

**The Catholic Churches of
Saint John the Baptist, Trowbridge
Saint Bernadette, Westbury
& Saint Thomas More, Bradford-on-Avon**



St John the Baptist
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Trowbridge
BA14 9EA



St Bernadette
100 West End
Westbury
BA13 3JQ



St Thomas More
Market Street
Bradford-on-Avon
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**Third Sunday of Advent – 15th December 2024
Gaudete Sunday**

Parish Priest: Father Richard Elson richard.elson@cliftondiocese.com 01225 752152

Parish websites: www.stjohnthebaptisttrowbridge.co.uk
www.together.ourchurchweb.org.uk/bradfordonavon/churches/stthomasmore/

This Week's Mass Times

Sat 14 th Dec	4pm	St Thomas More's	Third Sunday of Advent	<i>People of the Parish Alphonsa Joseph (RIP)</i>
	6pm	St John's		
Sun 15 th Dec	9am	St Bernadette's		<i>Maureen Stephens (RIP) George and Joan Mills (RIP)</i>
	10.30am	St John's		
Mon 16 th Dec	No Mass		Weekday of Advent	
Tues 17 th Dec	6pm	St John's	Weekday of Advent (O Sapientia)	<i>Prunella Erdozain (RIP)</i>
Wed 18 th Dec	9am	St Thomas More's	Weekday of Advent (O Adonai)	<i>Holy Souls</i>
Thurs 19 th Dec	No Mass		Weekday of Advent (O Radix)	
Fri 20 th Dec	9am	St John's	Weekday of Advent (O Clavis David)	<i>Rosa Devassy (RIP)</i>
Sat 21 st Dec	4pm	St Thomas More's	Fourth Sunday of Advent	<i>People of the Parish Mary Barlow (RIP)</i>
	6pm	St John's		

Confessions

Sat	10.00-10.30am	St John's
Sat	3.30-3.50pm	St Thomas More's
Sat	5.30-5.50pm	St John's

Today's Readings



Carol Service

Sun 6pm St John's

THE WORD THIS WEEK

This Sunday is called "Gaudete" Sunday — "Rejoice Sunday". This comes from the readings we hear today, and it underlines an important point. In the Gospel, we hear John the Baptist telling different groups what to do - they must repent, and change their lives. We might think of this as a rather joyless thing - something which is hard and unrewarding. The message of this Sunday is that repentance and changing our lives to welcome Jesus is something richly joyful. When we are planning to welcome anyone we love to our homes, we set about cleaning and preparing for their visit with enthusiasm - nothing is too much trouble for someone we care for greatly. Even scrubbing the bath or polishing the furniture can be a happy and joyful thing! The message of this Sunday is that preparing to welcome the Lord - even though it may involve hard work - is something utterly joyful, because of our love for Him, and His love for us.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION PROGRAMME 2025

Application forms are now available for the First Holy Communion Programme for 2025. Sessions will take place at St John's Parish Centre on Thursday evenings beginning with the first meeting on 16th January at 6pm. Parents are asked to attend the first meeting with the children. Full details of the programme will be provided at this meeting. The programme is open to anyone in Year 3 or above. Please return completed application forms to Fr Richard by 6th January.

CONFESSIONS IN ADVENT – 14th & 21st DEC

In addition to the usual scheduled times for confessions, there will be opportunities for confession on Saturday 14th & 21st December at 10am at St John's.

ST THOMAS MORE'S – 14th DEC

Coffee, tea and cakes after Mass this Saturday, 14th December. All are welcome.

BLESSING OF BAMBINELLI – 15th DEC

This is a beautiful Advent Tradition - Bambinelli Sunday, Blessing the Christ Child - which has been celebrated in Rome for over thirty years and helps children and young people to prepare for Jesus. Each family will bring the Christ Child from its own crib or Nativity scene and the Pope blesses it during the noon Angelus that day. It is a wonderful way to bring family and parish together. Following that tradition, I encourage families to bring the baby Jesus from their own cribs to church this Sunday and, at the end of Mass, I will bless the Bambinelli which have been brought to church. Everyone is welcome to take part – young and old alike. Fr Richard

CAROL SERVICE – 15th DEC

The joint Carol Service for our three churches will take place at St John's this Sunday at 6pm. Refreshments will be served in the Parish Centre afterwards. Everyone is very welcome to join us.

LECTIO DIVINA – ST THOMAS MORE'S

This month's Lectio Divina at St Thomas More's will be on Monday 16th December instead of Monday 23rd December.

ADVENT TIME OF PRAYER AT ST BERNADETTE'S

The Rosary will be prayed together followed by a time for private prayer during Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. Wednesday 18th December 10:15-11am. All are welcome.

MESSIAEN AT ST JOHN'S, BATH – 18th DEC

Olivier Messiaen's music is thrilling, seductive, mysterious, and sensuous in equal measure, and his deep Catholic faith led him to attempt to express all aspects of his belief in music. Here is an opportunity to hear this unique voice in his fantastic organ cycle La Nativité du Seigneur (The Birth of the Lord). The meditation is at 7.30pm on Wednesday 18th December in St John the Evangelist, with David Bednall on the organ and the accompanying readings for each movement will be given as well. The work covers ideas that range from the picturesque (The Shepherds and Magi), the mystical (The Word), and the overwhelming descent of God to Earth in the mighty closing movement. This is music for the dark atmosphere of the church rather than the concert hall, and this is an opportunity to have 80 minutes away from the busy outside world to contemplate the true Christmas message and to perhaps try this extraordinary music for the first time.

A LIVING NATIVITY – 21st DEC

Help to share the real meaning of Christmas. A living nativity takes place in Trowbridge on Saturday 21st December at 11am. Meeting at the Civic Centre for an 11am start, finishing at St James' Church. If you would like to, please come dressed in a nativity costume of your own choice.

CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES

Masses this year will be at the following times:

Tuesday 24th December – Christmas Eve

6pm St John's

9pm St Thomas More's (Carols from 8.30pm)

11pm St John's (Carols from 10.30pm)

Wednesday 25th December – Christmas Day

9am St Bernadette's

10.30am St John's

Thursday 26th December – St Stephen's Day

12noon St John's

CHRISTMAS OFFERINGS

The collection at the Christmas Masses is traditionally given as a personal gift to the priests of the parish. Envelopes for the Christmas Offerings are available from the Church Porches. You can also use the card machines at St John's or the donations page on the Parish Website.

MASS INTENTIONS

The diary for Mass Intentions in 2025 is now open. If you would like a Mass said on a particular date (e.g. a birthday or anniversary), please book this as early as possible. When completing the envelopes for Mass Intentions, please indicate which church, Mass time, and/or date that you would prefer. If these details are not specified, the Mass may be celebrated at another time or in one of the other churches. If a particular date is especially required, please check availability with me. Many thanks. Fr Richard

DIOCESAN DIRECTORIES AND LITURGICAL DIARIES

The Diocesan Directories (£6) and Liturgical Diaries (£6.50) for 2025 are now available from all of the churches.

AID TO THE CHURCH IN NEED

Aid to the Church in Need (UK) has launched an Open Letter campaign calling on Foreign Secretary David Lammy to make persecuted religious communities priority recipients of UK Overseas Development Aid (ODA). They need your help to reach their goal of 10,000 signatures, which will trigger a response from the Government. Please sign their open letter today: <https://acnuk.org/our-campaigns/red-wednesday-advocacy-letter>. Together, we can help Christians and other religious minorities trapped in modern slavery, extreme poverty and worse.

BEYOND THE THRESHOLD – 18th JAN

A day for all – creating safe spaces for people to find out who we are, what we believe and what we're like. On Saturday 18th January we will explore the key principles that we need to employ before we embark on any specific programme of catechesis. Our day at St Brendan's College, Brislington, will start at 10am (9.30am refreshments) and will be led by International Speaker and Author, David Wells as our keynote speaker. To register for the day please click on the Eventbrite link: <https://beyondthethreshold.eventbrite.co.uk>

CAR PARKING 10.30 MASS

Please note, overflow car-park at St. Augustine's is available.

PARISH GIVING

There are many ways you can give a donation to Parish Funds: with a monthly standing order (Ask Father Richard for a form), by using the Dona Card Reader in the Church Porch at St. John's, by a cash donation during the collections, or by using this QR Code. Thank you for your generosity.

