

My dear parishioners,

I cannot tell you how happy we are to be able to celebrate Holy Mass with you again this Advent and to see so many of you join us in celebrating, living and sharing the Word of God as we prepare to welcome Jesus into our hearts and our lives at Christmas. Like John the Baptist may we be witnesses to the Light in the way we live our lives in our families, our workplaces and our local communities. And may we listen to and accept the will of God, as Mary our mother shows us.

This weekend, Gaudete Sunday, we have an additional cause to rejoice, as we receive the wonderful news that a vaccine has been developed and will soon be available to everyone. We encourage you all to take advantage of this, so that we can get back to normal, enjoying each other's company, and fully participate in the Sacraments once more.

We write today to tell you of the arrangements for the Christmas period. As we continue to live through unusual times and to enable as many as possible to fulfil their Christmas obligations, our Church leaders have decreed that attendance at any Holy Mass between **Thursday, 24th December and Friday, 1st January** counts as a **Christmas Mass**. You will find details of Christmas Mass times attached. To avoid overcrowding and continue to keep everyone safe, I ask you please to **book a Mass in advance** – this can be done by telephoning the parish office on 0203 722 7573 on Monday to Thursday mornings or by e-mail at plumstead@rcaos.org.uk.

We have also been asked to remind you that your offertory over Christmas is for the clergy of the parish and, as always, we are truly grateful for your overwhelming and generous support. This year all donations received between the 24th December and the 6th January will be treated as Christmas contributions. If you are a Gift Aid member, please remember to use your Christmas envelope. Cheques should be made payable to '**St Patrick's Church**'. You may also pay by banker's order, quoting the reference '**CHRISTMAS**'. **BANK DETAILS:** National Westminster Bank - 'RCAS St Patrick-Plumstead'. Acc. No: 79136796.

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Some of you will already have heard that Pope Francis has accepted Bishop Patrick Lynch's resignation so that he can start his retirement. Bishop Pat has been a dear friend and good shepherd for 14 years. He has shared many joyous occasions with us and confirmed generations of our young people. We have always been delighted by his wit and wisdom and will miss him. We pray for him as he starts a new chapter in his life and that a worthy successor may be appointed to continue his good work.

Finally, we thank you for continuing to support our Parish and each other throughout this difficult time. We look forward to seeing you over the next few weeks and wish you all the joy and blessings of Christmas and hope for the New Year.

May God bless you and keep you safe.

Fr Auson and Fr Fortunatus

Rev. Deacons Wole and Anthony 13th December, 2020

