



Bridgeside Bulletin



The weekly Bulletin of the Catholic Parish of Forster Tuncurry

"Unity in Christ"

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We acknowledge the Worimi people - the traditional custodians of this place

SUNDAY 18 DECEMBER 2022,

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT YEAR A

Dear Brothers and Sisters.

Over the last couple of days, the Diocesan Administrator, (Fr Greg Barker), has appointed me as Dean of the Myall Deanery, Priest Supervisor at Gloucester, and also as a member of the Clergy life and ministry team. This will mean more meetings, it will also mean that from the week of the 9th of January till the 13th of January, I will be away at a conference. As such, there will be no weekday Masses that week. As we proceed into the New Year, I will have a clearer understanding what this will mean for the parish, how much I will need to be away during the week. We wait and see.

Speaking of waiting we are nearing the end of Advent. The emphasis of Advent is changing, we are moving from looking forward to the second coming of Christ, to focusing much more on his first coming, over 2000 years ago. That event, yes it happened in a certain point in time and space, however, we who are his followers must allow that event to affect us and our lives. We must make Him present to all those we encounter, Jesus, must be here and now or He is nowhere and never. It is up to us to do this. We do it by the way we follow Him. We do it by living the life God calls us to live. We do it by living the teachings of the Church in a world that would rather we did not. In short we do it by living love. None of this is easy, Jesus has left us the gift of Himself in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, so that we can be nourished on His Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity to enable us to carry out His mission. The whole point of what we do inside the Church, is that it will inform what we do outside of the Church. We come to Mass so that we can be sent to continue the mission after having been nourished at both the Table of the Word and the Table of the Eucharistic Sacrifice. If what we do in the Church does not inform what we are doing outside of it, then, quite honestly we are cheapening the Sacrifice of the Mass, we cheapen the Calvary event, and we cheapen the Incarnation. What response we make to this is up to us. I hope that we are all using this period of waiting to examine our response, and are prepared to make the changes in our lives and hearts to enable Christ to be made present through us to all we encounter.

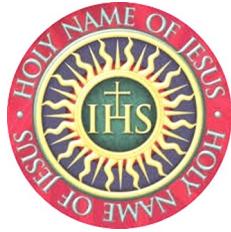
At this time of the year there is a lot of travelling. I pray that each and every one who is travelling at this time will be safe on the roads.

Please remember to take the Christmas cards that are available at the entrance to the Church. Please take big handfuls of them to give to as many people as you can, this is as I said before, a simple way of passing on our greeting to people at this time of the year, and it is also a way of inviting people to come to Mass. You may remember a few weeks ago on the front of the bulletin I suggested, challenged each one of you to invite at least one person a month to come to Mass with you. I wonder how many have taken up that challenge. The Christmas card is an easy first step.

Like everyone, I am shocked by the siege at Tara in Queensland during the week. The death of the two young Police Constables and the neighbor who came to help with the fire is just awful. The fact the three perpetrators have escaped justice is this life is also sad. Let us pray for all those involved in this horrific event, their families and colleagues. Let us pray that the peace of Christ will reign everywhere this Christmas and always.

With Love.

Fr. Peter.



Parish Timetable

| | |
|---------------|--|
| Mon 19 DEC | 9am Counters– Team 6 9.30am Mass 12pm Community Kitchen |
| Tue 20 DEC | 9.30am Christian Meditation 12pm Community Kitchen 4.30pm Mass |
| Wed 21 DEC | 11am Novena of Our Lady of Perpetual Help 12pm Community Kitchen 5.30pm Mass followed by Parish Christmas Dinner in the Parish Hall |
| Thu 22 DEC | 9.30am Mass 12pm Community Kitchen |
| Fri 23 DEC | 9.30am Mass |
| Sat 24 DEC | 9.30am Mass 4pm Confession 5pm Vigil Mass– Christmas Vigil 7.30pm- Christmas Vigil |
| Sun 25 DEC | 8am Mass –Christmas Day 10am Mass- Christmas Day 11.30am Christmas Day Lunch in the Hall |

Parish Notices

- **Mass will be held at 9.30am on Mon 19th Dec** for anyone who wishes to attend Mass each day during the Christmas Novena.
- **Columban Art Calendars 2023** are on sale for \$10.

CHRISTMAS DAY LUNCH

History of the lunch: As Christmas approached in 1986, the local Catholic Priest, Fr. Tony Brady, became aware of some people in our community who would be spending Christmas Day alone. In an effort to reach out to these people Fr. Tony instigated a Christmas Day Lunch in the Catholic Church Hall at Forster.

This event has continued each Christmas since that time and once again this year single people and families will gather in the Forster Church Hall on Christmas Day to celebrate the joy of Christ's birth and share Christmas Day Lunch together.

Christmas can be a sad time for those who may be separated from their families by distance and may feel detached from the love and joy that the season is meant to bring. Sharing the day with others can assist in this regard. The free lunch is available to all and all are sure to be made to feel most welcome.

Information: The hall, located at 31 Lake Street, Forster, will be open from 11.30am to set up and we will sit down to lunch at around 1.00pm. Further enquiries may be directed to Greg Byrne on 0427 918 568.

You may wish to bring a plate of food or drinks to share. Foods such as cold meats, salads, sauces, breads, pastas, chips, dips etc. are some options. Deserts are always a favourite as well! Please let Greg Byrne know what you will bring so that we don't double up.

Prayer for the appointment of our new Bishop

Shepherding God
you reveal your way of unfailing love
in the image of the Good Shepherd
who seeks the lost,
shows compassion
knows and is known by the sheep
and lays down his life for them.
We your people of Maitland-Newcastle
are without a bishop to shepherd us.
We ask that your Holy Spirit
who moves through this great south land,
inspire the choice of our new Bishop,
empower his 'yes'
and open our hearts in hospitality and love.
We make this prayer through Christ our Lord, Amen.
Our Lady of Perpetual Help **pray for us**
Mary MacKillop of the Cross **pray for us.**

CHRISTMAS MASSES 2022

Christmas Eve Sat 24th Dec

5.00pm & 7.30pm



Christmas Day Sun 25th Dec

8.00am & 10.00am

Become an SRE volunteer

Did you know that some 50% of Catholic children are in state schools? Have you ever thought about becoming a Special Religious Educator? This could be an opportunity for you to meet new people, discover new friendships and build quality relationships whilst mastering skills and confidence in Catechetics.

You can make a difference in the schools within your parish! For people of faith, knowing you are participating in Christ's call to share the Good News to all is a great source of joy and meaning. If you would like to learn more about how you can help, please contact the Parish Office 0475 242 695.

PARISH CHRISTMAS DINNER

Date: Wed 21st Dec

Time: Mass at 5.30pm

followed by dinner in the Parish Hall.

No cost to attend.

Please bring a plate of food to share.

Some suggestions are: your national dish, salads, cold cut meats, pastas, tray bakes, desserts.

RSVP to Parish Office by 16th Dec.

If we get enough donations we will hold a fund-raising raffle/silent auction on the night. Please **donate any items for the auction to the parish office.** Items must be new or handmade. Small items can be used as lucky door prizes,

Saints and Feasts

21 DECEMBER ST PETER CANISIUS was born in Holland in 1521. He studied canon law, but later came to the conclusion that a legal career and marriage, as arranged by his father, were not to his liking. He joined the Jesuits and spent his time in prayer, study, teaching and care of the sick. St Peter was a prominent preacher and he attended the Council of Trent, then later taught at the first Jesuit school at Messina. He was later called to Rome to work with St Ignatius; the founder of the Jesuit order. After posts as rector and vice-chancellor of the University of Ingoldstandt, he was sent to Vienna, which was in need of reform. In 1555, his famous Catechism was published and



eventually translated into 15 languages during his lifetime. Considered one of the most influential theologians and writers of his time, he was declared a Doctor of the Church in 1925.

Christmas Giving

By Iris W. Bray

Christmas is for giving
And for showing that we care,
For honoring the Christ Child
With the loving gifts we share.
The wise men gave of riches;
The shepherds, faith and love.
Each gift, in its own measure,
Was smiled on from above.
Let every gift be treasured;
Not always size or price
Determines the extent of love
And willing sacrifice
Handsome gifts with festive trim
Bring smiles of sweet content,
But modest gifts of humble means
are of times heaven sent.
Whether it be large or small,
Each gift will share in part
The message of true Christmas joy
If given from the heart!



On THE LATEST NEWS FROM OUR SAFEGUARDING PROMOTERS – 18dec22

The Promoters of Safeguarding continue to endorse a culture of safeguarding within the Parish. To this end, your attention is drawn to review the issue of **basic manners for children and teenagers**. Good manners are important in both social and employment situations. When you know and display the acceptable behaviour for any situation, this will improve your confidence, self-esteem and safeguard your life's opportunities. Employers favour those with impressive manners as attested by referees or that emerge during interviews or trial work experience.

Humankind is the most intelligent creation of God on Earth – we are beings who live in society. Also, humans need the capacity to think, talk and act accordingly in social situations. So, we must know how to behave well and exhibit good manners. Parents/grandparents/teachers must teach kids about appropriate behaviour with family members, neighbours, friends, teachers, etc. ‘It takes a village to raise a child’.

Unfortunately, teachers are commenting that, following Covid restrictions on gathering during 2020-2021, children had two years when normal social interactions and expectations were severely interrupted. Home learning reduced the benefits of social interaction with peers and the expectations of school situations. Despite schools/teacher expectations having had reduced Covid interruptions in 2022, too many students still display ‘rudeness’.

Here are some basic manners youngsters should be taught to use on a regular basis:

- Saying ‘Please’ and ‘Thank you’
- Apologise after doing/saying something inappropriate
- Ask permission to do things
- Don’t answer/use mobile phones during face-to-face conversations or when at a counter being served by a sales assistant
- Keep hands to yourself and don’t snatch things
- Make eye contact in conversation
- Say ‘Excuse me’ when interruption is vital or after bumping someone
- Take care of personal hygiene, including coughing into your elbow, covering your mouth when sneezing
- Use respectful and appropriate language in conversations or when answering questions and waiting your turn to speak in a conversation

Since education in basic manners needs special attention in today’s digital age and family life potholed by Covid-19, the coming Summer School Vacation offers an opportunity for supporting young children and teenagers in acquiring basic manners.

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS:

Recently deceased: Joseph Vella

Anniversaries: Christine Anne Stimpson

We remember and pray for those who are ill at home and in hospital at this time, may they know the healing presence of Christ:

Jane Michie, Imogen Ralph, Robin Koszyk, Joseph Flanagan & Thelma Lyndon.

People will remain on the prayers for the sick for 4 weeks. You can resubmit names as needed.



Fourth Sunday of Advent Year A

Sunday 18 Dec 2022

Fr Peter: Dear Brothers and Sisters, with the confidence of the Virgin Mary, let us bring our prayers to the Lord.

Reader: That Holy Mother Church may be united in God's promise of salvation. In your mercy:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That conflict and war will end and all people may live in peace. In your mercy:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That those who make difficult decisions will be given courage. In your mercy:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That like the Virgin Mary, we will have the grace of certain trust in God. In your mercy:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That our parish will remember the poor and marginalised amid our celebrations. In your mercy:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That those who await the birth of a child will be filled with joy at the wonder of God's creative love. In your mercy:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That the sick and housebound will be granted relief and healing. In your mercy:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That those who have died will be granted life with the King of Glory, especially Joseph Vella who has died recently, as well as for all those who died in the siege in Queensland as well as for Christine Anne Stimpson whose anniversary occurs at this time. In your mercy:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Fr Peter: Father, we graciously wait for the arrival of the Son of David. Hear our prayers, and grant us the confidence to embrace Christ's coming as God-with-us. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

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A Prayer For Those Unable To Receive Holy Communion

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

Sunday 18 Dec 2022
Fourth Sunday of Advent Year A

Entrance Antiphon

Cf. Is 45:8

Drop down dew from above, you heavens, and let the clouds rain down the Just One; let the earth be opened and bring forth a Saviour.

First Reading

Is 7:10-14

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

The Lord spoke to Ahaz and said, 'Ask the Lord your God for a sign for yourself coming either from the depths of Sheol or from the heights above.' 'No', Ahaz answered 'I will not put the Lord to the test.' Then Isaiah said: 'Listen now, House of David: are you not satisfied with trying the patience of men without trying the patience of my God, too?'

The Lord himself, therefore, will give you a sign. It is this: the maiden is with child and will soon give birth to a son whom she will call Immanuel, a name which means "God-is-with-us".'

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 23:1-6. R. see vv 7. 10

(R.) Let the Lord enter; he is king of glory.

1. The Lord's is the earth and its fullness, the world and all its peoples. It is he who set it on the seas; on the waters he made it firm. (R.)

2. Who shall climb the mountain of the Lord? Who shall stand in his holy place? The man with clean hands and pure heart, who desires not worthless things. (R.)

3. He shall receive blessings from the Lord and reward from the God who saves him. Such are the men who seek him, seek the face of the God of Jacob (R.)

Second Reading

Rom 1:1-7

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Romans

From Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus who has been called to be an apostle, and specially chosen to preach the Good News that God promised long ago through his prophets in the scriptures.

This news is about the Son of God, who, according to the human nature he took, was a descendant of David: it is about Jesus Christ our Lord who, in the order of the spirit, the spirit of holiness that was in him, was proclaimed Son of God in all his power through his resurrection from the dead. Through him we received grace and our apostolic mission to preach the obedience of faith to all pagan nations in honour of his name. You are one of these nations, and by his call belong to Jesus Christ. To you all, then, who are God's beloved in Rome, called to be saints, may God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ send grace and peace.

Gospel Acclamation

Mt 1:23

Alleluia, alleluia!

A virgin will give birth to a son; his name will be Emmanuel: God is with us.

Alleluia!

Gospel

Mt 1:18-24

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew

This is how Jesus Christ came to be born. His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph; but before they came to live together she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a man of honour and wanting to spare her publicity, decided to divorce her informally. He had made up his mind to do this when the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.' Now all this took place to fulfil the words spoken by the Lord through the prophet: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and they will call him Emmanuel, a name which means 'God-is-with-us'. When Joseph woke up he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do: he took his wife to his home

Communion Antiphon

Is 7:14

Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son; and his name will be called Emmanuel.



Readings for Next Week 24/25 December

First Reading

Is 52:7-10 The Lord redeems the entire earth.

Responsorial Psalm

Ps 97:1-6. R. v.3 (R.) All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

Second Reading

Heb 1:1-6 God has spoken through his Son.

Gospel Acclamation

Alleluia, alleluia! A holy day has dawned upon us. Come you nations and adore the Lord. Today a great light has come upon the earth. Alleluia!

Gospel

Jn 1:1-18 The beginning of John's Gospel.

THE ORDER OF MASS

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen. either:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And with your spirit.** or:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. **And with your spirit.** or:

The Lord be with you. **And with your spirit.**

PENITENTIAL ACT

Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries. either:

I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned, in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, through my fault, through my fault, (striking the breast) through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.** or:

Have mercy on us, O Lord.

For we have sinned against you.

Show us, O Lord, your mercy.

And grant us your salvation.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.** or:

You were sent to heal the contrite of heart:

P: Lord, have mercy or: **P: Kyrie, eleison.**

R: Lord, have mercy or: **R: Kyrie, eleison.**

You came to call sinners:

P: Christ have mercy or: **P: Christe, eleison.**

R: Christ have mercy or: **R: Christe, eleison.**

You are seated at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us:

P: Lord, have mercy or: **P: Kyrie, eleison.**

R: Lord, have mercy or: **R: Kyrie, eleison.**

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life. **Amen.**

The Kyrie follows, unless it has occurred in the Penitential Act. either:

P: Lord, have mercy. **R: Lord, have mercy.**

P: Christ, have mercy. **R: Christ, have mercy.**

P: Lord, have mercy. **R: Lord, have mercy.**

or:

P: Kyrie, eleison.

P: Christe, eleison.

P: Kyrie, eleison.

R: Kyrie, eleison.

R: Christe, eleison.

R: Kyrie, eleison.

Gloria (when said)

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Let us pray. At the end of the Collect, the people acclaim:
Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

At the end of the reading:

The word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

At the Gospel:

The Lord be with you. **And with your spirit.**

A reading from the holy Gospel according to **N.**

Glory to you, O Lord.

At the end of the Gospel:

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

THE NICENE CREED

I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (all bow) and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come

again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will have no end. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, (all bow) born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; he descended into hell; on the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God the Father almighty; from there he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting. Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Pray, brethren ... the almighty Father.

May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of His name, for our good and the good of all His holy Church.

At the end of the prayer, the people acclaim:

Amen.

THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

The Lord be with you. **And with your spirit.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **It is right and just.**

After the Preface

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

The mystery of faith. either:

We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again. or:

When we eat this Bread and drink this Cup, we proclaim your Death, O Lord, until you come again. or:

**Save us, Saviour of the world,
for by your Cross and Resurrection
you have set us free.**

Through him, and with him, ... for ever and ever.
Amen.

THE COMMUNION RITE

At the Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say:

Our Father, who art in heaven...

Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil...

For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever.

Lord Jesus Christ, who said to your Apostles...

Who live and reign for ever and ever.

Amen.

The peace of the Lord be with you always.

And with your spirit.

Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. (X2)

Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, grant us peace.

Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

The Body of Christ. **Amen.**

The Blood of Christ. **Amen.**

Let us pray. At the end of the prayer, the people acclaim:
Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

The Lord be with you. **And with your spirit.**

May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the † Son, and the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**
either:

Go forth, the Mass is ended. or:

Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord. or:

Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your Life. or:

Go in peace.

Thanks be to God.

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Sunday 18 Dec 2022
SCRIPTURE COMMENTARY by Brendan Byrne SJ

On this Fourth Sunday of Advent we arrive at Matthew's account of the birth of Jesus. Preparing the way for the Gospel describing this event, Matthew 1:18-24, is the First Reading, Isaiah 7:10-14 featuring an oracle of the prophet to King Ahaz at a time when Assyria posed a great threat to the Kingdom of Judah. When this far-from-admirable ruler refuses to ask God for a sign that would indicate divine protection, Isaiah responds by describing the sign that God will, nonetheless, give: the pregnancy of a young girl – presumably a princess of the royal house. In the Hebrew text of Isaiah the word used for 'young girl' (*almah*) does not necessarily connote the idea of virginity – simply a young woman of marriageable age. Also part of the sign is the name she is planning to give her child: Emmanuel – 'God is with us'. Taken together, the conception of the child and the name he is to bear constitute a sign that, despite the present troubles, God remains 'with' the People.

The annunciation of Jesus' birth in Matthew (1:18-24) follows straight on from the Genealogy (1:1-17) with which the Gospel begins. Four times within the otherwise relentlessly male list of Jesus' ancestors there are references to women: Tamar, whom Judah violated; Rahab, who had been a prostitute; Ruth, the Moabitess; and the wife of Uriah (Bathsheba), whom King David adulterously took to himself. In each case a note of sexual impropriety or irregularity attends the reference – not so much because of what the women themselves have done but because of what has been done to them. The genealogy shows how the divine thread of salvation has run through much unsavoury human history.

The four references to women in the account of Jesus' ancestry prepare the ground for the situation of Jesus' mother Mary. We, the readers, are told that her pregnancy has come about 'through the Holy Spirit' (v 18). But no one else knows that, including, at this point, Joseph. Since betrothal was considered equivalent to marriage, Mary's situation is precarious in the extreme; she stands liable to the severe penalties laid down in the Mosaic Law for adultery (stoning: cf. John 8:1-11). Obedience to the Law requires Joseph to divorce Mary but, being, as the text says, a 'righteous person' (JB's 'man of honour' is quite misleading), he wants to do so in a way that will spare her as much public shame as possible. In this he 'models' keeping the

Law in the way that Jesus will command, giving priority to values such as forgiveness, mercy and compassion (the 'weightier matters of the Law' [23:23]).

The angelic messenger turns everything around for Joseph. Mary's pregnancy has not come about through infidelity but through the agency of God's Holy Spirit. The child she is to bear is to carry the name and role of Josue – the great 'saviour' figure of Israel. Only, here the saving role will not be a matter of military conquest but that of rescuing the people from sin, freeing them, that is, from all that stands in the way of a vital and life-giving relationship to God.

Characteristically, Matthew reinforces the sense of divine purpose by quoting the text from Isaiah that, in retrospect at least, seemed to indicate that this is how things would run in the messianic age. His quotation of Isaiah 7:14 follows the Greek (Septuagint) translation which in its choice of words – *parthenos* – does convey the sense that the young girl is a virgin. Matthew finds, then, in this text, a clear prophecy that the birth of the Saviour will come about through a virginal conception, worked by the Holy Spirit.

But, of course, no less important for Matthew is the second part of the biblical verse stating that the child will be called 'Emmanuel – God with Us'. 'Emmanuel' indicates not so much a fresh name but the role the child is to have for Israel and the world. In the person of this child, God will be 'with' the people in a unique way, far outstripping all conventional hopes for the messianic age. People will experience this divine saving presence in their encounters with Jesus throughout his earthly life. After his resurrection, he will continue to be 'with' his Church in its communal life (18:19-20) and world-wide mission to the end of time (28:19-20).

The wonderful thing about Matthew's presentation of Jesus' birth is the way in which, through the genealogy and the public situation of Mary – and later through Herod's violence – it highlights the invasion of God's grace saving power into human society as we so often know it.

In the Second Reading, Romans 1:1-7, Paul solemnly introduces himself as the divinely appointed messenger of the messianic good news to the nations of the world.

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CHRISTMAS HAMPERS WILL BE DISTRIBUTED TO THE COMMUNITY ON THU 22 DEC.

CatholicCare Christmas Hamper Drive 2022

Help us help those in need this Christmas.

CatholicCare is hoping to distribute much needed hampers through our Food Programs across the Hunter-Manning this Christmas, and we need your support!

You can help by donating any of the items listed below:

- Tins of ham • Fruit mince pies or Christmas puddings • Fruit juice or tins of stewed fruit • Jams, cranberry or apple sauce • Reusable Christmas shopping bags • Cereal, long life milk or custard • Sweet or savory biscuits • Tins of vegetables: baby potatoes, beetroot, corn, peas or tomatoes • Tea bags, coffee, hot chocolate, sugar • Chocolates, lollies or pancake mix. Drop off at Parish Office.

Financial donations are also welcome!

Each hamper costs \$50, but any amount will make a difference.

Please visit catholiccare.org.au/donate



**POPE FRANCIS
ANGELUS
Saint Peter's Square
Sunday, 11 December 2022**

Dear brothers and sisters, blessed Sunday!

The Gospel of this third Sunday of Advent speaks to us about John the Baptist who, while in prison, sends his disciples to ask Jesus: "Are you he who is to come, or shall we look for another?" (Mt 11:4). Indeed, John, hearing of Jesus' works, is seized with doubt as to whether He is really the Messiah or not. In fact, he imagined a stern Messiah who would come and do justice with power by chastising sinners. Now, on the contrary, Jesus has words and gestures of compassion towards all; at the centre of His action is the mercy that forgives, whereby "the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them" (v. 6). It does us good, however, to look more closely at this crisis of John the Baptist, as it can tell us something important too.

The text emphasizes that John is in prison, and this, as well as being a physical place, makes us think of the inner situation he is experiencing: in prison there is darkness, there is no possibility of seeing clearly and seeing beyond it. In effect, the Baptist is no longer able to recognize Jesus as the awaited Messiah. He is assailed by doubt, and he sends the disciples to check: "Go and see if he is the Messiah or not". It surprises us that this should happen to John, the one who had baptized Jesus in the Jordan and had indicated him to his disciples as the Lamb of God (cf. Jn 1:29). But this means that even the greatest believer goes through the tunnel of doubt. And this is not a bad thing; on the contrary, sometimes it is essential for spiritual growth: it helps us understand that God is always greater than we imagine Him to be. His works are surprising compared to our calculations; His actions are different, always, they exceed our needs and expectations; and therefore, we must never stop seeking Him and converting to His true face. A great theologian used to say that God "needs to be rediscovered in stages... sometimes believing that we are losing Him" (H. DE LUBAC, *Sur les chemins de Dieu*). This is what the Baptist does: in doubt, he still seeks Him, questions Him, "argues" with Him and finally rediscovers Him. John, defined by Jesus as the greatest among those born of women (cf. Mt 11:11), teaches us, in short, not to close God within our own mindsets. This is always the danger, the temptation: to make ourselves a God to our measure, a God to use. And God is something else. Brothers and sisters, we too at times find ourselves in his situation, in an inner jail, unable to recognize the newness of the Lord, whom we perhaps hold captive in the presumption that we already know everything about Him. Dear brothers and sisters, one never knows everything about God, never! Perhaps we have in mind a powerful God who does what He wants, instead of the God of humble meekness, the God of mercy and love, who always intervenes respecting our freedom and our choices. Perhaps we even find ourselves saying to Him: "Are you really you, so humble, the God who is coming to save us?". And something similar can happen to us with our brothers and sisters too: we have our ideas, our prejudices and we attach rigid labels to others, especially those we feel are different to us. Advent, then is a time for overturning

our perspectives, for letting ourselves be surprised by God's mercy. Astonishment: God always astonishes. We saw, not long ago, in the television programme "A Sua Immagine", they were talking about wonder. God is always the One who stirs wonder in you. A time – Advent – in which, preparing the Nativity display for the Infant Jesus, we learn again who our Lord is; a time to leave behind certain preconceptions and prejudices about God and our brothers and sisters. Advent is a time in which, instead of thinking about gifts for ourselves, we can give words and gestures of consolation to those who are wounded, as Jesus did with the blind, the deaf and the lame.

May Our Lady take us by the hand, like a mother, may she take us by the hand in these days of preparation for Christmas, and help us recognize in the smallness of the Infant the greatness of God who is coming.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters!

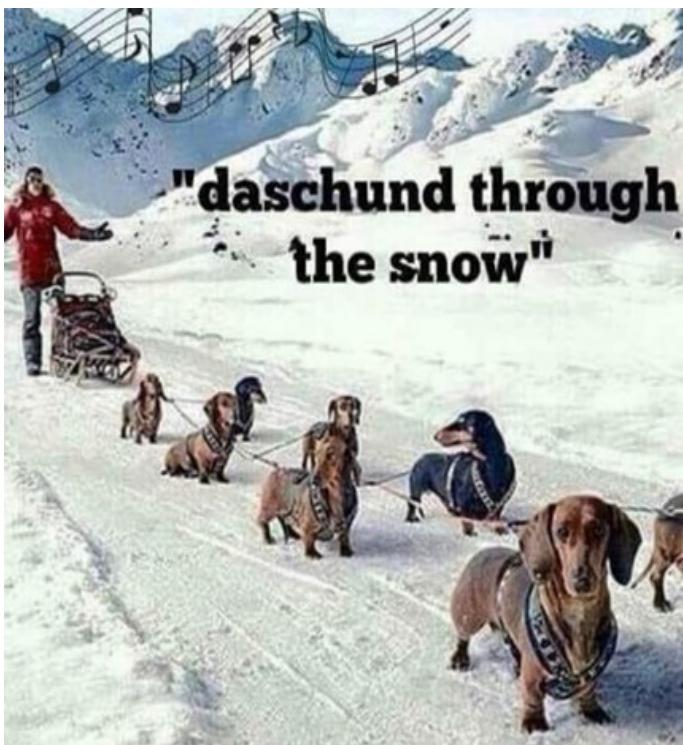
Yesterday, in Barbacena in Brazil, Isabel Cristina Mrad Campos was beatified. This young woman was killed in 1982 at the age of twenty, in hatred of the faith, for having defended her dignity as a woman and the value of her chastity. May her heroic example inspire in particular the young to render generous witness of faith and adhesion to the Gospel. A round of applause for the new Blessed!

I follow with sorrow and concern the news from South Sudan about the violent clashes of the past few days. Let us pray to the Lord for peace and national reconciliation, so that the attacks may cease and that civilians may always be respected.

Today is World Mountain Day, which invites us to recognize the importance of this marvellous resource for the life of the planet and of humanity. The theme this year – "Women move mountains" – it is true, women move mountains! – reminds us of the role of women in caring for the environment and in safeguarding the traditions of mountain populations. From mountain people we learn the sense of community and of walking together. I greet you all, here in Rome, from Italy and from many parts of the world. In particular, I greet the faithful from Barcelona, Valencia, Alicante, Beirut, Cairo, and those of Mexico and Poland. I greet the Tanzanian Catholic community in Italy; parish groups from Terni, Panzano in Chianti, Perugia, Nozza di Vestone; the Alpini Choir of Rome; and the representatives of citizens who live in the most polluted areas of Italy, in the hope of a just solution to their serious problems and the illnesses that come from this polluted environment.

And I would like to send a cordial greeting to the detainees in the "Due Palazzi" prison of Padua: I greet you affectionately!

And now I will bless the "Bambinelli", the little statuettes of the Infant Jesus that you, dear boys and girls, have brought here and then, returning home, will place in the Nativity scene. I invite you to pray, before the creche, that the Nativity of the Lord will bring a ray of peace to children all over the world, especially those forced to live the terrible and dark days of war, this war in Ukraine that destroys many lives, so many lives, and many children. The blessing of the Bambinelli ... [The Pope blesses them]. I wish you all a blessed Sunday and a good journey towards the Nativity of the Lord. Please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch, and arrivederci.



PROCLAMATION OF THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

The Twenty-fifth Day of December, when ages beyond number had run their course from the creation of the world, when God in the beginning created heaven and earth, and formed man in his own likeness; when century upon century had passed since the Almighty set his bow in the clouds after the Great Flood, as a sign of covenant and peace; in the twenty-first century since Abraham, our father in faith, came out of Ur of the Chaldees; in the thirteenth century since the People of Israel were led by Moses in the Exodus from Egypt; around the thousandth year since David was anointed King; in the sixty-fifth week of the prophecy of Daniel; in the one hundred and ninety-fourth Olympiad; in the year seven hundred and fifty-two since the foundation of the City of Rome; in the forty-second year of the reign of Caesar Octavian Augustus, the whole world being at peace, Jesus Christ, eternal God and Son of the eternal Father, desiring to consecrate the world by his most loving presence, was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and when nine months had passed since his conception, was born of the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem of Judah, and was made man: The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to the flesh.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Proclamation_of_the_Birth_of_Christ



The True Meaning of Christmas: Giving to Those in Need

With decorations hanging around our homes and indulgent feasts in the works, there's no doubt that Christmas is a time of celebration with our loved ones to cherish our blessings and the year gone by. Yet, for the millions of people living in poverty worldwide, their Christmas can starkly contrast our own. As the holiday season draws near, it's crucial that we remember all the vulnerable people worldwide that still need support. <https://www.caritas.org.au/news/latest-news/the-true-meaning-of-christmas-giving-to-those-in-need/>

689 MILLION

people live in extreme poverty

70%

of people older than 15 living in extreme poverty have no schooling or only some basic education

1.6 BILLION

live in inadequate housing

1 IN 3

around the world do not have access to food



**Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad;
let the sea resound, and all that is in it.
Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them;
let all the trees of the forest sing for joy.
Let all creation rejoice before the Lord, for he comes,
he comes to judge the earth.
He will judge the world in righteousness
and the peoples in his faithfulness.**

Psalm 96:11-13

Go make disciples

CHRISTIAN INITIATION FORMATION PROCESS

Accompanying seekers journeying into the mystery of God's love.

'Go make disciples' is a formation opportunity for **new and experienced Christian Initiation Ministers** ministering with adults and children and their families, and **any parishioner interested in the ministry** of Christian Initiation.

Over six weeks participants will explore the entire Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults (RCIA).

There will be opportunities to grow in knowledge and understanding of the RCIA; pray and reflect mystagogically; reimagine and discern the ministry of Christian initiation in the parish community; explore questions and insights; meet other ministers, share experience, strengthen networks, deepen faith, hope and love.

Hosted by the Diocesan Christian Initiation Forum with the Northern Pastoral Region Parish Leaders.



*Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations; baptise them ... and teach them ... And know that I am with you always; yes to the end of time.
(Mt 28: 19-20)*

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE DIOCESE AND SURROUNDS...

Save the Date: Toronto Men's Weekend

A MenALIVE Men's Weekend will be held at the St Joseph's Toronto Parish on the weekend of **25 and 26 March 2023**. The weekend is suitable for all men from 18 years of age and provides an opportunity for attendees to explore what makes them feel fully alive.

More information including how to register will be provided closer to the date. For more information on MenALIVE, visit: www.menalive.org.au

Roll up your sleeves; make a difference

Do you require professional renewal, or are you seeking a retirement challenge? Communities abroad are asking for qualified and experienced Australians able to mentor their people in education, health, administration, trades, agriculture and more.

Imagine yourself re-engaging your vocational passion in Africa, Asia or the Pacific. Since 1961 Palms Australia has been recruiting Australians able to offer mentoring that will allow overseas counterparts opportunities other-

When

Tuesdays 1.00 pm – 4.30 pm
7, 14, 28 Feb, 7, 21, 28 Mar 2023.

Where

Forster Parish Hall,
31 Lake St Forster.

Facilitators

Fr Andrew Doohan,
Louise Gannon rsj,

Christian Initiation Forum members.

Bring

Your copy of "Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults"
[ISBN 9781876295721 RRP \$24.95].
Copies can be borrowed or purchased for \$20 at first session.

RSVP

by Friday 27 Jan 2023

To Forster Parish Office

0475 242 695

forster-tuncurry.parish@mn.catholic.org.au

Each participant will need a copy of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. Copies can be purchased or borrowed from Fr. Peter ahead of the formation OR from Sr Louise at the first session on 7 February.

wise unattainable. Sharing your skills will strengthen the capacity of workers overseas to serve their communities for generations to come, long after you return home. Communities in American Samoa, Cambodia, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tanzania, Thailand, Timor-Leste, and Zambia are seeking to fill a variety of roles.

Enquire about those roles via www.palms.org.au or by calling 02 9560 533 or 0422 472 567.

Praying the Gospels

You are invited to connect and pray with each other across the Diocese from your own home. God speaks to us through the words of the Gospel and then through artist's images of the Gospel message.

Join us each Wednesday 5.00-5.45pm.

Zoom link: <https://mncatholic.zoom.us/j/61036103033>

Password: pray

For more information contact:

rose.mcallister@mn.catholic.org.au



BAPTISMS

Celebrated most Sundays.
Bookings via the Parish website

MARRIAGE

Celebrated by arrangement with at least 6 months notice. Bookings via the parish website

SACRAMENTAL PROCESS

Enrolment via the Parish Website

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS (RCIA)

Parish Office 0475 242 695

CATHOLIC CARE

Phone: 02 6539 5900 for services provided in Forster



PARISH TEAM

Fr Peter Street - Parish Priest

Peter.street@mn.catholic.org.au

Emergency Contact: 0458 327 219
(Please only calls to this phone no texts)

Danielle Kingdom

Admin Assistant

danielle.kingdom@mn.catholic.org.au

Office Hours:

Mon 11am-3.30pm, Tue-Fri 9.00am- 3.30pm
Phone: 0475 242 695

Website:

www.forstertuncurrycatholic.org.au

Follow us on facebook:

@catholicparishofforstertuncurry

Feedback, complaints or concerns can be communicated directly to the Parish Office, through our website (Contact Us) or if the concern is relating to the safety of a child, contact the Office of Safeguarding: 02 4979 1390 childprotection@mn.catholic.org.au

COMMUNITY KITCHEN

Serving meals to the community from the Parish Hall **Mon, Tue, Wed, & Thurs 12pm-1pm**

For volunteer opportunities contact Michelle Robinson: 0447 184 917

PARISH GROUPS

Christian Meditation

Forster Tues 9.30am

Greg 0427 918 568

Hallidays Point Wed 10am

John 0417 249 466

Gardening Group

3rd Monday of the month, 8am
Church grounds.

Parish Office 0475 242 695

Family and Friends Group

Meets monthly, contact Carol and Terry Pearson on 0408768729.

Singing Practice

Ken Heffernan 0475 242 695
(see parish timetable)

Holy Hour

Tues 3.30pm in the Church

Finance Council

3rd Wednesday of the month,
5.30pm Meeting Room

Pastoral Council

1st Thursday of the month, 6.00pm
Meeting Room

Novena to our Lady of Perpetual Help and Rosary

Wed 11.00am in the Church

Shiony 0411 493 086

Novena Benediction on the last Wednesday of the month.

Secular Franciscan Fraternity

4th Sunday of the month 9.30am
Barbara Dolahenty 0408 248 018

The above groups are all subject to Covid-19 restrictions, please enquire before attending.



SUNDAY MASS TIMES

Sat 5.00pm, Sun. 8.00am & 10.00am

RECONCILIATION

4.00pm Saturday and during Holy Hour

YOUTH MASS

3rd Sunday of the month, will resume once restrictions have eased.

AGED CARE MASSES (Subject to change)

GLAICA: **1st Thu 10.30am**

Estia Tuncurry: **2nd Thu 10.30am**

Estia Forster: **3rd Fri 10.30am**

Baptistcare: **4th Thu 10.30am**



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Holy Name Catholic School K-6

41 Lake Street, Forster

Ph: 02 6554 6504

E:admin@forster.catholic.edu.au

W: www.forster.catholic.edu.au

Principal: Brooke Stephens

St Clare's High School 7-12

Davis Street, Taree

P: 02 6552 3300

E:Admin@tareesc.catholic.edu.au

W: www.tareesc.catholic.edu.au

Principal: Peter Nicholls