

## 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](http://www.sevrccparish.org)



Archdiocese of  
Southwark

## PARISH OF ST THOMAS OF CANTERBURY SEVENOAKS

CHURCHES IN SEVENOAKS, OTFORD,  
BOROUGH GREEN AND WEST KINGSDOWN



Parish Newsletter

**SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

8th December 2024



As we enter the second week of Advent, this Sunday's Psalm presents a dreamlike image of joy and hope—a road filled with liberated captives returning to Jerusalem, their mouths filled with laughter and their tongues rejoicing. This vision recalls Israel's deliverance from exile in Babylon while also inviting us to reflect on the great works the Lord has done in our own lives and the promise of even greater things to come.

Advent is a season of hope, not only for remembering the past but also for preparing for the future. As St Paul tells us, "He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion." Like Israel in exile, we are called to turn away from sin and follow the road John the Baptist describes—a path of repentance and renewal that leads us closer to Christ.

This journey of faith is also a journey of life — a life that is sacred and precious at every stage. In Advent, we recall the truth of the Incarnation: in taking on human flesh, God entered our world of suffering, illness, and death. The Almighty chose to share in our weakness and brokenness so that He might redeem us. Through His Incarnation, God reveals the infinite worth of every human life, even in its most vulnerable moments. Christ Himself embraced the cross, showing us that pain and sacrifice can become sources of redemption and grace. By embracing those who suffer, we bear witness to the love and mercy of God. This is our calling as Christians — to accompany and support those in need, especially when their lives are marked by challenges and suffering.

In recent days, the passing of the assisted suicide bill in Parliament has raised urgent questions about the value we place on life, particularly the lives of the most vulnerable. Archbishop John Wilson has described this as a "seismic and concerning shift," reminding us that true compassion means accompanying those who suffer, offering care and presence, not facilitating the ending of life.

St Benedict of Nursia, in his *Rule*, emphasised that prayer should be the foundation and culmination of every Christian action. **I invite you to join in prayer at our Rorate Candle Mass on Wednesday, 18th December, at 7:30pm at St Thomas' Church.** This beautiful candlelit celebration in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary will be offered for the protection of life, from conception to natural death. As the flickering candles light up the darkness, they remind us of the light of Christ, our hope and guide in every moment of our lives. Let us come together this Advent season to pray for a culture that upholds the dignity of every human life, especially those marked by pain and vulnerability. May our faith stir us to action, our hope fill us with courage, and our love inspire us to defend and cherish the gift of life.

Yours in Christ,

*Fr Peter*



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](http://www.saintthomas.co.uk)

**Headteacher:**  
Ms Geraldine Leahy  
Tel: 01732 453921

GIVE A LITTLE



GIFT AID FORM



# 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 Hurll chris.hurll@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 O1959 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.

## How I see the Immaculate Conception Of the Blessed Virgin Mary...



The Blessed Virgin Mary is the undisputed central figure of Advent, with 8th December (this year, exceptionally observed on 9th December) commemorating the dogma of her Immaculate Conception. Often, this dogma is misunderstood as a privilege. The word "privilege" might bring to mind something that conveys benefits, like an award or honour. This raises a natural question: why did she receive this, and not me? When we frame it as a privilege—of the Immaculate Conception, of the Assumption, or of perpetual virginity—we risk portraying Mary as a superhuman figure, leaving us unsure of how to relate to her. One might think: isn't Jesus sufficient? He is, after all, the sole Saviour.

However, it is more accurate to view the Immaculate Conception not as a privilege but as a sign. This is well captured with the Latin term *munus*, a word that encompasses both a gift and the responsibilities that flow from it. It is something good but given for a specific purpose.

Take, for example, a couple. A young man proposes, saying, "Will you marry me?" If the answer is "yes," he becomes the happiest man in the world. But in accepting, he receives the *munus* of being her fiancé, and later her husband. This is a great honour, but it comes with concrete duties and lifelong consequences. In Catholic teaching, marriage is a commitment that cannot be revoked — it's a sacrament for life. Similarly, parenthood and priesthood are lifelong callings. Once given, these identities cannot be renounced. They are gifts intertwined with responsibility. The Immaculate Conception, then, is Mary's *munus*. As God provides each person with what they need, Mary was given the grace of the Immaculate Conception because it was necessary for her mission as the mother of Jesus. It wasn't essential for us, and that's why we weren't given it.

The essence of the mystery of the Immaculate Conception lies in the fact that Mary was preserved from all stain of original sin through the merits of Jesus Christ, foreseen from all eternity. For many, the experience of sin, especially habitual sin, might create the impression that sin is foundational to their existence. Without grace — through neglect of confession, sacraments, and prayer — someone might begin to feel that sin is their natural state, as water is for fish. The Immaculate Conception refutes this notion. St Paul writes in Ephesians that God "chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless before him" (Eph 1:3-4). When

we are overcome by doubt, the Immaculate Conception reminds us that before sin existed, each of us was in God's plan, pure and unblemished. Mary is not presented as a figure to admire from afar but as a sign of our destiny. God will purify us as He purified Mary, and this process begins now through confession and self-examination.

Regular self-examination is essential. It is not merely a litany of sins but a tool to uncover who we truly are and where we stand in our journey. Think of it as consulting a map during a journey. Look at St. Joseph as an example. After marrying Mary, he discovered she was pregnant but didn't know how. As a young man from a small, humble village like Nazareth, Joseph faced a challenging dilemma. Out of compassion, he decided to quietly leave Mary and bear the blame himself. It was then that God revealed the mystery of Jesus's conception by the Holy Spirit. Through this trial, Joseph came to understand his true nature and calling. This leads us to the great task of self-discovery through regular self-examination, alongside God's promise: "You will be free from evil, I promise you." To understand this longing for freedom better, we might turn to the writings of Thomas Merton (see: *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander*) who described a mystical insight into the "point vierge," (or the "virgin point") the innermost centre of every person, untouched by sin, illusion, or self-awareness. It is a point of pure truth and beauty, entirely belonging to God — a place where the true essence of a person shines as God sees them. This aligns with the mystery of the Immaculate Conception, which reflects not only Mary's unique role but also the truth of every human being. While the Old Testament recounts humanity's repeated falls into sin, the Immaculate Conception marks a breakthrough: God begins a new chapter in creation by forming the New Eve — Mary, conceived without sin. This moment is both a starting point and the ultimate destination of human history.

When we say Mary is our mother, our model, and our guide, we mean that she shows us who we are in God's eyes. Everyone seeks to be free from sin and frustration, but we often take misguided paths because we fail to reflect on our conscience or consult our spiritual map.

This breathtaking mystery shows us who we truly are and the immense holiness within every person, even if it is buried beneath sin.

# Parish and other NOTICES

**NEXT WEEK SECOND COLLECTION** is for the Christmas Flowers. We are blessed to have a lovely team of volunteers in our Parish. Their work truly makes our churches beautiful and bring joy to everyone who enters. Your contribution is greatly appreciated.

**RORATE CANDLE MASS** on Wednesday, 18th December at 7:30pm. Join us for this candlelit Mass in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary, offered for the protection of life from conception to natural death and in reparation for sins against life.

**FOOD BANK.** As it is becoming traditional, Sevenoaks (Loaves & Fishes) Foodbank is relying on St Thomas' Parishioners to provide Christmas Cakes for his clients. We have between 40 and 50 people weekly who rely on us for their basic need and we are trying to give them the best Christmas possible. Cakes can be left in the Foodbank boxes at church. Thank you in advance for your generosity. *Isabelle Mercer*

**MOST HOLY TRINITY, OTFORD CHRISTMAS CLEANING** will be on Wednesday 11th December after 10:00 Mass in the parish room. All help gratefully received. Coffee will be provided.

**ST THOMAS'S CHURCH CHRISTMAS CLEANING on Thursday 12/12 from 10:00-11:00am and Saturday 14/12 from 2:00-3:00pm.** 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 [jamesmcsarry@hotmail.com](mailto:jamesmcsarry@hotmail.com) or call 07917032024.

**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 10:30am to midday.

**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 email [sevenoaks@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:sevenoaks@rcaos.org.uk).

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

**REPOSITORY OPENING TIMES THIS WEEK:**  
Sat. 7th Dec: after 6pm mass; Sun. 8th Dec: after 8am mass; Thursday 12th Dec: during Coffee Morning — 10:15 - 12noon; Sat. 14th Dec: after 6pm mass; Sun 15th Dec: after 6pm mass.  
A further selection of Christmas cards (and Advent calendars) is available, as well as other items, including copies of the new CTS Sunday Missal, People's Edition. We also stock prayer and devotional books, a variety of rosaries and other gifts. Any queries, please get in touch with Esther Ford at [sevenoaksrepository@rcaos.org.uk](mailto:sevenoaksrepository@rcaos.org.uk). Thank you very much for your support.

**ST THOMAS' CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL PTA.** Volunteers will be selling tickets for our Christmas hamper raffle after Mass this weekend. 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.

### CHRISTMAS SERVICES:

**Christmas Eve (Tuesday, 24th December)**  
5:00pm (Sevenoaks) - Family Mass with children's Nativity  
7:30pm (Otford) - Carol Service and Mass (8pm)  
9:30pm (Borough Green) - Carol Service & Mass (10pm)  
10.30pm (Sevenoaks) - Carol Service & Night Mass (11pm)  
**Christmas Day (Wednesday, 25th December)**  
8.00am (Sevenoaks) - Simple Mass (ENG)  
9.00am (Sevenoaks) - Family Mass  
9.30am (Otford) - Sung Mass  
9.30am (Borough Green) - Sung Mass  
11.00am (West Kingsdown) - Sung Mass  
11.15am (Sevenoaks) - Solemn Mass  
*No Mass in the evening.*

**THE CHILDREN'S VIGIL MASS WITH NATIVITY PLAY** will be held on Christmas Eve at 5:00pm. This will incorporate a nativity play at the beginning of Mass. Children in YR and above are invited to rehearse in the Church from 3.30pm. We will be looking for readers in Y4 and above. Younger children are invited to attend the Mass dressed as angels and shepherds. Please contact Catherine Bennett on 07712 702211 if your children would like to take part.

# MASS INTENTIONS

All masses are at St Thomas' CHURCH unless otherwise stated

**SUNDAY 8<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT (C)**  
6:00pm (Sat) Terri Craig - wellbeing  
8:00am (Latin) Melroy Dudley DeZilva  
9:15am Celia Costello RIP  
11:15am Good health of Joan and Richard Smith  
6:00pm People of the Parish  
9:30am Otford Father William John Bradle RIP  
9:30am Borough Green Peter Ringham RIP  
11:00am West Kingsdown Holy Souls  
**Monday 9<sup>th</sup> The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary**  
8:00am Canon Anthony Ford RIP  
**Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup>**  
9:30am Father Joseph Phillips RIP  
**Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup>**  
8:00am 1) Thomas Healy RIP  
2) Valerie Dias RIP - 1st Anniversary  
10:00am Otford Good health and successful treatment of Beulan Fernandes  
**Thursday 12<sup>th</sup>**  
10:00am Borough Green Chin Kimee Ayoung-Chee RIP  
12:00noon Birthday Mass - Ann Walsh  
**Friday 13<sup>th</sup> St Lucy, Virgin and Martyr**  
8:00am Helena Kendrick  
10:00am West Kingsdown Alice Ballard RIP  
**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> St John of the Cross, Priest and Doctor**  
9:30am Intentions for Lily and John Rooney and family

**SUNDAY 15<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT (C)**  
6:00pm (Sat) Wellbeing of John Smoker  
8:00am (Latin) People of the Parish  
9:15am Edward Reilly RIP  
11:15am Deacon Neil on the 15th Anniversary of Ordination  
6:00pm Health and conversion of Phillip R. J. Smith  
9:30am Otford Sister Eithne Donoghue  
9:30am Borough Green Margaret Havard RIP  
11:00am West Kingsdown The people of Kemsing

### 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

Eileen Edwards, Peter Miah, Patrick Donoghue, Mary Kitching, John O'Neill, Dora Acott, Hannah Cunningham, Sheila Lamb, Margaret & James Chambers, Lady Claire  
Followes, Marjorie Lindsey, Mary Lille, Canon Anthony Ford, Brian Burns, Mary Chamberlain, Yvonne Higgs, Harold Jaffa, Thomas O'Leary, Clifford Holmes, Beatrice St Clare Hill, Dennis Goodall, Mrs Henriques, Pat Coakley, Josephine Coakley, Peter Jones, Catherine Bond, Anna Anderson, Michael Goodall, Margaret Knowles, Joseph Ford, Rosamund Montagu, Michael Castelli, Mary Gatenby, June Smith, John Kerr, Phyllis Claydon, Vincent Askew,

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

### RECENTLY DIED

**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:**  
Pópulus Sion, ecce Dóminus véniet ad salvándas gentes; et audítam fáciét Dóminus glóriam vocis suæ in lætítia cordis vestri.  
**AD COMMUNIONEM:**  
Ierúsalem, surge et sta in excélsó, et vide iucunditátem, quæ véniet tibi a Deo tuo.