

St Thomas of Canterbury Sevenoaks

Sunday Mass times:

Saturday
6:00pm

Sunday
8:00am (Latin)
9:15am (Children's Liturgy of Word)
11:15am
6:00pm

Adoration:

Monday 8:30am - 9:30am
Tuesday 6:00pm - 7:00pm

Weekday Mass times:

Monday 8:00am
Tuesday 9:30am
Wednesday 8:00am
Thursday 12:00noon
Friday 8:00am
Saturday 9:30am

Sacrament of Reconciliation:

Saturday 10:00am - 10:30am
5:15pm - 5:45pm

Fathers' day off:

Assistant Priests: **Monday**
Parish Priest: **Tuesday**



12 Granville Road,
Sevenoaks TN13 1ER

Parish Secretary: **Silvana Wuttke**

Parish Office: **Monday-Friday**
9.00am-12:00noon

Tel: 01732 454177
sevenoaks@rcaos.org.uk
www.sevrccparish.org



High Street, Otford
TN14 5PH

MOST HOLY TRINITY OTFORD

Mass times: Sunday 9:30am
(with Children's Liturgy of the Word)
Wednesday 10:00am
Holy Days of Obligation 10:00am
Adoration: Thursday 7:30pm - 8:30pm
Friday 11:00am - 12:00noon

Church contact:

Barry Authers
Tel: 01959 524362
sevenoaksmht@rcaos.org.uk



Western Rd, Borough Green
TN15 8AG

St Joseph's BOROUGH GREEN

Mass times: Sunday 9:30am
(with Children's Liturgy of the Word)
Thursday 10:00am
Adoration: Thursday 10.30am-11.00am
Holy Days of Obligation 6:00pm

Church contact:

Antoni Offert
Tel: 07513 041075
sevenoaks@rcaos.org.uk



Fawkham Rd, West Kingsdown
TN15 6JP

St Bernadette's West Kingsdown

Mass times: Sunday 11:00am
Friday 10:00am
Holy Days of Obligation 11:00am
Adoration: Wed 12:00noon- 1:00pm

Church contacts:

Jill & John Gobel
Tel: 01474 853676
sevenoaks@rcaos.org.uk



St Thomas' catholic primary school

South Park,
Sevenoaks, TN13 1EH
www.saintthomas.co.uk

Headteacher:
Ms Geraldine Leahy
Tel: 01732 453921

GIVE A LITTLE GIFT AID FORM



Archdiocese of
Southwark

PARISH OF ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY SEVENOAKS

CHURCHES IN SEVENOAKS, OTFORD,
BOROUGH GREEN AND WEST KINGSDOWN



Parish Newsletter

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

1st December 2024

*Be alert at all times, praying
that you may have the strength
to escape all these things that will take place,
and to stand before the Son of Man.*

Luke 21:36



Dear Friends,

This Sunday marks the beginning of a new liturgical year and the season of Advent, a time of preparation, expectation, and hope. The word "Advent" comes from the Latin *adventus*, meaning "coming" or "arrival," and during these four weeks the Church invites us to reflect deeply on the threefold coming of Christ: His incarnation as a child in Bethlehem, His presence among us now, and His glorious return at the end of time.

In the Gospel (Luke 21:25-28, 34-36) this weekend Jesus speaks of signs in the heavens, distress among the nations, and the roaring of the seas. These powerful images might seem alarming, yet they carry a sincere message of hope. Jesus encourages us not to fear but to stand tall and lift our heads high, for these signs proclaim the nearness of our redemption. For those who live in trust and faith, His return is not a moment of dread but of joy, fulfilment, and salvation.

Advent is a season of reorientation, inviting us to pause amidst the busyness of life and focus our hearts on what truly matters. Just as the people of Israel waited with longing for the promised Messiah, we are called to wait with anticipation, preparing not just for the celebration of Christmas but for the fulfilment of God's ultimate promise: the return of Christ in glory.

This Advent also brings a noticeable change: we are now using the newly updated lectionaries with a fresh translation of the Scriptures. We are grateful to everyone who generously donated towards the purchase of these liturgical books. Please remember, that if your personal Sunday Missal will have to be replaced with the updated version, which is available in our Repository shop or can be ordered on demand.

Let this Advent be a time of renewal and watchfulness. May we find the strength to focus on prayer, simplify our lives, and deepen our relationship with God, so we are ready to welcome Him at every moment.

Wishing you a blessed and hope-filled Advent,

Fr Peter

Contacts & organisations

Presbytery and Parish Office: 12 Granville Road, Sevenoaks, TN13 1ER
Website: www.sevrcparish.org.uk **Tel:** 01732 454177

Parish Priest: Fr Piotr Kucharski (piotr.kucharski@rcaos.org.uk)
Assistant Priest: Fr John Eyike (john.eyike@rcaos.org.uk)
Parish Deacon: Rev'd Neil Philipson (neil.philipson@rcaos.org.uk)

Parish Secretary: Silvana Wuttke (sevenoaks@rcaos.org.uk)
Parish Office Hours: Monday to Friday 9:00am-12:00noon
Webmaster: Barry Authers: sevenoakswebmaster@rcaos.org.uk

Safeguarding Rep: Ken Baines (sevenoaksg1@safeguardrcaos.org.uk)
Safeguarding DBS: Sally Kelly (sevenoaksg2@safeguardrcaos.org.uk)

The Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator can be contacted on 020 7261 1606; in an emergency dial 999

PASTORAL & FINANCE COMMITTEES

Parish Finance Committee

Secretary: Mary Scott - 3maryscott@gmail.com

Holy Trinity, Otford

Secretary: Barry Authers - sevenoaksmht@rcaos.org.uk

St Joseph's, Borough Green

Secretary: John Foley - johnandmariefoley@gmail.com

St Bernadette's, West Kingsdown

Secretary: Jill Gobel - jill.gobel@btinternet.com

Gift Aid: Sean Corrigan: sevenoaksgac@rcaos.org.uk

Parish Lead for Formation:

Adrian Pinington

Parish Lead for Catechesis:

Trish Pinington

Parishes Lead for Evangelisation:

Andrew La Trobe & Sue Sylvester

LITURGY

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament Coordinator

Barry Authers: sevenoaksadoration@rcaos.org.uk

Altar Servers (St Thomas's)

Catherine Ingram: ingramfamily15@yahoo.com

Children's Liturgy of the Word, Sunday Mass

⇒ *Sevenoaks, 9:15am Mass:*

Mark O'Prey: sevenoaks@rcaos.org.uk

⇒ *Otford, 9:30am Mass:*

Catherine Bennett: sevenoaks@rcaos.org.uk

⇒ *Borough Green, 9:30am Mass:*

Fiona Newton: fionanewton321@btinternet.com

Choirs

Music Group: Lonnie Christophers lonniechr@hotmail.com

Traditional Choir: Barbara Page 01732 454729

Borough Green: Chris Hurl chris.hurl@outlook.com

Music Rota and Volunteers:

Kathleen Bouverie: kcbouverie@yahoo.com

Readers, Ministers & Welcomers Rota (St Thomas's)

Andrew Pembroke: st.thomas.rota@gmail.com

SACRAMENTS & CATECHESIS

Confirmation Programme

Gabrielle Ellis: sevenoaksconfirmation@rcaos.org.uk

First Holy Communion & Reconciliation Programme

Catherine Tan: sevenoaksfhc@rcaos.org.uk

RCIA (for adults becoming Catholic):

Andrew Wilkinson: sevenoaksrcia@rcaos.org.uk

PRAYER & WELLBEING

Mothers' Prayers

⇒ Mondays at 11:30am at Star House, Star Hill Road 01959 532505

⇒ Thursday after the 12noon Mass in the Parish Centre

Parent & Toddlers Group

Tuesdays 10:00am - 12:00noon MH Room

Mary Hunt 07890 229794

Lectio Divina

Kathie Gonzalez 01732 761253

Listening to you (Bereavement Support)

Third Monday, 10:30am until midday in Parish Room

Sarah Harrison, Kate Travers, Ann Livingston, Sally Haggarty.

Contact via sevenoaks@rcaos.org.uk

Retreats

Catherine Roger: c.rodger@btinternet.com

Scripture Fellowship

Reading a Gospel together

Andrew Wilkinson: andrewwilkos@gmail.com

Quiet Days

Gilly Ferner - gf58b@icloud.com

SOCIAL ACTION

Caritas Representative: Gina Hartnett

(gina.hartnett@hotmail.com)

Catenians (social club for Catholic men)

Mark O'Prey

Knights of St Columba

Br David Havard: action.youth@kscsouthwark.org

Loaves and Fishes Foodbank

Isabelle Mercer: h.imercer@btopenworld.com

St Vincent de Paul Society (SVP)

Contact Paul Boyle 07918 808222

St Thomas' Coffee Morning

Thursdays 10:15-11:45am in our Parish Centre.

Contact Frances Smith at francesrsmith@hotmail.com

Union of Catholic Mothers (UCM) (West Kingsdown)

Ann Vallins: annvallins@yahoo.com

OTHER MINISTRIES

Church Cleaning (St Thomas's)

James McSharry: jamesmcsharry@hotmail.com

Church Flowers (St Thomas's)

Kate Travers: katetravers521@hotmail.com

St Thomas's Repository

Esther Ford: sevenoaksrepository@rcaos.org.uk

Please contact the Parish Office if you can help.

The Advent of God and Humanity...



Joshua Abraham Heschel, a Jewish theologian and philosopher, wrote in one of his books that a single phrase ties together the entire Bible—a cry filled with longing and fatherly tenderness, reminiscent of Jesus' parable of the Merciful Father. This cry is familiar to us from the Book of Genesis: "Adam, where are you?" (Genesis 3:9). It is God seeking humanity and humanity, in its innermost being, seeking God - the Advent of God and humanity. But let us start at the beginning.

THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL. The world created by God was secure and harmonious. It is significant that the Bible begins with the Hebrew letter *beth*, which symbolises a "house." Thus, Bethel means "House of the Most High," and Bethlehem, "House of Bread." Humanity could freely enjoy the abundance of the biblical paradise, and was completely cared for by God, free from suffering and death. Everything fell apart because of the ill-fated symbolic tree of the "knowledge" of good and evil. The introduction us to a paradox: don't we read the Bible, go to church, and pray to understand what is good and what is evil? Why, then, did God forbid the first parents from eating the fruit of this tree? The answer lies in the Hebrew verb *yada*, which means "to know" but also carries the connotations of intimate knowledge (as between spouses) and "to hold" or "to decide." From this comes *Yad Vashem*, the institution committed to preserving and deciding on the memory of Jewish Holocaust victims.

When humanity replaced God as the decider of good and evil, good was called evil, and evil was called good. Consequently, humans abandoned God and could no longer remain in paradise.

RESTORING THE ORDER OF PARADISE. This was Jesus' missions. The Messiah did this with extraordinary precision, calling good what is good and evil what is evil. For example, as with the Pharisees who came to test Him about the possibility of divorcing one's wife (Matthew 19:3-8). This restoration is also evident in Jesus' miracles, many of which involved healing the sick as it is in our nature to see, walk, and function properly. Miracles do not contradict nature; they restore its proper order. In Christ, the Advent of God is fulfilled because in Him the truth of the loving Father is fully revealed. There will be no further revelation. In Christ, God has said everything He wished to say to humanity. It is enough to believe and accept Jesus' redemption to follow Him into salvation—into paradise. This paradise is not a mythical place in the clouds with angels bouncing around; it is the state of bliss and harmony that existed at the beginning.

THAT WE MIGHT BECOME CHILDREN OF GOD... During the Christmas season, we read the magnificent prologue of John's Gospel. I recall one celebration when I was struck by the reason for Jesus' coming. Why did the Word become flesh and "pitch its tent among us" (a beautiful allusion to *tabernaculum*, the Latin word for "tent")? Theologically, we might say: to redeem us, to open the way to salvation. Yet these words resonated deeply with me: "But to all who did accept Him, He gave power to become children of God, to those who believed in His name, who were born not from blood, nor from the will of the flesh, nor from the will of man, but from God" (John 1:12-13). Jesus came—the Word became flesh—so that we might become children of God. It reminds me of Christ's words: "Unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3b).

Our life's Advent must be lived like children. A child is wholly dependent on its parents, receiving from them everything essential for life. This is the essence of the first Beatitude: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3). Jesus and the apostles had money, and not a small amount (see John 6:7), yet they were spiritually poor. Adam and Eve in paradise had everything yet were spiritually poor. To such belongs the kingdom of heaven. A child also values and sees the world through the eyes of its parents. Jesus taught us to view the world through the Father's perspective, to be children of God who are not driven by lust or earthly concerns but born of God.

In Advent, we look to Mary, the perfect child of God that exemplifies this trust. Her heart was immaculate, not only through divine privilege (see Luke 1:28c) but also because she trusted God's judgment, calling good what is good and evil what is evil. Our hearts remain impure because we still struggle to trust the Father.

THE ADVENT OF HUMANITY... We await the Parousia—the final coming of Christ—when the harmony of the biblical paradise will be fully restored. This earthly Advent is meant to help us grow with and in Him. That crying infant in the manger will soon stand as a grown man at the Jordan, beginning His public ministry. "He must increase; I must decrease," said John the Baptist (John 3:30). This is yet another paradox: as He increases within me, I too grow—toward salvation, toward a wise and fulfilling Advent of my life.

Parish and other NOTICES

ADVENT. As we prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ this Advent, why not make time for quiet prayer and reflection before the Lord in Eucharistic Adoration?

Here are the **Adoration** times across our churches:

St. Thomas of Canterbury, Sevenoaks:

Mondays, 8:30–9:30am & Tuesday, 6:00–7:00pm

St. Joseph's, Borough Green:

Thursdays, 10:30–11:00am

St. Bernadette's, West Kingsdown:

Wednesdays, 12:00–1:00pm

Most Holy Trinity, Otford

Thursdays, 7:30–8:30pm & Fridays 11:00am–12:00pm

Please make a special effort to attend our ADVENT SPECIALS: **Taizé Prayer Evening** – Saturday, 7th December, at 7:15 pm; and **Rorate Candle Mass** – Wednesday, 18th December, at 7:30 pm (candlelit, honouring the Blessed Virgin Mary).

Make time this Advent to prepare your heart through the **Sacrament of Reconciliation**. Confessions are available every Saturday at 10:00–10:30am and 5:15–5:50 pm.

PARISH MORNING OF REFLECTION AND TRAINING FOR READERS. We warmly invite all parish readers to this a special meeting on Saturday, 7th December. We aim to offer a dedicated time to deepen our appreciation and understanding of the ministry of reading the Word of God at Mass and other services.

9:30am Holy Mass with the blessing for readers

10:15am Instruction and reflection in the Parish Centre, on the new lectionary translation

11:45am some practical advice

12:00pm closing prayer with the Angelus.

This is a wonderful opportunity to grow in this vital ministry, ensuring we serve the Word with greater clarity and reverence. We look forward to welcoming you for this time of enrichment and prayer.

ENHANCED LISTENING SKILLS COURSE to enhance skills you already have. It is an interactive course which could help you both in your daily life, and in a range of settings from ministry in visiting people or supporting people to working as a mentor at school or work. The course will be held over 2 dates: 29th November and 6th December from 7-9pm. It will be led by Sue Buddin who is a very experienced former Relate counsellor and trainer. She has kindly agreed to run this course for us in our parish on a voluntary basis in our Parish Centre. Tea and coffee will be provided. There is a limit on numbers attending so please book with either Catherine Rodger at c.rodger@btinternet.com or Gina Hartnett at gina.hartnett@hotmail.com.

FATHER VIPIN'S WELCOME MASS is scheduled for Saturday 14th of December, at 5:30pm at St Lawrence Church, followed by refreshments in the hall after the service. All are welcome.

ST THOMAS'S CHURCH CLEANING ON THURSDAY 12/12 FROM 10AM-11AM AND SATURDAY 14/12 FROM 2PM-3PM. Christmas is fast approaching and it would be wonderful to give our church a deep clean! Do you have just one hour to spare? No experience required, just enthusiasm to present Our Lord's House at its best for this most holy feast. Just turn up (side door opposite the Presbytery) and if you have any questions contact James at jamesmcsharry@hotmail.com or call 07917032024.

CHRISTMAS CRIBS. Our team is now getting the cribs in the windows and on the shelves of shops in central Sevenoaks. If you see a spot at Tubbs Hill, Bat and Ball or Dunton Green (usually independent businesses) we would be glad to hear *asap* to try to follow up the lead. Thank you. You may contact Pat Harman or write an email to sevenoaks@rcaos.org.uk.

ST THOMAS' CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL PTA. Volunteers will be selling tickets for our Christmas hamper raffle after Mass for the next two weekends. The raffle will be drawn on Friday 13th December. We will be raffling some fantastic hampers, each with a different theme. Money raised by the PTA is greatly appreciated by our parish school and supports the children's learning experience.

REPOSITORY OPENING TIMES THIS WEEK:

Sat. 30th Nov: after 6pm Mass; **Sun. 1st Dec:** after 6pm Mass; **Tuesday 3rd Dec:** after 9:30 mass; **Sat. 7th Dec:** after 6pm mass and **Sun. 8th Dec:** after 8am mass. Advent calendars and Christmas cards are available, as well as other items, including copies of the new CTS New Sunday Missal, People's Ed. Any queries, please email Esther Ford at sevenoaksrepository@rcaos.org.uk.

BEREAVEMENT. There will be no Bereavement Support on the third Monday in December but if you would really like someone to listen to you, please contact the Parish Office and we will be happy to arrange a mutually convenient time. The next date will be on Monday, 20th January in the Parish Room from 10.30 to midday.

MASS INTENTIONS

All masses are at St Thomas' CHURCH unless otherwise stated

SUNDAY 1st DECEMBER FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT (C)

6:00pm (<i>Sat</i>)	People of the Parish
8:00am (<i>Latin</i>)	Lorna Currie RIP and comfort for the family
9:15am	Ursula McGloughlin
11:15am	Thomas Giblin RIP
6:00pm	Paddy Stack RIP and all the Stack family
9:30am <i>Otford</i>	John Harrington RIP
9:30am <i>Borough Green</i>	Recovery and wellbeing of Father Patrick Zammit
11:00am <i>West Kingsdown</i>	Hilary Fernandez - Happy Birthday

Monday 2nd

8:00am	Suzi Elliot RIP
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Tuesday 3rd

9:30am	St Frances Xavier, Priest Melroy Dudly DeZilva
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Wednesday 4th

8:00am	R. J. Hilton RIP (anniversary)
10:00am <i>Otford</i>	Good health and safe holiday travels of donor and family

Thursday 5th

10:00am <i>Borough Green</i>	Alden Pais RIP and comfort for the family
12:00noon	Safe overseas travels of donor and family

Friday 6th

8:00am	Canon Philip Donnelly RIP
10:00am <i>West Kingsdown</i>	Canon John RIP (100th birthday)

Saturday 7th

9:30am	St Ambrose, Bishop and Doctor Kenneth D'Souza RIP (anniversary)
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SUNDAY 8th DECEMBER SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT (C)

6:00pm (<i>Sat</i>)	Terri Craig - well being
8:00am (<i>Latin</i>)	Melroy DudlyDeZilva
9:15am	Celia Costello RIP
11:15am	Good health of Joan and Richard Smith
6:00pm	People of the Parish
9:30am <i>Otford</i>	Father William John Bradle RIP
9:30am <i>Borough Green</i>	Peter Ringham RIP
11:00am <i>West Kingsdown</i>	Holy Souls

PRAY FOR THE SICK

Micheal Bunton, Helena Kendrick, Milena Currall, Sue Spilstead, Elizabeth Sherratt, Philip Hardaker, Paulina Andrea, Zamora Hernandez, Mavis Mitchell Lambert, Toni Barrett, Frank Easterbrook, Lynne Stanley, Veronica Williams, Yvonne Bollen, Ann Steven, Sean Cloke, Ann Farren, Maureen Beadle and all in care and nursing homes in the Parish.

ANNIVERSARIES IN DECEMBER

Norah Leahy, Tim Leahy, Bert Spokes, Deidre Thomas, Gabriel Nye, Kathleen Smith, Robert Angibault, Tony Stevenson, Maureen Hanton, Molly Suwala, Edward Hibling, Sr Margaret Colson, Hazel Molloy, Rowland Connolly, Ignace Van Kan, Bernard Molland, Theresa Hart, Augustus Schnorr, Canon Donnelly, Annie Berry, John Horgan, Mark Otto, Margaret Salt, William Sherratt, Dolly de Havilland, Eileen Mackey, Martin Williams, Norah Salt, John Gerelli, Therese Rucker, David Cantwell, Ron Jones, Eileen Fowley, Mary Parr, Daphne Gobel, Allison Tilling, Mercedes Mora, Rev Thomas Quinn, Mary Gannon, Albert Goldsmith, Bertie Jordan, Derek Turpin, David Fowdrey,

**Eternal rest grant unto them
O Lord, and let perpetual light
shine upon them.**

May they rest in peace. Amen.

RECENTLY DIED

Bernadette Frances Butterworth

funeral on Wednesday 4th December (1:30pm) at St Thomas'

Jane Franklin

funeral on Tuesday 17th December (11:30pm) at St Thomas'

Josephine Bell

funeral on Wednesday 18th December (12.30pm) at Bluebell Crematorium

May they rest in peace

LATIN ANTIPHONS

AD INTROITUM:

Ad te levávi ánimam meam, Deus meus, in te confido, non erubéscam. Neque irrideant me inimíci mei, étenim univérsi qui te expéctant non confundéntur.

AD COMMUNIONEM:

Dóminus dabit benignitátem, et terra nostra dabit fructum suum.