



**St John  
Vianney**  
Parish Morisset



**FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT YEAR C 22 DECEMBER 2024**

*Our celebration of Christmas has many layers. What we have to do, is find a connection between the secular market place, and the spiritual content of the feast.*

*Christmas is dreaded by many people...living alone... grieving the loss of a loved one...burdened by bills... wrecked by anxiety over excessive drinking. It seems to them that everybody else is enjoying life and that makes the pain worse. Is there anybody I should visit with a word of support? My presence may be the best of presents. Mary visited Elizabeth when she needed support.*

*The first Christmas was full of hurry and worry, uncertainty and fear. It was no picnic for Mary and Joseph. It was more like an ordeal or nightmare. They had just completed a long journey. They arrived in Bethlehem poor, unknown, and without influence of any kind. They were unable to find accommodation.*

*As we light our fourth candle, let us pray that we might open our minds to see beyond our own dreams and schemes so that Emmanuel may be ever more present in us and through us.*



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](mailto:morparish@mn.catholic.org.au)

**Morisset Parish Web site:** [www.vianneymorisset.org](http://www.vianneymorisset.org)

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

**Morisset Parish Instagram :** [https://www.instagram.com/stjvparish\\_morisset/](https://www.instagram.com/stjvparish_morisset/)

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

**UPCOMING WORSHIP TIMES :**

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
Saturday	18th January 5pm Family Mass—Morisset
Sunday	19th January 9.30am Mass—Morisset
Saturday	25th January 5pm Mass—Cooranbong
Sunday	26th January 9.30am Mass—Morisset

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## Welcome

Welcome to all the visitors to our Parish of St John Vianney during the summer holiday season.

The Parish of St John Vianney Morisset, was officially formed in 1947, however our Mass center of St Patrick and St Brigid at Cooranbong, dates to the 1860's. The present Cooranbong Church celebrated its centenary in August 2006, and 150 years of Catholic presence in the area was celebrated in 2011.

It is documented that Saint Mary McKillop visited Cooranbong where she had a convent school. Up until 1966 St John Vianney Parish was part of the Diocese of Sydney, but now it is part of the Diocese of Maitland / Newcastle, with Bishop Michael Kennedy as Bishop.

The 9.30am Mass at Morisset is recorded each Sunday and uploaded to the Parish Website and Facebook later in the day, internet allowing. This allows people in nursing facilities and those away from the parish for whatever reason, to keep 'in touch' with the parish.

## Christmas Masses

Christmas Eve 7pm Morisset Showground.

Christmas Day 9.30am Morisset Church

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 car parking.

A working bee to set up the chairs and stage at the Showground will be held.

Tuesday 24th December 10am. All assistance appreciated.

Fr Darryl will be the presider at the Christmas Eve Mass.

## Christmas Eve

**Free sausage sizzle 5.30pm**

**Carols 6.30pm**

**Mass 7pm**

## 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.

## Fourth Sunday of Advent Year C - 22nd December 2024 Reflection

The end of the year is coming very quickly. Christmas is just around the corner, and we are invited to look forward to the coming of Jesus, in a special way.

John the Baptist dominated the early weeks of Advent, and today it is Mary and Elizabeth, who now come to the center stage. The stage was small, but the audience has been millions ever since. The prayers they said have been also said ever since.

As we approach Christmas, we have lots of hopes and expectations.

As we ponder Mary's acceptance of God's request, we are invited to join her, in dropping normal expectations.

Base jumpers stand on the top of a very high cliff, or a vertical mountain, and look down a thousand or more feet, to see the fields on the valley floor far below.

Some lack the faith, to make that leap, and never jump. Others take a deep breath and go.

Mary was also asked to take a great leap of faith.

As she stood fearfully on the edge of the cliff of her decision, her trusting "Yes", was her confident response. With that she jumped,

Today we prepare for the birth of Jesus, but the most important nativity, is the birth of Jesus in our lives.

The coming of Christ among us, which we celebrate at Christmas, means believers are called to make a difference in our world.

Unless Jesus is born within us, and in our world, then our celebration of his birth in Bethlehem long ago is false.

Christmas is our time to say, "Yes. Be it done unto me according to

your Word." John France

## Message from Bishop Michael Kennedy.

Dear Fathers, Deacons, and Parish Leaders,

Deacon Naveen Susainathan

Deacon Naveen's two-year discernment period with the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle is drawing to a close. We had a conversation about this last week and Deacon Naveen has decided to return home to India prior to Christmas, so he will be leaving us soon. I am very grateful to Deacon Naveen for the ministry he has provided and the friendship he has extended to us. He showed a lot of courage coming here two years ago and I'm sure that same courage will see him through whatever lies ahead. I'm sure you all join with me in thanking Deacon Naveen, in wishing him every blessing, and in praying for him into the future.

## Eftpos Machines

The parish has taken delivery of two Eftpos Machines. 'Tap & Go'

A generous weekend parishioner has kindly agreed to pay the associated costs for the machines. We have received numerous requests 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. Anyone who is familiar with Eftpos terminals should have no trouble with the machine. The machines will not issue receipts. Anyone who requires a receipt is encouraged to join the 'Planned Giving'.

## Parish Office Christmas Closure

The Parish Office will be closed from 2pm Tuesday 24th December and will reopen 9am Thursday 2nd January 2025.

Emergency Parish No-0459369832 for urgent administrative matters between 9am and 2pm on business days.

Emergency Priest No-0493969362 for anointing of the sick for someone who is gravely ill.

## New Years Day

Mass will be celebrated at Morisset on New Years Day 9.30am.

Fr Darryl will be presiding.

## No Liturgies-School Holidays

There will be no Tuesday Liturgy of the Word during the School Holidays.

## Parish Priest Appointments 2025

Effective from 1st January 2025, Fr Darryl Mackie has been appointed as Parish Priest of Boolaroo, Warners Bay, Booragul, Toronto, and Morisset.

Fr Darryl is also Tribunal Office Manager and Vicar for retired and sick clergy.

Fr Paul Macharia Kamau CSSp (Spiritan): has been appointed Assistant Priest in the parishes of Boolaroo/Warners Bay, Booragul, Toronto, and Morisset.

Fr Paul is from Kenya and is currently Associate Pastor at St Francis Xavier Parish Goodna in the Archdiocese of Brisbane and will arrive in January.

Effective from 1st January 2025, Fr Greg Barker V.G. formally PP of Boolaroo/Warners Bay, has been appointed Parish Priest of Inner Newcastle, (Hamilton, Mayfield, Tighes Hill, The Junction/Mereweather, St Marys on the Hill, and Stockton.)

## Fifth Sunday Advance Notice

The month of December 2024 has five Sundays. This means that on the 5th Sunday weekend, the Vigil Mass (Saturday 28th December) will be at Cooranbong 5pm.

## With A Light Heart

A man goes into a pet shop to buy a parrot. The shop owner points to three identical-looking parrots in a cage and says, "The parrot on the left costs \$500 dollars."

"Why does the parrot cost so much?" asks the man.

The owner says, "Well the parrot knows how to use a computer."

The man then asks about the parrot in the middle and is told it costs \$1000 dollars because it can do everything the first parrot can do plus it knows how to use Windows.

Naturally, the increasingly startled man asks about the third parrot, only to be told that it costs \$2000 dollars. Needless to say, this begs the question, "What can it do?"

To which the owner replies, "To be honest, I have never seen it do anything, but the other two call him boss!"

## 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.

## Support services to turn to over the holiday season

If you need support during the holiday season, please reach out to one of the support services available.

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As we approach the holiday season, it's important to recognise many people in our community could be struggling.

While the Christmas and New Year periods are typically a time of joy, for some, the festive season can also bring feelings of sadness, stress, and loneliness.

Alternatively, you may want to start the New Year by planning self-care, speaking to someone about something on your mind, or getting advice about a loved one.

If you need support during this period, please reach out to one of the support services listed at: <https://mnnews.today/your-diocese/2024/59281-support-services-to-turn-to-over-the-holiday-season/>

## Bishop Michael's Christmas Message

You can watch Bishop Michael's Christmas Message at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AaFVY2pKHq4>



## Save the Dates the following Jubilee Year 2025 Diocese Events

### 2nd March 2025

Diocesan Launch—Pilgrimage, Mass and Festival—Foreshore Park to Sacred Heart Cathedral

### 8th August 2025

aMeN Camino Experience

### 25th September—11th October 2025

International Pilgrimage—Journey of St Paul and Rome

### 29th September—3rd October 2025

NATSICC Assembly—Hunter Valley

### 30th November—2nd December 2025

Australian Catholic Youth Festival—Melbourne



## Caritas Australia launches a Vanuatu earthquake appeal

At least 14 people have been killed in Vanuatu following two earthquakes in 24 hours, impacting an estimated 116,000 people.

Hundreds of people are injured or trapped following the collapse of buildings resulting from successive 7.4 and 6.1 magnitude earthquakes. As rescue efforts continue, the death toll is expected to rise. The Port Vila hospital has been overwhelmed, having also sustained damage resulting in the closure of operating theatres.

Two major water reserves that supply Port Vila have also been destroyed, with assessment into water supplies ongoing. Major damage to infrastructure has been sustained, impacting communications, airport runways, bridges including the Tagabe, Teouma and Black Sand bridges, and the main port.

As part of the Church Agencies Network Disaster Operations (CANDO) Caritas Australia will be supporting on the ground through its partners. These partners are assessing the situation, and are ready to respond to the humanitarian requirements, which are likely to include emergency shelter, food, and other essentials, as well as psychosocial support.

Sally Thomas, Humanitarian Manager at Caritas Australia said, "Vanuatu, and particularly Port Vila, has been devastated. People are now trying to recover and perform rescues with damage to infrastructure such as bridges, telecommunications, water supplies, and the local hospital."

"Many are fearing further disaster as Vanuatu is one of the most susceptible countries to natural disasters such as earthquakes, storm damage, flooding, and tsunamis. These disasters are unfortunately the most common place at this time of year, when many of us are celebrating and enjoying a break."

"As we embrace the festivities, we must remember that our brothers and sisters in Vanuatu, who need our compassion and support as they recover."

To support Caritas Australia's Vanuatu Earthquake Appeal, go to: <https://www.caritas.org.au/donate/emergency-appeals/vanuatu-earthquake/>

or call 1800 024 413 toll free.



**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	J Vipan L McRae	P Melvey S Matthew
<u>PSALMIST:</u>	5PM 9.30AM	P Melvey P Melvey	P Robertson D Joyce
<u>GIFTS</u>	5PM 9.30AM	P Robertson H White A Walker G Walker	L Hutchinson G Hutchinson K Tonkin A Dussin
<u>SERVERS</u>	5PM 9.30AM	M Melvey M Melvey	M Melvey V Paulo
<u>AV</u>	5PM 9.30AM	J France T Alexander	U France M Fowler
<u>WELCOMERS</u>	5PM 9.30AM	H White K Lendon	K Lendon M Melvey
<u>CHURCH CLEANING</u>	COOR MOR	F Dunn B Hutcheson D Whitten	A Dussin C Lawandos K Lendon

*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](mailto:childprotection@mn.catholic.org.au),*

*or visit their website for further information:*

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

**UPCOMING FEAST DAYS MEMORIALS AND SOLEMNITIES**

- 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
- SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD (S) - 1ST JAN
- 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](http://www.mn.catholic.org.au/places/live-stream)**



**SUNDAY PRAYER SERVICE**  
**Fourth Sunday of Advent Year C**  
**Sunday 22 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 mighty God and Prince of Peace: Lord, have mercy.

**All: Lord, have mercy.**

Christ Jesus, you are Son of God and son of Mary: Christ, have mercy.

**All: Christ, have mercy.**

Lord Jesus, you are word made flesh and splendour of the Father: 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.*

Heavenly Father, the world awaits the coming of the Christ-child, the hope of all ages, the promised one. Make us ready to receive him so that the light of Christ may live in our hearts and shine in the world. We ask this through Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever.

**All:**

**Amen.**

**The Liturgy of the Word**

**First Reading**

**Micah 5:1-4**

A reading from the prophet Micah

*Out of you will be born the one who is to rule over Israel.*

The Lord says this:

You, Bethlehem Ephrathah, the least of the clans of Judah, out of you will be born for me the one who is to rule over Israel; his origin goes back to the distant past, to the days of old. The Lord is therefore going to abandon them till the time when she who is to give birth gives birth. Then the remnant of his brothers will come back to the sons of Israel. He will stand and feed his flock with the power of the Lord, with the majesty of the name of his God. They will live secure, for from then on he will extend his power to the ends of the land. He himself will be peace.

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

The word of the Lord.

**All reply:**

**Thanks be to God.**

**Responsorial Psalm**

**Ps 79:2-3. 15-16. 18-19. R. v.4**

**(R.) Lord, make us turn to you;**

**let us see your face and we shall be saved.**

1. O Shepherd of Israel, hear us, shine forth from your cherubim throne. O Lord, rouse up your might, O Lord, come to our help. **(R.)**
2. God of hosts, turn again, we implore, look down from heaven and see. Visit this vine and protect it, the vine your right hand has planted. **(R.)**
3. May your hand be on the man you have chosen, the man you have given your strength. And we shall never forsake you again: give us life that we may call upon your name. **(R.)**

## Second Reading

### Hebrews 10:5-10

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews

*I am coming to do your will.*

This is what Christ said, on coming into the world:

You who wanted no sacrifice or oblation,  
prepared a body for me.

You took no pleasure in holocausts or sacrifices for sin;  
then I said,

just as I was commanded in the scroll of the book,

'God, here I am! I am coming to obey your will.'

Notice that he says first: You did not want what the Law lays down as the things to be offered, that is: the sacrifices, the oblations, the holocausts and the sacrifices for sin, and you took no pleasure in them; and then he says: Here I am! I am coming to obey your will. He is abolishing the first sort to replace it with the second. And this will was for us to be made holy by the offering of his body made once and for all by Jesus Christ.

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 1:39-45

*Why should it happen that I am honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord?*

Mary set out and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said, 'Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? For the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. Yes, blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.'

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. Why do you think Luke's gospel is the only one to deal with the Visitation and John's birth?

Q. Why is Mary regarded as a role model for humankind?

Q. How does this gospel help to focus our preparation towards Christmas?

Q. In response to this gospel, is there anyone that you should make the effort to visit?

## 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, like the Virgin Mary, let us open our hearts to the Lord in prayer.

Reader: That the Holy Church may be obedient to the Father and trust in God's promise of salvation.

In trust we pray:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That like the Virgin Mary we may have the grace of certain trust in the Lord.

In trust we pray:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That conflict and war will be silenced and people of all nations may live securely in God.

In trust we pray:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That our parish community will honour Mary as the most blessed Mother of Christ.

In trust we pray:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That all the sick who call upon your name may be given life and healing, especially for our loved ones and fellow community members.

In trust we pray:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Reader: That all those who have died may share in the eternal life fulfilled by Christ Jesus. We remember especially our loved ones and our fellow community members.

In trust we pray:

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

Leader: Lord God, your faithful handmaid and Mother of your Son is ever blessed in our midst. Hear our prayers, and help us, like Mary, to serve you with mercy, peace and justice. 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.

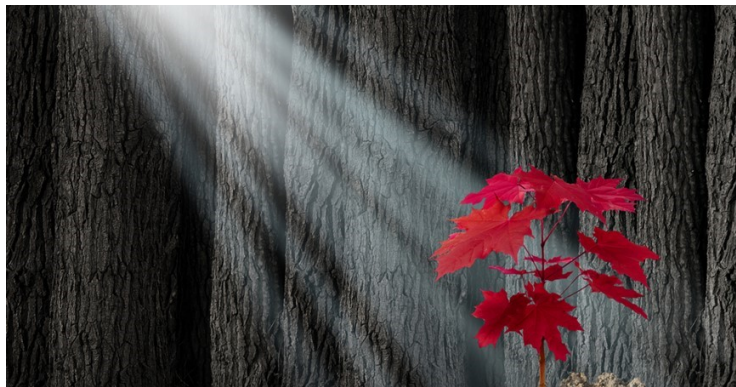
All:

Thanks be to God.

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## LITURGY MATTERS: Perseverance – the art of not giving up; of keeping hope

As we finish making our way through Advent, then into the Christmas season, and then the New Year, we often find time to reflect on the year that was. There are many aspects to the year that may come to mind when we think about areas that required perseverance. Maybe it was a new job, study, subsequent setbacks, social justice plights, relationships, health goals, illness,

or other challenges and obstacles.

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Sometimes giving up might seem the easy way forward. Our faith says otherwise. When I think about people in the gospel who persisted, I realise that their reward was healing and new life.

In John 5:5-9 we find a paralysed man at a pool in Bethesda, struggling to get to the water for a healing miracle. As the gospel reads, it was only the first person who made it to the water at a certain time who would be healed. Although the man persevered, he was never successful. Jesus saw his struggles and asked the man if he wanted to be healed. Jesus did heal him with just a word, and gave him new life.

In Luke 8:43-48 we find a woman who suffered with chronic bleeding for twelve years. Even though she persevered in getting help, no one was able to heal her, and she had exhausted her finances. Hearing about Jesus and his ability to heal she decided to push through her pain. All she needed for healing was to touch the hem of Jesus' garment. In reaching out and having faith in Jesus, she received his comfort and healing.

These two stories teach us that no matter what we are going through God knows us intimately and wants to provide comfort, healing and hope. Sometimes our hope can seem distant but by persevering in looking for ways to come through those times, and by trusting and keeping our faith in God we can be transformed and blessed.

And so, we come to Christmas. When Caesar Augustus issued a decree that there was going to be a census of the known world, people had to return to their homelands to be registered. Joseph, therefore, had to register in Bethlehem. He, and a very pregnant Mary, travelled from Nazareth to Bethlehem (around 150km on foot). I can't even begin to imagine the difficulties that Mary had to persevere through having to travel that distance. For someone so young, she had put the ultimate trust in God. Not long after they arrived in Bethlehem, it was time for Mary to give birth to Jesus (this name means Emmanuel – God is with us). Mary continues to be a wonderful role model of perseverance to Christians around the world. She did not give up even though when so many times she was challenged and suffered as the mother of Jesus. She persevered with the will of God in her life, in her support of Jesus, and ultimately at the foot of the cross.

Of Mary, Pope Benedict XVI stated:

*'...we join our voices to the many generations who praise the Virgin Mary and call her Blessed ... Her example of faithful perseverance in doing the will of God and her heavenly reward are a source of courage and hope for all of us' [1]*

Read more encouraging words of perseverance:

For prayer – Luke 18:1

For faith – Hebrews 11:13

For doing right – Galatians 6:9

For walking the path God has for our lives – Proverbs 4:25-27

For finding strength in following Christ – Isaiah 40:31

For persistent hope - Psalm 27:14

For God's salvation – Mark 13:13

[\[1\] Angelus, 15 August 2010, Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary | BENEDICT XVI](#)





### 10 Questions about Christmas Time

In our latest edition of 10 Questions, Fiona Duque explores the liturgical season of Christmas Time.

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#### What is Christmas Time?

Christmas Time is the liturgical season that begins for many people at the Vigil Mass on the 24 December, which is liturgically known as the Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord and finishing with the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. This next year, it will be Sunday 12 January. FYI: Vigil = Mass the evening before a Solemnity, and it = a celebration of great significance – more to follow in 2025.

#### What is meant to be the focus for us during Christmas Time?

This time is a very important liturgical season for the Church. Here, we find the mystery of the incarnation (the putting on of flesh), where God becomes one of us. It is a wonderful, joyous time of celebration as we reflect on the gift of salvation that Jesus' birth will ultimately give us.

#### What is involved in Christmas Time?

Christmas Time is one of the shortest liturgical seasons in the year, but it packs a punch for what it delivers. It starts with an octave (this is where a feast day gets extra time – 8 days – to be celebrated). Within the octave, the following feasts are included: Holy Family, Saints Stephen, John and the Holy Innocents. The octave (last) day is another Solemnity – Mary, the Holy Mother of God.

#### How many days does Christmas Time go for?

This is a tricky question to answer. It changes year to year depending on the Solemnity of the Epiphany (aka the arrival of the wise men that we read in Matthew 2:1). This date is always observed (celebrated) on a Sunday (its actual day is 6 January, and that could be any day of the week). So, for 23/24, it lasted 15 days and for 24/25, it will last 19 days.

#### Why is the colour white significant during Christmas Time?

Colours have always played an important part in the liturgical life of the church. Gone is the Advent purple, and white has arrived. The white signifies celebrations of the Lord (other than his passion – this is red). White reminds us of the light of Jesus coming into the world, his innocence and purity, and the joy that his birth brought to humanity.

#### What are the other important days of significance in Christmas Time?

It is much easier to list these: December 26 - St Stephen (the first martyr), 27 - St John the Evangelist, 28 – The Holy Innocents (martyrs), and the Sunday within the Octave – The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. January 1 – Mary, the Holy Mother of God.

#### What is the significance of Boxing Day?

Boxing Day isn't a significant day for the Church. The Church remembers St Stephen on this day. However, it is a day steeped in tradition. Originating in Ye Old England around the 16th century, it was a day when servants and tradespeople were

thanked with a day off and gifts. Unfortunately, it's now just about the Boxing Day sales.

#### Why do we have Christmas Trees?

Who doesn't love a bit of greenery? Now, we are thanking the Germans. Originating in the late Middle Ages through a play about Adam and Eve (it's a long story), Germans used a cutting from a fir tree as they are evergreen in winter. They decorated them on the 24 December, often with apples. Through immigration, the Germans took it to the rest of the world and the decorations just snowballed.

#### Why do we celebrate Christmas on the 25 December?

This date was established by the Church around the fourth century. There are many different perspectives and explanations about why this date. This is what we do know: It was the winter solstice for the Roman Empire, it was a time of pagan celebrations but was eventually enculturated into the Gospel story when Pope Julius I, who was the Pope at the time, formalised it.

#### I am not Catholic; how can I get involved?

You don't have to be Catholic to get involved. It is a time for families to come together to celebrate the gift and love that family members are to each other and to neighbours. Maybe it is time to return to Mass and be reminded about the message of the birth of Jesus. What about rethinking St Stephen's Feast Day (Boxing Day) and thinking about what you can give to others who need it most?

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#### 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.



*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