

PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE (PHP)

People Helping People is a small project founded in the Chapel of Penha de França by the late Father Bernardino Andrade to help those in need. Our former Bishop D. António once said, "One must find new ways of helping the poor". A very small group of people attending the English Mass decided to do just that after the floods in 2010! In a short period of time, we created partnerships with supermarket chains and restaurants; we have paid dozens of medical prescriptions, we have spent gallons and gallons of petrol riding across the island giving lifts, we have prevented families from going hungry, getting their electricity cut off, running out of gas, losing their homes. **We have tried to keep them warm, keep them hopeful, and keep them dreaming.**

"This is the true Christmas: the feast of God's poverty, who humbled himself, taking on the nature of a slave; of God who serves at the table; of God who hides himself from the intelligent and wise, revealing himself to the little ones, the simple and the poor. God's world is a world where everyone feels responsible for one another, for the good of others." (Christmas is every day - Pope Francis).



>> TRANSFER TO BANK ACCOUNT IN MADEIRA:

ACCOUNT NAME:

Associação Gente Ajudando Gente

BANK: Banco Santander Totta

ACCOUNT NUMBER: 0003 4938 1759020

IBAN: PT50 0018 0003 49381759020 94

SWIFT: TOTAPTPL

NIB: 0018 0003 49381759020 94

BANK ADDRESS:

Caminho de Santa Quitéria 46A,
9020-119, Funchal
Madeira, Portugal.



>> DONATIONS FROM THE UK:

ACCOUNT NAME: Sinead Moynihan

BANK: Lloyds Bank

ACCOUNT NUMBER: 02461743

BRANCH: Univ. of Cambridge

SORT CODE: 30-13-55

IBAN: GB05 LOYD 3013 5502 4617 43

BIC: LOYDGB21035



The funds will then be transferred to Madeira. Any questions or concerns about transferring to this account, please contact Sinead Moynihan at: sineadmoynihn7@icloud.com

PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE CONTACTS: Alexandre Silva, Funchal. Email: alex.lupus@gmail.com
When making any donation, please send an email to penhafranca.php@gmail.com with the date, and name on the transfer so that we are able to confirm that the transfer has been received. Thank you.

BLESS YOURSELF WITH HOLY WATER



As you go inside the Chapel just under the archways on either side of the door, you will find a small font on the wall with Holy water inside which you can use to bless yourself with, before and after Mass. 🙏🙏🙏🙏

Tea and Coffee

After Mass
at Moynihans
Irish Pub... up
the road from the
Chapel.



Please sign our Visitor's book or leave a message

We'd love to know
which country you
are visiting us
from!



Receive this newsletter by email every week. Ask to be added to the newsletter distribution list by sending an email to: penhafranca.newsletter@gmail.com or alternatively, you can download them from the Chapel's website/blog: www.rcmassmadeira.org/newsletter-downloads/

JOYFUL GIFT

Vol. 3, nr. 497

14th December 2025 – 10:30 am - Sunday
3rd Sunday of Advent - Year A

Chapel of Our Lady of Penha de França

Rua Penha de França 3, Funchal, Madeira

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f www.facebook.com/penhafrancachapel

i www.instagram.com/capela_penha_franca/

e penhafranca.newsletter@gmail.com

CATHOLIC MASS IN ENGLISH

Good morning! Today is the 3rd Sunday of Advent (also known as *Gaudete Sunday*). Our priest this morning is **Fr. Aloysius Ssegwanyii, OSM**. Father Aloysius is originally from Uganda but is currently based in Austria. He is visiting Madeira on holiday for the first time!

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS – 3rd Sunday of Advent - Year A

(Isaiah 35:1-6,10; Psalm 145(147); James 5:7-10; Matthew 11:2-11)

To encourage and console all whose confidence in God falters, **Isaiah** continues his triumphal vision of the peace that will come from God, when those ransomed by the Lord will go to Zion, singing God's praises. It was written in Babylon shortly after 540 BC, when the Persian king Cyrus had unexpectedly authorised Jewish exiles to return to Jerusalem. Isaiah's portrayal of the people's expectant joy was later seen by Christians as a foretaste of the peace Jesus Christ will bring.

The Psalm praises the goodness of God who keeps his covenant promises. The letter attributed to **James**, probably the brother of the Lord, the leader of the Jerusalem Church, was written late in the first century. It is full of pastoral advice and warnings against riches and presumption. Religion is not a private matter – the Christian community is in a covenant relationship with God, and our faith in God must be visible in love of our neighbour. We must patiently practise our faith, not swearing but letting our "yes" mean "yes", leaving justice to God.

In **Matthew's Gospel** Jesus fulfills Isaiah's vision – he is already enabling the blind to see, the lame to walk – his kingdom is already coming into being. But this deputation from John the Baptist in prison introduces two chapters describing growing opposition to Jesus by the Jewish leaders.

- **By:** Chris Oliver (www.bible-groups.info)

PSALM RESPONSE: Come, Lord, and save us.



TODAY'S HYMN MUSIC

Entry: "How lovely on the mountains..." - 235

Offertory: "All that I am..." - 21

Communion: "A new commandment..." - 2

Final: "Make way..." - 360

By: Larysa Makarova





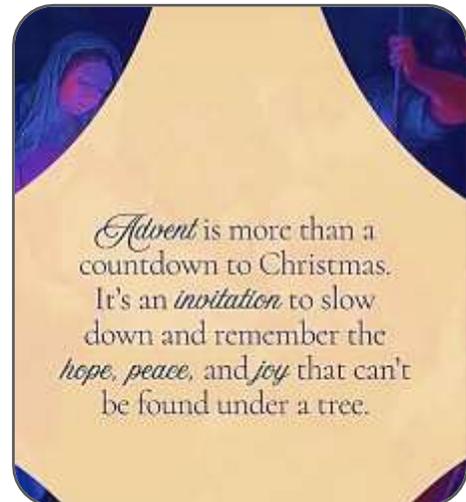
I once stood at a crowded bus stop in Funchal. A ship had come in that morning and the place was overflowing with visitors waiting for the bus to one of the island's popular sights. Among them was a local woman who immediately stood out. She wasn't flustered or bothered by the heat of the sun or the crush of people. She simply radiated a quiet, steady joy. She chatted with anyone nearby, and her presence changed the whole atmosphere. Faces that had looked tired began to soften.

People started smiling, and before long strangers were talking to each other as if they were old friends.

When her bus arrived, I noticed its destination: **Alegria**, which means **joy**. It felt completely right. Her warmth had lifted the whole group out of irritation and impatience. What she carried within her is meant to be part of every Christian's life. It is a joy that runs deeper than circumstances and one that steadies us even when things are difficult.

The Scriptures for this Sunday remind us where that joy comes from. We are not just promised a saviour. We are told that God Himself is our Saviour. Isaiah speaks of a God who comes with strength and tenderness, who opens the eyes of the blind and unstops the ears of the deaf. The Gospel shows Jesus bringing these promises to life, and John the Baptist is reassured that the Messiah truly is at work. St Paul urges the Church to rejoice, and he says it again so we do not miss the point: rejoice.

Why such insistence? Because the nearness of God changes everything. Advent tells us that God is not distant or unreachable. He draws near in the flesh, fully present with us. As we pass the halfway point of Advent, the Church invites us to pause and reflect on this closeness. The Lord we await is not far off. He shares our humanity and steps into our world with all its struggles and all its hopes.



This is the heart of Christian joy. It is not wishful thinking or forced cheerfulness. It is the steady assurance that God is with us and that in Christ He has taken our wounds, our worries and even our death upon Himself. This joy can carry us through darkness and confusion, and through those moments when we feel tired or worn out. It can open what has been closed, soften what has hardened and bring hope where we thought there was none. Today the Church wears rose as a sign of joy breaking through and she repeats Paul's words: rejoice. Not because life is always easy, but because the Lord is near.

May His nearness lighten our hearts, lift our spirits and help us share His joy with those around us, even at a crowded bus stop on a hot day.

- Deacon Tito

CHRISTMAS HAMPER DRIVE



During the month of December we have been collecting food staples and toiletries for the poor for Christmas. Today is the last day we are collecting, but if you would still like to contribute in some way, or to buy a gift for a child, please get in touch with Debbie (contact details below).

Many thanks to everyone who has contributed so far! ❤️



Everything received will be distributed amongst families who need our help.

Contact details for Debbie:
deborahadajesus@yahoo.co.uk



Debbie

THE MEANING OF THE FOUR ADVENT CANDLES

1st Candle—Hope
We remember God's promises and look forward with faith, just as the prophets longed for the Messiah.

2nd Candle—Peace
We reflect on the peace Christ brings—peace in our hearts, our homes, and the world.

3rd Candle—Joy
The rose candle invites us to rejoice as Christmas draws near, celebrating the joy of the Gospel.

4th Candle—Love
We honor God's perfect love revealed in Jesus and are called to share that love with others.

Together, these candles guide us in welcoming Christ with a ready, hopeful, and loving heart.