WELCOME TO THE YEAR OF MARK

AS you may know it is now the custom in the Catholic Church to keep the Second Sunday in Advent as Bible Sunday, an observance borrowed from the Church of England, and a day to think a bit about the place of the Bible in our lives. It’s also a good time to reflect from the gospel from which most of our Sunday readings will be taken for the next year, the gospel of Mark.

We’re not sure who wrote it (as the name Mark isn’t in the actual text); it is usually thought to be the earliest gospel, written probably about AD70. The Evangelist is shown here in a Syrian icon, with writing in Arabic, and traditionally seen as the first bishop in Egypt. The first readers of Mark needed to have Jewish customs explained and it has a hazy geography of Palestine so probably wasn’t written there. It is not only early - it’s shorter and simpler than the other gospels, so it has a ‘raw’ and direct quality, easier to read. It is thought that both Matthew and Luke drew on Mark. Mark is less interested than Luke in the universality of the Christian message for all peoples, and less interested than Matthew in seeing the Church as the new Israel, or Jesus as being like Moses.

The theological message of Mark is straightforward, from its first lines: ‘The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God’. A clear aim of the writer is to demonstrate that though in Jesus it is inaugurated and anticipated’

Another big idea is the conflict with evil. A scholar has written: ‘in this struggle God had been victorious, but in the course of time the evil powers had to some extent reasserted their sway over God’s creation; and so... it was expected that he, or some representative of his, would have to engage a further, and this time finally decisive, struggle against the evil powers’. In Christian moral teaching, the notion of conflict with evil is important. We see it in our everyday lives and our often faltering efforts to lead good lives; moreover in terms of Catholic social teaching the Church’s battle with injustice and violence in the world is a conflict with the sources of evil.

A feature of Mark is the head-banging stupidity of the disciples (toned down in the later gospels), reassuring for the rest of us in view of the mess we often make of things. This feeling of ‘mess’ is part of the stark, raw quality of the gospel. The relationship between the Lord and his disciples is characterised by frustration and their constant failure to understand the Lord’s teaching and ministry. Miracles such as the feeding of the multitude (6:30ff. and 8:1.ff) have to be repeated - because the disciples don’t understand the meaning after the first miracle, as we are told by the evangelist after Jesus has walked on water (6:52: ‘Their minds were closed.’) We can see the same denseness over the well-known parables of the sower (4:1ff.): the people have to make do with the parables which they may not find easy to understand, and the disciples get the pains-taking explanation. This repeated failure is contrasted from an early stage with the opposition Jesus arouses from others. The message of Jesus in Mark is deeply unsettling and disturbing; it challenges and arouses antagonism early on; but his closest followers seem to be in dark for so much of the time. We can see how exasperated Jesus gets: ‘Why are you so frightened? Have you still so little faith?’ he says after the calming of the storm in chapter 4; or again, after talking about clean and unclean foods he says wardly ‘Even you - don’t you understand? Can’t you see...?’ (7:17). When we mess things up we’re in good company. This frustration on Jesus’ part is evident in his dealings with the Pharisees at 8:10ff, demanding of him a sign. Instead of a sign they get a ‘profound sigh’. This sense of failure and frustration also can also shed a rather harsh light on the odd ending of the original text of the Gospel after the resurrection (16:8 - what comes later in your texts was added later). Those who had failed Jesus again and again through the gospel are simply afraid when the tomb is found to be empty - that’s it!

So try in the next year simply to get to know the gospel of Mark.
PARISH NEWS

A big thank you to all the parishioners who helped to put together the Christmas Fair last Sunday. It was arranged in a matter of weeks and was a lovely social occasion for the many parishioners who turned up to enjoy what was on offer.
The bacon butties I hear were a great success.
Many thanks to Sue Owen for coming in mid-way through and pulling it all together so successfully. The fair raised £2,376.36

EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION
9.30 am Mass on Sundays

A reminder that all Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist must sign in on the Rota Sheet before the start of Mass. This enables a substitute to be assigned in place of any missing minister.
Thank you for your co-operation.

The Parish Carol Service is on Saturday 16th at 7pm. This is a really lovely mixture of songs and carols and poems and readings put together by all our choirs and rounded off by mulled wine and mince pies in the Hall.
Do come and enjoy this wonderful start to Christmas

HOLY COMMUNION AT 6PM CHRISTMAS VIGIL AND MIDNIGHT MASS AT ST EDMUND’S

Owing to the exceptional number of people normally attending these two Masses, and the consequent crowding of the aisles, it will be possible to administer Holy Communion only under the form of the host; the chalice will not be available to the congregation. The fullness of Christ, body and blood, soul and divinity, is received under either kind.

GETTING ORGANISED FOR CHRISTMAS SERVICES

As we are now in Advent and the weeks will go very fast we would like to get some things organised early.

Will altar servers please indicate on the sheets in the Sacristy their availability to serve at a Christmas Mass.

At the back of the Church near the Statue of the Sacred Heart are also sheets for the various Masses. Would Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist and Readers please indicate their availability to participate at a specific Mass.

Rosemary Ekong on 07956 109465 or email r.ekong@ucl.ac.uk is arranging the readers for the Christmas Vigil and Midnight Mass in the church. Several readers will be needed for this so please get in touch with Rosemary now.

ST EDMUND’S WALKING GROUP
Saturday 16 December

A final reminder that next Saturday is our last walk of 2017. This will be a gentle stroll around Kelsey Park and the Harvington Estate followed by coffee, mince pies and mulled wine at 69 Kenwood Drive BR3 6QZ.
Meet at 10 am at the North Gate, (nearest to the High Street)

ST ED

Please would all of our St Ed distributors collect their copies from the porch and try to get them distributed before Christmas or some of the information in them will be redundant.
Thank you once more for distributing these copies for us. We greatly appreciate it. If you feel that you can no longer deliver, please let the office know.

Please visit our Christmas Crib. All the money raised will go to support the Catholic Children’s Society Crisis Fund which provides one-off emergency grants to support children and families who are experiencing a crisis in their lives.
The Advent copies of these little publications have arrived and are at the back of the church. This year we have available the usual edition which is a day by day guide through Advent with daily readings and commentary, **but we also have copies of ones designed for infants and juniors**. These have stories and activities for children to complete as we get closer to Christmas Day.

Each booklet costs £1 and this should be put in the Papers box in the porch.

**LAW SURGERY**

Monday 11 at 7.00pm in no11
This will be the final Law Surgery for 2017. Please arrive promptly at 7.00 pm.
Many, many thanks to the team of solicitors who so generously give up the time every month to offer this service.

This coming Saturday 16 December, marks the first anniversary of the death of Canon Jack Madden. Please remember him in your prayers.

**FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS EVE**

As happened about six or seven years ago when Christmas day last fell on a Monday, people have understandably asked this question: if I normally go to Mass on a Sunday evening, does that satisfy at once the obligation to go to Mass both on the Sunday and at Christmas? Guidance given by the Liturgy Office of the Bishops Conference makes it clear that the answer is 'No!'

The statement says: **The primary purpose of a holy day of obligation is to call the faithful to celebrate particular dimensions of the mysteries of Christ and His Church. Since obligation is attached to specific mysteries being celebrated, it is not possible to fulfill two obligations in one celebration.**

This means that you are expected to go to Mass on the Fourth Sunday of Advent and to Mass on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. It has been made clear that you cannot do these things by attending **one single Mass** on the evening of Christmas Eve. You could do so by attending two such Masses (and this parish you can do this as we have three early evening Masses on Christmas Eve) but it would be much better to go to an Advent Mass on the Saturday evening or Sunday morning and then a Christmas Mass on Sunday evening or Monday morning.

**CYM BROMLEY DEANERY CHOIR 2018**

As part of the continuing programme of initiatives for young people in Bromley Deanery, we would like to explore the possibility of starting a choir and/or youth orchestra in 2018. We would like to hear from anyone who is interested in getting involved and at this stage specifically from professional musicians/musical directors who would like to be part of this exciting project. For general enquiries and for more details email: susan.longhurst@bromleydeanery.org or Rogf16@btinternet.com.

**AID TO THE CHURCH IN NEED**

Fr Steve has received this letter from the gentleman who made an appeal in our Church some time ago. He wanted to share it with us:

Dear Father Steve,
I returned from visiting my mother in Ireland on Sunday to find your cheque for my appeal a few weeks ago. I am absolutely staggered by the great generosity of your parishioners! This amount far exceeds what I expected and I can only pass on my gratitude to them for the amount of £2059! This together with £460 for the stock makes an amazing total of £2519 which I will be banking for Aid to the Church in Need. This will make a significant contribution to the needs of persecuted Christians and other Christians and religious around the world who have a variety of needs.
Please pass on my thanks to your parishioners through your newsletter and a special thanks to your ‘counters’ who have processed the envelopes and counted the money.
Once again, thank you for allowing me to make the appeal at your church.
I wish you and your other colleagues at Saint Edmunds all the best for the coming season of Advent.
Best wishes and God bless
Mike Davies
Area secretary for Southwark
Aid to the Church in Need

**BAPTISMS DURING NOVEMBER**

Congratulations to the following children who were baptised at St Edmund’s during November.

- Lila Madden Acha
- Ezra Kwokori Campbell
- Francesca Aves
- Jessica Da Costa
- Nicholas Selvanathan
- Hazel Pham.

**MESSAGE FROM THE ARCHBISHOP OF SOUTHWARK**

Do you support Catholic schools and the right of Catholics to send their children to them? Then we need you to make your voice heard.

The Government is making a critical decision on whether to overturn the admissions cap which prevents Catholic schools from allowing all Catholic pupils to attend. They have acknowledged that this policy discriminates against Catholics and promised to abandon it, now we need you to tell them not to u-turn on their promise to Catholics. Visit [http://catholicnews.org.uk/](http://catholicnews.org.uk/) or search for ‘Catholic Education’ in your search engine to write to the Government and urge them to drop their policy which bans new Catholic schools.
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sunday 10</td>
<td>Second Sunday of Advent (B)</td>
<td>Bible Sunday Aiden Tyndall RIP</td>
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<td>For the people (Children’s Liturgy) Thomas Lee RIP (Baptism)</td>
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<td>Children’s Advent Service Maria Simianic RIP</td>
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<td>Monday 11</td>
<td>Feria (St Damasus I, Pope)</td>
<td>27 V Way Jeanne &amp; Pierre Champetier RIP Adoration Hour</td>
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<td>Tuesday 12</td>
<td>Feria (Our Lady of Guadalupe)</td>
<td>Arthur Cecil Pearce RIP</td>
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<td>Wednesday 13</td>
<td>St Lucy, Virgin and Martyr</td>
<td>8.00 am Challoner Peter and Barbara Oke RIP</td>
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<td>8.15 am Claver Dec'd promoters and benefactors of the Claver sisters.</td>
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<td>10.00 am Church Chona and Giacomo Collu (wedding anniv)</td>
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<td>7.30 pm Church Angela Laws RIP</td>
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<td>Thursday 14</td>
<td>St John of the Cross, Priest and Doctor of the Church</td>
<td>8.15 am Claver Fr Leo Targett RIP</td>
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<td>10.00 am Church Monica Grima RIP</td>
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<td>8.00 pm Claver Adoration Hour</td>
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<td>Friday 15</td>
<td>Feria</td>
<td>8.15 am Claver Joan Friel RIP</td>
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<td>9.10 am St Mary’s Dennis Cremin RIP</td>
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<td>10.00 am Church Spiro and Alba Pensa RIp (1st anniv)</td>
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<td>Saturday 16</td>
<td>Feria (Our Lady)</td>
<td>8.15 am Claver John Ransford RIP</td>
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<td>10.00 am Church Canon Jack Madden RIp (1st anniv)</td>
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<td>6.00 pm Church Crescenzo and Delisa Panetta RIp</td>
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<td>7.00 pm Church Parish Advent Service</td>
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<td>Sunday 17</td>
<td>Third Sunday of Advent (B)</td>
<td>8.00 am Church Horsman and Unwin families</td>
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<td>Gaudete Sunday</td>
<td>9.30 am Church For the people</td>
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<td>11.00 am Church Marie O'Reilly</td>
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<td>5.30 pm Church Harold and Muriel Hartrop RIP</td>
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<td>7.00 pm Church Rainer Stueper RIp</td>
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<td>Reconciliation on Saturdays from 10.30 - 11 am &amp; from 5.00 - 6.00pm.</td>
<td>Other times by request.</td>
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We pray for those who have died recently:
Baby Edward, Paul Lane, Sheila Hartley and Penny Wood

Those whose anniversaries are this week:
Josephine O’Halloran, Lucas Campos, Elizabeth Lynch, Sharon Wigner, Jane Bogue, Thomas Lee, Mary Sullivan, Spencer Hoyles, Chris McBurney, Pamela Flood, Canon Jack Madden and John Ransford

We pray for the sick:

**COLLECTIONS:**
Last week’s collection raised £2489.30 and the second collection for the SVP raised £1124.99

**DIARY DATES**

**DECEMBER**
*Meditation - Every Monday in no11 from 5.30pm to 6.15pm except 25 December.*
Sunday 10 - Children’s Advent Service
Monday 11 - SVP Christmas Lunch
Saturday 16 - Walking Group

**JANUARY**
Saturday 27 - St Edmund’s Youth Club in the Hall 7-9 pm

*O come, O come Emmanuel*