

Our Parish Liturgy

This Week (2 Advent A)

DIVINE OFFICE	WEEK 2
ENTRANCE HYMN	18.00 64 09.00 64 11.00 Musicians
PENITENTIAL ACT	Spoken
FIRST READING	Isaiah 11:1-10 <i>'With righteousness he shall judge the poor.'</i>
PSALM RESPONSE	<i>In his days justice shall flourish, and great peace for everyone.'</i>
SECOND READING	Romans 15:4-9 <i>'Christ saves humanity.'</i>
GOSPEL ACCLAMATION	Alleluia, alleluia. <i>Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight; all flesh shall see the salvation of God. Alleluia.</i>
GOSPEL READING	Matthew 3:1-12 <i>'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'</i>
PRESENTATION OF THE GIFTS	18.00 101 09.00 101 11.00 Musicians
SANCTUS	18.00 Missal Tone 09.00 Missal Tone 11.00 Musicians
MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION	18.00 Missal Tone 09.00 Missal Tone 11.00 Musicians
GREAT AMEN	18.00 Missal Tone 09.00 Missal Tone 11.00 Spoken
OUR FATHER	18.00 Spoken 09.00 Spoken 11.00 Musicians
AGNUS DEI	18.00 Spoken 09.00 Spoken 11.00 Musicians
COMMUNION ANTIPHON	<i>Jerusalem, arise and stand upon the heights, and behold the joy which comes to you from God.</i>
THANKSGIVING	18.00 78 09.00 78 11.00 Musicians
RECESSION	18.00 108 09.00 108 11.00 Musicians

Next Week (3 Advent A)

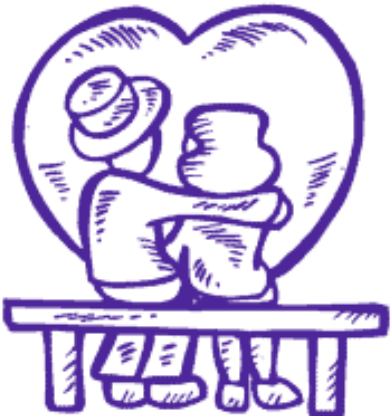
DIVINE OFFICE	WEEK 3
FIRST READING	Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10 <i>'God himself will come and save you.'</i>
PSALM RESPONSE	<i>Come, Lord, and save us.</i>
SECOND READING	James 5:7-10 <i>'Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.'</i>
GOSPEL READING	Matthew 11:2-11 <i>'Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?'</i>
Music and text of Antiphons from <i>Psallite</i> , © 2005 Collegeville Composers Group. Published by Liturgical Press, MN56321. Used with Permission. One Licence No.0199	

MARRIAGE MATTERS

In his Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis offers a profound insight into the joy of Christian marriage and reminds us of its place at the very heart of the Church's life. Christian marriage, he observes, 'is a sign of how much Christ loved his Church in the covenant sealed on the cross, yet it also makes that love present in the communion of the spouses. By becoming one flesh, they embody the espousal of our human nature by the Son of God.'

As we know, the Holy Scriptures feed and nourish our faith and help us to grow in our relationship with God and one another. It is for this reason that these scriptural reflections are offered. They should help enable married couples to focus on the richness of God's Word that we hear proclaimed each Sunday of the Year and to experience the deep joy of God's love expressed in the great Sacrament of Marriage.

ADVENT - A NEW BEGINNING FOR US



Today, Isaiah talks about trust and Matthew focuses on forgiveness. Advent is the ideal opportunity to discover new ways to help our partner to trust us and to share themselves. Our prayer can be that we drop our defences, become more vulnerable and have the courage to open ourselves to be able to really listen, to share and to change.

Parish Priest
Rev Fr Daryl George JCL
Sacred Heart Presbytery
25 Between Streets
COBHAM
Surrey
KT11 1AA

(01932) 862518
cobham@abdiocese.org.uk
sacredheartcobham.org.uk

THIS WEEK:

BIBLE READING PLAN

Mo 2 Corinthians 5-9
Tu 2 Corinthians 10-13
We Romans 1-3
Th Romans 4-7
Fr Romans 8-10

Financial News . .

Weekend of 30/11/25

Plate £ 458:99
Standing Orders £ 755:00
Contactless £ 150:00
1st Total £ 1,363:99

Thankyou for your continuing generosity to your Parish.

2nd £ 286:00
Parish Buildings Fund

2nd Collection . . .

This Weekend 07/12/25

Church Flower Fund

Gift Aid Members are able to make this collection tax efficient using our Parish Envelope or our Dona terminals..

Next Weekend 14/12/25

None

Bite Size . . .

Whenever
you blame
others, you
give up your
power to
change.

Unknown author



Sacred Heart
Parish Newsletter

for the Roman Catholic
community
of Cobham, Oxshott,
& Stoke D'Abernnon



part of the Arundel & Brighton Diocesan Trust, a Registered Charity No. 252878

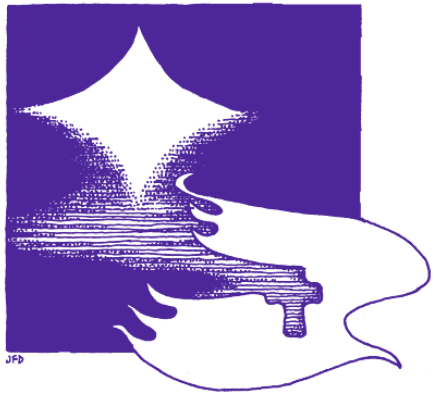
Volume 07 Issue 02 7th December 2025 : 2nd Sunday Advent A

John was on fire!

After hearing the beautiful images of the lion and the lamb, the cow and the bear, and the child and the snake living together in peace in the first reading today, the Gospel passage about John the Baptist may seem jarring, or even off-putting. Then again, the words and actions of John the Baptist, whenever he shows up in the Gospels, are always strong, direct, and challenging. Sometimes people don't want to hear his directness - or his challenges.

John was on fire with the urgency that we turn our lives around. He was asking folks to repent of whatever in their lives was keeping them from living in God's way of justice and peace. He gladly baptized those who acknowledged their sins, but he had little patience for false repentance, especially coming from religious leaders like the Pharisees and Sadducees. It didn't matter to him who someone was, what family they came from, or what their religious background was - he wanted to see the fruits of their repentance. John was a New Testament version of the Old Testament prophets: fiery, passionate characters who unsettled the rich and powerful but offered hope and consolation to those willing to be honest about their shortcomings.

As we prepare ourselves for Christmas, John is a valuable guide. His urgency to evaluate how we live in this world and how we need to change is hard to



"He shall judge the poor with justice, and decide aright for the land's afflicted."

Sheepish Question:

How can I enhance my feelings of compassion with a deeper sense of justice?

ignore. We have work to do before Christmas that doesn't involve planning the perfect party or finding the perfect gift. Our work now is to acknowledge what we need to change, ask forgiveness, and get back to doing God's work.

Questions of the week

- Who in your life is on fire for justice and repentance? What can you learn from them?
- What can you do this coming week to "prepare the way of the Lord"?

CHRISTMAS COLLECTION FOR THE
SUPPORT OF PARISH CLERGY

These collections provide income to the Parish for the support of clergy and may be Gift Aided. Any cheques should be made payable to the 'Sacred Heart Parish.' Cheques made out personally to Fr Daryl are 'direct gifts' and cannot be received into Parish Funds or Gift Aided. You will find a supply of Gift Aid envelopes for this collection in the church narthex.

Before Mass - Talk to God During Mass - Listen to God After Mass - Talk to your friends

Parish Office

Normal Office Hours : Monday to Friday 09.30 - 12.30.

Parish Secretary : Sarah Cox (01932) 860244
cobham@abdiocese.org.uk

Newsletter Editorial : Items for possible inclusion in the Parish Newsletter (if there is room) need to be received (in writing please) at the Parish Office by midday on Wednesday.

Gift Aid Organiser : Dan Meehan (01372) 456416
ga.cobham@abdiocese.org.uk

Safeguarding Rep. : Mark Hillas 07436 571060
sg1.cobham@abdiocese.org.uk

General Parish Information

Parishioner Registration : Every household within the Parish is requested to complete a 'Parishioner Registration/Census' form so that our Parish records may be kept up to date. These forms can be obtained from the Parish Office and should be completed fully before being returned to the Parish Office.

Should you move address within the Parish at any time please complete a new form and write 'AMENDMENT' across the top of the form. Thank you.

Hospital : If you are going into hospital as a 'planned admission' you are strongly encouraged to make contact with Fr Daryl well beforehand so that, if appropriate, the Sacrament of the Sick can be celebrated beforehand.

Infant Baptism : Infant Baptisms are intended for the children of practising parishioners only and are celebrated on five occasions during the year after parents and godparents have completed a course of preparation. There can be no celebration without this important course. The dates of the courses for the current year can be found in the application form available from the Parish Office. Baptisms do not take place during the seasons of Advent or Lent.

Sacramental Preparation : Notice of the availability of Application Forms for preparation for First Reconciliation and First Eucharist will be made via the Parish Newsletter between the school Summer Half Term and 31st August each year. Possible candidates for Confirmation should respond to the announcements made via the Parish Newsletter at the beginning of the Autumn school term.

Parishioners are advised that it is very difficult to imagine that any family or individual who is not regularly practising the Faith as members of our community could possibly be ready to celebrate a Sacrament of the Church.

Marriage Preparation : Marriages are celebrated by appointment with the Parish Priest. It should be remembered that in the Diocese of Arundel & Brighton twelve months minimum notice is required before a marriage may take place; this is a requirement of the Church for all marriages that involve a Roman Catholic (even if they are not taking place in the Catholic Church). It is also necessary that one of the parties must have a meaningful connection with the Parish. Marriages do not take place during the seasons of Advent or Lent.

Parish Car Park : All Parishioners attending Mass and using our Car Park need to make sure that they have fully completed our 'Parishioner Registration/Census Form' (available from the Parish Office) before using the Car Park; this ensures that your current vehicle registration is lodged in the system. Registering only needs to be done once (unless you change your car or if you use another car in the family that is not registered on the system).

Important : if you are not registered on the system and you use the car park you will receive a parking notice. Registered Parishioners and pre-registered visitors are able to park whilst they attend our Masses/liturgies without fear of a charge notice. (Car Park queries - parking@shpcobham.com)

NOTE : the Car Park does not use QR codes any found are **scams!**

Diocesan Pastoral Plan - Epsom. . .

The Word Who is Life: The Call to Mission Continuing to Develop Our Response

Background

As many of you already know, over several years, Bishop Richard has met with clergy and parishioners to reflect on the opportunities and challenges our Church is facing and how best to respond to them. He then published *The Word Who Is Life* — our Diocesan Pastoral Plan — which was then presented to everyone in the Diocese (there are synopses still available in the church narthex). Locally, as part of this Plan, the nine parishes that today make up the present Epsom Deanery will come together to form a **New Single Parish** at some point in 2026. The central message of the Pastoral Plan is "*The Call to Mission*" — inviting all of us to help to shape our parishes into **strong, lively, and welcoming communities**.

What's happening now

So what is happening now?

Here in Epsom Deanery, a team formed from clergy and parishioners from EVERY parish has been discussing how we should respond to this *The Call to Mission*. One of the first things the team asked itself was **how to get everyone involved**.

To that end, a meeting is planned in the New Year in each of our existing parishes to share information of what the Pastoral Plan means, how any necessary changes will be decided, and to get the participation of all communities in shaping what our response will be.

For our Sacred Heart community this meeting will take place at 19.30 on Wednesday 21st January - Please put the date in your diary today!

What we are now asking of you

The Pastoral Plan is a call to *all parishioners*, and we know that our communities are blessed with many different gifts. That is why **your participation is needed even before this meeting takes place**.

On your way out of church today, you are asked to take a "*You're Invited!*" POSTCARD and a FLYER which outline how we are shaping our response to this call and what we can expect to be different over the coming months and years. For example, one of the goals is a wider expansion of parishioner leadership, participation, and engagement. Another goal is for our parishes to work more closely with one another and with our schools.

Both postcards and flyers include QR codes or a link to a website where you can find **more information** to help you make your contribution: in particular, we are asking you to **get involved by helping us to identify: Opportunities, Challenges, and any Questions**.

There are several ways for you to share your thoughts:

- ⇒ You can fill in one of the "*You're invited!*" postcards and return it before next **Sunday (14th December)**
- ⇒ You can use the online form whose address you will find on the flyer
- ⇒ Or, if you prefer, you can email directly to **epsomdeanerynewsletter@gmail.com**

CHILDREN'S WORD SEARCH 2ND SUNDAY ADVENT YEAR A

Z	I	K	V	J	R	J	R	M	P	R	Z	CRYING	PROPHET
H	D	C	H	A	O	U	P	Y	R	R	L	REPENT	HONEY
Y	O	D	A	R	U	D	R	C	O	G	O	WILDERNESS	BAPTIZE
O	I	N	J	K	X	E	E	U	P	I	C	LOCUSTS	PREACHING
U	B	M	E	E	O	A	A	B	H	I	U	JUDEA	
M	N	N	A	Y	J	A	C	Q	E	O	S		
O	B	J	R	R	H	Y	H	M	T	M	T		
K	D	Z	D	A	L	M	I	F	K	B	S		
C	R	Y	I	N	G	T	N	X	D	L	V		
B	A	P	T	I	Z	E	G	H	V	F	O		
D	N	T	M	A	R	E	P	E	N	T	S		
W	I	L	D	E	R	N	E	S	S	Y	P		



COME TO JESUS

Matthew 3:1-12

¹At that time John the Baptist came to the desert of Judea and started preaching.

²"Turn away from your sins," he said, "because the Kingdom of heaven is near!"

³John was the man the prophet Isaiah was talking about when he said: "Someone is shouting in the desert, 'Prepare a road for the Lord; make a straight path for him to travel!'"

John's clothes were made of camel's hair; he wore a leather belt round his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵People came to him from Jerusalem, from the whole province of Judea, and from all the country near the River Jordan. ⁶They confessed their sins, and he baptized them in the Jordan.

⁷When John saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming to him to be baptized, he said to them, "You snakes – who told you that you could escape from the punishment God is about to send? ⁸Do those things that will show that you have turned from your sins. ⁹And don't think you can escape punishment by saying that Abraham is your ancestor. I tell you that God can take these stones and make descendants for Abraham! ¹⁰The axe is ready to cut down the trees at the roots; every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown in the fire.

¹¹I baptize you with water to show that you have repented, but the one who will come after me will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. He is much greater than I am; and I am not good enough even to carry his sandals. ¹²He has his winnowing shovel with him to thresh out all the grain. He will gather his wheat into his barn, but he will burn the chaff in a fire that never goes out."

Other Readings: Isaiah 11:1-10; Psalm 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17; Romans 15:4-9

LECTIO:

The whole purpose of Advent is laid out before us in the second verse of today's Gospel reading: turn away from your sins because the Kingdom of heaven (Matthew's usual expression for the Kingdom of God) is near. John's message repeats Jesus' warning in last week's Gospel message: make sure you are ready for the return of the King.

Matthew uses four powerful images – a road, water, an axe and fire – to remind us that while God's kingdom offers salvation and deliverance it also brings judgement and division.

This is where Matthew introduces John the Baptist to his readers and he emphasizes his significance straight away. Firstly, he identifies him as the person sent to prepare the way for the long awaited Messiah (Isaiah 40:3). Next, by describing John's clothing, he draws a comparison with one of Israel's greatest prophets, Elijah (2 Kings 1:8). The significance of baptising people in the river Jordan would not have been missed either; a thousand years earlier Joshua had miraculously led their ancestors through the Jordan to inherit the promised land.

John's message touched a nerve. People came in droves and repented. John's stern rebuke for the Pharisees and Sadducees makes it clear that he wasn't interested in an outward show of repentance. God is looking for genuine repentance that leads to changed lives – only this is worthy of the King. Relying on their spiritual pedigree as the sons of Abraham wasn't good enough.

And John was clear, right from the outset, about where his ministry ended and the Messiah took over.



MEDITATIO:

- How would you explain the difference between the ministries of John and Jesus?
- What aspects of your life does God's grace cover?
- What is the 'good fruit' that we should expect to see in our lives as Christians?

ORATIO:

John called for repentance and a turning towards God. What is God saying to you now?

CONTEMPLATIO:

John was preparing the way for Jesus and pointing people towards him. We are called to do this as well – Jesus has made us fishers of men. What practical steps can you take during Advent to prepare yourself and others for the Messiah's rule?

Day	Date	Time	Service / Intention	Donor
Sat.	6 th December	17.00 - 17.30	St Nicholas, Bishop Sacrament of Reconciliation	
		18.00	Yousif & Evelyn Farage †	N. Farage
Sun.	7 th December		SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT, YEAR A	
		09.00	For the Parishioners	
		11.00	Toni Mascolo †	P. Mascolo
		15.30	Advent Evening Prayer & Benediction	
Mon.	8 th December		Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary No Service Today	Mass 10.00 at Leatherhead
Tue.	9 th December		Advent Weekday	
		09.15	Morning Prayer of the Church	[p.p. 116 - 493]
		09.30	Patrycja's Intentions	
		10.00 - 11.00	Exposition of Blessed Sacrament for Private Prayer	
Wed.	10 th December		Advent Weekday	
		09.15	Morning Prayer of the Church	[p.p. 126 - 493]
		09.30	In honour of St Joseph	
Thu.	11 th December		Advent Weekday	
		09.15	Morning Prayer of the Church	[p.p. 137 - 493]
		09.30	Fr Alan Sharpe †	DCA
Fri.	12 th December		Advent Weekday (Day of Abstinence)	
		09.15	Morning Prayer of the Church	[p.p. 148 - 493]
		09.30	Rrok & Family	M.
Sat.	13 th December		St Lucy, Virgin & Martyr Sacrament of Reconciliation	
		17.00 - 17.30	Gjelina Ujka	M.
		18.00		
Sun.	14 th December		THIRD (GAUDETE) SUNDAY OF ADVENT, YEAR A	
		09.00	Fr John Garry †	D. & P. Meehan
		11.00	For the Parishioners	
		15.30	Advent Evening Prayer & Benediction	

St Lucy

All little girls named Lucy must be disappointed when they first try to find out what there is to know about their patron. Older books will have details of a small number of traditions. Newer books will have a long paragraph showing that there is little basis in history for these traditions.

The single fact survives that a disappointed suitor accused Lucy of being a Christian, and she was executed in Syracuse, Sicily, in the year 304. But it is also true that her name is in the Eucharistic Prayer, places are named after her, a popular song has her name as its title, and down through the ages

many thousands of little girls have been proud of their name *Lucy*.

One can easily imagine what a young Christian woman had to contend with in pagan Sicily in the year 300. Just think about today's pleasure-at-all-costs society and the many barriers this presents against leading a good Christian life.

To be pure before marriage was an ancient Roman ideal, rarely found, but not to be condemned. To decide to exclude marriage altogether, however, was too much. She must have something sinister to hide, so the tongues wagged.

Lucy knew of the heroism of earlier virgin martyrs. She remained faithful to their example and to the example of the carpenter, whom she knew to be the Son of God. She is the patroness of eyesight.



DATE / MASS	WELCOME MINISTERS	READERS	EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS	REPOSITORY AFTER MASS
SATURDAY 3 Advent A 13/12/25 18.00	Still Required; please offer	Sr. Patricia	N/A at present	P. Hunt A. Essien
SUNDAY 3 Advent A 14/12/25 09.00	Still Required; please offer	D. McEvoy	L. Kolber Sr Maria	D. Westsmith M. Smyth
SUNDAY 3 Advent A 14/12/25 11.00	Still Required; please offer	E. Twist	D. Yearley P. Mascolo	M. Smith C. Kendall

PLEASE REMEMBER : If you are unable to complete your particular ministry then it is your responsibility to arrange cover with another minister. In this way our Sunday Liturgies will run in a smooth and prayerful way.

SACRED HEART COBHAM - ADVENT/CHRISTMAS SEASONS 2025

WEEKDAYS - Tue. 9, 16, 23 Dec. Morning Prayer (09.15), Mass (09.30), Exposition (10.00-11.00)
Wed. 10, 17, 24 Dec. Morning Prayer (09.15), Mass (09.30)
Thu. 11, 18 Dec. Morning Prayer (09.15). Mass (09.30)
Fri. 12, 19 Dec. Morning Prayer (09.15), Mass (09.30)

WEEKENDS - Sat. 6, 13, 20 Dec. Vigil Mass (18.00)
Sun. 7, 14, 21 Dec. Masses (09.00 & 11.00), Evening Prayer & Benediction (15.30)

RECONCILIATION SERVICES - Sat. 29 Nov. Children's (11.00)
Fri. 19 Dec. Adult's (19.30) - Sacred Heart


ADVENT CAROL SERVICE - Sun. 21 Dec. 18.00 (followed by -)
ADVENT PARISH SOCIAL - Sun. 21 Dec. 19.00 Mince Pies & Mulled Wine





CHILDREN'S CRIB SERVICE - Wed. 24 Dec. 16.30
VIGIL MASS OF CHRISTMAS - Wed. 24 Dec. 18.00
CAROLS BEFORE MIDNIGHT - Wed. 24 Dec. 23.30
MIDNIGHT MASS - Thu. 25 Dec. 00.00
CHRISTMAS DAY MASSES - Thu. 25 Dec. 09.00 & 11.00

Prayers Please

 FOR THOSE UNWELL AT THIS TIME: Jay Adams, Sr Anne Bayley, Jim Begley, Maggie Dongray, Tom Delbridge, Fiona Frank, Maureen Garner, baby Naomi Hunt, Michael Nutter, Fr Sebastian Paul, Pascal Smyth and Anne Sproul.	ANNIVERSARIES OF DEATH: Toni Mascolo † Madeleine Judd † Richard Sadler † Peter Peyton † Fr Edward Bell † Fr Thomas Quinn †	HOLY FATHER'S MONTHLY PRAYER INTENTION: ". . . that Christians living in areas of war or conflict, especially in the Middle East, might be seeds of peace, reconciliation, and hope . . ."	For those who are unwell..... those who have died recently.... those whose anniversaries occur..... the Holy Father's Prayer Intention....
THE RECENTLY DECEASED: None			

LAUDATO SI - Some parishioners at St Ann's (Banstead) are involved in the Laudato Si movement and are hoping to bring together a larger group of those interested in the movement. The group hope to have opportunities to pray together and plan for how to help our communities better understand nature and our collective and personal responsibility towards God's creation. If you are interested in joining this group and learning more, please contact St Ann's (banstead@abdiocese.org.uk) in order to be put on the mailing list for future events.

MINISTRIES AT SACRED HEART THIS CHRISTMAS - Would ALL our regular Servers, Readers, and Welcomers please make a point of looking at the Christmas Ministries Rota at the rear of the church. As well as the Masses over Christmas there are other readers needed for our Parish Carol Service and the traditional Readings and Carols before Midnight Mass. Thank you.

ADULT ADVENT RECONCILIATION SERVICE - Our Advent Reconciliation Service for Adults (over 11 years) will be celebrated in the Sacred Heart on the evening of Friday 19th December at 19.30. As usual, we will be joined by the Effingham and Fetcham Catholic community for this opportunity to celebrate the Lord's forgiveness in preparation for the Christmas feast. Please do take advantage of this opportunity.

REPOSITORY - Thanks to the kindness of several volunteer Parishioners our Repository is open after our weekend Masses. Plenty of Christmas cards, and various nativity sets are available as well as the normal fare - why not pop in and have a look around?

PARISH CHRISTMAS BAZAAR RESULTS - Many, many thanks to all those who help with this annual social event in any way. The event was a great success both socially (the Parish working together) and financially (results will be posted next weekend). Next year the Bazaar will be taking place on Saturday 5th December; get the date in your diary now.


PARISH DIARIES NOW AVAILABLE - Our Parish Diaries have arrived and are now available in the Repository after our weekend Masses for a donation of £1 per copy.

ELECTRONIC GIVING - As the number of parishioners using our 'Dona' electronic giving terminal at the rear of the church has been steadily growing, the Parish Finance Committee has decided that a second terminal should be available to reduce the queuing that sometimes takes place whilst waiting to access the terminal. When the second terminal arrives we will be positioning both terminals half way down the two side aisles, this will assist access and 'unblock the exit at the end of Masses. Of course, parishioners do not have to wait until the end of our Masses to use the terminals - after arrival and before taking seats?



CAFOD WORLD GIFTS - CAFOD is once again encouraging people to "swap the socks for something special this Christmas," giving a World Gift that will delight loved ones and help families and communities around the world to thrive. CAFOD's World Gifts are ethical presents that make a real difference - from their *Winter Warmth* gift helping families stay safe through cold weather, to their *Super Soup Kitchens* supporting local partners providing meals for those in need, every gift brings hope where it's needed most. Each World Gift comes with a card to give to your loved one, showing how their gift is changing lives. You can also add extra festive joy with the charity's stocking fillers, from chocolates to devotional items, and even some adorable cuddly toys! Find out more from CAFOD's brochure available in the narthex.

POPE LEO'S TRAVELS - This week Pope Leo concluded his Apostolic Journey to Türkiye and Lebanon on Tuesday. Bringing the 6-day apostolic visit to a close, he said: "We hope to involve the entire Middle East in [a] spirit of fraternity and commitment to peace, including those who currently consider themselves enemies." Reflecting on the three days he spent in Lebanon, Pope Leo referenced the country's rich spiritual heritage and the resilience of its people, noting the deep veneration for the Blessed Virgin Mary shared by both Christians and Muslims. Addressing the ongoing challenges facing the country, he expressed solidarity with victims of the Beirut port explosion in 2020: "I carry with me the pain" he said, "and the thirst for truth and justice, of so many families, [and] an entire country." Calling for an end to hostilities, he added: "We must recognise that armed struggle brings no benefit. While weapons are lethal, negotiation, mediation and dialogue are constructive. Let us all choose peace as a way, not just as a goal!" The Pope invoked the words of St John Paul II: "Lebanon is more than a country; it is a message! Let us learn to work together and hope together, so that this may become a reality."



Pope Leo in Beirut: "Choose peace as a way, not just a goal"