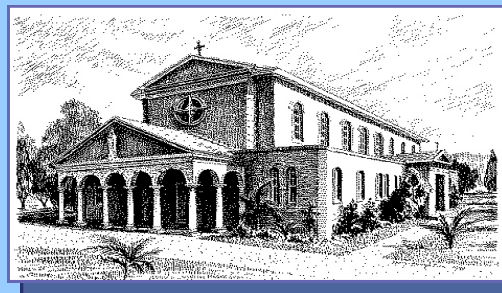


Parish and Shrine of the Immaculate Conception Unanderra

48 Princes Highway Post Office Box 14 Unanderra NSW 2526

<i>Parish Priest</i>	Fr Graham Schmitzer
<i>Polish Chaplain</i>	Fr Tomasz Nowak Mobile: 0437 677 727 Email: tomasz.n04@gmail.com
<i>Parish Assistant & Catechist Co-ordinator</i>	Sister Joan Goodwin Ph: 4272 9980 Email: joan.goodwin@sosj.org.au
<i>Parish School</i>	Saint Pius X School Hargreaves & Cummins Streets PO Box 358, Unanderra, NSW - 2526 Ph: 4271 3550 Fax: 4272 2954
<i>School Principal</i>	Mr Philip Moore
<i>Parish Secretary</i>	Mrs Agnes Jerald



Parish Office Hours: Monday, Thursday and Friday: 9:00am—3:30pm
Phone: 4271 1068 Fax: 4271 1298
Email: unanderra@dow.org.au
Parish website: www.unanderraparish.org.au

PROGRAMME FOR THIS WEEK

Monday	Dec 26	No Mass

Tuesday	Dec 27	
Saint John		Adoration: 4:30pm-5:30pm Mass: 5:30pm

Wednesday	Dec 28	Mass: 7:00am
The Holy Innocents		

Thursday	Dec 29	
Saint Thomas a'Becket		Adoration: 4:30pm-5:30pm (Reconciliation available) Mass: 5:30pm

Friday	Dec 30	Mass: 9:30am
The Holy Family		

Saturday	Dec 31	No Morning Mass Reconciliation 5pm - 5:30pm Vigil Mass: 6:00pm

Sunday	Jan 1	
Mary, The Mother of God		Masses: 7:00am, 9:00am 10:45am (Polish)

BAPTISMS & MARRIAGES

By appointment Phone: 4271 1068

CHRISTMAS DAY, YEAR A

25TH DECEMBER, 2016

There are four Mass formularies for the Feast of the Nativity - a Vigil (mainly for use in monastic communities), then Mass at midnight, at dawn, and during the day. The traditional three Masses emphasize the coming of Christ as Light, a light which grows stronger as the day lengthens.

At the GOSPEL of the Midnight Mass it is the shepherds who take centre stage. At dawn we are invited to ponder with Mary this great mystery. At the day Mass we listen to St John's great hymn to the Word of God, the source of life, whose coming among us has made us God's children.



PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

Giuseppe, Luigi, and Rosa **Marciano**,
Esta **Schembri**, John and Des **Cundy**, Marie **Bishop**,
Mary and Charlie **Micallef**, Victor and Bonnie **Tabone**,
Deceased members of the **Smith** and **Egan** families
Deceased members of the **McAuley** and **McIllhurton** families

Pray for the sick and those unable to get to Mass

Rosters of next weekend

Sat 31st	Church Cleaning	M Lloyd, J Allen, J Haywood, S Walsh	
	Lawns	Walsh Family, Fernandez Family	
	Acolytes	Lectors	Welcomers
Vigil 6pm	G Attard	A Kelly	D Gelfius
Sun 01st 7am	P Jones	D Ferrer	B Neich, B Rosendal
9am		B Anderson	S Michielin
Counters	T & L Barnes, J Carolan, A Bill		
Children's Liturgy	Not held during the school holidays		

PARISH ACTIVITIES

Legion of Mary: Mondays at 9:30am, St Joseph's room

Catholic Women's League: 2nd Thursday of the month, 10.30am

St Joseph's room. New members welcome.

Contact: Jan 42714051 or Margaret 42715804

St. Vincent de Paul Conference: Tues, 7.30pm St. Joseph's room

Parish Pastoral Council: 2nd Monday of the month, 7:30pm

St Joseph's room

Nursing Home Masses

Hillside Nursing Home: 1st Tuesday of the month, 2pm

Figtree Nursing Home: 2nd Tuesday of the month, 10:45am

Villa Maria Nursing Home: 3rd Tuesday of the month, 9:30am

Refreshments after the Vigil Mass and 9am Mass on 1st weekend of the month

Note from the Sisters:

Parishioners we are now in No 3 Grace St.

We are grateful to all who have helped us in our move - especially the Vincent De Paul men & women - "you are our wonderful Angels".

We like to share our Christmas with others so no present please but a donation in our CHARITY BOX at Our Lady's shine would be gratefully received.

Wishing you all a very holy and blessed Christmas and God's blessings on the New Year.

Sisters Joan & Margaret

LIVING FAITH booklets

(one for adults, one for children)

January - March 2017 available now.

\$ 4 Each

The booklets contain a meditation for each day based on that day's Scripture Reading at Mass

Gospel Reflection

In our times Christmas has become very commercialised and very pagan.

Many people are lured into overspending and excessive eating and drinking.

However, these abuses must not blind us to the true meaning of Christmas.

When thick smoke rises up, catches in your throat, and brings tears to your eyes, it is because a fire has been lit.

Ever since the coming of Christ a fire has been burning on our Earth, a fire that will never die.

At this fire we experience the warmth of God's love, and the glow of human fellowship.

Let us not be afraid to come in out of the cold and warm ourselves at this fire.

So Happy Christmas, everyone !

READERS note:

You will find at the side door of the church some notes and observations I have made.

I ask you to read them. In the New Year a training programme will be organised.

Fr Graham

Because
the
maker
of us all



lay with
the
cattle
in the
stall

Because
the
Great
comes
to the
small



I thank my God



"Would each of you go in spirit to the crib of our infant Saviour and meditate on the lesson He teaches there."

Saint MARY of the CROSS

VOCATIONS

SEEK THE LORD – Lord, I have my timetable, my priorities, my hopes. Help me to surrender all to your own divine timetable, priorities and hopes for me. Need help in seeking the Lord's will for you? Please contact Fr Richard Healey, Vocations Director, on 0401 621 591 or priesthood@dow.org.au

VOLUNTEERS FOR EXCITING NEW YOUTH MINISTRY INITIATIVES - APPLY NOW !

If you're aged 18-35 and interested in music, sound, lighting, events, teaching, preaching, dance, drama, leadership or just want to lend a hand, call Seth Harsh on **4222 2460** or email seth.harsh@dow.org.au

Don't miss this opportunity to share and develop your gifts by being part of Catholic Youth initiatives that are set to transform the face of youth ministry in this Diocese and beyond.

"In the Grotto of Bethlehem God shows himself to us as a humble 'infant' to defeat our arrogance.

Perhaps we would have submitted more easily to power and wisdom, but He does not want us to submit; rather,

He appeals to our free decision to accept His love".

Pope Benedict XVI

MARY MACKILLOP PILGRIMAGE

St Mary MacKillop Parish Oran Park have arranged a pilgrimage to some of the sites in Victoria and South Australia (such as Melbourne, Portland and Penola) associated with Mary MacKillop's life and ministry.

This pilgrimage, led by Fr David Catterall PP, will depart Sydney on Wednesday 10 May 2017 (8 Day/7 Nights).

For more details please contact St Mary MacKillop Parish Office on 4648 2226 or oranpark@dow.org.au

Booking are now being taken...

THE JOURNEY CATHOLIC RADIO PROGRAM

AIRS 16 December 2016 This week *The Journey* Catholic Radio program will continue to bring you weekly Gospel reflections, great music and wonderful inputs from amazing people. We have Wisdom from the Abby with Sr Hilda Scott, Sam Clear is "Walking the Walk" with our Muslim Neighbours (Repeat) and Francine Pirola in SMARTloving sharing her great advice on "A mission to Love". To add to this great line up, we have a show that is all about faith, hope and life. Tune into LIFE 101.9 FM Sun 11am or go to: www.jcr.org.au or www.itunes.jcr.org.au

ROSTERS FOR 2017

Now Available at side door of Church.

Wishing you all a Happy and Holy Christmas.



TAKE A RISK AND GIVE THE GIFT OF FAITH

Did you know that in our Parish there is a faithful team of volunteers that take a risk and step out in faith? In State Government schools there are no school lessons that teach the basic message about Jesus, our faith and the great adventure that life can be with God. That's where Catechists come in. Each week of the school year they have a short 30-minute lesson where they use a step-by-step lesson plan that helps Catholic children understand their faith, grow in love and maturity and learn what it means to be Catholic. We were all given this gift by someone. Someone stepped up for us so that we would know. So we invite you to take a risk and give the gift of faith. Become a Catechist as a teacher or helper today! For more information, please call 4222 2416 or ask your Parish priest for more information.

LOVE AND MARRIAGE ACCORDING TO POPE FRANCIS

10-12 February 2017 Mount Carmel Retreat Centre, 247 St Andrews Rd Varroville

Lead by Fr Elio Capra this retreat will explore the theology and the spirituality underpinning Pope Francis' *The Joy of Love, Amoris Laetitia*. The following areas will be explored: the scriptural background to the sacrament of marriage; the theology and spirituality of marriage; the challenges and the difficulties of marriage in our society today; the role of sex and sexuality within the sacrament of marriage; the missionary dimension of the sacrament of marriage for the parish and for the world. This retreat is for families, young people preparing for marriage and for all interested parishioners. Registration essential to the Retreat Centre on 8795 3400

My Dear people,

Travelling is a traditional feature of the Christmas season. My memories of Christmas as a child are travelling from Port Macquarie to Taree to spend a few days with my cousins and uncles and aunts, and especially Grandma Schmitzer. People still go to great trouble, travel great distances, to be with their families. The extra buses and trains and planes are barely able to cope.

When you come to think about it, travel was also very much a part of the first Christmas. As soon as she knew she was pregnant Mary set out from Nazareth to visit her cousin Elizabeth who, she had heard, was also pregnant. Nine months later she went up again to Judaea to be registered in the government census. There she gave birth to her Son.

The story of the first Christmas also includes the journey of the shepherds who, when they heard the news of the birth of a Saviour, went over the Bethlehem to see the Baby. And the story includes the journey of the Wise Men who travelled all the way from the East bringing gifts. Soon afterwards Mary and Joseph were on the road again. The Child had to be taken in haste to Egypt to escape the rage of Herod.

But the most important journey that first Christmas was surely the one described by Saint John in the Prologue of his Gospel. We sing of it in our carols: "He came down to earth from heaven who is God and Lord of all". This mysterious journey is the essence of Christmas.

From the beginning, our human story has been one of infidelity to the Creator.

Like Adam and Eve in the Garden we had hidden ourselves from the Lord. Our world is not the kingdom of peace it was meant to be - it has been a Tower of Babel, full of failure and betrayal, selfishness and sin, skeletons in cupboards, guilt and helplessness.

The first Christmas is God's response to this tragic situation. God is not content to stay at home waiting for the Prodigal to return. God goes out and follows the Prodigal into the land of sin. In the language of Saint John, God become flesh, "pitches his tent among us" to use the literal Greek, becomes visible in the earthy messiness of our human condition.

Referring to Christ as the original Good Samaritan, Saint Augustine wrote: "The man lying on the road is the whole human race. When the Immortal One, the Holy One, was far removed from us because we were sinners, He came down to us, so that He, the stranger, might become our neighbour".

This journey of incarnation, whose beginning we celebrate at Christmas, is essentially a journey of forgiveness. God is taking the initiative. God is breaking the deadlock. The God we found difficult to love because we could not see Him, has now become visible. As such, He is easier to love and serve. By word and example He becomes our Way, our Truth, and our Life. His death will prove the incredible depths of God's love.

I wish you all every blessing for Christmas. My gift has been the offering of a Novena of Masses for your intentions.



Fr Graham Schmitzer
Parish Priest

