



# PARISH AND SHRINE OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION UNANDERRA



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## PROGRAMME FOR THIS WEEK

<b>Monday</b>	Dec 25	<b>CHRISTMAS DAY</b> Masses: 7:00am, 9:00am 10:45am (Polish)
<b>Tuesday</b>	Dec 26	Masses: 7:30am <b>SAINT STEPHEN</b> 10:45am (Polish)
<b>Wednesday</b>	Dec 27	No Mass
<b>Thursday</b>	Dec 28	No Mass
<b>Friday</b>	Dec 29	Mass: 9:30am <b>St Thomas A Becket</b>
<b>Saturday</b>	Dec 30	No Morning Mass Reconciliation: 5 - 5:30pm Vigil Mass 6pm
<b>Sunday</b>	Dec 31	<b>THE HOLY FAMILY</b> Masses: 7:00am, 9:00am 10:45am (Polish)

## FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT, YEAR B

24 DECEMBER 2017

**READINGS:** 2 Sam 7:1-5, 8-12, 14, 16; Rom 16:25-27;  
Lk 1:26-38

King of a united country,  
with Jerusalem as the  
capital, David set about  
building a house or temple  
for God. But God pre-  
empted David's plan. God  
would build David a house,  
meaning a royal dynasty.



When Jerusalem was  
destroyed in 587BC it seemed the promise would not  
be fulfilled. Still, hope remained. The expectation was  
fulfilled when Gabriel announces to Mary that she  
would be the mother of the Redeemer who, through  
Joseph, would be of the House of David.

## PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

**Recently Deceased:** Bridie O'GORMAN, Marilyn & Bob BILLIGHAM

**Anniversaries:** Neta BROWN, Yvonne TREVEN, Mary POTTS, Lucy DALTON, Alfredo & Gina MORI,  
Esther SCHMBRI

Agnes OGGERO, Des & John CUNDY, Alex, Katie and Danny SMITH, May & Daniel EGAN

### Rosters of next weekend

Sat 30th	Church Cleaning	S & W Brown, J & D Browne,	
	Lawns	Mark Walsh, Fernandez Family	
	Acolytes	Lectors	Welcomers
Vigil 6pm	A Carlotto	N Milan	A Milan
Sun 31 <sup>st</sup> 7am	G Attard	A Browne	S Brown, A Browne
9am	N Dwyer	C Walsh	V Cleary,
Counters	M Murphy (FT), J Powell, R Wilson, L Wade		
Children's Liturgy	Not held during the school holidays		

### Christmas Rosters

	2 Acolytes	2 Lectors	2 Welcomers	2 Servers
Sunday, 24th Dec Vigil 6pm	Mark WALSH	Mary GILLIS Roger BAXENDALE	James AUKCSO Mary AZZOPARDI	
Monday, 25th Dec 7am	Andrew CARLOTTO	Paul GUNNING	Rob BRUNERO Yvonne BRUNERO	
Monday, 25th Dec 9am	Neil Dwyer Rob KLAUS	<b>Volunteer needed</b>	Vera CLEARY	Patrick CAROLAN Cormac CAROLAN

### PARISH ACTIVITIES

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

St Joseph's room. New members welcome.

Contact: Barbara 42711584 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 9am Mass on 1st weekend of the month.**

## Gospel Reflection

You sometimes hear people say,  
'I always find Christmas Day a lonely day.'  
I think what they are really saying is:  
'I always feel lonely on Christmas Day.'  
Loneliness is caused chiefly by two things:  
absence and emptiness.

Let us spare a thought, a prayer, and maybe  
a visit for someone who will spend Christmas alone.

And if while spending Christmas  
in the midst of others,  
we still feel lonely, let us not be alarmed.  
Our hearts are always longing for something more,  
or rather, for someone else.

In every human heart is an empty chamber  
waiting for a guest.

**That guest is God.**

### NOTICE TO ALL PARISHIONERS FROM SR JOAN AND SR MARGARET

We wish you all a blessed Christmas, full of love, peace and joy that Jesus gives on His Birthday. You are all remembered in prayer in our Chapel each day.

A special request—no presents please. The Parish has provided us with a very comfortable home for which we are very grateful. We support orphaned children in Timor and Aleppo. If you would like to make a donation towards this work there is a 'Donation Box' at Our Lady's Shrine.

Thank you to all especially those who look after our gardens and lawn.

God bless you all and also to those Catechists, Sacramental Leaders, Children's Liturgy and Nursing Home Volunteers who work with us in the Parish Ministries. May God bless you abundantly for your generosity.

— Sr Joan & Sr Margaret

### ORDINATION OF BISHOP-ELECT BRIAN MASCORD

Please note the date for the Ordination of Bishop-elect Brian Mascord is now confirmed as follows:

**Thursday, 22 February 2018**, on the Feast of the Chair of St Peter, Apostle

**7:00 pm at WIN Entertainment Centre**, Corner Crown and Harbour Streets, Wollongong

**Principal Consecrator:** Archbishop Anthony Fisher

**Assisting Consecrators:** Bishops Peter Ingham and Bill Wright



“Look upon your crosses as stepping stones to an eternal life of happiness.”  
*st. Mary of the Cross 1890*

**THE JOURNEY CATHOLIC RADIO PROGRAM—AIRS 24 Dec 2017**

This week on the Journey, our Christmas Eve edition, we have our very own Bishop Peter Ingham sharing his Christmas message with us, Sr Hilda shares her Wisdom and wishes us Happy Christmas from the Nuns at Jamberoo Abbey, during this very busy yet very Holy time, Marilyn Rodrigues, The Peaceful Parent, reminds us to Pray, Hope and Don't worry. It has been our pleasure to bring you Journey Catholic radio this year, and look forward to 2018. God Bless and Merry Christmas. Go to [www.jcr.org.au](http://www.jcr.org.au) or [www.itunes.jcr.org.au](http://www.itunes.jcr.org.au) where you can listen anytime and subscribe to weekly shows by email.

**VINNIES CHRISTMAS APPEAL**

The second collection on all Christmas Day Masses will go to the Vinnie's Christmas Appeal. Envelopes will be available for those wishing to make credit card payments. All money raised will go to St Vincent de Paul Unanderra Conference.

**CATHEDRAL BOOKS & GIFTS** A great range of excellent quality religious gifts are available from Cathedral Books and Gifts. A beautiful selection of bibles, books, missals, rosaries, plaques, crucifixes, medals, statues and greeting cards, candles, etc. perfect to commemorate Confirmation, Communion and Baptism. Enter the store via Crown St, Xavier Centre, Wollongong. Enquiries phone 4222 2484.



*Happy Christmas to all.  
 My gift was been the  
 opening of a New Year Mass  
 for your intentions.  
 St Graham Schmitzer*

**Where does the Nativity scene come from?**

The first live reproduction of the outdoor Christmas nativity was made by St Francis of Assisi for the event he staged in Greccio, Italy, in 1223. It was a way of communicating the true meaning of Christmas. The idea proved so popular that it soon spread throughout the Christian world.



The story of the nativity comes from the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Luke's account describes the journey of Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem, where they must go to be counted in the census ordered by Caesar Augustus. Unable to find any room at the inn, they take refuge in a stable used to shelter animals. Here Jesus is born and laid in a manger filled with hay. In the hills overlooking Bethlehem an angel tells the shepherds of Jesus' Birth. Matthew's account tells of a brilliant star that appears, marking the birthplace of Jesus, and of the three kings that follow its light to find the Christ Child.

The traditional grouping of wise men and farm folk is symbolic of the universal nature of Christianity and emphasizes God's desire to embrace all people. The shepherds carry the richness of the Earth's harvest, and the first to arrive carries a dove, the symbol of peace. The angel, in bringing the message of the birth to the shepherds, is symbolic of the way God reaches out to all mankind with a message of peace. The wise men are traditionally kings with gifts of riches to symbolize how wealth and wisdom come to kneel before a greater King. Baby Jesus in a humble crib is at the very centre.

Since the time of St Francis, the practice has spread around the world in pageants, church reproductions, neighbourhood rituals, professionally staged plays where huge casts including live animals are utilized, and of course the school plays where sometimes the imaginative interpretation of the script provides highly original versions of the events.

**THE 4 AGES OF MAN**

1. He believes in Santa
2. He doesn't believe in Santa
3. He plays Santa
4. He looks like Santa





My dear people,

We have been listening these past few weeks to the voices of the prophet Isaiah and the last of all the prophets, John the Baptist. Today the Church focuses her attention on Our Lady, the model of all who wait on God.

Holding on to a sense of expectation when we've already heard the story year after year is not easy. That's why we've needed this period of Advent to reflect on the fact that God is always coming to us - at **every** moment in our lives. We need to train ourselves to sense His presence. It is, I suppose, a good definition of a holy person - one who is constantly aware of God, and thus open to what God is asking at each moment. It would seem that the meaning of our English word GOD is 'the One who calls' .

This week we return to the familiar and comforting stories of angels and shepherds and magi. To appreciate it all anew we have to try and go behind the scenes, and attempt to understand how this must have sounded to someone hearing the news for the first time. St Luke is trying to tell us how remarkable this Child will be: Son of the Most High, preserver of David's kingdom, Ruler without end. The promise made to David - that his House would last for ever - seemed not to have been kept, for David's kingdom came crashing down at the hands of the Babylonians. What good is a prophecy proved false by history ?

Imagine how the first Christians, steeped in Jewish tradition, must have received the news. God **had** fulfilled His promise and restored the Davidic line through Christ, legally adopted by Joseph who was of the House of David. Christ did establish a kingdom, but not of this world, and therefore one that will last forever. God had kept His promise after all ! And in a much greater way than expected.

It all comes about through the agency of an unknown girl in a relatively unknown town—not exactly material for royalty. But Mary seems ready for anything God will ask. Though Christ's kingdom is quite different than the one expected by the Jews at the time, it is still a kingdom in which **obedience** brings about the fulfilment of the King's wishes. Mary is presented to us as the model of that obedience which brings about the establishment of Christ's kingdom in the world.



There are obvious implications for us. God waits on us and our consent, as He waited on Mary's, to enter our world. My examination of conscience each day should address the question as to what I might have done to thwart God's purpose. My lack of love, my lack of justice denies God's entry into the world. It is staggering to think what God might be able to do in my life and through me if, like Our Lady, I would give myself entirely to Him.

We find our lives of faith difficult. Like Our Lady we are often 'troubled' by God's message, and we 'wonder' at its relevance to our lives. Like her, we must be patient as the fullness of the message is made known to us only by the passing of the years. Our prayers to Our Lady, such an indispensable part of Catholic life, should not always be for selfish requests. Rather, they should be petitions asking Her to help us say YES to God, and never to give up in the face of seeming paradox.

*Graham Schmitzer*

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**Parish Priest**