



# Fourth Sunday of Advent

Take me home!

21th of December

## Priest's Tidings

Our world is full of humble, ordinary people living in obscure hamlets, and yet some people like these have changed the course of the world. Within the history of the Church we are shown today the first person coming from such an ordinary milieu who by a simple phrase of her YES turned around the course of the world and the Church to be. It is Mary. Her YES to God, her "Here I am," gave to her and to us Jesus, the Son of God. It made possible the "Here I am, I come to do your will," of Jesus. Her YES and the YES of Jesus call us and the whole Church today to give our unconditional YES to God. Let us ask in this Eucharist that we may join Jesus and Mary in their YES. Then we can change the course of the world today.

To solve our human problems we have recourse to strong means, like authority, influence, money, and power. God's upsetting standards are quite different from ours. To save our world and us he joins people in their weakness and becomes human among us. The Savior is born not in the capital but in a sleepy rural town. He is born in poverty. He overthrows the power of evil with the apparent weakness of humility, obedience, and service. A woman and a child are at the beginning of our salvation. Let us recognize God's astonishing way of coming.

**Fr Hugo**



**Entrance Hymn:**

676 – Immortal, invisible, God only wise,

**Collect:**

Pour forth, we beseech you, O Lord, your grace into our hearts, that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ your Son was made known by the message of an Angel, may by his Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of his Resurrection. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

**Amen.**

## First Reading:

Reading from the book of second book of Isaiah 7:10-14.

On that day:

In those days: The Lord spoke to Ahaz: 'Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven.' But Ahaz said, 'I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test.' And Isaiah said, 'Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel.

This is the word of the Lord

**Thanks be to God.**

## **Responsorial Psalm Ps 24 (23)**

**R./Let the Lord enter; he is the king of glory.**

The Lord's is the earth and its fullness, the world, and those who dwell in it. It is he who set it on the seas; on the rivers he made it firm.**R/ Let the Lord enter; he is the king of glory.**

Who shall climb the mountain of the Lord? Who shall stand in his holy place? The clean of hands and pure of heart, whose soul is not set on vain things.

**R/ Let the Lord enter; he is the king of glory.**

Blessings from the Lord shall he receive, and right reward from the God who saves him. Such are the people who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob. **R/ Let the Lord enter; he is the king of glory.**

## Second Reading:

Reading from the letter of Romans 1:1-7

Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an Apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the

nations, including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ. To all those in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ..

**This is the word of the Lord**

**Thanks be to God**

**Gradual Hymn:**

30 – Come thou long -expected Jesus,

## **Gospel Reading**

Hear the The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to Matthew 1:18-24

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to send her away quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 'Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel' which means, God with us. When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife.

This is the Gospel of the Lord

**Praise to you, O Christ**

## Prayers of Intercession

**R/ God, come among us: make your home with us.**

God of freedom, we pray for all who are oppressed. We ask your blessing upon all who suffer through tyranny or terrorism. We remember all whose freedom has been diminished through war or violence. We pray for the poor, the hungry and the homeless. **R/ God, come among us: make your home with us.**

We give thanks for our homes and for all who love us. May we show your presence in our daily living. We pray for homes where there is neglect or lack

of love, where there is cruelty or deep selfishness. We remember all who live alone and those who are lonely. **R/ God, come among us: make your home with us.**

We give thanks for those who have taught us the faith by the example of the way they live. May we be a good example to others. Lord, bless our homes and our loved ones with the light of your presence. We remember all who are struggling in their relationships and those whose minds are full of doubt. **R/ Come, Lord, for our hope is in you.**

Lord, we come to you for renewal and healing. for strength and for light. We ask your blessing upon all who suffer from a disability or who are ill at this time. We remember those who are blind, lame or deaf and those who suffer from leprosy. We pray for all who have lost loved ones this week and for those who are caring for the terminally ill. **R/ Come, Lord, for our hope is in you.**

We remember all our loved ones departed, and we pray for any who have died recently. May they rejoice in the fullness of life and be with you in glory. Merciful Father, **accept these prayers for the sake of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen**

**Offertory Hymn:**

99 – Hail to the Lord's Anointed,

**Communion Hymn:**

494- I, the Lord of sea and sky,

**Post Communion Prayer:**

Heavenly Father, who chose the Blessed Virgin Mary to be the mother of the promised saviour: fill us your servants with your grace, that in all things we may embrace your holy will and with her rejoice in your salvation; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen

## **Recessional**

Blessed be the name of the Lord  
Blessed be the name of the Lord  
Blessed be the name of the Lord,  
Most High. X2  
Holy is the name of the Lord  
Holy is the name of the Lord  
Holy is the name of the Lord,  
Most High. X2  
The name of the Lord is a strong  
tower  
The righteous run into it and they  
are saved  
The name of the Lord is a strong  
tower  
The righteous run into it and they  
are saved.

Blessed be the name of the Lord,

Blessed be the name of the  
Lord5

Blessed be the name of the Lord  
Blessed be the name of the Lord,  
Most High. X2

Glory to the name of the Lord  
Glory to the name of the Lord  
Glory to the name of the Lord,  
Most High. X2

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This chorus can be repeated to  
include:

\* Holy is the name of the Lord  
and

\* Jesus is the name of the Lord

## **Prayer and Meditation**

### **Lectio:**

Matthew presents Jesus as the fulfilment of God's promises, tracing his lineage back to Abraham and David. While Luke focuses on Mary's encounter with the angel, Matthew highlights Joseph's dream, in which an angel assures him that Mary's child is from the Holy Spirit. Joseph obediently accepts Mary as his wife and names the child Jesus, meaning "the Lord saves." By doing so, Joseph gives Jesus legal descent from King David. Together, Mary and Joseph faithfully take part in God's plan of salvation, preparing the way for Jesus' mission.

### **Meditatio:**

- Think about Joseph. How must he have felt when Mary told him an angel had told her she would be the mother of God's son? Or that she was pregnant by the power of the Holy Spirit?
- What lessons can you learn from Joseph's willingness to act quickly when he knew what God wanted him to do?
- Jesus came to save people from their sins. What does this mean for you?
- God gives grace and strength to face impossible situations. When and where has He helped you?

## Oratio:

God promised to send a Messiah to save His people. Think about His faithfulness. Marvel that Jesus came to earth as Emmanuel, "God with us." What does this mean for you?



*On behalf of the parish priest, the clergy team, and the entire staff,  
we would like to wish our dear parish family a very Merry  
Christmas and a New Year full of blessings.  
May God, who comes to us in the smile of the Child Jesus,  
walk with you always,  
bless you abundantly,  
and fill your homes and your lives with peace, hope, and joy.*

## **What's happening in our Parish! Sunday—Mass at 9:30 a.m**

### **Mission WhatsApp Groups**

We have a series of WhatsApp groups with activities voted for by the congregation. Please have a look and see if you would like to join one: if you are already in one, please think of ways you can proactively help run the activity you have volunteered for.

### **Welcoming at our Eucharist**

Are you able to arrive at 9.15am to help welcome people into our church? If so, it would be lovely to have you join the welcoming team! Please chat to Cynthia so we can add you to the rota

### **Regular Giving**

Many thanks for your generous giving to the ministry of St Matthews' each week. If you have taken home a red envelope please fill out the form and return it so we can plan our future developments of St Matthew's



### **Youth Club**

Our Youth Club runs on Thursdays from 5-7pm at Christ Church, 90 Brixton Road, SW9 6BE. All 14-18 year olds are welcome!

### **Christmas Day Service**

All are welcome for our Christmas Day service on Thursday 25th December at 9.30am with Christmas carols. Please do invite friends and family!

### **Fr Steve**

Fr Steve's final Sunday will be 11th January 2026, with a bilingual mass at 12 followed by bring and share. He is due to be licensed at the Annunciation Chislehurst on Wednesday 28th January 2026 at 7:30pm.

### **Bishop's Retirement**

The Bishop of Southwark, The Rt Revd Christopher Chessun, has announced he will retire on his 70th birthday in August 2026. We give thanks for his faithful ministry in our diocese and send him our prayers and good wishes for the next stage of his Christian pilgrimage

## **CONTACT US**

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