring us beyond ourselves in order to attain the fullest truth of our being ... for if we have received the love which restores meaning to our lives, how can we fail to share that love with others? The joy of the Gospel is for all people; no one can be excluded* (The Joy of the Gospel: 1,8,23)



A blessed week, Fr Brian