

# OUR SUNDAY CELEBRATION

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT / B

10 DECEMBER 2023

PREPARE A WAY FOR THE LORD. Engulfed by many chores in the lead-up to Christmas, we can fail to hear a voice that cries in the wilderness: prepare a way for the Lord. Let us resolve to include some time to pray, to reflect on the Gospel stories of Jesus' birth, and to seek reconciliation with God and others, in our Christmas preparations.

## INTRODUCTORY RITES

**ENTRANCE ANTIPHON** Cf. Isa 30: 19, 30

**O people of Sion, behold, the Lord will come to save the nations, and the Lord will make the glory of his voice heard in the joy of your heart.**

## GREETING

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

**R. Amen.**

P. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**R. And with your spirit.**

## PENITENTIAL ACT

P. Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries.  
P. You were sent to heal the contrite of heart: Lord, have mercy.

**R. Lord, have mercy.**

P. You came to call sinners: Christ, have mercy.

**R. Christ, have mercy.**

P. You are seated at the right hand of the Father to intercede for us: Lord, have mercy.

**R. Lord, have mercy.**

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

*The Gloria is not said during Advent.*

## COLLECT

P. Almighty and merciful God, may no earthly undertaking hinder those who set out in haste to meet your Son, but may our learning of heavenly wisdom gain us admittance to his company. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

**R. Amen.**

## LITURGY OF THE WORD

### FIRST READING

Isa 40:1-5, 9-11

**A reading from the prophet Isaiah.**

*Prepare the way for the Lord.*

'Console my people, console them' says your God.

'Speak to the heart of Jerusalem and call to her

that her time of service is ended,  
that her sin is atoned for,

that she has received from the hand of the Lord double punishment for her crimes.'

A voice cries, 'Prepare in the wilderness a way for the Lord.

Make a straight highway for our God across the desert.

Let every valley be filled in,  
every mountain and hill be laid low,  
let every cliff become a plain,  
and the ridges a valley;  
then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed  
and all mankind shall see it;  
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.'

Go up on a high mountain,  
joyful messenger to Zion.  
Shout with a loud voice,  
joyful messenger to Jerusalem.  
Shout without fear,  
say to the towns of Judah,  
'Here is your God.'

Here is the Lord coming with power,  
his arm subduing all things to him.  
The prize of his victory is with him,  
his trophies all go before him.  
He is like a shepherd feeding his flock,  
gathering lambs in his arms,  
holding them against his breast  
and leading to their rest the mother ewes.

The word of the Lord.

**R. Thanks be to God.**

### RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 84: 9-14. R. v. 8

**R. Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.**

1. I will hear what the Lord God has to say,  
a voice that speaks of peace,/peace for his people./His help is near for those who fear him/and his glory will dwell in our land. **R.**

2. Mercy and faithfulness have met;/justice and peace have embraced./Faithfulness shall spring from the earth/and justice look down from heaven. **R.**

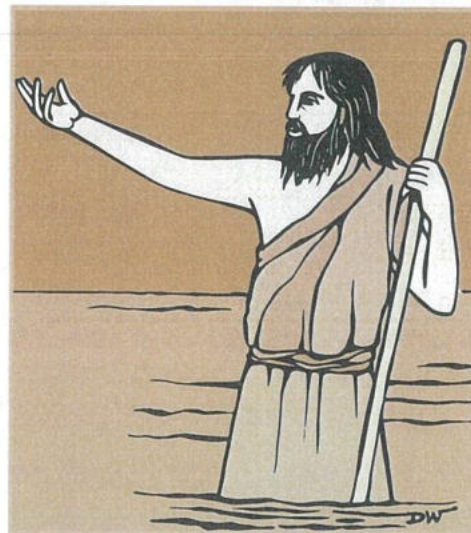
3. The Lord will make us prosper/and our earth shall yield its fruit./Justice shall march before him/and peace shall follow his steps. **R.**

### SECOND READING

2 Pet 3:8-14

**A reading from the second letter of St Peter.**

*We wait for new heavens and a new earth.*



There is one thing, my friends, that you must never forget: that with the Lord, 'a day' can mean a thousand years, and a thousand years is like a day. The Lord is not being slow to carry out his promises, as anybody else might be called slow; but he is being patient with you all, wanting nobody to be lost and everybody to be brought to change his ways. The Day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then with a roar the sky will vanish, the elements will catch fire and fall apart, the earth and all that it contains will be burnt up.

Since everything is coming to an end like this, you should be living holy and saintly lives while you wait and long for the Day of God to come, when the sky will dissolve in flames and the elements melt in the heat. What we are waiting for is what he promised; the new heavens and new earth, the place where righteousness will be at home. So then, my friends, while you are waiting, do your best to live lives without spot or stain so that he will find you at peace.

The word of the Lord.

**R. Thanks be to God**

### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Lk 3:4, 6

**Alleluia, alleluia!**

**Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths: all people shall see the salvation of God. Alleluia!**

### GOSPEL

Mk 1: 1-8

P. The Lord be with you.

**R. And with your spirit**

P. A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

**R. Glory to you, O Lord.**

*Make straight the paths of the Lord.*





# ST MARTHA'S PARISH STRATHFIELD

**Parish Priest:** Father John Hayes

**Assistant Priest:** Father Liem Duong

**Administration Coordinator:** Nicolle Mazzaferro (Mon, Tues & Thurs) [admin@stmarthas.org.au](mailto:admin@stmarthas.org.au)

**Administration Support:** Larissa Argiro (Friday) [office@stmarthas.org.au](mailto:office@stmarthas.org.au)

**Sacramental Coordinator:** Linda Praum [sc@stmarthas.org.au](mailto:sc@stmarthas.org.au)

**Safeguarding Officer:** Dianne Dawson & Helen Williamson [safeguarding@stmarthas.org.au](mailto:safeguarding@stmarthas.org.au)

**Parish Ministries Coordinator:** Helen Williamson

**Music Ministry:** Marcella Ayoub

**Children's Liturgy Coordinator:** Alannah Hickry

**Plenary Council Ambassador:** Helena O'Neil



**'Make straight the paths of the Lord' ... Mark 1**

70 Homebush Rd Strathfield NSW 2135

**Phone:** 9746 6131 **Fax:** 9764 3040

**Email:** [office@stmarthas.org.au](mailto:office@stmarthas.org.au)

**Website:** [www.stmarthas.org.au](http://www.stmarthas.org.au)

**Parish Office Hours:**

Mon, Tues & Thurs 9am-5pm & Fridays 9am-3pm



**St Martha's School:** 9764 1184

**Email:** [info@stmstrathfield.catholic.edu.au](mailto:info@stmstrathfield.catholic.edu.au)

**Principal:** Carolyn Parsell

**Assist Principal:** Steven Belcastro

**Acting REC:** Cindy Ronzini

THE PARISH OF ST MARTHA'S ACKNOWLEDGES THE WANGUL PEOPLE AS THE TRADITIONAL CUSTODIANS OF THE LAND ON WHICH THE CHURCH IS BUILT

## Vision:

**Welcoming  
Eucharistic  
Transformed by the Word  
Full of Grace  
Proclaiming Good News**



*Please  
continue  
to support the  
St Vincent De Paul Society  
through the Church  
Poor Boxes.*

## Mission:

**Alive with the Spirit  
Inspired by St Martha  
We Celebrate & Witness  
God's love  
Using our Gifts & Talents**



## MASS TIMES

**Tuesday:** 7.30am

**Wednesday:** 9.10am

**Thursday:** 9.10am

**Friday:** 9.10am

**Saturday:** 9.10am, 5pm Vigil Mass

**Sunday:** 8.00am; 10.00am & 6.00pm



**1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of every month:**

8.30am Adoration followed by Mass

## RECONCILIATION:

Saturday after 9.10am Mass or by appointment.

## SYDNEY MALAYALEE ROMAN CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

Rosary, Mass & Adoration from 6.30pm to 8.00pm on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday of each month.

## BAPTISM:

2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays of the month at 11.00am  
(One month's notice is required).

Baptism Preparation by appointment only.  
Contact the Parish office for more information.

**MARRIAGES:** By appointment only.  
(6 months' notice is required).

## ROSARY:

Tuesday & Saturday after morning Mass

Wednesday, Thursday & Friday 8.30am

7.30pm on Fridays in conjunction with Marian Movement of Priests  
Cenacle and Divine Mercy Chaplet.



## PRAYER GROUP / ADORATION AT ST MARTHA'S CHURCH:

Mondays 10.30am – 11.30am (school term only)



**Please support our Catholic Press  
Copies of the Catholic Weekly \$2  
& Catholic Leader \$2.50 are available  
at the Church Entrance.**



## SAFE GUARDING



A reminder to parents that the Notice-Board located at the side entrance contains various resources for children regarding Safeguarding.

### A MESSAGE FROM THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SYDNEY.

Child sexual abuse is a crime. The appropriate people to deal with crimes are the police. If you, or anyone you know, have been abused, please contact the police. Alternatively, you can contact the Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office at (02) 9390 5810 or [safeguardingenquiries@sydneycatholic.org](mailto:safeguardingenquiries@sydneycatholic.org)

You may also want to speak to your Parish Priest who will be able to provide support and guidance. The Archdiocese has a legal obligation to report crimes to the police.

### Commitment Statement

The Archdiocese of Sydney is wholly committed to ensuring the safety, well-being and dignity of all Children and Adults at Risk, and it acknowledges its important legal, moral and spiritual responsibility for Children and Adults.



**Office of the  
Children's Guardian**

Please be aware that if you "TAG" St Martha's in photos on your Facebook page, the images also appear on an "unofficial" St Martha's Facebook page. This "unofficial" page was created automatically by Facebook and is not controlled by St Martha's. We kindly remind you to take care when uploading photos of any children without parent consent.

### IMPORTANT NOTICE:

**IF YOU PARTICIPATE IN ANY OF THE FOLLOWING MINISTRIES YOU ARE REQUIRED TO SIGN IN - ACOLYTES; READERS; EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS; CHOIR; CHILDREN'S LITURGY (LEADERS & CHILDREN) & SACRAMENTAL PROGRAM (LEADERS & CHILDREN). SIGN IN FOLDERS ARE KEPT IN THE SACRISTY. THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION.**

**ALTAR SERVERS ARE NOT PERMITTED IN THE SACRISTY WITHOUT A PARENT/TEACHER. THE SIGN IN FOLDER IS LOCATED IN THE CORRIDOR OUTSIDE THE SACRISTY.**



**GLUTEN FREE HOSTS ARE AVAILABLE FOR ANY CELIAC PARISHIONERS. IF YOU WISH TO RECEIVE HOLY COMMUNION PLEASE TELL THE CHURCH WARDEN OR SEE AN ACOLYTE IN THE SACRISTY PRIOR TO MASS.**



**Congratulations to  
CELESTE SAAD & COLLIN ALFRED**  
on receiving the St Martha's Parish Award for 2023, in recognition of  
their outstanding service to our Church and Parish Community.

### Prayer for Lighting the Advent Wreath Candles Second Candle - The Candle of Peace



**Leader:** Light and peace, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

**All:** Thanks be to God.

**Leader:** Last Sunday we lit the First Candle in our Advent Wreath, the candle of Hope.

Today we light the Second Candle, the Candle of Peace. The prophet Isaiah called Christ "the Prince of Peace." He told us how he would rule the world wisely and bless all the nations.

When Jesus came he taught people the importance of being peace-makers. He said that those who make peace shall be called the children of God. When Christ comes to us he brings us peace and he will bring everlasting peace when he comes again. We light the Candle of Peace to remind us that Jesus is the Prince of Peace and that through him peace is found.

(A person lights the Second Candle here)

Peace is like a light shining in a dark place. As we look at this candle we celebrate the peace we find in Jesus Christ.



### Lectors, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion & Altar Servers

To assist with the preparation of rosters for the Christmas Masses would any parishioners who are on the regular rosters please volunteer if available. Christmas is one of our major Liturgical celebrations so the more volunteers we have would be appreciated.



**The Christmas Eve Children's Mass** - Plans are underway for school aged children to take part and participate in this Mass by coming along dressed as either an Angel or a Shepherd. Children will need to supply their own costume. The specific roles of Mary, Joseph, the Three Wise Men, Readers and Offertory Procession will be allocated by Fr John. More information will be made available over the coming weeks.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Rite of Reconciliation will be held at 7.00pm on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> December



### Background on the Gospel Reading (Loyola Press)

Today's Gospel is taken from the beginning of Mark. Unlike Luke and Matthew, Mark does not include any details of Jesus' birth. Instead Mark begins with the appearance of John the Baptist in the desert. On this the Second Sunday of Advent, we are invited to reflect upon the role of John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Jesus and the salvation that he would bring to us. Mark's description of the appearance of John the Baptist highlights John's continuity with the Jewish prophetic tradition. Mark combines quotations from the Old Testament books of Malachi, Isaiah, and Exodus. Mark's description of John as an ascetic, living in the desert, clothed in camel hair, and eating locusts and wild honey, is reminiscent of the description of the prophet Elijah found in Second Kings. The people of Judea and Jerusalem flock to him, listening to his message of repentance and forgiveness; they also come to him to be baptized. Mark's Gospel is clear, however, that John the Baptist's role is only to prepare the way for another who will come, one who is greater than John. Many scholars believe that the Gospels reflect the tension that likely existed between followers of John the Baptist and disciples of Jesus. Each of the four Evangelists report on John's preaching and baptizing, and they each emphasize the importance of Jesus' baptism by John. The four Gospels also explain that John was sent to preach in preparation for another. In the Gospel of Luke, the question is raised as to whether John the Baptist was himself the Messiah. Just as in today's Gospel, however, John speaks quite explicitly that the Messiah was to come after him. In today's Gospel we hear John the Baptist contrast his baptism of repentance with the baptism that Jesus will inaugurate. John says that he has baptized with water, but that the one who is to come will baptize with the Holy Spirit. John's baptism was not yet a Christian baptism, but a preparation for the Sacrament of Baptism through which sins are forgiven and the gift of the Holy Spirit is received. John the Baptist is presented to us as a model during Advent. We, too, are called upon to prepare a way for the Lord. Like John the Baptist, we are messengers in service to one who is greater than we are. Our Baptism commissions us to call others to life as disciples of Jesus.



**Family Connection:** The season of Advent invites us to renew our lives in preparation for the coming of Jesus. The people who heard the message of John the Baptist repented for their sins and were baptized as a sign of God's forgiveness. In Baptism, our sins are forgiven, and we receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, who helps us in our life of discipleship. Led by the Holy Spirit, we use this Advent season to renew our lives so that we, like John the Baptist, might prepare the way for Jesus. As you gather together as a family, talk about ways in which the example of others has called you to be a follower of Jesus. Name the people who have been examples to you of Christian discipleship and describe their characteristics that you have tried to emulate.

Read together today's Gospel, Mark 1:1-8. As John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus, Baptism commissions us to prepare the way of the Lord. The gift of the Holy Spirit leads us to continually renew our lives so that we might lead others to Jesus. As a family, identify at least one action that you will take this week to try to be more faithful followers of Jesus. Conclude in prayer together that God will receive this action and use it to lead others to Jesus. Pray the Prayer to the Holy Spirit.

Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful. And kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And you will renew the face of the earth. Lord, by the light of the Holy Spirit you have taught the hearts of your faithful. In the same Spirit help us to relish what is right and always rejoice in your consolation. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.



**St Vincent de Paul 2024 Columban Calendars &  
Christmas Card packs are now available for \$10 each.**

### St Vincent de Paul Christmas Appeal

This Christmas, your generous financial donation will help Vinnies provide much needed help and financial assistance to those without. More than anything we can give hope to many in our community in their time of need. envelopes will be available on the pews. Donations can be placed in any of the collection plates.

Thank you in anticipation. Anthony Thurn, President Strathfield Conference.







Thank you to the Association Bagnara Calabria for their generous donation of \$1,200 to St Martha's following the annual Blessing of the Fleet at Sydney Fish markets.

**The New January to July Roster is now available from the side entrance of the Church and on the parish website.**

### 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> December

Special Ministers	5PM	8AM	10AM	6PM
	Marian McCluskey	Georgette Sahyoun	Anne Marrins	Ravi Family
	Peter McCluskey	Peter Yamin	Maria Soares	Ravi Family
Readers	5PM	8AM	10AM	6PM
	Helen Blefari	Paulina Roncevic	Mark Soares	Helen Williamson
	Patricia Saad	Robert Smith	Rachel Suriano	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>
Altar Servers	5PM	8AM	10AM	6PM
	Saad Family	Mary Louise I.	Bonett Family	Lawrence X.
	Saad Family	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>	Suriano Family	Jayden Y.
	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>	Aidan M.	<b>Volunteer Needed</b>
Wardens	5PM	8AM	10AM	6PM
	Edith Pun	Phil Robinson	Trudie Rogers	Anthony Thurn

### MASS OFFERINGS

**Recently Deceased:**  
**Repose of The Soul:**



**Anniversaries:**

**Sick Intentions:**

**Special Intentions:**

Sam Galluzzo, Bill O'Riordan, Sr Helen Aphorpe, Josefina Sereno, Paul Maria To Ba Tuan, Maria Pagano. Fr Adrian Horgan, Fr Paul Ryan, Br Ray Dowding, Francesco Campanale, Francis Doumit, Frederick McDowell, Dorothy Harris, Daniel Lucich, James Brady, Ken Fraser, Elizabeth Keating, John McManus, Aldo Amarino, Salvatore Puglisi, William & Dorothy Starr, Bruce & Estelle Thurn, Anne Cecilia Glass, Reginald & Agnes Glass, Gerald & Frances Gleeson, Faado & Alice Herro, Patrick & Janet Reynolds, Jim Reynolds, Ken Rich, Monica & Patrick Ryan, Francesco & Mary Sorbello, Betty Warbrick, Gerald Wilson, Dr Stephanie Winfield, Philip Winfield, Mary Trefle', Anne Trefle', Elie Sahyoun, Alan & Peg Bailey, Matteo & Caterina Genova, Francesco & Maria Colagiuri, Lisa Cooke, Michael & Mary Cassar, Giuseppe & Romilda Reginato, Julian & Mabel Doyle & Jim Bradbury.

Maria Pagano, Maria Rosa Natale, Ethan Yan, John St George, Dorothea (Dorothy) Starr, Ilham (Helen) Matta, Jack Dawson, James Brady, Noel Jebanasam, Giuseppina Iannella, Marie Verschuer, Dominic Van So Duong, Francis Ta, Michael & Nollag Donegan, Thomas Kenny, John Harrington, Mary Dinhvu & John Hao Vu.

Dareth Flavell, George Bugeja, Carminella Tiberio, Theo McLean, Joseph Akkary, Sylvia Watson, Sheree Mouawad, Virgilio Lim, George Jabbour, Dr Maher Ishak Morian, Graham Byrnes, Stephanie Harrington, Phil Harriss, Sophie O'Donnell, Ken South, Ajith Antony, Pat Fraser, Siena Fabrie, Giuseppe Faraone, Joanna Jo, Simon Alam, Rosanne Sukkar, Henry D'Souza, Kevin O'Connor.

Deceased friends, relatives & Benefactors of the Dominican Order. The Bowden Family, Antonia, Giuseppe, Raffaele, Teresa, Matteo, Filomena & Maria Pagano, Caterina & Francesco Agostino, Sofie & Jerome Druart.



**During this season of Advent and Christmas we remember the people of Gaza. Please take home a Blessed Nativity Card with a token of **HOPE** for your Christmas Tree. If you're able, please offer a donation to the **CARITAS BOX - GAZA CRISIS RELIEF.****



#### GAZA CRISIS APPEAL

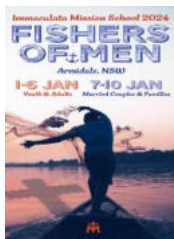
Help provide urgent humanitarian assistance to the people affected by the conflict.



**DONATE NOW**  
[www.caritas.org.au/gaza](http://www.caritas.org.au/gaza)  
1800 024 413



You can donate by scanning this QR code or a via the Cash Donation box in the Church foyer



**Immaculata Mission School 2024: FISHERS OF MEN** - Start the new year by going deeper in God's love through awesome speakers on the Catholic faith, daily Mass, Adoration and the Rosary, praise and worship, fellowship and more! There are two different programs, so there is something for everyone ... Youth & adults (14 years & up): 1-6 January 2024. Married couples & families: 7-10 January 2024 (specifically designed for married couples, includes ministry for children aged 13 & under) Special guest speakers: Dan & Stephanie Burke from the USA (co-founders of the Avila Institute, presenters on EWTN & Dan is an author of over 15 books on Catholic spirituality), plus Fr Francesco Gavazzi (from the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal) Where: NEGS (New England Girls' School), Armidale NSW. For costs, additional information and TO REGISTER visit: <http://www.immaculata.org.au/ims>





## BEING READY FOR CHRISTMAS

By Ron Rolheiser

Many of us arrive at Christmas tired, running, distracted, and already fatigued with the lights, songs, and celebrations of Christmas. Advent is meant to be a time of preparation for Christmas; but for many of us it is not exactly a time for the kind of preparation that enables Christ to be born more deeply in our lives. Instead our preparation for Christmas is mostly a time of making ready to celebrate with our families, friends, and colleagues. The days leading up to Christmas are rarely serene. Instead we find ourselves harried and hurried putting up decorations, shopping for gifts, sending out cards, preparing food, and attending Christmas socials. Moreover, when Christmas arrives, we are already tired of Christmas carols, having heard them already, non-stop, for weeks in our shopping malls, restaurants, public squares, and on our radio stations. And so Christmas, itself, generally finds us more in a pressured and tired space than in a leisured and rested one. Indeed, sometimes the Christmas season is more an endurance test than a time of genuine enjoyment. More-over and

more seriously, if we are honest with ourselves, we have to admit that in our preparations for Christmas, we, in fact, make very little space for the spiritual, for Christ to be born more deeply in our lives. Our time of preparation is generally more of a time to prepare our houses than a time to prepare our souls, more of a time of shopping than of prayer, and more of a time of already feasting than a time of fasting as a preparation for a feast. Today advent is perhaps more about already celebrating Christmas than it is about preparing for it. And the end result is that, like the biblical innkeepers who had no room for Mary and Joseph at the first Christmas, we generally arrive at Christmas with "no room at the inn", no space in our lives for a spiritual rebirth. Our hearts are good, we want Christmas to renew us spiritually, but our lives are too pressured, too full of activity and tiredness, for us to have any real energy to make Christmas a special time of spiritual renewal for ourselves. The spirit of Christmas is still in us, real, but lying like a neglected baby in the straw waiting to be picked up. And we do intend to pick up the baby, but simply never get around to it. **So how bad are we?** Now, while this should challenge us to take a look at ourselves, it is not as bad as many religious critics make it out to be. Arriving at Christmas with a life too busy and too distracted to make more room for Christ doesn't make us bad persons. It doesn't mean that we are mindless pagans. And it doesn't mean that Christ has died in our lives. We are not bad, faithless, and pagan because we habitually arrive at Christmas too distracted, too busy, too pressured, and too tired to make much of a conscious effort to make this feast a time of real spiritual renewal in our lives. Our spiritual lethargy simply defines us as more human than angelic, more earthly than platonic, and as more sensual than spiritual. I suspect that God fully understands this condition. Indeed, everyone struggles with this in some fashion. No one is perfect; no one gives a full place in his or her life to Christ, even at Christmas time. That should bring us some consolation. But it should also leave us with a pressing challenge: There is too little room for Christ in our busy, distracted lives! We must work at clearing some space for Christ, at making Christmas a time of spiritual refreshment and renewal in our lives. **How do we do that?** In the days leading up to Christmas, many of us struggle to do all the things we need to do to be ready for all that needs to happen in our houses, churches, and places of work. We need to shop for gifts, send out cards, put up lights and decorations, plan menus, buy food, attend a goodly number of Christmas socials at work, at church, at friends' houses. This, added on to the normal pressures within our lives, not infrequently leaves us with the feeling: I'm not going to make it! I won't be ready! I won't be ready for Christmas! That's a common feeling. But being ready for Christmas, getting everything we need to do done on time, making it, does not depend upon getting everything neatly checked off on our to-do list: gifts, done; cards, done; decorations, done; food, ready; the requisite number of social obligations, completed. Even if that list is only half done, if you find yourself in church at Christmas, if you find yourself at table with your family on Christmas day, and if you find yourself greeting your neighbours and colleagues with a little more warmth, then it doesn't matter if you are distracted, tired, over-fed, and not thinking explicitly about Jesus, you've made it.

# CHRISTMAS

## at the Cathedral

*a festival evening at St Mary's*

**14-25 DECEMBER**

We invite the community of Sydney to come together at St Mary's Cathedral during Advent to prepare for the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Festivities begin at 5.30pm with:**  
Christmas market stalls, food, fun activities for the kids and live entertainment

Use the hashtag  
**#ChristmasAtTheCathedral**  
on your social posts.

For more information, visit our website  
[christmasatthecathedral.org.au](http://christmasatthecathedral.org.au)

CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF SYDNEY

**ENGLISH**

**CAROLS ON THE LAWN**  
Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December, 5:30pm - 7:30pm  
Community Christmas Carols  
Includes free BBQ and children's activities

**CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE**  
Monday 25<sup>th</sup> December, 9:00am

**Beyond Blue**  
Beyond Blue  
P: 1300 22 4636  
W: [www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)

**CatholicCare**  
CatholicCare - Archdiocese of Sydney  
P: 13 18 19  
W: [www.catholiccare.org](http://www.catholiccare.org)

**kidshelpline**  
Anytime Any Reason  
**Call 1800 55 1800**

**Lifeline**  
Saving Lives  
Crisis Support. Suicide Prevention.  
Lifeline  
P: 13 11 14  
W: [www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)

**1800RESPECT**  
NATIONAL DOMESTIC FAMILY AND  
SEXUAL VIOLENCE COUNSELLING SERVICE  
1800RESPECT  
P: 1800 737 732  
W: [www.1800respect.org.au](http://www.1800respect.org.au)



The beginning of the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is written in the book of the prophet Isaiah:

Look, I am going to send my messenger before you;

he will prepare your way.

A voice cries in the wilderness:

Prepare a way for the Lord,  
make his paths straight,

and so it was that John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. All Judaea and all the people of Jerusalem made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins. John wore a garment of camel-skin, and he lived on locusts and wild honey. In the course of his preaching he said, 'Someone is following me, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptised you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

**R. Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ**

## HOMILY

**PROFESSION OF FAITH APOSTLES' CREED**  
*Or the Nicene Creed may be said.*

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, /  
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.

## PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

### LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

*After the priest raises the paten with the bread and prays, and then the chalice, we respond to each prayer:*

**R. Blessed be God for ever.**

P. Pray, brethren (brothers and sisters), that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father.

**R. 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.**

## PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

P. Be pleased, O Lord, with our humble prayers and offerings, and, since we have no merits to plead our cause, come, we pray, to our rescue with the protection of your mercy. Through Christ our Lord.

**R. Amen.**

## THE EUCHARISTIC PRAYER

P. The Lord be with you.

**R. And with your spirit.**

P. Lift up your hearts.

**R. We lift them up to the Lord.**

P. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**R. It is right and just.**

## PREFACE I OF ADVENT

*After the Preface, we sing or say:*

**All: 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 MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION

P. The mystery of faith.

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

## COMMUNION RITE

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

**All: Our Father, who art in heaven ...**

P. Deliver us, Lord, we pray ...

**All: For the kingdom, the power and the  
glory are yours now and for ever.**

P. Lord Jesus Christ, who said ...

**R. Amen.**

P. The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**R. And with your spirit.**

P. Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

*All exchange a sign of peace*

## LAMB OF GOD

**All: Lamb of God, you take away the sins  
of the world, have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God, you take away the sins of  
the world, have mercy on us.**

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

## INVITATION TO COMMUNION

P. 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.

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

## COMMUNION ANTIPHON Bar 5: 5; 4: 36

**Jerusalem, arise and stand upon the  
heights, and behold the joy which comes  
to you from God.**

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

P. Replenished by the food of spiritual nourishment, we humbly beseech you, O Lord, that, through our partaking in this mystery, you may teach us to judge wisely the things of earth and hold firm to the things of heaven. Through Christ our Lord.

**R. Amen.**

## THE CONCLUDING RITES

P. The Lord be with you.

**R. And with your spirit.**

P. May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit.

**R. Amen.**

P. Go in peace, glorifying the Lord by your life.

**R. Thanks be to God.**

## BREAKING OPEN THE WORD

### IN THE WILDERNESS

In Australia we experience the desert and wilderness in all its beauty and expanse, yet it can be a lonely, dangerous place. Today we hear a voice crying out in the wilderness in the time of Isaiah and echoed in the Gospel. This voice also cries out to us today, in the wilderness and the desert of our lives. The voice is consolation: "Console, console my people" (Is 40:1). It bellows, "In the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. (Is 40:3). Isaiah's words create an image of the landscape of our life and soul, in need of God.

The Gospel engages this imagery for John the Baptist, a guide in the wilderness who heralds the Messiah. Mark gives name to the voice just as he identified that this writing is "The beginning of the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (1:1). Although the name of Isaiah is invoked, the first quote is from Malachi "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way (1:2 cf. Mal 3:1); then comes the echo from Isaiah 40:3. Here in the wilderness John announces the one who is to come who will baptise with the Holy Spirit (Mark 7-8). This is the announcement of the Messiah, the one longed for. As we hear that voice in our wilderness, we know that Jesus is with us. We can reflect on our attention to his presence and our welcome to him in our souls and lives.

DR ROSEMARY CANAVAN

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