

PARISH AND SHRINE OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

48 Princes Highway (PO Box 14) Unanderra NSW 2526



Parish Priest: Mgr Graham Schmitzer

Polish Chaplain: Fr Tomasz Nowak
Mobile: 0437 677 727
Email: tomasz.n04@gmail.com

Parish Assistant & Catechist Co-ordinator: Sister Joan Goodwin
Phone: 4272 9980
Mobile: 0499 970 074
Email: joan.goodwin@sosj.org.au

Parish School: St Pius X School
Cnr Hargreaves & Cummins Streets
PO Box 358 Unanderra NSW 2526
Phone: 4271 3550 | Fax: 4272 2954

School Principal: Mr Philip Moore

Parish Secretary: Mrs Sue Briscoe

Parish Office Hours: Monday, Thursday and Friday: 9am—3.30pm
Phone: 4271 1068 | Fax: 4271 1298
Email: unanderra@dow.org.au
Parish Website: www.unanderraparish.org.au

PROGRAMME FOR THIS WEEK

Monday	24 Dec	Christmas Eve Mass: 7am Vigil Mass: 6pm
Tuesday	25 Dec	The Nativity of Our Lord Masses: 7am, 9am, 10.45am (Polish)
Wednesday	26 Dec	No Mass
Thursday	27 Dec	St John Adoration: 4.30pm-5.30pm (Reconciliation Available) Mass: 5.30pm
Friday	28 Dec	The Holy Innocents Mass: 9.30am Christmas Vespers & Benediction: 5pm
Saturday	29 Dec	Mass: 7.30am Reconciliation: 5pm-5.30pm Vigil Mass: 6pm
Sunday	30 Dec	The Holy Family Masses: 7am, 9am, 10.45am (Polish)

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT - YEAR C

23 DECEMBER 2018

READINGS: Micah 5:1-4; Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-44

When the prophet Micah was writing, Jerusalem was under siege and David's dynasty was in jeopardy. The prophet announces that salvation would come from the most insignificant place — Bethlehem (**FIRST READING**). The **GOSPEL** relates Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth. Enlightened by the Holy Spirit, Elizabeth praises Mary's faith and hints at the uniqueness of the child she has conceived.

The author of the Book of Hebrews states that Jesus did not come to offer the sacrifices of the Old Law but to do the will of God (**SECOND READING**).



PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

Anniversaries

Esther SCHEMBRI
Neta BROWN
Colleen WALTER
Nicholas BRUTON
Mary BLATTMAN
John & Des CUNDY
Annette CREAGH
Demetrio ESCOBIA
Katie, Alex & Danny SMITH
Lucas, Fortunata, Andrea & Aquilino ESCOBIA



CWL CHRISTMAS RAFFLE

Thank you for supporting our Christmas Raffle this year.
The money raised will help support our charities.

The winners of the prizes were:

1st prize: Susan Camadro

2nd prize: Sue Lopresti

3rd prize: Brian Mannix

Congratulations to our winners!

ROSTERS – NEXT WEEKEND

December	Church Washing	Fiona Fernandez	
Sat 29 Dec	Church Cleaning	F Fernandez, B Rice, S Walsh	
	Lawns	Peters Family, Winner Family	
	Acolytes	Lectors	Welcomers
Sat 29 Dec		R Baxendale	Volunteer
Sun 23 Dec 7am Mass	A Michielin	P Gunning	S Brown
Sun 30 Dec 9am Mass	C Carolan	C Walsh	Y Brunero, S Michielin
Counters	M Murphy (FT), R Wilson, J Carolan, S Alessi		
Children's Liturgy	School Holidays		

CHRISTMAS ROSTER

	2 Acolytes	2 Lectors	2 Welcomers	2 Altar Servers
Mon 24 Dec 6pm Vigil	Mark Walsh	Colleen Walsh Sarah Walsh	Matthew Lyon Noah Lyon	Aidan Calvert Zali Calvert
Tue 25 Dec 7am Mass	Paul Jones	Paul Gunning	Deborah Yates	
Tue 25 Dec 9am Mass	Neil Dwyer	Vera Cleary	Tierney Dunne Merly Fien	



PARISH ACTIVITIES



- Catholic Women's League:** 2nd Thursday of the month - 10.30am in St Joseph's room
New members always welcome!
Please contact: Barbara - 4271 1584
- St Vincent de Paul Conference:** Every Tue 7.30pm in St Joseph's room
- Parish Pastoral Council:** 2nd Monday of alternate months
7.30pm in 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 9am Mass on 1st weekend of the month



A MESSAGE FROM SR JOAN & SR MARGARET

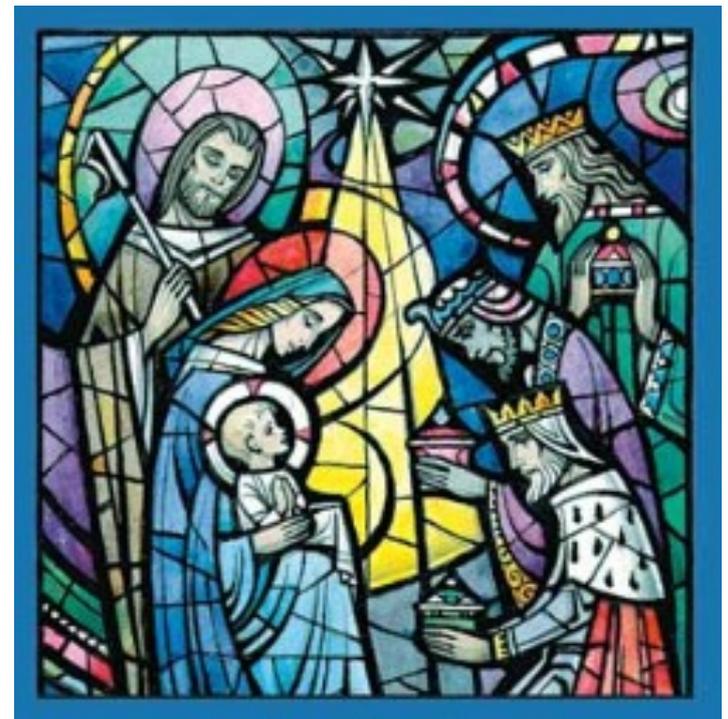
To our wonderful parishioners, thank you for your care and support of us especially in mowing our lawns and helping when needed, as well as the lovely surprises that arrive at our door. We ask the Infant Jesus, Mary and Joseph to bless you abundantly this Christmas Season and in the New Year 2019. You are prayed for in our Chapel with gratitude.
Love and prayers, Srs Joan & Margaret

NOTICE RE CHILDREN'S LIBRARY

The Children's Library will be closed over the Christmas and New Year period. Thanks to all the parents and children who have used it. Watch out for some wonderful new books in 2019.
God bless you all, Sr Joan.

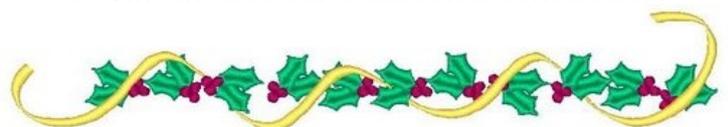
A PRAYER FOR CHRISTMAS

Lord Jesus, come into our weakness.
Come into our fears.
Come into our anxieties.
Come into our failures.
Come into our divisions.
Come into our grieving.
Come into our loneliness.
Come into our darkness.
Come into our doubting.
Come into our despair.
Come into our poverty of heart.
Come into our searching.
Come into our joys and hopes.
Come into our dying.
Come, Lord Jesus, come.



ST VINCENT DE PAUL CHRISTMAS APPEAL

The SECOND COLLECTION at all Christmas Masses will go to the Vinnies Christmas Appeal to help in their work for the coming year. Envelopes will be available for those wishing to make credit card payments. All money raised will go to the St Vincent de Paul Unanderra Conference.





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

St Mary of the Cross — 1890

USED STAMPS COLLECTED BY OUR PARISH



On behalf of Mary MacKillop Today, I thank you for your generous support in supplying and assisting with used stamps.

2018 was another successful year of us raising approximately \$68,000. A great effort from many, many people!

Since 2001 until now, our total is \$312,000. It is through your efforts that the legacy of Saint Mary MacKillop continues in Peru today.

*Sr Helen Saunders
for Sisters of St Joseph*

ALL WELCOME - CHRISTMAS DAY

Ratha's Place will be open for a special purpose this Christmas Day, Tuesday 25 December. Together, with the support of the community, Ratha's Place will be serving a festive feast on Christmas Day.

Ratha's Place will be opening our doors to provide a safe and friendly environment for those in need of a Christmas meal.

We will have transport available to and from our café on Christmas Day for locals that don't have access to transport.

We will also be delivering meals to local people or groups to ensure that we can help everyone to have a Merry Christmas. Members of the local community have pre-purchased these meals on behalf of people in need - families, couples and individuals are all welcome! Contact us if you know of anyone in need this Christmas.

All Welcome! Breakfast and Lunch will be served throughout the day.

help2help

Where: Ratha's Place - 84 Central Avenue Oak Flats

When: Tuesday 25 December 2018 - from 9am

Contact: 0414 975 627

Email: faye.webb@barringtongroup.com.au

2019 — PLANNED GIVING

The Parish Finance Council (PFC) recommend and implement cost saving initiatives for our Parish. We will

shortly be ordering and paying for next year's envelopes for the Envelope Contribution Scheme, however the PFC would like to suggest our parishioners can assist by changing to the Direct Debit System to save some costs in Envelope production. Please fill

out a Direct Debit Planned Giving Form (located near the side door of the church) and submit it to the Parish Office, and we will organise the changes.

We appreciate the generous contributions our parishioners provide, and all giving — whether via direct debit or envelope — is most welcome and appreciated.

Please see a member of the PFC if you have any queries - Wayne Rodgers, Henry Fernandez, Gloria Simmonite.

The Parish Finance Council



THE JOURNEY CATHOLIC RADIO PROGRAM — AIRS SUNDAY 23 DECEMBER 2018 —

This week on The Journey, the Gospel reflection is from the Dioceses of Wollongong Advent reflection booklet; Sr Hilda shares her Wisdom from the Abbey with her Christmas reflection; Bruce Downes, the Catholic Guy, reminds us to be still before God; and The Pirolas encourage us to Make A Change For The Better.

It is with great pleasure and gratitude that we say thank you for your support with Journey Catholic Radio for another year. God Bless, and Merry Christmas from all of us here at the Diocese of Wollongong.

Go to www.jcr.org.au or
www.itunes.jcr.org.au

where you can listen any time and
subscribe to weekly shows via email



ERIC GENUIS CONCERT — IMMACULATE CONCEPTION CHURCH UNANDERRA

Eric Genuis Concert

Immaculate Conception Church Unanderra

Wednesday 27 February 2019 — 7pm

Looking for a Christmas gift for the person who has everything? Why not buy them tickets to an experience you can share as well as help your Parish community?

A rare opportunity to listen to a pianist of exceptional talent who brings with him a world class violinist, cellist and soprano playing in our parish church. The 'Opera House' is coming to our parish! All original compositions together with powerful testimonies outlining the inspiration behind each piece with true stories of life transformations destined to make a deep impression upon all who hear them. A message of hope for all.



Tickets: \$30 adult; \$25 pensioner/concession; \$70 family (parents with dependant children under 18).

Ticket sales are available online at www.ericgenuistour.com or from **Sue Briscoe** at the **Parish Office** (cash only).

On the weekend of 12-13 January 2019 Fr Mark De Battista will be here promoting the concert in our parish. A parish event not to be missed. Your support will support our parish.

With kind regards, Mgr Graham Schmitzer

My dear people,

For three weeks we have been expecting. Expecting what, exactly? Pope Benedict has some thoughts, well worth our meditation. "Expectation" he says, is profoundly human. "Expectation and waiting represent a dimension that touches our entire individual, family and social existence. Expectation is present in many situations, from the smallest and most insignificant to the most important - a couple expecting a child; awaiting a relative or friend who comes to visit us from far away; the expectation of the result of some decisive examination; in personal relations the expectation of meeting a loved one. We could say that man is alive as long as he expects, so long as hope remains alive in his heart. And man can be recognised by his expectations - our moral and spiritual stature may be measured by what our hopes are.

"So, in this time of preparation for Christmas, each of us may ask ourselves: What do I expect? And this same question can be posed at the level of the family, the community, the nation. What do we expect together? What unites our aspirations, what brings us together? In Israel in the period prior to Jesus' birth, there was a very strong expectation of the Messiah, who would free the people from all moral and political slavery and establish the Kingdom of God.

"But no-one could have imagined that the Messiah would be born of a humble girl like Mary, who had been promised in marriage to the good Joseph. Neither could she have imagined it; yet in her heart the expectation of the Saviour was so great, her faith and hope so ardent, that in her He could find a worthy mother. There is a mysterious correspondence between the expectation of God and that of Mary, the creature 'full of grace', completely transparent before the Almighty's plan of love. Let us learn from her, the woman of Advent, to live daily life with a new spirit, with feelings of profound expectation which only the coming of God can satisfy."



So, we could ask: What is God expecting this Christmas? Because everything we do is a response to His initiative. St John of the Cross, who was Teresa of Avila's helper in the Carmelite reform, and whose Feast we celebrate this month, could be our guide. Our God is a God who is always giving. Look at the Trinity - three persons eternally giving themselves to each other in love, so much so they are one God. And God's desire in creating us is to give Himself to us in love. He is an approaching God, always desiring union. John of the Cross makes an extraordinary statement in his writings, well worth pondering: "I can see that Christ is very little known by those who think themselves His friends". Christ wishes to fill us with Himself - but few of us create the space into which He can enter. We fill the space in our hearts with other things, many of which cannot provide the happiness we really long for.

The space we make in our hearts can perhaps be measured by the space we make each day for prayer. The goal of prayer is union with God. As Catholics, we have many forms of prayer. But, above all, we have the Mass and the presence of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament. Our greatest gift to Our Lord for His Birthday would be the promise to pursue union with Him more deeply in the coming year about to start - a time set aside each day for Him; an extra Mass; taking advantage of the times the Blessed Sacrament is exposed for adoration. We are about to celebrate His Birth - not a past event, but His desire to be born again in us. The words of the Dominican Meister Eckhart (+1329), will always ring true: "What good is it to me if this eternal birth of the divine Son takes place unceasingly, but does not take place within myself?".

Mgr Graham Schmitzer

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Parish Priest

LIVING FAITH

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January * February * March 2019 — \$4.00

