



CATHOLIC CHAPLAINCY TO THE LIVERPOOL UNIVERSITIES

The University Church of St Philip Neri Church ~ "The Oratory Church"

30 Catharine Street L8 7NL Tel: 0151-709 3858

Chaplain: Fr Neil Ritchie

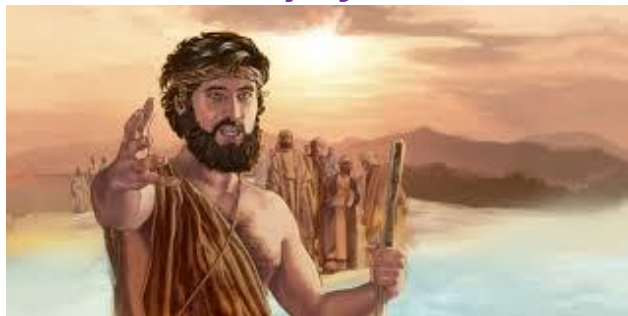
www.cathchap.org.uk unichap@rcaol.org.uk

 [Liverpool CathChap Facebook Page](#)  [liverpoolcathsoc](#)



8th December 2024

Second Sunday of Advent (Year C)



Email addresses: unichap@rcaol.org.uk is a general address. If you want to contact Fr Neil privately, use: n.ritchie@rcaol.org.uk. To contact Arran, use arran.kearney@rcaol.org.uk

Events for Students and University Members:

Masses & Services This Week:

Monday: 8.15 Mass at the **Missionaries of Charity** house, 55 Seel street L1 4AZ, – students are always welcome!
Tuesday: Morning Prayer/breakfast 8am; Mass 5.30pm
Wednesday: 12.30pm Mass at Faith Express
Thursday: 5.30 Mass – Our Lady of Guadalupe
Saturday: Day of Recollection
Sunday: Next Mass 6pm January 5th

Today's Mass is in Thanksgiving for Sr Rachel FCJ's many years of ministry among us, here at the chaplaincy. We are grateful for her gentle and supportive ministry among us over the years.

Sister, we wish you every blessing for the future!

Next Sunday Mass: January 5th at 6pm

The **filming of Mass** by two students from Manchester University as part of their Masters project in Visual Anthropology has been deferred to January 5th. The main purpose of the film is to look at the details and processes that take place during a Catholic mass, and how these processes contribute to a feeling of community and sanctity for the congregation. The film will not be broadcast or distributed anywhere, & will form part of their assessment; it will only be seen by our small masters cohort (18 people) and the course leaders. They also wish to interview a few of us afterwards

Tuesday Evening:

CathSoc Film Night!

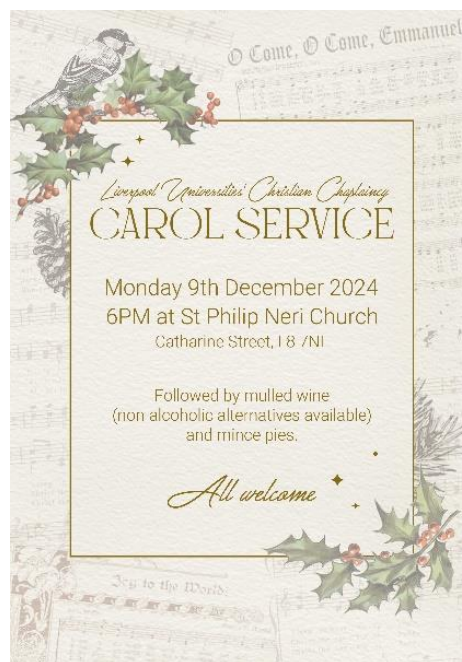
6.30pm in the chaplaincy – with food to snack on!

Thursday is the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Mass (5.30pm) will be in Spanish & English, and afterwards we will have food with a 'Hispanic' character!!



Philip Neri Student House: would you like to be part of the resident community at the Chaplaincy, living at Philip Neri House?

Residents play a vital role in supporting CathSoc & the Chaplaincy. (They also have one of the best garden views in Liverpool!) If you are interested, come and have a chat with Fr Neil.



In February we will have our annual **retreat at Freshfield** (where we were last year) Sisters Angela Marie OP and Bernadette Marie OP will once again be joining us. **February 21st-23rd. Mark the dates in you diary now!**

Weekly Collection & other donations, you can pay online
philipnerihouse.sumupstore.com
Thank you so much for your contributions!!



Arran, Kasia and Fr Neil wish you all a very happy and Holy celebration of the Christmas Season, and a very joyous and blessed New Year!

Living in Advent

It can sometimes be difficult to know how one ought to behave during the Advent season. Even as we are called to prepare for the Nativity of our Lord we are also, seemingly conversely, called to recognize

Advent on its merits, and not to confuse it with Christmastime. We must look forward to Christmas Day, but remember as we do so that we have not yet arrived at our destination. Just as on the occasion of the first Nativity Our Lady was called upon to take a journey prior to the coming of Christ, so too are we.

This is unlikely to be a physical journey - I'm not sure the Diocese would countenance a Chaplaincy trip to Bethlehem at this time - but rather a spiritual one. A spiritual journey in which we imitate Mary's submission to God and her Hope for the future; both accepting God's Will and, in that accepting, expecting its fulfilment in our own lives and the life of the Church. Advent graduates to Christmas not because of some date which we've written on our calendars, but rather because the Hope of Advent is fulfilled by the birth of Christ. You can see how one cannot be had without the other; the joy of His arrival cannot be felt without the yearning and patient waiting that precedes it. We must live in both, in order that we might fully and properly experience both. Thus, the two seasons are at once inseparable, whilst also being distinct and worthy on their own merits.

Now how is the story of that physical journey and physical birth, renewed each year, supposed to be translated in a spiritual sense within our own lives? We can't hope for a convenient sign from heaven. It seems unlikely that the Angel Gabriel will be stopping by the Chaplaincy any time soon - and in any case he probably wouldn't be able to remember the door code. Of course it's unlikely for a number of reasons, but for the chief amongst those we must look to Our Lady again. The reason why she was chosen for her task was because she alone amongst all humanity was fit for it. She in her goodness sets us an example. We must enter into our spiritual journey by seeking to act as she did: allowing God to fully enter into our lives. This is something we talk about a lot, so much so that its meaning may be at risk of being diluted. We are called to accept God absolutely and without reservation. We recently heard these words from Revelation at mass: "I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot!" Obviously, it would be much better if we were hot, on fire with faith, but even being stone cold is preferable to being

lukewarm, because it might bring us to a point of such desperation and obvious spiritual need that we are almost forced to accept God solely because every other avenue has been shut off. For many of us, in our comfort and complacency, we can rub along quite nicely from year to year, season to season, murmuring platitudes and profundities, all the while never quite grasping the scale of the life-altering, all-changing, earth-shattering thing we claim to be worshipping. Advent is the season when we are asked to change this: to look frankly at our lives, to feel our calamities, to admit our faults. The Mind has a mercurial power of inventing specious and plausible excuses. We explain away our behaviour each and every day. We can even, by pure guile, transform contrition into a means of maintaining our faults; promising change, but locating the impetus for that change within ourselves, rather than in God, so that nobody can hold us to account when we inevitably fail.

Advent can bring true change - and it can bring it by inspiring true contrition. Imagine arriving at Christmas Day with all those secret weights lifted from your shoulders! Imagine looking upon the pure innocence and goodness of the Christ child unencumbered by that frustration and nagging self-reproach which is the by-product of a lukewarm life. That can only be done through the preparation of our hearts and minds for his arrival - something we must do prior to Christmas Day. Advent and Christmas interweave to create this redemptive tapestry. How to accept God? Well, we must cease to be lukewarm. CS Lewis speculates that the full acceptance of God can only come after the exhaustion of our human capacities - after we are forced to realize that our powers alone are not sufficient for the thing to which we feel called. Only in this way do we un-stop our ears to hear Jesus knocking at our door. This thing to which we are called is not easy - it is very far from that. Perhaps this Advent we must look to act in Goodness the best way we know how, and in so doing exhaust our human powers, realizing the necessity of that which is Divine. And there, at the end of it all, shall come the Divine on Christmas morning, heralding tidings of comfort and joy.

Wishing you a blessed Advent and a Merry Christmas,

Arran Kearney, Chaplain Assistant