

### The Sunday Message from Fr Antonio on the Second Sunday of Advent

We are told in this Sunday's Gospel that John the Baptist "went through the whole Jordan district proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins". The concepts of repentance and sin are not popular in our world today. Seldom are we encouraged to examine our conscience because guilt is generally regarded as negative and useless, a feeling that should be ignored. But the Church teaches that to repent is a wonderful and positive thing because it heals us and makes whole again our relationship with God and our neighbours.

St Therese of Lisieux puts it this way: "A child who has sinned throws himself into his father's arms, telling him that he is sorry to have hurt him, that he loves him ... then, if that child asks his father to punish him with a kiss, I don't think the happy father could harden his heart against his child's filial trust, knowing his sincerity and love."

As we begin the second week of Advent, let us experience the joy of repentance. Let us acknowledge that we are wounded by sin and strive to be holy. Holiness does not mean being perfect, but it is knowing that when we make mistakes, we have the power to change and can always return to the Father.

*Fr Antonio Pineda*

## Parish Note Friday 3rd December 2021 and the Sunday Message from Fr Antonio on the Second Sunday of Advent

Bishop's Stortford - St Joseph & The English Martyr <bishopsstortford@rcdow.org.uk>

Fri 12/3/2021 4:10 PM

To: Bishop's Stortford - St Joseph & The English Martyr <bishopsstortford@rcdow.org.uk>

 1 attachments (24 KB)

The Sunday Message from Fr Antonio on the Second Sunday of Advent.docx;

Good afternoon

Please find attached the Sunday Message from Fr Antonio on the Second Sunday of Advent which can also be found on our website.

Today is the celebration of the International Day for People with Disabilities. To mark this important day, the Catholic Church is promoting a time of universal prayer. The Department for Social Justice of the Bishops' Conference welcomes the initiative and is encouraging Catholics across England and Wales to take the opportunity to join the online broadcasts on the theme "Because You care for us" inspired by the quote from 1 Peter 5:7.

The online global event will be broadcast on the 3 December between 18:00 and 19:00 (UK time) via these links.

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/ChiesaCattolicaItaliana>

Facebook: <https://m.facebook.com/conferenzaepiscopaleitaliana/>

For more information visit <https://idpwd.org/>

**FACE COVERINGS** - As you will be aware, from 30 November 2021, there are some places where you must wear a face covering by law, unless you are exempt or have a reasonable excuse. Although places of worship have not been specifically included in this directive on the Government website, we positively welcome face masks being worn in our Churches to help protect our Parishioners and our Priests. We thank you for continuing to sanitise your hands also.

*'You should continue to wear a face covering in other indoor places, which are crowded and enclosed and where you may come into contact with people you do not normally meet.'*

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own/face-coverings-when-to-wear-one-and-how-to-make-your-own>

**REMINDER - FIRST HOLY COMMUNION PARENTS MEETING** - There will be a meeting for parents/ guardians of the 2022 First Holy Communion Candidates at 2pm this Saturday 4th December in St Joseph and the English Martyrs Catholic Church. Please remember that most of the town and roads will be closed all day for the Christmas event, so please do allow enough time for travel.

**OUR WEBSITE HAS TURNED PURPLE!** - There's a new section on our website that's all about Advent. Why do we celebrate it and what do all the things we associate with it symbolise? There's a list of "28 Ways to Prepare for Christmas", just one of the host of recommended resources to make the weeks leading up to the Big Day more meaningful. The section will be updated throughout the Advent season with new resources so do visit regularly. You'll find it here: <https://rcstortford.org.uk/advent2021>

**HONOURING SUNDAY** -During the pandemic, public worship was suspended for a time and there have been restrictions on parish life. As a result, people have been exploring other ways to practice their faith including

Spiritual Communion via live streaming. As people begin returning to more regular patterns of parish life, the bishops of England and Wales have issued the following statement about the importance of honouring Sunday. <https://rcstortford.org.uk/2021/11/19/bishops-statement-honouring-sunday/>

An extract from the Bishop's Conference. *'The Sunday Eucharist is a gift; as God's holy people we are called to praise and thank God in the most sublime way possible. When the Church speaks of the Sunday obligation, it reminds us that attending Mass is a personal response to the selfless offering of Christ's love.'*

*At this time, we recognise that for some people there may be certain factors which hinder attendance at Sunday Mass. The pandemic is clearly not over. The risk of infection is still present. For some, there is legitimate fear in gathering together. As your bishops, we recognise that these prevailing circumstances suggest that not everyone is yet in the position to fulfil the absolute duty to attend freely Sunday Mass.'*

**HELP THE SVP** -The SVP are distributing **11,500 Vinnie Packs** containing cold weather essentials to the homeless this winter. Please could you consider sponsoring packs at a suggested donation of £3.70 per pack? Donations can be sent to **Vinnie Packs, PO Box 72264, London SW1P 9EZ** with cheques made out to SVP or by bank transfer to Nat West **sort code 60-60-04, account no. 4608 8237** . Thank you so much for your support.

**BAPTISM PREPARATION COURSE** - We are pleased to advise you that Sophie Sullivan, our Catechetical Coordinator and her husband Mike shall be running the next two-part Baptism preparation course on the dates below via Zoom. The places will be limited to a maximum of 10 couples on each.

Monday 10th and Monday 17th January 2022 at 8pm - 9.15pm

If you would like to attend this course, please contact the parish office as soon as possible, so that we can send you an invitation in plenty of time. You are requested to attend the course prior to your Child being baptised. If you have not yet completed a Baptism application form, please contact the office so that we can send you one for completion so that we have your details on file.

**THE UNIVERSE CATHOLIC WEEKLY** - is thrilled to announce that we have launched our new online newspaper with the full support of our first subscriber none other than His Eminence Cardinal Vincent Nichols. Order your Digital copy by going to [www.universecatholicweekly.co.uk](http://www.universecatholicweekly.co.uk) or call us on 0743661 7650 and ask for Michelle. Special offer: Only £20 for 3 months.

**AFGHAN REFUGEE SUPPORT** -Thank you very much to everyone who kindly donated last week. We have gift aid forms and envelopes at the back of the Church if you would still like to support this cause.

**ADMISSION TO ST JOSEPH'S ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOL RECEPTION** - The application process for admission to **Reception Class** at St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School for children born between 1st September 2017 and 31st August 2018 will open on 1st November 2021 and close on 15th January 2022.

School application forms will be available on St. Joseph's School website from 1st November. They must be completed with the necessary documentation and returned to the school by 15th January 2022.

In addition to the school forms, you **MUST** complete the online Hertfordshire County Council application form (or your local authority if not Hertfordshire) - see [www.hertsdirect.org](http://www.hertsdirect.org)  
For more information, please see the school website: [www.stjosephs207.herts.sch.uk](http://www.stjosephs207.herts.sch.uk)

**CERTIFICATE OF CATHOLIC PRACTICE** - Applicants for St Joseph's School for **RECEPTION** places in 2022 should collect a white 'embossed' application form for a certificate from No 3 Windhill, the Sacristy after Mass or the Parish Office in person. Once completed it should then be posted through the letter box of No 3 Windhill marked for Fr Antonio's attention **with a stamped addressed envelope, please**. The Certificate will then be posted to you. The School deadline is 15/1/2022.

**CONFIRMATION GROUP 2021/22** - Bishop Paul has allocated us a date for the Confirmation Masses  
- **Saturday 16th July at 11am and 2pm.** Please put this important date in your diaries!

**SYCAMORE ADVENT COURSE** - The Dad's Group and the Catenians are delighted to invite you to a Sycamore Advent Course.

Sycamore is a fabulous resource produced by the Westminster Diocese. We will be facilitating an Advent journey over four sessions using Zoom:

**7 Dec: Finding True Freedom - Peace**

**14 Dec: The Community of the Church - Joy**

**21 Dec: The Light of Christ - Love**

Each session consists of a brief welcome and introduction, three short video clips linked to the session theme and a chance for small group discussion on each clip.

**All sessions start at 7:30pm and will be complete by 9:00pm.**

We look forward to seeing you during Advent! Any questions, contact John Wright (07739 789169)

**Zoom Meeting Details:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89576068767?pwd=SWVWURITmV2V3NW0XBU0GNnYXdYUT09>

**THE GIVING TREE** - is our annual charitable present-giving endeavour to support children of the St Francis Family Centre in Poplar, East London. The area has the highest rate of child poverty in the country, more than double the national average. Many of the families we work with live in crowded and dilapidated accommodation and struggle to afford basic essentials for their children. The family centre works in partnership with parents to provide outstanding pre-school education, giving disadvantaged children the best possible start in life. Presents and Hampers at Christmas complement the services the family centre provides and brings a good dose of Christmas cheer! This year, following the success of last year's collection, we have set up an online [Wishlist with Amazon](#). The advantage of this means that the Centre can receive the gifts directly and we can keep the process Covid-secure. Gifts need to be received by the Centre by Friday 10 December, so please order your gift to arrive by then. Thursday 9 December would be the last day for Prime deliveries please! We are sending the gifts directly to the St Francis centre so you must click on 'Other Addresses' and choose the Giving Tree 2021 gift registry address. Please visit our website for full instructions. <https://rcstortford.org.uk/2021/11/18/support-the-giving-tree-2021/>

And finally, a word of thanks, in advance, from those working at the Centre itself:

"Thank you so very much for thinking of us again this year. Your unfailing support means the world to us and the families we work with".

**SALVATION ARMY TOY APPEAL** - is running once again, and we would love your support so that we can help more families in our area. There are a few ways you can do this:

They are partnering with The Entertainer Shop in Jackson Square. The gifts then stay with the shop and we pick them up from there.

The other option is to buy your gift and then bring this to The Independent Newsagent, 12 North Street. Either way will be great, and they would be most grateful for your support! They are currently working with 70 families and this number will rise.

**WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL'S ANNUAL CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION**-a wonderful evening of music and readings for all the family in the magnificent Mother Church of the Diocese, is taking place this year on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> December and Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> December at 7:30pm. Doors will open at 6:30pm, with organ music being played from 7pm. The programme includes some of the finest Advent and Christmas choral music from across the centuries, sung by the world-famous Cathedral Choir, as well as favourite congregational carols. Westminster Cathedral Choir and Orchestra will be conducted by Simon Johnson, the Cathedral's new Master of Music.

This year's selection of readings ranges from the Scriptures to writers such as GK Chesterton, all read by an array of celebrity readers.

Tickets are now available at Ticketmaster:

<https://www.ticketmaster.co.uk/westminster-cathedral-tickets-london/venue/254582>

**RIGHT TO LIFE UK** - The abortion lobby are now running a large campaign in the media to put pressure on the Government to make temporary 'DIY' abortion schemes permanent before the end of the year. It is therefore vital that as many MPs as possible write to the Health Secretary, Sajid Javid, asking the Government to end these dangerous 'DIY' abortion schemes. Right To Life UK has launched an easy-to-use tool on its website today which makes it easy for you to send an email to your MP asking them to write to Sajid Javid. Please visit [www.righttolife.org.uk/endDIY](http://www.righttolife.org.uk/endDIY) to contact your MP now. It only takes 30 seconds.

**CATHOLIC LISTENERS TELEPHONE HELPLINE** - Are you a good listener? Do you enjoy helping others with their queries? Can you assist with finding basic information about a service or an organisation? Catholic Listeners Helpline Service is staffed by volunteers who are trained and operate with the ethos of compassionate listening. All calls and the caller's needs are dealt with sensitivity and due diligence. Catholic Listeners is funded by the Cardinal's Appeal and operates in the Diocese of Westminster. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, email Ade for details at [catholiclisteners@gmail.com](mailto:catholiclisteners@gmail.com)

**AN EVENING OF CHRISTMAS MUSIC** - with harpist and singer Lucy Bunce Sunday 12th December, 7.30pm at the St Barnabas Centre. Tickets: £10 and can be purchased online at [www.stjamesthorney.church](http://www.stjamesthorney.church) or by contacting St James Church Office on 01279 506753

**A JOURNEY TO BETHLEHEM**- The Christmas Story. Saturday 4 December 2021 at 3pm St Andrew's Church, Much Hadham Join the Rev Steve Bate for a short ecumenical service for children. All primary aged children are warmly invited to celebrate with carols, the Christmas story and craft (and coffee for grown-ups). All welcome.

**PARISH CHARITY GOLF DAY** - As the new year approaches and we are starting to make plans we are hoping to resurrect our Parish Charity Golf Day. So, for 2022 we have booked FRIDAY 10TH JUNE at the GREAT HADHAM GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB. Further details will follow later and all is subject to any restrictions from possible Covid complications! So, for now pop the date into your diaries and we will contact you later. Thanks Angela Tyson.

**HOLY TRINITY WINTER NIGHT SHELTER** - <https://www.htwinternightshelter.org/> If you would like to help raise funds towards the Holy Trinity Shelter, please donate online Sort code: 60-02-36 Account Number: 67759521 Thank you very much.

**ISABEL HOSPICE** - The Isobel Hospice will hold a Light of Love outdoor service at Market Square, Bishop's Stortford starting at 4pm on Sunday December 5th.

**PARISHIONERS OF THE WEEK** - Thank you very much to everyone at Holy Cross who has helped to organise the ecumenical 'Journey to Bethlehem' event this weekend for the children of the parish. Thank you also to Fr Antonio, Fr Peter, Sophie and our fantastic Catechists who are giving their time on Saturday and Sunday to run First Holy Communion Parents meetings and Confirmation classes.

To finish this week on the theme from the International day for people with disabilities, a quote from St Teresa of Avila.

*'We always find that those who walked closest to Christ were those that had to bear the greatest trials'*  
St Teresa of Avila;

I hope that you all have a very happy and healthy week

Best wishes  
Debbie

**Parish Administrator**

*(Mon- Fri 9am - 3pm)*

**Catholic Parish of Bishop's Stortford**

*St Joseph and the English Martyrs, Bishop's Stortford  
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Most Holy Redeemer, Sayesbury Road, Sawbridgeworth*

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*Parish Website: <https://www.rcstortford.org.uk>*

*Follow our Live streaming on [www.churchservices.tv/bishopsstortford](http://www.churchservices.tv/bishopsstortford)*

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