

TODAY’S READINGS

**Entrance Antiphon:**  
Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice.  
Indeed, the Lord is near.


**Collect:** O God, who see how your people faithfully await the feast of the Lord’s Nativity, enable us, we pray, to attain the joys of so great a salvation and to celebrate them always with solemn worship and glad rejoicing. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

**First Reading:** **Isaiah 35:1-6a, 10**  
**‘God himself will come and save you.’**  
The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad; the desert shall rejoice and blossom like the crocus; it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the majesty of Carmel and Sharon. They shall see the glory of the Lord, the majesty of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who have an anxious heart, ‘Be strong; fear not! Behold, your God will come with vengeance, with the recompense of God. He will come and save you.’ Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return and come to Sion with singing; everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.

**R/ THE WORD OF THE LORD**  
**C/ THANKS BE TO GOD**

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM:**

R. Come Lord and save----- us.



**Second Reading:** **James 5:7-10**  
**‘Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand.’**  
Be patient, brothers and sisters, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains. You also, be patient. Establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is at hand. Do not grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, so that you may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing at the door. As an example of suffering and patience, brothers and sisters, take the prophets who spoke in the

**Phil 4: 4-5** name of the Lord.  
**R/ THE WORD OF THE LORD**  
**C/ THANKS BE TO GOD**

**Gospel Acclamation:** **Isaiah 61:1 (Luke 4:18)**  
**(ALL STAND)**  
*Alleluia, alleluia.*  
The Spirit of the Lord is upon me;  
he has sent me to proclaim good news to the poor.  
*Alleluia.*

**Gospel:** **Matthew 11:2-11**  
**‘Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?’**  
At that time: When John heard in prison about the deeds of the Christ, he sent word by his disciples and said to him, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?’ And Jesus answered them, ‘Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is the one who is not offended by me.’ As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: ‘What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who wear soft clothing are in kings’ houses. ‘What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written, “Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.” Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.’

**R/ THE GOSPEL OF THE LORD**  
**C/ PRAISE TO YOU, LORD JESUS CHRIST**

**Prayer over the Offerings:**  
May the sacrifice of our worship, Lord, we pray, be offered to you unceasingly, to complete what was begun in sacred mystery and powerfully accomplish for us your saving work. Through Christ our Lord.

**Communion Antiphon:** **Is 35: 4**  
Say to the faint of heart: Be strong and do not fear. Behold, our God will come, and he will save us.

**Prayer after Communion:**  
We implore your mercy, Lord, that this divine sustenance may cleanse us of our faults and prepare us for the coming feasts. Through Christ our Lord.



Catholic Parish of Our Lady of Hal  
Camden Town

Reminder: Please turn your mobile phones OFF! Would you kindly take your weekly newsletter home with you!

14th December 2025 (Year A) | THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT



Welcome to all at Mass today, especially to any visitors who are here for the first time. Please take this sheet home with you which will tell you about this week’s celebration and the activities in the parish during the week.



**REFLECTIONS ON THE GOSPEL**

**Gaudete Sunday – Third Sunday of Advent (Year A)**

This Sunday the Church invites us to pause in the middle of Advent and rejoice. That’s why it’s called Gaudete Sunday – from the Latin word for “Rejoice”. The rose candle is lit on the Advent wreath, the vestments may be rose, and the tone of the liturgy lightens. It’s not quite Christmas yet, but we’re close enough to taste the hope.

The readings this Sunday (all point towards this quiet, deep joy. Isaiah gives us a beautiful picture: the wilderness bursting into flower, the feeble hands strengthened, the fearful hearts told, “Be strong, do not be afraid. Here is your God... he comes to save you.” It’s a reminder that God can bring life, colour and hope even into the “desert places” of our lives.

St James then urges us to be patient like farmers waiting for the precious crop. They cannot hurry the rain or the sun; they can only trust the process. In the same way, James says, “Be patient... because the Lord’s coming is near.” Advent joy is not noisy or shallow; it’s a steady confidence that God is at work, even when we can’t yet see the full picture.

In the Gospel, John the Baptist is in prison. He sends his disciples to Jesus with a haunting question: “Are you the one who is to come, or must we wait for someone else?” It’s a very human moment of doubt and confusion. Jesus does not answer with a theory, but with signs: “the blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have the Good News preached to them.” Joy grows as we recognise these signs of God’s Kingdom – mercy, healing, forgiveness, new beginnings – in our own time.

Gaudete Sunday gently asks each of us: Where are the “deserts” in my life that I need God to make bloom? Where do I need patience and trust, rather than trying to control everything? Where do I already see small signs of God’s Kingdom breaking in – kindness, reconciliation, generosity, faith?

As we light the rose candle this weekend, we are not pretending that everything is easy or perfect. We are choosing to believe that Christ is near, that he is already at work, and that his coming brings real hope.

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. The Lord is very near.”  
*Father Mark*

WHO’S WHO AT OUR LADY OF HAL:

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| <p><b>Parish Priest:</b> Fr. Mark Dunglinson<br/>Email: <a href="mailto:markdunglinson@rcdow.org.uk">markdunglinson@rcdow.org.uk</a></p> <p><b>Also in residence:</b><br/>Fr. Colin McLean (<i>Retired</i>)<br/>Fr. John Deehan (<i>Retired</i>)<br/>Fr. Christopher Connor (<i>School Chaplain</i>)</p> <p>Carl Williams (<i>Pastoral Assistant/Director of Music</i>)<br/>Email addresses:<br/><a href="mailto:camdenpastoralassistant@rcdow.org.uk">camdenpastoralassistant@rcdow.org.uk</a><br/><a href="mailto:camdenmusicdirector@rcdow.org.uk">camdenmusicdirector@rcdow.org.uk</a></p> | <p><b>Administrator:</b>Althea Scully<br/><b>Contact:</b> The Presbytery, 165, Arlington Road, London NW1 7EX<br/>Tel: 020 7485 2727<br/>Email: <a href="mailto:camdentown@rcdow.org.uk">camdentown@rcdow.org.uk</a><br/>Web: <a href="http://www.ourladyofhal.org.uk">www.ourladyofhal.org.uk</a><br/>Registered Charity No: 233699</p> <p><b>Portuguese Community:</b> Fr. Claudio Dos Reis<br/>Portuguese Office Tel: 020 7587 0881<br/>Email: <a href="mailto:ukportuguesechaplain@gmail.com">ukportuguesechaplain@gmail.com</a></p> |
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FOR YOUR PRAYERS

SICK, HOUSEBOUND, THOSE WHO RECEIVE COMMUNION AT HOME:

Mike Power, Father Anthony, Margaret Quinn, Michael O’Brien, Christine Smith, Rachel Cottrell, Alice O’Neill, Janice Davidson, Jilly Taylor, Marie Cawdery, Pauline Guthrie, Maureen Lyden, Richard Ainsworth, Francesco Sesia, Joe Owen, Doreen O’Callaghan, Wesley Gilead, Henrik Sperlich, Allan & Lynne Mackintosh, Ray Norris, Morag & Raj Puri, Stephen de Winter, George Spencer.

HAL LAMPS: THE HOLY SOULS

RECENTLY DEPARTED: We pray for all those who have died recently: Janice Davidson

DEAD ANNIVERSARIES: We pray for all that died around this time.



| LITURGICAL CALENDAR & INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK   |                      |               |                         |       |                                    |   |
|---|----------------------|---------------|-------------------------|-------|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>SUNDAY MASS:</b> 6pm (Saturday Vigil), 10.00am (Family) & 12 Noon (Solemn). 5pm (Portuguese).<br><b>OTHER MASS TIMES:</b> <u>Monday, Tuesday &amp; Friday at 12 Noon</u> ; <u>Wednesday and Thursday at 9.30am</u><br><b>HOLYDAYS OF OBLIGATION:</b> As Announced.<br><b>EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION:</b> Fridays: 12.30pm-1pm and Saturday: 5.15-5.45pm<br><b>CONFESSIONS:</b> Friday 12.35-1pm, Saturday 11am-11.30 & 5.15pm-5.45pm and by appointment. |                      |               |                         |       |                                    |   |
| RP/P  | Sunday               | 14th December | Third Sunday of Advent  | Vigil | 6:00 pm<br>10:00 am<br><br>12 Noon | Constancio Denis (RIP)<br>Lauriana Denis (RIP) &<br>People of the Parish<br>Peter Cajetan Denis (RIP) |
| P   | Monday               | 15th December | Advent Feria            |       | 12 Noon                            | Pauline O’Sullivan (INT)  |
| P   | Tuesday              | 16th December | Advent Feria            |       | 12 Noon                            | Anthony Philip Denis (RIP)  |
| P   | Wednesday            | 17th December | Advent Feria            |       | 9:30 am                            | Richard Denis (RIP)   |
| P   | Thursday             | 18th December | Advent Feria            |       | 9:30 am                            | Theresa Lynagh (B’d day)  |
| P   | Friday<br>abstinence | 19th December | Advent Feria            |       | 12 Noon                            | Madge Lynagh (RIP)  |
| P   | Saturday             | 20th December | Fourth Sunday of Advent | Vigil | 6:00 pm                            | Phil Carroll (RIP)  |

NEWS AND VIEWS

**WELCOME** to all at Mass today, especially visitors, or to anyone who is new to the Parish.

**PARISH OFFICE OPENING HOURS:** Mon; Tue; Thu and Fri: 10.00 to 2.00pm; Wednesday closed.

**WEEKDAY MASSES:** At present, we will be able to retain most weekday Masses from Monday to Friday. The situation will be reviewed at the end of the year.

**VESPERS (EVENING PRAYER):** On Saturday evenings, Sung Evening Prayer is celebrated at 5:15pm before Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. All are welcome to join us.

**CONFIRMATION 2026:** We have had few applications from young people to be confirmed next summer. The deadline for applications has been extended to **15th December**. The reality is that we don’t have enough voluntary catechists to run a course for a small number. If more people do not come forward, we will skip a year and run a programme for 2025/2026

**Christmas Tree and Flowers:** Thank you to all those generous parishioners who kindly gave money towards the flowers and Christmas tree. This means we will be able to buy a good selection of flowers to decorate our church for Christmas.

**PENITENTIAL SERVICE IN PREPARATION FOR CHRISTMAS:** Wednesday 17th December: 6pm. Opportunity to come together as a community in penitence to prepare for Christmas. Individual confessions will be heard by a visiting priest and the parish priest.

**READERS FOR CHRISTMAS MASSES.** If you will be here for Christmas Mass, please indicate when you can read (24 December 6.30pm and 10pm, 25 December 12 Noon) on the notice board in the sacristy. A rota will be drawn up.

**EUCCHARISTIC MINISTER NEEDED FOR 2 HOME VISITS:** We have ‘lost’ a Eucharistic Minister from the parish and we need someone to take over her two home visits twice a month or every 3 weeks. As this is an important part of your ministry, please speak to Fr Mark to arrange.

**First Mass of Christmas, 24th December, 6:30pm:** You are cordially invited, parishioners and visitors, to join us in a glass of mulled wine in the hall after 6:30pm Mass on the 24th of December. All are welcomed.

**LEGION OF MARY** is planning to start a group here at Our Lady of Hal. If you are interested in joining, please sign the notice in the outer sacristy and Fr Mark will pass your names on to Lourdes who will give you more information.

**Organ Music During Advent:** As is the tradition of the church during penitential seasons, and with the exception of Gaudate Sunday, organ music is limited to supporting the singing only as we prepare for the celebratory joy of the Nativity itself.

**Christmas Stall:** After weekend masses up until Christmas Eve, a Christmas stall will be set up at the back of the church selling a variety of Christmas gifts including the ‘Our Lady of Hal’ 2026 Calendars, Our Lady of Hal children’s chocolate selection boxes, personalized mugs, and monastic wine covers. Please come and visit our Christmas stand to purchase all of your stocking fillers. All proceeds go to the church.

‘**Dive Deeper**’ is a two-part course talks on the Patriarchs of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph, given by Fr. John Deehan. The first part of the Talk will focus on Abraham and Isaac and will begin on Monday, 19th January over Zoom. If you are interested, please email Warren ([catadmin@rcdow.org.uk](mailto:catadmin@rcdow.org.uk)) for more information and to register.

**Christmas Leaflet:** The Christmas Programme Leaflet is now available at the back of the church. Please take one home with you.

**Christmas Envelopes** are attached to this newsletter for your Christmas offerings. Please return it in the collection or to the parish office.

**Piano:** Fr. Mark and Carl would like to thank a parishioner for the generous donation of the piano throughout the month of December. This will elevate our Christmas liturgies and bring joy to all who play and hear it.

**PRIVATE TUTOR NEEDED for GCSE Maths.** If you can help, please see Fr. Mark. Thank you.

**SACRAMENTAL PROGRAMMES 2025**

**First Holy Communion 2026:** Applications now closed.

**Confirmation 2026:** please see separate item.

**RCIA Course:** Now up and running.

**TEAS AND COFFEES TODAY** for parishioners and visitors after the 10am Sunday Mass.

**COLLECTIONS LAST SUNDAY: (THANK YOU!)**  
Envelopes: £223.00 Loose: £258.30 Total: £481.30  
Donation by Dona Card Machine on Sunday: £172.76 and £519 per week by standing order.