

Welcome to the community of the Catholic Parish of St John 23rd Glenwood-Stanhope Gardens where the love of Christ is shining in so many ways.

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY**

In the spirit of reconciliation, we acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands in which the Catholic Parish of St John XXIII and the Diocese of Parramatta sits, the land of the Darug and Gundungurra people. We would like to pay our respects to the Aboriginal Elders past, present and future for they hold the traditions, memories and wisdom of Mother Earth on which we place our feet upon today.

**Gospel Reflection**

Today we read from John's Gospel again before switching to Luke for the third year of our Lectionary cycle (C). This pericope (John 18:33-37) was the one chosen when this feast was instituted soon after World War I because it highlights Christ as King, but of a kingdom different from those of this world; the eucharology too emphasises him as above them, but not in a worldly way. The feast does not suggest that the Church in its earthly institutions has superiority over secular rule and dominions, but that Christ himself does, and to him all are ultimately responsible. This excerpt also forms part of the long Passion reading on Good Friday; that day therefore provides the broader context, for we know that Christ's coronation and his enthronement (both on the cross and at the Father's right hand) are of a different order from those of rulers in the world. The first reading (Dan 7:13-14) is also encountered every year as part of the first reading on the feast of the Transfiguration. The second reading (Rev 1:5-8) too reoccurs each year, in the Chrism Mass, where the opening "Grace and peace from" originating from verse 4 is employed, while today the verb "is" is inserted instead. The themes then of Christ crucified, Christ transfigured, and Christ who sanctifies and heals all converge in a sense in this feast, but they are overlaid by the image of him as Judge.

Since readings are chosen specifically for feasts there is greater correspondence than usual between the second reading and the others. The first two share a reference to the apocalyptic image of one "coming on the clouds", and both share, at least in the Greek, a reference to "all tribes", which in our translation appears as "all peoples, nations" and "all the races". And in the way that only John masters, the second reading and Gospel both contain threads linking them to

other passages. From the second reading we have references back to the crucifixion in "everyone will see him" (since he was lifted up for all to see) who was "pierced" (a feature peculiar to John), and who "washed away our sins with his blood". The end of the Gospel passage draws together key Johannine themes, of Christ coming "into the world" and "the truth" which were first uttered in 1:9-14, while "listen to my voice" (literally, "each... hears my voice") draws from the Good Shepherd discourse and its follow-on (10:16, 27), which employ the ancient Hebrew description of kings as shepherds of their people. The verse in the Gospel acclamation also takes us back to Mark's version of the triumphant entrance into Jerusalem, although here Mark 10:10 is in an amended form that speaks of one "who inherits the kingdom of our father David" rather than of "our father David's kingdom that comes".

This King, unlike those of this world or the corruptible leaders in any realm, cares for all people, and he laid down his life for them; he does not merely rule from on high, but, emptying himself, he entered our struggle, and sharing our pain he knows how to judge both wisely and mercifully in order to heal and save—or in other words, to serve. There was a tendency in the past in Australia to treat this feast as a triumphalist manifestation, but that approach reflects less this theme of service and more the marked tribalism that had grown in antipathy to Protestantism. That is at odds with its origin in a Europe reviving from the ruination inflicted by warring worldly powers; the King it honours came in humility and to serve. This needs to be kept in balance with his role as Judge, to whom all will ultimately be answerable.

**Our Parish Mission**

*The Parish of St John XXIII is a faith community with the Eucharist as its heart. Inspired by John XXIII's prophetic opening of the windows of the Church, we welcome the fresh air of the Holy Spirit, inviting every person to share in the responsibility of enriching the life and faith of our community by sharing their gifts and talents."*

**Mass Times**

- Mon** 8:30am
- Tues-Fri** 9:15am
- Sat** 9.00am, 6pm Vigil
- Sun** 7:30am 9am, 10:30am 6pm
- Holy Cross Primary School**
- Wed** 9:15am during school days
- 2nd Sat** 7:30pm Indonesian Mass

**Masses of Devotion**

- 1st Tues** 7.30pm Novena Mass  
*Our Lady of Perpetual Help*
- 1st Fri** 7:30pm Novena Mass  
*Sacred Heart of Jesus*

**Exposition + Benediction**

- 1st Fri** after 9.15am, 7.30pm

**Reconciliation**

- After the weekday masses**
- Sat** after the 9am mass until 10.30am  
5:15 - 5:45pm before the  
*Vigil Mass or upon request*

**Sacraments**

- Sun** 12pm Baptism by appointment

**Prayers**

- Mon** 7.30pm Christian Meditation  
*Frances Pegram 0417 406715*
- Tue** 7:00pm Rosary and novena prayers  
*(Church Tabernacle)*
- Fri** 6.30pm Christ Catholic Community Prayer Group  
*Pauline Camilleri 0407 417039*

**Praise & Worship**

- Fri** 7:30pm Risen Lord Comm

**Special Blessings**

- Blessing during masses**
- 1st Sun** Birthday celebrants
- 3rd Sun** Wedding anniversaries

For further updates on parish activities

<http://john23rd.com/>  
<https://www.facebook.com/john23rdparish>

If you want to be part of our mailing list please email

✉ [Communications@john23rd.org.au](mailto:Communications@john23rd.org.au)

## CONTACTS

### PARISH OFFICE

#### Office Hours

Tue - Fri 8.30 - 4.00pm

#### Office Contacts

☎ (02) 8883 5981

(AH Emergency)

📞 0423 160567

160 Perfection Avenue,  
Stanhope Gardens NSW 2768

### MAILING

PO Box 23, Stanhope Gardens,  
NSW 2768

### CLERGY

#### Parish Priest:

Fr Jolly Chacko

✉ [jolly@john23rd.org.au](mailto:jolly@john23rd.org.au)

📞 0417 541 637 (emergency only)

#### Deacon:

Menard Gaspi

✉ [menard.gaspi@parracatholic.org](mailto:menard.gaspi@parracatholic.org)

### STAFF

#### Secretary:

Tanya Gatt

✉ [secretary@john23rd.org.au](mailto:secretary@john23rd.org.au)

#### Finance:

Renuka Soosaipillai

✉ [accounts@john23rd.org.au](mailto:accounts@john23rd.org.au)

#### Sacramental Coordinator:

Helen Zammit

✉ [sacramental@john23rd.org.au](mailto:sacramental@john23rd.org.au)

### OTHER CONTACTS

#### Parish Council:

John McCabe

✉ [johnmccabe5@gmail.com](mailto:johnmccabe5@gmail.com)

#### Maintenance issues:

David Gorkic

✉ [maintenance@john23rd.org.au](mailto:maintenance@john23rd.org.au)

#### Columbarium queries:

✉ [columbarium@john23rd.org.au](mailto:columbarium@john23rd.org.au)

### Never miss our Bulletin

If you would like to be included in  
our mailing list

✉ [communications@john23rd.org.au](mailto:communications@john23rd.org.au)

### NEW TO OUR PARISH?

#### Welcome to our parish community!

Please take a welcome pack from  
the church foyer

Visit our website

<http://john23rd.com/>

Like our Facebook page

[www.facebook.com/john23rdparish](http://www.facebook.com/john23rdparish)

### COELIACS

Those who are gluten intolerant  
may receive communion with a  
gluten low host. Please inform the  
acolyte before Mass.

### HOMEBOUND

Homebound and would like to  
receive Holy Communion please  
contact the parish office or send  
text message to Rose Franco on  
0401 387427



Office for Safeguarding  
Parramatta Way is to:

◆ Act with Justice, and state that  
we have a zero tolerance for any  
form of abuse or harm to  
children or any person

◆ Act with justice and ensure that  
laws and obligations are upheld,  
and safety is paramount  
<https://safeguarding.org.au/>

## Praying together

### Our Lady of Perpetual Help Prayer

O Mother of Perpetual Help, grant that I may ever invoke thy most powerful name, which is the safeguard of the living and the salvation of the dying. O Purest Mary, O Sweetest Mary, let thy name henceforth be ever on my lips. Delay not, O Blessed Lady, to help me whenever I call on thee, for, in all my needs, in all my temptations I shall never cease to call on thee, ever repeating thy sacred name, Mary, Mary.

O what consolation, what sweetness, what confidence, what emotion fill my soul when I pronounce thy sacred name, or even only think of thee. I thank God for having given thee, for my good, so sweet, so powerful, so lovely a name. But I will not be content with merely pronouncing thy name: let my love for thee prompt me ever to hail thee, Mother of Perpetual Help. (Then say three Hail Marys).

Rosary and novena prayers every Tuesday at 7:00pm and Novena mass every First Tuesday 7:30pm

For the opportunity of having the statue of Our Lady visit your home, please contact either

Techie Sarlabus [techie.sarlabus@gmail.com](mailto:techie.sarlabus@gmail.com) or Melva Paguinto [emcipi85@yahoo.com.au](mailto:emcipi85@yahoo.com.au).

Families on the roster, if unable to pick up please don't hesitate to contact Techie or Melva.

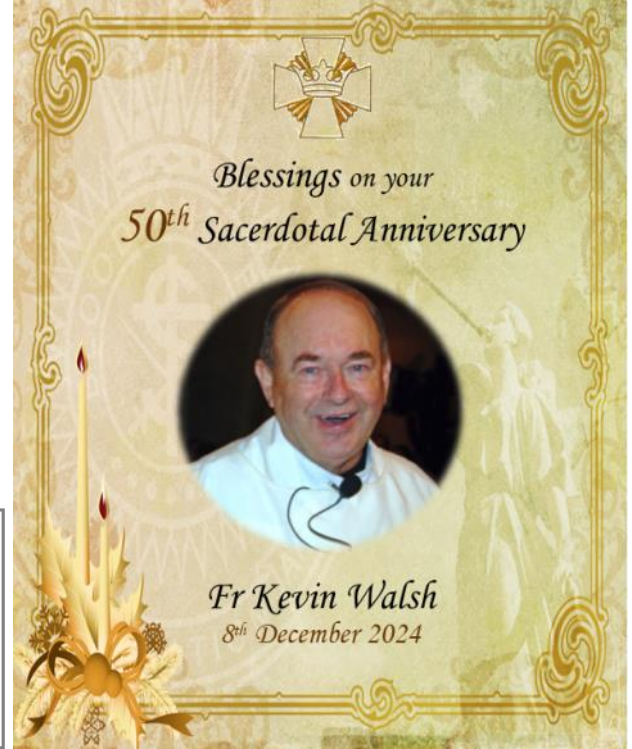
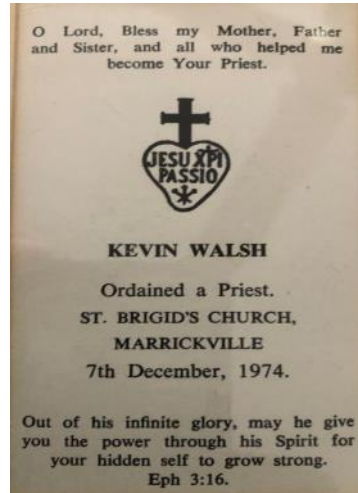
If you would like to invite Fr Jolly to join you in prayers at home, please organise with the parish office.



### Rosary Statue Family Roster

|     | 5         | 12        | 19        | 26        |           |
|-----|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Nov | Hala      | Barnouti  | Gan       | Jacob     |           |
| Dec | Paguinto  | Lee       | Sebastian | Sebastian | Sebastian |
| Jan | Gan       | Ruggiero  | Barnouti  | Tangunan  |           |
| Feb | Available | Available | Available | Ruggiero  |           |
| Mar | Paguinto  | Available | Available | Available |           |

"A family that prays together, stays together - Fr Patrick Peyton"



PRAYING in the *SILENCE* of the HEART  
with Brother Roger of Taizé  
Holy Spirit, consoling Spirit,  
when we remain in your presence, silent, at  
peace, You understand everything about us,  
and at times even a simple sigh can be  
prayer.

## Paying our debt together

We are very grateful to all our parishioners who always generously support our Parish.

FIRST COLLECTION supports the priests and deacons of the Diocese.

SECOND COLLECTION goes to the running costs of our church, ministry expenses and specially to pay off our church mortgage.

To help with the planning/budgeting of church expenses, we have a Planned Giving Program. We encourage parishioners to register for direct debit or credit card deductions as alternative to an envelope system. Support can be provided via the registration forms are available at the church foyer or from the website or scan the QR Code.

scan this



TapnGo machines available by the entrances.

## OUR PARISH SCHOOLS

**Catholic Early Learning Centre**  
160 Perfection Ave Stanhope Gardens  
☎ (02) 9852 0585  
✉ [celstanhope@parra.catholic.edu.au](mailto:celstanhope@parra.catholic.edu.au)  
🌐 [www.celstanhope.catholic.edu.au](http://www.celstanhope.catholic.edu.au)

**Holy Cross Primary**  
49 Meurants Lane, Glenwood  
Principal: Louise O'Donnell  
☎ (02) 8664 7100  
✉ [holycross@parra.catholic.edu.au](mailto:holycross@parra.catholic.edu.au)  
🌐 [www.hglenwood.catholic.edu.au](http://www.hglenwood.catholic.edu.au)

**St John XXIII Catholic College**  
160 Perfection Ave Stanhope Gardens  
Principal: Frank Chiment  
☎ (02) 9852 0500  
✉ [stmarks@parra.catholic.edu.au](mailto:stmarks@parra.catholic.edu.au)  
🌐 [www.stjohn23stanhope.catholic.edu.au](http://www.stjohn23stanhope.catholic.edu.au)

### Entrance Antiphon

How worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and divinity, and wisdom and strength and honour. To him belong glory and power for ever and ever.

### First Reading

*Daniel 7:13-14*

*His sovereignty is eternal.*

I gazed into the visions of the night. And I saw, coming on the clouds of heaven, one like a son of man. He came to the one of great age and was led into his presence. On him was conferred sovereignty, glory and kingship, and men of all peoples, nations and languages became his servants. His sovereignty is an eternal sovereignty which shall never pass away, nor will his empire be destroyed.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

### Responsorial Psalm

*Ps 92:1-2, 5*

**R. The Lord is king; he is robed in majesty.**

The Lord is king, with majesty enrobed; the Lord has robed himself with might, he has girded himself with power. **R.**

The world you made firm, not to be moved; your throne has stood firm from of old. From all eternity, O Lord, you are. **R.**

Truly your decrees are to be trusted. Holiness is fitting to your house, O Lord, until the end of time. **R.**

### Second Reading

*Revelation 1:5-8*

*The ruler of the kings of the earth ... made us a line of kings, priests to serve his God.*

Jesus Christ is the faithful witness, the First-born from the dead, the Ruler of the kings of the earth. He loves us and has washed away our sins with his blood, and made us a line of kings, priests to serve his God and Father; to him, then, be glory and power for ever and ever. Amen. It is he who is coming on the clouds; everyone will see him, even those who pierced him, and all the races of the earth will mourn over him. This is the truth. Amen. 'I am the Alpha and the Omega' says the Lord God, who is, who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God

### Gospel Acclamation

*Mark 11:9, 10*

Alleluia, alleluia!

Blessed is he who inherits the kingdom of David our Father; blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Alleluia!

### Gospel

*John 18:33-37*

*You say that I am a king.*

'Are you the king of the Jews?' Pilate asked. Jesus replied, 'Do you ask this of your own accord, or have others spoken to you about me?' Pilate answered, 'Am I a Jew? It is your own people and the chief priests who have handed you over to me: what have you done?' Jesus replied, 'Mine is not a kingdom of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, my men would have fought to prevent my being surrendered to the Jews. But my kingdom is not of this kind.' 'So you are a king then?' said Pilate. 'It is you who say it' answered Jesus. 'Yes, I am a king. I was born for this, I came into the world for this: to bear witness to the truth; and all who are on the side of truth listen to my voice.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

### Communion Antiphon

The Lord sits as King for ever. The Lord will bless his people with peace.



St. John XXIII Catholic Parish presents

## CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT 2024

Join us with family and friends for a heartwarming night of music, joy and community spirit as we celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Date:** 14<sup>th</sup> December (Saturday)      **Carols singing.....Christmas delicacies.....**

**Time:** 7:00pm onwards      **Fun and games.....Great prizes.....**

**Venue:** St. John XXIII School Hub (outdoor area)      **Santa Claus is coming to town!**

**Look forward to seeing you there!!!**

**Pastoral Ministries**

*The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others. Mahatma Gandhi*  
**We are in urgent need for volunteers to assist in the different pastoral ministries in our Parish.**



**WE NEED YOU**

⇒ **SRE Teachers**

If you could spare an hour during weekdays to spread God's word teaching the scriptures to children, **WE NEED YOU**. We currently have 4 public primary schools and a high school in our parish where we hold scripture classes during school hours for 30 minutes during Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. For more information please call Asoki 0430 020265 or Renuka 0414 795814. Training and resources will be provided.

⇒ **GARDENERS AND CLEANERS**

Now that the church is open for celebrations, its floors need to be swept of dust, cobwebs brushed off, candle stands cleaned and garden kept green. We would like to request all our volunteer cleaners and gardeners to come back and continue their ministry. For more information contact [maintenance@john23rd.org.au](mailto:maintenance@john23rd.org.au) or the parish office.

⇒ **Grief and Bereavement Support Ministry. (Shalom)**

Last year, we started a special ministry called grief and bereavement support ministry which was a initiative from Salomie Joseph, a grief counsellor, who had faced her own grief of losing her only sibling through cancer.

In this regard the parish wishes to continue this ministry and we are looking for members to be part of this ministry. A training course will be provided.

Those who wish to be part of this great counselling and comforting ministry, a sign up sheet is made available at both entrances of the church. Or please be in touch with the parish office or Father Jolly.



- |               |                  |
|---------------|------------------|
| John McCabe   | Mei Velasco      |
| Karen Green   | Ajith Lobo       |
| Julian Martin | Helen Festejo    |
| Suni Fernando | Rebecca Reynolds |

**Special Intentions**

**Born to eternal life:**

*Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen*

Neville Binny, Kata Nugic Emilita Perez, Zenaida Bron-ladaban,

**Remembrances:**

**Anniversary:**

Josephine Apap, Leonila Perez Catabas

**Sick: Names published with permission.**

*Lord Jesus, heal me. Heal in me whatever You see needs healing. Heal me of whatever might separate me from You. Heal my memory, heal my heart, heal my emotions, heal my spirit, heal my body, heal my soul. Lay Your hands now gently upon me and heal me through Your love for me. Amen.*

Brian McCunnie, Geoff Roney, Emma Matoza, Dr Bronwyn Andrews, Rosanna John Pellissery, Carlo Bueno, Maria Romeo, Christina Properzi, Froilan De Jesus, Cindy Dadvivas, Jerry Bondoc, Lino Matteazi, Margaret Harrison, John Tipton, Manuel Sarris, Ksenija Bosnic, John Todhunter, Elizabeth Langley, Peter Dawson, Lucas Colleta Dudley Francis, Cathie Christie, Marilyn Nalapo Isagani Ocampo, Louise Smith, Charlie Busuttil, Carrie Conolly, Troy James, Geoffrey Robinson Joshua McCarroll, Adrian Von Hart, Bev Lewis, Virginia Santos, LB Corpus, Raymond Lanzona Jonathan Gemin, Victor Pons, Perla Magculang, Peter McArdle, Hilary Regan, Florentina Elisura Jakob&Marija Franich, Jovita Castillo, Zoey Illic Jerwin McCarron, Valeria Laureta, Bev Osborn Obet Dionisio, Myrna Manalili, Natasha Leitao, Jude Newnes, Elsie Knapp, Barbara Thompson Helen West, Mary Phillips, Lenka Olivier Talija, Emma Q Fernando, Elizabeth Candame, Virginia Villanueva, Ben & Etta Benesa, Brendan Prideaux, Tricia Batongbacal

**Thanksgiving:**

Vijai Poiya, Fr Menard Gaspi

*If you or a family member is homebound and would want to receive communion in your home please contact the parish office.*

**ALPHA PROGRAM**

*I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them. ... The Lord does not disappoint those who take this risk; whenever we take a step towards Jesus, we come to realise that he is already there, waiting for us with open arms.' Pope Francis - Evangelii Gaudium #3*



Register now - <https://tiny.cc/AlphaStJohnXXIII> Feel free to call Mei 0410 040 434 or email [mei.donnie.velasco@gmail.com](mailto:mei.donnie.velasco@gmail.com) for any queries.



**FLOWERS FOR THE CHURCH**

If you wish to donate flowers for the altar, please contact James David on 0413 787596

**Carpentry anyone?**

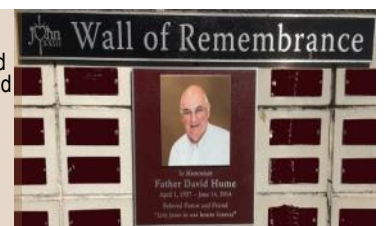
Deacon Menard is looking for any carpenters in the parish. He has a little project for the Schools that requires some woodwork. Please see Deacon any time for more information. Thank you!



**COLUMBARIUM**

For our parishioners who are planning to buy a Niche, do so without delay, because we always want to prioritise members of our parish who wish to buy the Niches. For further information please contact the Parish Office.

**MEMORIAL WALL**  
 The wall in front of the church is devoted to the memory of our deceased family and friends, especially if they are buried overseas.  
 For any enquiries please email [columbarium@john23rd.org.au](mailto:columbarium@john23rd.org.au)  
 The plaques cost \$600.00



Join and be part of the **Cake Angels**  
 contact Madeline Huang [cakeangels-tp-hm23@gmail.com](mailto:cakeangels-tp-hm23@gmail.com)

**PRaise AND WORSHIP**  
 3rd Saturdays at 7:30pm  
**SJ23rd Prayer Group**

**Young at Hearts**  
 Seniors Group contacts  
[theyoungatheart@john23rd.org.au](mailto:theyoungatheart@john23rd.org.au)

**Vinnies**  
 join the good works  
 Message Rose Franco 0401 387427

## Community Events



Building our Community  
TOGETHER

As a community of St John 23rd, we invite our different cultural community to host a Saturday Vigil or Sunday mornings mini event after our mass celebrations for a full community involvement and encourage our parish community to support these mini endeavour.

Any other suggestions for church fanfare, fundraising activities or just availability of support are most welcome and greatly appreciated. Please contact either Nanette - 0404 465600 or Techie - 0438 201436.

**UPCOMING EVENT/S | Save the dates in your diary**

# Plant Sale!

1ST DEC, SUN

After 7:30, 9:00 & 10:30 am Masses

All proceeds go to SJ23

Plant donations are welcome. Please contact Grace Agbulos @0416 014 450

## November Calendar

|       |    |  |
|-------|----|--|
| Mon   | 25 | 8:30am - Mass  |
| Tues  | 26 | 9:15am - Mass<br>7:00pm - Rosary & Novena prayer<br>Our Lady of Perpetual Help |
| Wed   | 27 | 9:15am - Mass  |
| Thurs | 28 | 9:15am - Mass  |
| Fri   | 29 | 9:15am - Mass  |
| Sat   | 30 | <i>Saint Andrew (F)</i><br>9:00am - Mass<br>6:00pm - Mass                      |

## December

|     |   |   |
|-----|---|---|
| Sun | 1 | 7:30, 9:00, 10:30am - Mass<br><i>Plant Sale after the morning masses</i><br>6:00pm - Mass |
|-----|---|---|

## Save the dates

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| 23 Nov<br>6:00pm Mass      | Fr Menard Gaspi's<br>1st Thanksgiving mass<br>SJ23rd |
| 8 Dec<br>10:30am Mass      | Fr Kevin Walsh<br>50th Sacerdotal celebration        |
| 14 Dec<br>7:00pm Mass      | Carols by Candlelight                                |
| 16 - 24 Dec<br>6:00am Mass | Mass of the Rooster                                  |

*Please bring a plate to share or contact Nanette, Techie or the parish office for any assistance/ contribution you might want to provide.*



## DIOCESE of PARRAMATTA

St. John XXIII Parish community  
are warmly invited to the

**Golden Jubilee  
celebration of  
Priesthood**  
of  
**Fr Kevin Walsh**



**Sunday, December 8, 2024 at 10.30am**  
St. John XXIII Parish Church  
Glenwood/Stanhope Gardens  
60 Perfection Ave Stanhope Gardens

Principal Celebrant  
**Most Rev Vincent Long O'FM Conv**  
Parish Priest  
**Fr Jolly Chacks**

Concelebrating Priests from the Diocese of Parramatta and The Passionist Congregation.

Celebration will be followed by a light Morning Tea.

## Nativity Play: The Greatest Story Ever Told

Christmas Season is upon us once more. The Nativity Story has always been a huge part of our parish Family Mass on Christmas Eve 6:00PM mass.

We would like to invite children from ages 4-12 to participate in this year's Nativity Play. While we need older children to play the core characters like Mary and Joseph, The Three Wise Men, etc, we would also need little children to be the host of angels and a group of shepherd boys and girls to herd their sheep to the birthplace of Jesus. Let our children bring the story come to life!

Casting and rehearsals will be on Sunday, 15 December at 3PM at the church and the second rehearsal will be on Sunday 23 December at 3PM.

If you would like your children to participate, please text Helen Festejo on 0401 671 665 or email [helen.festejo@gmail.com](mailto:helen.festejo@gmail.com).

We would also like to invite helping hands to assist with costumes, props, stage preparation etc to bring this story to life. If interested, please also let Helen F. know.

**8 practical ways to get ready for Advent**

The word Advent comes from the Latin *adventus*, which means a coming, approach, or arrival. In the Church, it refers to the period encompassing the four Sundays prior to Christmas. It is a time of penance, of turning away from sin and hopeful, joyous preparation for the coming of the Savior.

This is what makes Advent special for Christians: the recognition that Christmas is not just “the birthday of Jesus,” but a celebration of his coming into our world today, here and now. How does he come into the world today? Jesus is “born”—becomes physically tangible—through the celebration of the sacraments. It is by eating the Eucharist, washing in the waters of Baptism, being anointed with the oil of Confirmation and so on, that Jesus’ friends become part of the living Body of Christ (the Church) in the world today. For Catholics, then, every celebration of the Eucharist and the other sacraments is like a little Christmas.

During Advent, Christians prepare for this here-and-now coming of Christ by remembering the long years during which Israel waited for the coming of the Messiah, and by looking forward to the final coming of Christ at the end of time. You will hear both themes reflected in the Church’s readings during Advent.

Here are some practical ways that you can prepare to fully celebrate Advent with your kids. Remember, you don’t have to do it all—just choose a few practices to focus on, and see whether they work for your family.

**1. Get or make an Advent wreath** - The Advent wreath is one of the most familiar and beloved symbols of Advent. Children love lighting the candles, one each week, as a way of counting down the time until Christmas. Darkening the room and praying by candlelight is also a good way to signal to children that we are entering a very special time,

Advent wreaths usually consist of four candles, three violet and one rose, set in a circular wreath (usually made of evergreen branches). One candle is lit for each Sunday of Advent, with the rose candle being lit on the third Sunday (Gaudete Sunday, from the Latin word for “rejoice”). The violet (or purple) candles represent the penance and sacrifice we undertake to help us prepare for the Lord’s coming at Christmas; the rose candle represents the rejoicing of the faithful at the mid-point of Advent. You can purchase Advent wreaths inexpensively; on the other hand, you might find it more fun to make your own.

**2. Bless your Advent wreath** - On the first Sunday of Advent, be sure to bless your Advent wreath.

**3. Set up a nativity scene** - St. Francis had the brilliant idea to create a scene depicting the nativity of Jesus as a way of teaching the people about the meaning of the Incarnation. Displaying a nativity scene (or manger set) in your home during Advent is a great way to remind everyone (not just little kids) about the true meaning of Christmas: the Creator of the universe entering into creation in order to save it. Here are a few ideas for ways to use your nativity scene:

Setting up the manger is a great activity for the Friday or Saturday after Thanksgiving. When you set it up, don’t put out the baby Jesus; save that until Christmas Eve (or morning).

Some families like to have the baby Jesus appear in the manger overnight on Christmas Eve. That way, everyone can stop by the manger to greet the baby Jesus before opening presents.

You can also wait to put out the wise men. When you do put them out (perhaps on Gaudete Sunday, the third Sunday of Advent), consider placing them someplace far away from the manger, moving them a little bit closer every day until they “arrive” on the Feast of the Epiphany.

Another custom is to cut up small snips of paper to be “hay” for the baby Jesus; place the hay in a little bowl or cup near the manger. Every time your younger children do a good deed, they can place a piece of the hay in the baby Jesus’ bed to get it ready for his arrival.

Use the manger set to tell the Christmas story to little children as the story unfolds in the Sunday and weekday readings throughout

Advent. For example, hold the Mary and angel figure as you paraphrase the reading about the Annunciation.

Manger sets can be pricey—and fragile. Consider buying a nativity set second-hand, or make your own. Here’s a video about how to make a peg-doll nativity set:

**4. Bless your nativity scene** - Once you’ve set up your nativity set, bless it during your family prayer time using the Blessing of a Christmas Manger or Nativity Scene.

**5. Have an Advent Tree** - Do you set up your Christmas tree the weekend after Thanksgiving, then take it down on New Year’s Day? This year, try waiting to fully decorate your tree until Christmas Eve. Instead, let your bare tree be an “Advent Tree,” a symbol of our waiting for the coming of Christ.

This doesn’t mean that you have to leave the tree completely bare. You can put on a single string of lights during the first week of Advent, then add another string of lights every Sunday until Christmas. Some families also add one decoration per day during Advent. Other families hang Jesse Tree ornaments on their Advent Tree (see below).

If you go this route, you may also want to keep your Christmas tree up for the whole Christmas season, which ends at the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord (the weekend after Epiphany, in mid-January).

**6. Make a Jesse tree** - Another Christmas-tree alternative during Advent is to make a Jesse tree, which is a tree decorated with ornaments based on symbols of Old Testament events preparing for the coming of Christ. It might include an ark or rainbow to depict Noah and the flood, for instance, and a ladder to represent Jacob’s ladder.

**7. Keep an Advent calendar** - An Advent calendar, as the name implies, marks off the days of Advent. Some elaborate Advent calendars have a door to be opened for each day, with candy or a prize behind each door. You can purchase these at your local retailer or online.

If you want to observe the spirit of Advent, though, look for a more spiritually focused Advent calendar.

Another simple way to do an Advent calendar that builds on your Advent Tree is to make a decorative paper chain: every day, your kids can add a single link to the chain. You can have them decorate the link with a Jesse Tree symbol, or write a phrase from the day’s Scripture readings on it...the possibilities are endless.

**8. Look ahead to the feasts and celebrations of Advent** - There are quite a few important (and fun) feasts and celebrations during the Advent season. Look ahead to see what’s coming up so you can plan small celebrations throughout the season. Here’s what’s coming up:

***December 3 | Feast of St. Francis Xavier***

Francis Xavier was one of the founding members of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), and led an extensive mission to proclaim Christianity throughout Asia.

***December 6 | Feast of St. Nicholas***

Saint Nicholas, a bishop who lived during the third century, is the original “Santa Claus.” On the feast of St. Nicholas, children leave their shoes by the door for St. Nicholas to fill with candy (often foil-wrapped chocolate coins). This tradition recalls the story of how St. Nicholas secretly provided the dowry for young maidens so they could get married. This feast day is also a good opportunity to tell kids the true story of “Santa Claus.” Find out five ways to celebrate the feast with your kids.

***December 8 | Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception***

The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, a holy day of obligation in the United States, commemorates the immaculate (“stainless”) conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is not about Mary’s conception of Jesus. Find out how to explain the Immaculate Conception to your kids.

***December 9 | Feast of St. Juan Diego***

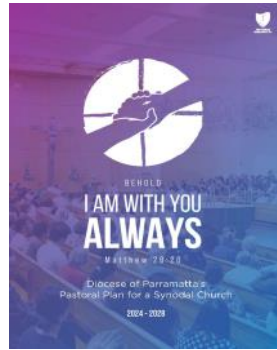
St. Juan Diego is the peasant to whom the Virgin Mary appeared as Our Lady of Guadalupe.



For more events please go to <https://parracatholic.org/connect/events/> or <https://catholicoutlook.org/>

**From the Pastoral Plan 2024-2028: ‘Behold, I Am With You Always’**

“The People of God have shared their hopes, fears, dreams and anxieties. These have now gained shape and form this Pastoral Plan. Our pastoral plan invites every person to become co-creators in the building up of the Kingdom of God. We take heart, trusting in God who loves us unconditionally and without limits, allowing the words of Jesus to echo in our hearts ‘Behold, I am with you always’ – Matthew 28:20.” (Pg. 7, Diocesan Pastoral Plan).



Download your copy of the Plan at [www.parracatholic.org/synodality](http://www.parracatholic.org/synodality).

Please support our Parramatta Catholic Foundation’s Bishop’s Christmas Appeal 30<sup>th</sup> November/1<sup>st</sup> December weekend.

**26 November ADVENT SCRIPTURE REFLECTION NIGHT**

In what particular way am I ‘awaiting’ God’s presence this Advent? How do I see myself in Advent Scripture stories this year?

CLICK HERE to register for the Diocesan Advent Scripture Reflection Evening with Dr Michele Connolly rsj, a Biblical Scholar and lecturer at the Catholic Institute of Sydney, on Tuesday 26 November 2024 from 6:30PM to 8:30pm.



**Homeless young mothers and their children desperately need your help this Christmas**



**Bishop’s Christmas Appeal**

Your kind-hearted gift and prayers will provide practical and emotional support, and a safe haven to call home.

[parracatholic.org/appeal](http://parracatholic.org/appeal)

**December 12 | Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe**

On the morning of December 9, 1531, the Virgin Mary appeared to a Mexican peasant named Juan Diego at a place called the Hill of Tepeyac (now part of Mexico City). Speaking to him in his native Nahuatl language, Mary identified herself as the “mother of the very true deity” and asked for a church to be built at that site in her honor. Juan Diego finally convinced skeptical Church authorities of the truth of the message by producing an armful of out-of-season roses from the folds of his tilma (a simple outer garment); an image of the Virgin Mary as a young, pregnant native woman miraculously appeared on the tilma as well. The image has been preserved to this day, and draws millions of pilgrims every year. Find out how to celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe with your kids.

**December 13 | Feast of St. Lucy**

Lucia of Syracuse (283–304) was a young Christian martyr. Later accounts of her martyrdom included a story about her eyes getting gouged out; that, along with the date of her feast, led to the celebration of her feast as a festival of light, especially in Scandinavian cultures. There, a young girl dressed in a white dress and a red sash (as the symbol of martyrdom) carries palms and wears a crown or wreath of candles on her head. It is said that to vividly celebrate St. Lucy’s Day will help you survive the long, dark winter days.

**December 14 | Feast of St. John of the Cross**

John of the Cross, together with St. Teresa of Avila, reformed the Carmelite order in the sixteenth century. He is also well-known for his spiritual writings, which had an enormous impact on the development of the Catholic contemplative tradition.

**December 16 | Las Posadas**

Las Posadas is a nine-day celebration that had its origins in Spain, but is now widely practiced in Latin America. Posadas means “lodging”; the celebration is chiefly a re-enactment of Mary and Joseph’s search for lodging in Bethlehem, and underlines the Christian importance of offering hospitality.

You can find out more about Las Posadas at Wikipedia.

**December 16 | Christmas Novena**

Pray a special Christmas Novena beginning nine days before Christmas.

**December 17 | O Antiphons**

The O Antiphons are sung or recited during the last seven days of Advent (from December 17 through December 23) as part of the Liturgy of Hours. Each hymn begins with the interjection “O” followed by a title for Christ, e.g., O Wisdom, O Lord, O Root of Jesse, O Key of David, O Dayspring, O King of Nations, O God-with-Us. You can find the O Antiphons online.

<https://www.teachingcatholickids.com/8-practical-ways-to-get-ready-for-advent/>

**YOUTH**



**BLAZE YOUTH**  
**WHO:** Year 7 to Year 12  
**WHEN:** 7:00 - 9:00pm  
**WHERE:** St John XXIII College (C Block Bell space)



Please use the QR code to register. For any queries please email on [blaze@john23rd.org.au](mailto:blaze@john23rd.org.au) or DM @blazeyouthsj23



**IGNITE YOUNG ADULTS**  
**WHO:** 18 - 35 years of age  
**WHEN:** First Sundays of the month  
**TIME:** 7:00 - 9:30pm  
**WHERE:** St John XXIII College Staffroom



Please use the QR Code to register for our sessions. For any queries please either email [ignite.stjohn23@gmail.com](mailto:ignite.stjohn23@gmail.com) or DM on @ignite\_sj23

| Youth Coordinators  | Youth Leaders  |
|---|--|
| Amanda Lee<br>0413 545 318<br>Caitlin Green<br>0425 579 594 | Taylor Coutinho<br>Natasja Surjanto<br>Brendan Weber<br>Anna Todhunter<br>Earl Carvalho<br>Charlotte Todhunter<br>Johnathan Soosaipillai |

| MORE YOUTH GROUPS   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>CRL</b> (Community of the Risen Lord)                                | Rojith de Silva 0405 9563210<br>Nimeshi Fernando 0417 101009 |
| <b>YFC</b> (Australia) (Youth for Christ)<br><b>YFC</b> (International) | Jonathan Montaos 0401 478733<br>Vince Erasmo 0406 253698     |



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