

PARISH AND SHRINE OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

48-50 Princes Highway (PO Box 14) Unanderra NSW 2526

www.unanderraparish.org.au

www.facebook.com/Immaculate-Conception-Unanderra-Parish-102440924742769/



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

School Principal: Mrs Pauline Chrostowski

Parish Secretary: Mrs Melissa Bridges (Mon/Wed/Fri)

Parish Office: Email: unanderra@dow.org.au
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SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT (YEAR B) – 10 DECEMBER 2023

Parish Vision—We are a diverse community united by our love for Jesus and for one another, constantly seeking to grow in this love especially through the Eucharist. We welcome everyone and help each other to discover their unique gifts, joyfully working together as one to bring the overflowing love of Jesus to all people.

Weekly Programme	Immaculate Conception UNANDERRA	St Therese WEST WOLLONGONG
Mon 11 Dec	Mass: 7am	
Tues 12 Dec	Mass: 5:30pm Rosary: 6pm Adoration: 6pm - 7pm	Mass: 7:45am
Wed 13 Dec <i>St Lucy, virgin, martyr</i>	Mass: 7am	Adoration: 4:30pm Reconciliation: 4:30pm - 5:15pm Mass: 5:30pm
Thurs 14 Dec <i>St John of the Cross, priest, doctor</i>	Mass: 5:30pm Rosary: 6pm Adoration: 6pm - 7pm Reconciliation: 6pm - 7pm	Mass: 7:45am
Fri 15 Dec	Mass: 7am	Mass: 9:30am
Sat 16 Dec	Rosary: 7am Mass: 7:30am Reconciliation: 5pm - 5:30pm Mass: 6pm	Rosary: 8:30am Mass: 9am
Sun 17 Dec	Mass: 8am Mass: 10am (Polish)	Mass: 10am Mass: 5pm

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

Recently Deceased

Vicki Maree Brown, John Sweeney
 Vincenza Carnevale, Serafin Gonzalo

Prayers for the sick

Jan Luke, Peter Lathourakis, Peter Stoyles
 Kerrie Maidment, Roger Baxendale, Josephine Moran

Anniversaries

Fred Brame, Mary & Charlie Micallef,
 Connie & Victor Tabone, Ian Ritchie



PARISH OFFICE HOURS

unanderra@dow.org.au / 4271 1068

Monday: 8:30am-3:30pm
 Tuesday: Closed
 Wednesday: 8:30am-3:30pm
 Thursday: Closed
 Friday: 8:30am-3pm

Message from Fr Duane

On Friday 8th December the Parish of Immaculate Conception Unanderra celebrates its annual Parish Feast Day – **the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary**. This is a wonderful Feast Day in its own right, reminding us of the unique blessedness of Mary our mother, preserved from all stain of sin from the very moment God created her in the womb, and giving her complete yes to God throughout her whole life. This uniqueness of Mary is not something that should distance her from us, but rather draw us closer to her, as our perfectly loving mother and model of faith for us to follow. This Feast is made even more wonderful for our own Parish of the Immaculate Conception, as it gives us an opportunity to celebrate our wonderful parish community, and all the blessings it has brought to Unanderra and beyond throughout the decades. In Mary's joyful and humble song of praise in Scripture known as the *Magnificat* she says "the Almighty has done great things for me, holy is his name!" As we give thanks to God for each other and for all who have gone before us in our Parish, may we make her prayer our own: "the Almighty has done great things for us, holy is his name!"

About two months ago, the Parish Pastoral Councils of Unanderra and West Wollongong decided to host a Christmas Day Lunch this year in the new St Therese Parish Centre, for those in need of food and/or company this Christmas – but it all depended on whether there were enough volunteers to make it possible. We have been overwhelmed by the generous response of parishioners (and others beyond our community) volunteering to make this possible! Thank you to everyone who has offered their support. The next step is to invite people to come along! All are welcome, among you yourselves or anyone you know who might benefit from an invitation. RSVP is essential by December 18 to unanderra@dow.org.au for catering purposes, and there are also some flyers available at the churches for you to take for yourself or to invite others along.

Fr Duane Fernandez

Message from Sr Kerry

Following the recent heavy rain, I stumbled across this creature on my way to the church. The creature was more than 30cms in length. It reminded me of one occasion when I was living in a country town. I went to get into my car, which was parked in the carport. I took fright. A similar creature was comfortably resting right near the driver's door of the car.

I rang the priest telling him I couldn't get to the church as a baby snake prevented me from getting into the car. Fr Anthony was a police chaplain, so he sought help for me from the local constabulary. Three policemen arrived. Two were in the same state as me – petrified and going nowhere near the creature. After some time, a braver man said, 'That is a Mile worm.' They seek out the Mile trees which were growing on the footpath.

A large emergency became a laughing matter when this policeman picked up the worm and placed it near the tree.

What fears do I carry that prevent me from seeing clearly? This week can you take Jesus' words to heart: **Trust in God and trust in me.**

Sr Kerry Gardiner



ROSTER – THIS WEEKEND

December	Church Washing	Helen Murphy	
Sat 9 Dec	Church Cleaning	Volunteers needed	
Sat 9 Dec	Lawns	H Fernandez, Milan Family, Broeckmann	
	Lectors	Welcomers	Children's liturgy
6pm 9 Dec	M Rodwell	B Farraway	
8am 10 Dec	A Kelly	J Sharwood	Leah Galea, Alison Sharwood
Counters	A Kelly, B Farraway		

ROSTER – NEXT WEEKEND

December	Church Washing	Helen Murphy	
Sat 16 Dec	Church Cleaning	W & J Rodgers, J Andersson	
Sat 16 Dec	Lawns	No lawn mowing this week	
	Lectors	Welcomers	Children's liturgy
6pm 16 Dec	N O'Donoghue	S Marsala	
8am 17 Dec	C Walsh	F Carolan/ A Arnone	Sarah Walsh, Alicia Sanchez-Levine
Counters	A Gunning, M Caudero, C Garrett		

PARISH NEWS

Parish Feast Day - Friday 8th December at 6pm.

Everyone is invited to celebrate our Parish Feast Day. Celebrations will begin with **mass at 6pm** followed by **sausage sizzle** in the parish grounds. Tea, coffee, cordial, biscuits and slices will also be available. Come along and join in the celebrations with other parishioners.



Christmas Mass times, lectors and welcomers

Christmas Eve - 6pm - Natasha O'Donoghue and Daisy Ferrier

Christmas Eve - 8pm - Telesia Vaafusuaga

Christmas Day - 8am Didi Browne

Welcomers

Christmas Eve 6pm - Sr Kerry Gardiner

Christmas Eve - 8pm - Barbara Faraway

Christmas Day - 8am - *Volunteer needed*

St Vincent De Paul Giving Tree

The Giving Christmas Tree has been placed in the church full of tags for children's toys and Christmas food. Gifts need to be placed under the Giving Tree **by Sunday 17 December** as hampers and toys will be delivered on Tuesday 19 December. A big thank you to all the generous parishioners who have supported the Vinnies Giving Tree for many years.



Vinnies Christmas Cards and Columban calendars

Christmas Cards and the Columban Calendars are available at the table near the side door. **Christmas cards are \$5/pack of ten and the 2024 Columban calendar is \$10.**

Advent & Christmas Daily reflections

The Sign: Daily Advent and Christmas Reflections from 3 December 2023 to the Baptism of the Lord 8 January 2024). **Cost is \$3.** Please leave money in the small drawer at the side door table.



RCIA program

It is exciting to have a number of people expressing their desire to become Catholic through the RCIA program (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults). The first step will be for Fr Duane to meet with each one during the coming weeks. If you're interested please contact Fr Duane at:

duane.fernandez@dow.org.au

Parish Finances - week ending 3 December 2023

\$563 First Collection - Clergy Remuneration Fund

\$499 Second collection - Parish expenses

\$200 Tap Point - Parish donations

\$356 Planned giving envelopes

\$534 Direct debits (weekly average from November).

Direct debits can be contributed weekly, fortnightly or monthly

The easiest way for our parish to budget for the many and rising expenses of the parish is via the Planned Giving program – preferably Direct Debit via this QR code (2nd collection, and you can choose weekly, fortnightly or monthly and change your contribution at any stage if you need to). Planned Giving envelopes for cash are also still an option – contact the parish office for these.



Christmas lunch at the St Therese Parish Centre.

We will be offering Christmas lunch at the St Therese Parish Centre. If you would like to join us, please contact Melissa at the Parish Office **unanderra@dow.org.au**

Christmas Carol event at Edmund Rice College - 18 December

You are invited to a BYO picnic (from 5pm), carol singing (7pm) and supper (8pm) at Edmund Rice College, please use Mt Keira Rd gate, on Monday 18 December. Families, friends and individuals all most welcome.

For further details please call **Fiona 0413121383.**

THE JOURNEY CATHOLIC RADIO PROGRAMME – AIRS SUNDAY 10 DECEMBER 2023

On the Journey this week: Fr Chris Sarkis says only prayer, sacrifice, and graced personal holiness of life can straighten what has become twisted and buried in the moral and human turmoil. Mother Hilda says God is like the freezer repair man, checking the gas of grace that keeps us ticking over. Plus, Fr Tony Percy says Mark's Gospel prologue sets the scene for the remainder of his Gospel, Fr John Nguyen OFM Cap says on the eight hundredth anniversary of the creation of the nativity scene, choose to see the living Babe of Christmas, like Saint Francis did 800 years ago. Listen at **jcr.org.au**



PURPOSE PILGRIMAGE OF MERCY 11 – 21 JUNE 2024

Father Christopher Sarkis, Parish Priest of Rosemeadow, will be the Chaplain accompanying Harvest Journeys Eastern Europe Pilgrimage of Mercy in June 2024, visiting Hungary, Poland and the Czech Republic. It includes the Shrines of Divine Mercy, the Black Madonna of Czestochowa and the Infant of Prague. It visits places of importance to St John Paul II, St. Faustina and St. Maximillian Kolbe, among others.

Optional Extension: There is also an optional 6 night/7-day extension (21 – 27 June) to Bavaria and Austria. It will include the Marian Shrine of Altotting, as well as Markt in Bavaria; Salzburg of the Sound of Music fame and the hometown of Mozart; and the historic, cultural, and artistic city of Vienna in Austria. We will also visit various other shrines and attractions along with some spectacular churches and monasteries. **Enquiries:** 4628 1385 or directly at **harvestjourneys.com/tour/pilgrimageof-mercy**
Bookings only through Harvest Journeys.

SUMMER SCHOOL OF EVANGELISATION (SYDNEY): 7-14 JANUARY 2024, MOUNT CARMEL RETREAT CENTRE, VARROVILLE

Summer School is a week-long, live-in, life-changing retreat featuring praise and worship, inspiring talks, engaging liturgy, time to chill & learn and more in the midst of a community of 150+ young people aged 16-35. Register by 30th November to receive early bird rates (concession \$525/adult \$625).
Bookings: **summerschool.org.au**

CARITAS AUSTRALIA'S GAZA CRISIS APPEAL

An estimated 1 million people have been displaced in Gaza with immediate food, shelter, health, and psychosocial needs. With your support, we will be able to help our partners on the ground to assist people displaced and affected by the current conflict. Please donate to Caritas Australia's Gaza Crisis Appeal. You can donate online **www.caritas.org.au/gaza** or phone **1800 024 413**

DIOCESAN YOUTH MINISTRY LEADER

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF WOLLONGONG

Suitably experienced and qualified persons are encouraged to apply for the role of Youth Ministry Leader in the Diocese of Wollongong.

Applications close on **Tuesday, 12 December 2023.**

For more information and a detailed role description, please go to: **dow.org.au/position-vacant-diocesan-youth-ministry-leader/** or for enquiries contact **helen.bennett@dow.org.au**

10 DECEMBER - SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT (YEAR B)

First Reading - Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11 *Prepare the way of the Lord*

'Console my people, console them' says your God.
'Speak to the heart of Jerusalem and call to her
that her time of service is ended, that her sin is atoned for,
that she has received from the hand of the Lord
double punishment for all her crimes.'
A voice cries, 'Prepare in the wilderness a way for the Lord.
Make a straight highway for our God across the desert.
Let every valley be filled in, every mountain and hill be laid low.
Let every cliff become a plain, and the ridges a valley;
then the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all mankind shall see it;
for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.'
Go up on a high mountain, joyful messenger to Zion.
Shout with a loud voice, joyful messenger to Jerusalem.
Shout without fear, say to the towns of Judah, 'Here is your God.'
Here is the Lord coming with power, his arm subduing all things to him.
The prize of his victory is with him, his trophies all go before him.
He is like a shepherd feeding his flock, gathering lambs in his arms,
holding them against his breast and leading to their rest the mother ewes.

Responsorial Psalm - Lord, let us see your kindness, and grant us your salvation.

1. I will hear what the Lord God has to say, a voice that speaks of peace,
peace for his people. His help is near for those who fear him
and his glory will dwell in our land. R.
2. Mercy and faithfulness have met; justice and peace have embraced.
Faithfulness shall spring from the earth and justice look down from heaven. R.
3. The Lord will make us prosper and our earth shall yield its fruit.
Justice shall march before him and peace shall follow his steps. R.

Second Reading - 2 Peter 3:8-14 *We wait for new heavens and a new earth.*

There is one thing, my friends, that you must never forget: that with the Lord, 'a day' can mean a thousand years, and a thousand years is like a day. The Lord is not being slow to carry out his promises, as anybody else might be called slow; but he is being patient with you all, wanting nobody to be lost and everybody to be brought to change his ways. The Day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then with a roar the sky will vanish, the elements will catch fire and fall apart, the earth and all that it contains will be burnt up.

Since everything is coming to an end like this, you should be living holy and saintly lives while you wait and long for the Day of God to come, when the sky will dissolve in flames and the elements melt in the heat. What we are waiting for is what he promised: the new heavens and new earth, the place where righteousness will be at home. So then, my friends, while you are waiting, do your best to live lives without spot or stain so that he will find you at peace.

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia! Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths: all people shall see the salvation of God. Alleluia!

Gospel - Mark 1:1-8 *Make straight the paths of the Lord.*

The beginning of the Good News about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. It is written in the book of the prophet Isaiah:

Look, I am going to send my messenger before you;
he will prepare your way.

A voice cries in the wilderness:

Prepare a way for the Lord, make his paths straight.

and so it was that John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. All Judaea and all the people of Jerusalem made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins. John wore a garment of camel-skin, and he lived on locusts and wild honey. In the course of his preaching he said, 'Someone is following me, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to kneel down and undo the strap of his sandals. I have baptised you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.'