

3rd Sunday of Advent



Mass Times

Monday-Friday

7.30am, 8.30am,
10.15am, & 4pm

SATURDAY

8.30am, 10.15am

Mass for the Sick

3.00pm

SUNDAY

9.00am, 11.15am

& 7.30pm

CONFESSIONS

MONDAY & FRIDAY

10.45am-12 Noon

3.00pm-4.00pm

SATURDAY

10.45am-12noon

2.30pm-4pm



St. Augustine's Church Child Safeguarding Representatives.

Fr. Flor O'Callaghan O.S.A.

Fr. John Lyng O.S.A.

Ms Geraldine van Dam

Mr. Robert Ryan

Ms Charlotte Gleeson

Mr. John Doyle



St. Augustine's Church Limerick 3rd Sunday of Advent 15th December 2024

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We have Ways of Making You Happy

You'd wonder how John the Baptizer would get on at the roadblocks that were once familiar to us. Saying "No intimidation, no extortion, be content with your pay" would be a novel approach to the waiting soldiers or police manning the four by four plank studded with upturned six-inch nails. A technical violation could usually be conjured up to justify a modest fee. What some might call a bribe was, in the latter part of the year, called *Christmas Salt*, a little something to free and flavour the oft-stuck wheels of celebration. So, as the US and the USSR engaged in the SALT talks in Geneva, we had our own Salt talks on the lonely road. The Baptist's injunction, "exact no more than your rate" would seem cheeky, maybe provocative, to the levy-collectors you might meet at the bounds of any local government area.

They all had to make a living and being content with their pay might leave the family hungry. They were usually amenable enough; admit you were in the wrong and you were halfway to being right. More than one thrifty, or meanish, missionary pleaded exemption on religious grounds and was sent on his way scot-free with the surprising and friendly face-saver "go and sin no more." How would John get on?

From start to finish John, it seems, didn't have an easy life. Putting together what we know of him from the gospels, we have to conclude that, in the jargon of today, he walked the walk. He lived in the desert and let the locusts and bees feed him. Scratchy camel-hair was his cloth and a strip of dried-out goatskin sandal kept sole and heel together. And when it came to talking the talk he didn't hold back either: anyone with two coats must give one to the person with none. And so on. And he warned of the one coming with the winnowing-fan, the great separator of good grain from useless chaff. I fancy if you were listening to John you'd have the feeling "he's looking at me." Maybe that's the way to read the gospel.

John with his inclination to wag the finger might seem a strange patron for Sunday for Rejoicing. That's what the men in charge of Church labels call today. The first words on our missalette are "Rejoice in the Lord always...." "Shout for joy" says Zephaniah. All easier said than done. The import of Jesus's words "Good News is proclaimed to the poor" may be hard enough to see. What about the man or woman who comes to this "Rejoicing Sunday" in misery? Deaths and debts, ill-health and ill-luck, bad choices or bad neighbours: these can all conspire against our happiness, whether we're preparing for feast or funeral.

Even the high praise of John may seem small consolation to the punters whose horse didn't come in.

Advent and the Christmas that gives it meaning are pointing towards happiness by inviting us to come close to a God who is coming close to us. This itself is not the easy road. But it does promise that when we are far along our own journey, even when it drags us into old age, we can pray to be young again.

One of the great Christian students of the last century, Karl Rahner, prayed his Christmas prayer like this: "*Grant that when we experience the disappointments of our lives we may be enabled to believe that Your love, which You yourself are, and which You have bestowed upon us, is the eternal youth that is our true life.*" J.L.

Third Week of Advent Meditation

John's disciples said to Jesus, "Are you 'He who is to come' or do we look for another?" In reply, Jesus said: "Tell John what you hear and see: the blind recover their sight, cripples walk, lepers are cured, and the poor have good news preached to them..." Lk. 3:10

O Jesus, I rejoice at the signs that say you are near. Your power is everywhere if I could see it. Yet my eyes often see only darkness and what has yet to be done. I believe in you, yet when I look around evil seems so strong and goodness so weak. If you have come, why is there still so much suffering and why do the poor still despair? Where are your miracles today? Your grace, O Lord, is more fruitful in my world than I imagine. I know your power is everywhere around me, if I could only see it. Show me today where the blind see and cripples walk. Make my vision sharper than it is.

Christmas Mass Times at St. Augustine's

Christmas Eve

Tuesday 24th December,
Masses: 7.30a.m. , 8.30a.m. & 10.15a.m.
Christmas Family Mass 5.00pm
Christmas Eve Mass 8.00p.m.

Christmas Day

Wednesday, 25th December
Masses: 9.00a.m. & 11.15a.m.

No evening Mass

St. Stephen's Day

Thursday 26th December
Masses: 10.15a.m. & 4.00p.m.

Confessions

Monday 16th December
10.45am-12 Noon / 3.00pm-4.00pm

Friday 20th & Saturday 21st
Monday 23rd & Tuesday 24th

10.00am - 4.00pm

Advent at St. Augustine's

Our gathering for Lectio Divina will take place this coming Monday 16th December at the shrine of Our Mother of Good Counsel following the 4.00pm Mass. Why not join us as we gather to hear God speak to us as we meditate and reflect on the coming Sunday Gospels. It will be facilitated by Sr. Mary Dolora RSM. All are welcome!

St. Saviour's Dominican Church Healing & Reconciliation Service

Join us for our Pastoral Unit (Croí Clann Naofa) Christmas Healing and Reconciliation Service at St. Saviour's Dominican Church next Thursday **19th December, 7-8pm.** Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, a led holy hour with music, Benediction and Confessions.

Carols by Candlelight at Knock Basilica

Join us for an evening of Christmas carols and festive favourites in the candlelit surrounding of Knock Basilica on Sunday, December 22nd at 8pm. This event is free of charge and will also be streamed live on our [website](http://www.knockshrine.ie) at www.knockshrine.ie

Grow Mental Health

Grow Mental Health (Henry Street, Limerick and Croom)- Friendly Community based peer support groups for anyone experiencing mental health issue through 12 Step Program of connection, hope, identity by empowering people to nurture their positive wellbeing by supporting personal growth through education and self-teaching. Contact Celia 086-1526966/ Danielle 086-1588626/www.grow.ie