



**St John
Vianney**
Parish Morisset



THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT YEAR C 15 DECEMBER 2024

Today, the living word of the Gospel has lost none of its power, just as on the day it was first spoken.

John’s words empower believers to ask the question “What ought we do?” and then work toward an honest answer, so as to prepare a worthy welcome for our coming and ever-present God.

During these final days of Advent, may we welcome Christ as he comes to us in many various ways.

Christmas celebrates the presence of God in our world and in our daily life. It is not an event that is celebrated for one day, and then tossed aside .

It is a reality that we should celebrate every day of our lives.



We acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, the Awabakal People who, long before us lived, loved, educated and raised their children on this Country. We pay our respects to Elders past and present and we recognise the young people who are our future. We acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in our communities. We respect their deep physical and spiritual connections to Country through their stories, traditions and living cultures.

PARISH LEADERSHIP TEAM: Uta France
John France

PRIEST SUPERVISOR: Fr Joseph Figuardo

SACRAMENTAL PRIESTS: Fr Greg Barker VG
Fr Darryl Mackie
Fr Raphael Madukwe
Fr John Purnell

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL: Juliet Hutchins
Mal Melvey
Pam Melvey
Kerry Lendon
Rod Hay

PARISH SECRETARY: Rosanna Suckling

PARISH OFFICE: 60 Yambo Street, Morisset 2264, PO Box 87, Ph: 02 4973 6859

Office Hours: 9.00 am to 2.00pm—Monday to Friday (except public holidays)

(We ask that you make an appointment when coming in to the office)

Morisset Parish Office email: morparish@mn.catholic.org.au

Morisset Parish Web site: www.vianneymorisset.org

Morisset Parish Facebook : <https://www.facebook.com/stjvparish>

Morisset Parish Instagram : https://www.instagram.com/stjvparish_morisset/

(Please submit all Bulletin Notice requests to the parish office by 2pm Wednesdays)

UPCOMING WORSHIP TIMES :

Saturday	14th December 5pm Family Mass—Morisset
Sunday	15th December 2024 9.30am Mass—Morisset
Wednesday	18th December 7pm Reconciliation—Morisset
Friday	20th December 10.30am Mass—Morisset
Saturday	21st December 5pm Mass—Cooranbong
Sunday	22nd December 9.30am Mass—Morisset
Tuesday	24th December 7pm Mass—Showground
Wednesday	25th December 9.30am Mass—Morisset
Saturday	28th December 5pm Mass—Cooranbong
Sunday	19th December 9.30am Mass—Morisset
Saturday	4th January 5pm Family Mass—Morisset
Sunday	5th January 9.30am Mass—Morisset
Saturday	11th January 5pm Mass—Cooranbong
Sunday	12th January 9.30am Mass—Morisset

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Farewell

As you know Fr Greg Barker V.G. has been appointed Parish Priest of Inner Newcastle, Mayfield, and Stockton, effective from 1 January 2025.

Fr Greg will preside at our 9.30am Sunday Mass this Sunday the 15th December. To help say farewell to Fr Greg a 'Cuppa' will be held in the Callinan Centre after Mass.

Christmas Mass Times.

Christmas Eve 7pm and Christmas Day 9.30am are the scheduled Mass times for 2024.

As in the past Christmas Eve will be held at the Morisset Showground to allow for the expected larger than normal crowd, and availability of parking.

This year a free sausage sizzle commencing at 5.30pm will be available for people arriving early before the Carols and Mass.

Christmas Reconciliation

In preparation for Christmas a special Reconciliation Liturgy together with Reconciliation, will be held in the Morisset Church this Wednesday 18th December 7pm. Fr Darryl Mackie and Fr John Purnell will lead us in the Liturgy.

GOSPEL

Luke 3:10-18

What, then, must we do?

When all the people asked John, 'What must we do?' he answered, 'If anyone has two tunics he must share with the man who has none, and the one with something to eat must do the same.' There were tax collectors too who came for baptism, and these said to him, 'Master, what must we do?' He said to them, 'Exact no more than your rate.' Some soldiers asked him in their turn, 'What about us? What must we do?' He said to them, 'No intimidation! No extortion! Be content with your pay!'

A feeling of expectancy had grown among the people, who were beginning to think that John might be the Christ, so John declared before them all, 'I baptise you with water, but someone is coming, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fan is in his hand to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his barn; but the chaff he will burn in a fire that will never go out.' As well as this, there were many other things he said to exhort the people and to announce the Good News to them.

Third Sunday of Advent Year C - 15th December 2024

Reflection

We have arrived at Gaudete Sunday- the name is taken from the Latin word to rejoice, and is celebrated each year on the 3rd Sunday of Advent. Its purpose is to enable us to pause & reflect on our journey so far, in preparation for the great Feast of CHRISTMAS.

The 1st Reading from Zephaniah sets the tone - the word JOY is mentioned 3 times, The Psalm repeats the excitement of joy & gladness,

Paul's message to the people in Philippi mentions the word HAPPY twice, as well as expressing his wish for their HAPPINESS, while urging them to be tolerant to everyone as "the Lord is very near".

Luke's Gospel describes how the people reacted to the teachings of John the Baptist, whose answers to their numerous questions seemed so exact that they were convinced he was the promised Messiah but he quickly declared that he baptised with water, whereas the one who was to follow him would "baptise with the Holy Spirit & fire"!

We know that God, our Creator, wants us to be happy, not just

in this world but in the next one. We should ask ourselves "what, then, are the things in our lives which may be preventing us from enjoying this happiness?"

Could it be our pride, envy, fear, ambition, resentment, or even unforgiveness?

In order to overcome these barriers we need to open our hearts fully to Jesus, acknowledging our weaknesses & express our desire to embrace the peace & hope which His loving, forgiving presence will deliver.

Christmas is more than a family festival with a Christmas tree, candlelight, tinsel, gifts & turkey on the table! It is the greatly anticipated celebration of Christ's coming into a cold, dark, unredeemed world. The song of the angels, the goodness of the shepherds & the faith of the wise men are the great reminders of that historical event.

There is also a paradoxical nature to Advent—In this Season we wait for God, yet He is with us always. We believe that God is coming to dwell among us, yet He is already at home in our hearts. While we wait, we need patience & prudence, but it is God's grace which gives us these qualities! As with all spiritual knowledge, two things CAN be equally true at the same time & it takes wisdom to be able to live with mystery & "unknowing" —Advent shows us how to be comfortable with paradox & this awareness helps us to grow.

Here are a few interesting details about Christmas tree decorations —found on a notice board by my family members who spent last Christmas with relatives in Scotland !

- When chocolate was first used as a decoration on a Christmas tree it represented prosperity & sweetness for the coming year
- A star is a common Christmas tree topper, representing the Star of Bethlehem. An angel or a fairy is often used to decorate the top of the tree
- Christmas lights bring light into the home during the short, dark winter days (Nth Hemisphere) Christians believe the lights symbolise the light Jesus brought the world
- Candy canes are shaped like a shepherd's crook as a symbol that Jesus is a good shepherd
- Poinsettia plants are popular at Christmas. In Mexican folklore two children take a Poinsettia to the manger & it blossoms into red, star-shaped flowers
- Tinsel comes from an old Ukrainian legend - a family didn't have many decorations on their tree. A spider came in overnight & spun beautiful webs which turned silver & gold in the morning light.

"Those who wait for God find a renewed power; they soar on eagles wings, they run & don't get weary, they walk & never tire". Isaiah 40:31

St Mary MacKillop said in 1881-

"We can all meet together in spirit at the crib of our loving infant & pray for one another" Heather White

Advent Prayer intention

God of Peace, as we begin our Jubilee Year, we ask for your holy presence to guide and inspire us as we walk forward together as Pilgrims of Hope. Make us bearers of the light of compassion, capable of sharing the forgiveness and reconciliation that come from you. We pray that your Church is experienced as a place of welcome, hope, and joy, especially for the most vulnerable and hurting among us. We pray to the Lord.

Pope Francis' prayer intention for December 2024

That the Jubilee Year of 2025 will strengthen us in our faith, helping us to recognise the Risen Christ in the midst of our lives, transforming us into pilgrims of Christian hope.

Eftpos Machines

This Monday 16th December the parish will be taking delivery of two Eftpos Machines. 'Tap & Go' A generous weekend parishioner has kindly agreed to pay the associated costs. We have received numerous requests over the months from visitors who have not been carrying cash but wanted to contribute to the parish. Unfortunately, we couldn't accommodate their requests at the time. Hopefully these machines will be helpful at Christmas.

Points to Ponder

Traditions have always been an important dimension of celebrating faith. Each age is a time of special grace, including our age of high technology.

Did You Know?

The third Sunday of Advent in 2024 will be this Sunday, December 15th. The third Sunday of Advent is traditionally called Gaudete Sunday. Gaudete is the Latin word for rejoice, and this Sunday is the time for us to rejoice because Jesus came and died so that we may live forever with him!

The third Sunday of Advent we are invited to reflect on the joy we have access to because of our faith in Jesus. One of the defining characteristics of Christ-followers is their joyful demeanor. Let's not allow the struggles of this year steal from the great joy we have because of Jesus.

Advent Reflection Resources

Awaiting Hope, our diocesan Advent reflection resource, invites us to use mystagogical reflection as our way of encountering Christ in the Advent gospels. It invites us to focus on the presence of Christ in our experience and in the living tradition of our faith, to connect it to life now and to be changed by it. Mystagogical reflection meets us where we are. No preparation is needed. It's about being open to encountering Christ so we can live from Christ. It's deeply personal and communal. Learn about Mystagogy.

[Download Awaiting Hope 2024 Advent Reflection resource](#)

During Advent, anyone and everyone can gather a circle of people to reflect on the Advent gospels using Awaiting Hope. Parishes and schools may like to schedule some gatherings to capture those who are not able to form a group. Consistent with our Catholic understanding of the Liturgical Year, we gather to reflect on the gospel AFTER we have heard it proclaimed at Mass.

Popular Pieties of Advent and Christmas

A new memo has been prepared: [Popular Pieties of Advent and Christmas](#). It provides links to essential documents relating to Advent and Christmas and responds to the most common ques-

tion received from parishes.

Advent in 2 minutes

For a joyful and quirky explanation of the relevance of Advent today watch [Advent in 2 minutes video by BustedHalo.com](#).

With A Light Heart

There were two brothers who were the most notorious criminals in a country town. When one of them died, the surviving brother went to the local priest and said, "I'll donate \$10 million to the church if you give the eulogy, but you have to say nice things and tell everyone my brother was a SAINT."

The priest scratched his head but finally said, "Ok, I'll do it."

The brother was pleasantly shocked that the priest agreed.

At the funeral the priest gets up and begins his eulogy, "... This man was a thief, a rapist, a liar and a crook."

here's a pause as the congregants look surprised. The priest continues, "There's not one good thing I can say about him! Not one!"

The priest then stares at the brother in the front pew and in a loud voice says, "But compared to his brother, HE WAS A SAINT! Amen."

Lebanon Crisis Appeal

The escalating conflict between Israel and Hezbollah has pushed Lebanon into severe turmoil, with tragic consequences that have spread from Southern Lebanon to the entire nation. The situation is dire: over 3,000 lives have been lost, more than 13,000 people injured, and critical infrastructure has been destroyed.

In response to a heartfelt plea for assistance by Bishop Tarabay and Bishop Rabbat, the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference in partnership with Catholic Religious Australia, Caritas Australia and Caritas Lebanon, has launched the Lebanon Appeal.

This appeal aims to provide essential humanitarian aid to our brothers and sisters suffering in Lebanon, especially those who are displaced and without homes or shelter.

Donate today: www.caritas.org.au/lebanondonate



Westlakes

Christmas Masses

2024

24 December	6.00 pm	St Mary's Warners Bay
24 December	6.00 pm	St Joseph's Toronto
24 December	7.00 pm	Showground Morisset
25 December	9.00 am	St Mary's Warners Bay
25 December	9.00 am	St Michael's Booragul
25 December	9.00 am	St Joseph's Toronto
25 December	9.30 am	St John Vianney Morisset

Celebrate the spirit of Christmas with Global Gifts.

This Christmas, give a gift that changes the lives of those living in poverty.

www.globalgifts.org.au

Caritas AUSTRALIA | Global Gifts

SUPPORTING THE CLERGY / 1st Collection

If you would like to make contributions to support the Clergy / 1st Collection please do so at Mass in the BLUE bucket or electronically using the Online Payments button on the Parish Website Home page, Diocese App, Electronic Funds Transfer Only Bank Account Name: Morisset Parish Presbytery BSB: 066739 No: 100004062 Ref: 1st Collection & SURNAME or contact the parish office to set up a direct debit.

SUPPORTING OUR PARISH / 2nd Collection

If you would like to make contributions to support our Parish please do so at Mass via the RED bucket or our Parish Electronic Funds Transfer Only Account the details are: Account Name: Morisset Parish Church BSB:066739 Account Number: 100004064 please use one of the following Payment References PG + your giver number or PG + SURNAME or SURNAME you can also use the Online Payments or Planned Giving button on the Parish Website Home page or the Diocese App. If you are considering taking up **planned giving** you may like to know that **a percentage of the contributions are tax deductible**. If you would like to know more or set up planned giving please contact the Parish Office.

WEEKEND ROSTERS			
		<u>THIS WEEK</u>	<u>NEXT WEEK</u>
<u>PRESIDERS</u>	5PM 9.30AM	Mass Mass	Mass Mass
<u>PROCLAIMERS:</u>	5PM 9.30AM	R Hay M Shamley	J Vipan L McRae
<u>PSALMIST:</u>	5PM 9.30AM	H White J Vipan	P Melvey P Melvey
<u>GIFTS</u>	5PM 9.30AM	B Cox L Hutchinson G Hutchinson	P Robertson H White A Walker G Walker
<u>SERVERS</u>	5PM 9.30AM	J Lawandos V Paulo	M Melvey M Melvey
<u>AV</u>	5PM 9.30AM	E Lawandos M Foo	J France T Alexander
<u>WELCOMERS</u>	5PM 9.30AM	P Melvey H White	H White K Lendon
<u>CHURCH CLEANING</u>	COOR MOR	XXXX A Walker G Walker	F Dunn B Hutcheson D Whitten

The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle has an abiding commitment to promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults.

Our Parish supports The Diocese in its zero-tolerance approach to abuse. Every one of us must each day commit ourselves individually and collectively to safeguard each child and every vulnerable person to whom we interact with.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

If you have any concerns for a child or vulnerable person please contact the Office of Safeguarding Phone: 02 4979 1390

Email: childprotection@mn.catholic.org.au,

or visit their website for further information:

www.officeofsafeguarding.org.au

UPCOMING FEAST DAYS MEMORIALS AND SOLEMNITIES

- SAINT JOHN OF THE CROSS (M) - 14TH DEC
- SAINT PETER CANISIUS (OM) - 21ST DEC
- SAINT JOHN OF KANTY (OM) - 23RD DEC
- THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD VIGIL (S) - 24TH DEC
- THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD DAY (S) - 25TH DEC
- SAINT STEPHEN (F) - 26TH DEC
- SAINT JOHN (F) - 27TH DEC
- THE HOLY INNOCENTS (F) - 28TH DEC
- THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY, AND JOSEPH (F) - 29TH DEC
- SAINT SYLVESTER I (OM) - 31ST DEC
- THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD—5TH JAN

Please pray for all those who are sick: in hospital or at home, especially those living with a life threatening disease:

Jackie Purnell, Nancy Overton, Ross Dickson, Betty Smith, Frank Simons, Anna Dussin, Koby Smith, Annette Boyd, Mary Monaghan, Clare Wallington, Donna Hazzard, Pam Mullaly, Tintumol Thomas, Peter Martyn, Bernadette Martin, Bruce Gillett.

Please pray for those who have been called to eternal life may they always be in our prayers.



Prayer Requests for the Bulletin

If you would like the parish to pray for a family member who is sick, recently deceased or you would like remembered please call or email the parish office or complete a prayer card for each person and place in the mail box near the parish office door. Cards are available at the back of the church and at the Parish Office.

All prayer requests require permission from a family member or the person. Due to Australian privacy laws.

An Act of Spiritual 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.



Live stream Mass every Sunday at 9.30am at www.mn.catholic.org.au/places/live-stream



We are committed to the
**NATIONAL CATHOLIC
SAFEGUARDING STANDARDS**

SUNDAY PRAYER SERVICE
Third Sunday of Advent Year C
Sunday 15 Dec 2024

The Introductory Rites

Acknowledgement of Country

We Acknowledge the Awabakal and Darkinjung nations as the Traditional Custodians who have walked upon and cared for this land our parish encompasses for thousands of years, and honour and pay respect to, Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to this country and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of reconciliation.

Gathering

The Lectionary/Roman Missal or a Bible may be placed on a table together with a candle and a cross.

Sign of the Cross

Leader:

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

All:

Amen.

Greeting

Leader:

Blessed be Jesus Christ
who will come again in glory.

All:

Blessed be God forever.

Introductory Remarks

Leader (in these or similar words):

Friends in Christ,
although we cannot celebrate the Eucharist this day,
we gather in God's name
for when two or more come together
God is always with us.
In union with the whole Church,
we await the coming of the Lord.

Opening Rite

LITANY OF PRAISE

Leader:

Before listening to the Word of God let us praise the Lord Jesus
Christ who has raised us to new life.

A brief period of silence follows.

Leader:

Lord Jesus, you are our strength and our hope: Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Christ Jesus, you come to make us holy: Christ, have mercy.

All: Christ, have mercy.

Lord Jesus, you sent your Holy Spirit to remain with us always:

Lord, have mercy.

All: Lord, have mercy.

Leader:

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

All:

Amen.

Opening Prayer

Leader:

Let us pray.

All pause for silent prayer.

God of all ages,
with joy and gladness
we await the coming of our Saviour, Jesus.
Give us courage and strength
so that we may share with others
the Good News of your kingdom.
We ask this through Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit,
for ever and ever.

All:

Amen.

The Liturgy of the Word

First Reading

Zephaniah 3:14-18

A reading from the prophet Zephaniah
With gladness the Lord will rejoice over you.

Shout for joy, daughter of Zion,
Israel, shout aloud!

Rejoice, exult with all your heart,
daughter of Jerusalem!

The Lord has repealed your sentence;
he has driven your enemies away.

The Lord, the king of Israel, is in your midst;
you have no more evil to fear.

When that day comes, word will come to Jerusalem:
Zion, have no fear,

do not let your hands fall limp.

The Lord your God is in your midst,
a victorious warrior.

He will exult with joy over you,

he will renew you by his love;

he will dance with shouts of joy for you

as on a day of festival.

To indicate the end of the reading, the reader acclaims:

The word of the Lord.

All reply:

Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm

Is 12:2-6 R. v.6

(R.) Cry out with joy and gladness: for among you is the great and Holy One of Israel.

1. Truly, God is my salvation,
I trust, I shall not fear.
For the Lord is my strength, my song,
he became my saviour.
With joy you will draw water
from the wells of salvation. (R.)
2. Give thanks to the Lord, give praise to his name!
Make his mighty deeds known to the peoples!
Declare the greatness of his name. (R.)
3. Sing a psalm to the Lord
for he has done glorious deeds,
make them known to all the earth!
People of Zion, sing and shout for joy
for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel. (R.)

4. They go out, they go out, full of tears,
carrying seed for the sowing:
they come back, they come back, full of song,
carrying their sheaves. (R.)

Second Reading

Philippians 4:4-7

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians

The Lord is near.

I want you to be happy, always happy in the Lord; I repeat, what I want is your happiness. Let your tolerance be evident to everyone: the Lord is very near. There is no need to worry; but if there is anything you need, pray for it, asking God for it with prayer and thanksgiving, and that peace of God, which is so much greater than we can understand, will guard your hearts and your thoughts, in Christ Jesus.

To indicate the end of the reading, the reader acclaims:

The word of the Lord.

All reply:

Thanks be to God.

Gospel

Reader:

From the holy Gospel according to **Luke**

All:

Glory to you, O Lord.

Luke 3:10-18

What, then, must we do?

When all the people asked John, 'What must we do?' he answered, 'If anyone has two tunics he must share with the man who has none, and the one with something to eat must do the same.' There were tax collectors too who came for baptism, and these said to him, 'Master, what must we do?' He said to them, 'Exact no more than your rate.' Some soldiers asked him in their turn, 'What about us? What must we do?' He said to them, 'No intimidation! No extortion! Be content with your pay!' A feeling of expectancy had grown among the people, who were beginning to think that John might be the Christ, so John declared before them all, 'I baptise you with water, but someone is coming, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing-fan is in his hand to clear his threshing-floor and to gather the wheat into his barn; but the chaff he will burn in a fire that will never go out.' As well as this, there were many other things he said to exhort the people and to announce the Good News to them.

Reader:

The Gospel of the Lord.

All:

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

All are seated.

Reflection on the Word

A short period of reflection may be observed.

Q. How do you think the crowd, tax collectors and soldiers reacted to John's words to them?

Q. Have you ever experienced a real 'change of heart'?

Q. Apart from charitable giving, how can generosity be expressed?

Q. In what aspect/s of your life do you need to adopt a more generous spirit?

Q. What does it mean to you to be 'baptised in the Holy Spirit'?

Profession of Faith

Leader:

In union with the whole Church
let us profess our faith.

All:

**I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,**

*At the words that follow, up to and including the Virgin
Mary, all bow.*

**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

Leader: Dear friends, with prayer and thanksgiving let us bring our intentions before the Lord.

Reader: That the Pope and all priests and bishops will continue to spread the Good News of our Saviour.
In your mercy:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That the people of Australia and of all nations will be guided in the way of true peace.
In your mercy:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That those suffering addiction or distress may come to know the comforting message of God's Word.
In your mercy:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That in this Advent time, our community may be filled with prayer as we reflect on the coming of Christ.
In your mercy:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That all the sick and housebound will find strength and healing in the Lord.
In your mercy:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That all those who have died may come to everlasting life with Christ.
In your mercy:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: Lord God, the coming of your Son is near. Hear our prayers, and guide us in faith as we wait in joyful hope. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Leader:

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

All:

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours,
now and forever.
Amen.**

The Concluding Rite Blessing

Leader:

We believe that the Son of God once came to us
and we look for him to come again.
May his coming bring us the light of his holiness
and free us with his blessing.

All make the sign of the cross during the blessing.

All:

Amen.

Dismissal

Leader:

Let us go in the peace.

All:

Thanks be to God.

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FAITH MATTERS: Evangelisation = Good News

When we hear the word evangelisation the image of enthusiastic singing, expressive forms of worship such as raising hands, clapping and being born again might come to mind. While these are not necessarily undesirable images, negative connotations and associations for some have arisen from the word evangelisation over the years. Certainly, there is a branch of Protestant Christianity that refer to themselves as being an Evangelical church, but evangelisation as a word and action really should apply to all authentic Christians.

Rosemary McAllister PUBLISHED December 10, 2024

If we strip back to the bare basics' evangelisation is the process of sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ with others. The four canonical Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—are known as the Four Evangelists. The term "evangelist" comes from the Greek word "euangelion," meaning "good news," which reflects their role in spreading the message of Jesus Christ.

Evangelisation began with the apostles, who spread the teachings of Jesus Christ throughout the Roman Empire. Key figures like St. Paul travelled extensively, establishing Christian communities. He continued to spread the good news and build

relationships with these communities via letter writing. In the Middle Ages Monastic communities also became centres of learning and evangelisation. The 15th and 16th centuries saw Catholic missionaries, such as the Jesuits, Franciscans, and Dominicans, travelling to the Americas, Africa, and Asia. Figures like St. Francis Xavier were instrumental in spreading Christianity to India, Japan, and other parts of Asia.

In 1975 Pope Paul VI issued the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (Evangelisation in the Modern World). The document emphasizes that evangelisation is the Church's primary mission. It is not just about preaching but transforming humanity from within and making it new. While nearly fifty years old the document still holds currency as it speaks of a Church that is called to be a witness to the Gospel through both word and action. This includes addressing social issues and promoting justice and peace. The document calls for the involvement of all members of the Church, not just clergy, in spreading the Gospel. In more recent times Pope Francis in his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel), which was issued in 2013 highlights that evangelisation should be marked by joy. He encourages Christians to share the joy of knowing Jesus Christ and the transformative power of His love. Living out the Gospel authentically in daily life is crucial for effective evangelisation. Pope Francis calls for a Church that goes out to the peripheries, reaching out to the marginalized and those on the fringes of society. He emphasises the need for a welcoming and inclusive approach. He underscores the importance of a personal encounter with Jesus Christ. Evangelisation begins with a personal relationship with Christ, which then inspires others through genuine witness. Evangelisation is not just about spiritual matters but also involves addressing social issues. Pope Francis links the proclamation of the Gospel with efforts to promote justice, peace, and care for the poor. He believes that the Church must continuously renew itself to remain effective in its mission. This involves being open to change and adapting to new circumstances while staying true to the core message of the Gospel. Pope Francis' approach to evangelisation is holistic, integrating personal witness, social action, and a joyful proclamation of the Gospel. His teachings encourage all Christians to actively participate in the mission of evangelisation in their own unique ways.

In 2023 the Evangelisation Statement was published by the Bishops Commission for Evangelisation, Laity and Ministry, a commission of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference. This document is a biblical theological reflection for all Catholics and places its foundations in encounter, discipleship and mission. The first fundamental is about encountering Jesus. Kerygma is the moment when we encounter the life and death of Jesus within us and through the action of the Holy Spirit the Good News is received and enacted. The second fundamental is about becoming disciples, considering how does Jesus evangelise and how does Jesus make disciples. Jesus never proselytised or forced anyone to believe in him. His encounter with those around him was subtle and invitational. The third fundamental calls us all to the work of evangelisation that is missionary, Marian and has a synodal style. Our missionary lens propels us to consider charity for others with a tender mercy while we journey together. There is much we can aspire to through engaging with this theological reflection.

I am looking forward to exploring how we can apply this document in 2025 during the Jubilee Year, Pilgrims of Hope and beyond. Sharing the how the Church of Maitland-Newcastle spreads the good news or in other words, evangelises!

To access this document, go to: [National Centre for Evangelisation - National Centre for Evangelisation, Australia](#)

Christmas spirit for young and old

Cracking bon-bons and singing Christmas carols signalled the culmination of something truly special for the Year 6 students of St Paul's Primary School, Rutherford and the residents of Rutherford Park Care Community.

Gemma Hunter PUBLISHED December 06, 2024

Throughout the year, students in the school's Mini Vinnies program attended the aged care home where they traded stories with the residents, learning from each other and creating memories that will last a lifetime.

Now, coming together for the last time in 2024 to celebrate the festive season.

The Mini Vinnies program had seen humble beginnings.

Restricted by the pandemic, the students had initially found it challenging to engage with their local community. However, Robert Temesvary, the Religious Education and Mini Vinnies Coordinator at St Paul's said the determination to make a difference saw the program flourish.

"Ever since I've been at St Paul's, the program has been a big focus for our Year 6 students," he said.

"At the beginning of the year, the students who want to be part of Mini Vinnies nominate themselves, and then they're officially welcomed into the community at Sunday Mass with the parish around midterm."

From that point onward, the students are not only ambassadors of the school but also budding philanthropists. In addition to their regular visits to Rutherford Park, they take part in school fundraising, coordinated mission days, and even support the Breakfast Club on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Robert said the idea of the intergenerational program was presented by St Paul's librarian Katrina Howard and everyone thought it would be meaningful for both students and the residents.

"It took some time for the program to get off the ground, but ever since then it's really gone from strength to strength.

"The students enjoy going and hearing about their lives and we know they bring some joy and connection while they're there.

"We sometimes forget the power of slowing down and spending time with others. It's what life's all about and it's so beneficial on both ends," Mr Temesvary said.

Lara, a Year 6 student, has been visiting Rutherford Park since the beginning of the year. She said it's shown her and her peers how to befriend people of all ages and walks of life.

"We always have a great time when we visit, and we love talking with the residents and hearing their stories. I know some of the residents don't have family close by and we feel like we have brightened their day when we leave," Lara said.

Xavier, another Year 6 student, agreed adding that he feels grateful to have learnt so much.

"It's a truly special thing to meet new people who have tales you could never dream of. Because they're older than us they've experienced some really cool things," Xavier said.

I've got my own grandma who lives by herself, so I know how important it is to make sure they feel like they are heard, and someone cares about them."

Rutherford Park resident, Pat Sexton said the Mini Vinnies visits are always a hit.

"It's good to see them arrive with their smiling faces and I've learnt a lot about them, and I love hearing about their families," Pat said.

"I have a big family, and I've always loved having the kids around. I have four children and ten grandchildren, and they were constantly at my place, and we were involved in Scouts and the netball and soccer clubs. It was my life, and the student visits remind me of those times."

The impact of the program is deeply felt, especially during the

festive season where the celebrations can often highlight the absence of loved ones.

"You could be having the most stressful week, but when you see the students interact with the residents and the looks on their faces, it's just the most bucket-filling experience," Mr Temesvary said.

"You can see the excitement in their conversation, and some residents bring out pictures of their family, exchanging stories with the students. It's just a really personal experience. Some residents don't have family close by, so it's special for them during the Christmas period.

"Having that connection to the community is a big thing for us as a school.

"I think it's important to students because in this work, they have pride in what they do. It's more than school and an activity, it's bigger than that and that's what we are about at St Paul's."

Fr Solomon Okovido ordained to the priesthood

Sacred Heart Cathedral was at capacity on Saturday 23 November as Father Solomon Okovido was ordained to the priesthood.

Elizabeth Symington PUBLISHED December 10, 2024

It marked an important moment for both Fr Solomon and the people of the Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.

"It feels deeply humbling and profoundly joyful to be ordained a priest," Fr Solomon said.

"It is a call to a lifelong commitment of service to God and His people.

"I feel grateful to God, my family, my seminary formators, and the many people who have prayed for me throughout this journey and I am grateful to Bishop Michael Kennedy for ordaining me to the Priesthood.

"I am now a servant of God and the community in a unique and intimate way, and I am deeply aware of the responsibility entrusted to me. I pray daily for the grace to serve faithfully."

Bishop Michael Kennedy presided at the liturgy before guests moved to the Southern Cross Hall to continue the celebration over lunch.

Fr Solomon said he felt an array of emotions during the day.

"During the Ordination Mass, I experienced an overwhelming mix of emotions—joy, awe, peace, and a little bit of nervousness," he explained.

"When I laid prostrate during the Litany of the Saints, I felt a profound surrender to God, as if the prayers of the Church lifted me and carried me to a new place of grace.

"When the Bishop laid his hands on my head, I felt a deep connection to the centuries-old tradition of the priesthood as well as a moment of transformation.

"It was a moment of reflective intimacy with Christ and His Church, and it is one I will cherish forever, especially after several years of waiting after my diaconate ordination. Having my family present to witness my ordination was also very meaningful."

Fr Solomon has been appointed Assistant Priest in St Benedict's Inner Newcastle Parish, Stockton Parish, and Mayfield Parish. In this role, and as a priest, he hopes to be a faithful servant of Christ and his Church.

"I want to be a source of spiritual nourishment for my parishioners, offering them guidance and support, celebrating the sacraments, winning souls for Christ, and breaking open The Word of God," he said.

"I hope to foster a vibrant and welcoming community where people feel loved and accepted.

"Additionally, I am passionate about youth ministry and hope to inspire young people to encounter Christ and live a life of faith."

We congratulate Fr Solomon on his priestly ordination.