

PARISH AND SHRINE OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

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

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CHRISTMAS DAY (YEAR B) – 25 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 25 Dec	Mass: 8am (Christmas Day) Mass: 10am (Polish)	Mass: 10am (Christmas Day)
Tues 26 Dec <i>St Stephen, the first martyr</i>	Mass: 10am (Polish) Mass: 5:30pm Rosary: 6pm Adoration: 6pm - 7pm 	Mass: No Mass today
Wed 27 Dec <i>St John, apostle, evangelist</i>	Mass: 7am	Adoration: 4:30pm Reconciliation: 4:30pm - 5:15pm Mass: 5:30pm 
Thurs 28 Dec <i>The Holy Innocents</i>	Mass: 5:30pm Adoration: 6pm - 7pm Reconciliation: 6pm - 7pm 	Mass: 7:45am
Fri 29 Dec <i>St Thomas Becket, bishop, martyr</i>	Mass: 7am	Mass: 9:30am
Sat 30 Dec	Rosary 7am Mass: 7:30am Reconciliation: 5pm - 5:30pm Mass: 6pm 	Rosary: 8:30am Mass: 9am 
Sun 31 Dec <i>The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph</i>	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

Anniversaries

Colleen Walter, Nicholas Bruton,
 Molly Rowe, Maurice Connell, Yvonne Treuen,
 Mary Potts, Lucy Dalton, Jack Miller

Prayers for the sick

Peter Lathourakis, Peter Stoyles, Antoinette Sakr
 Kerrie Maidment, Roger Baxendale, Josephine Moran



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

For many, Christmas is a joyful time of getting together for celebrations with loved ones, and that is something to be grateful for. However it is good to keep in mind that Christmas can be an especially difficult time for many, when we might feel more keenly the things in our lives that we wish were different – grief, loneliness, relationship difficulties, financial struggle, just to name a few. Thankfully, no matter what our circumstances, the joy of Christmas is truly available to all! We hear in our Christmas Mass readings that the birth of Christ is “*news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people*” (Luke 2:10). The deepest reason for Christmas joy is the good news that, in Christ, God himself has become human, shown us how much we are worth to him, and promised us that he knows us, understands us, and walks with us in the joys and the sorrows of human life.

As a parish, we are constantly seeking to grow as a community that helps every person to experience this joy of the love of Christ more and more deeply – through prayer and worship, building friendships and community, and reaching out to bring Christ’s love to all people in a variety of ways. It has been wonderful to see our parish community growing in so many ways throughout this year and I thank every parishioner who has contributed their gifts in some way to making this possible! Whatever your connection may be with our parish at this time, we are so glad that you are with us this Christmas, and please take this bulletin with you and read and reflect on the various ways that you may wish to get more connected with this parish community during the coming year. We would love to be able to support you in any ways we can and to empower you to share your God-given gifts in this parish and beyond.

I wish you a peaceful and blessed Christmas, and whatever challenges you may face this Christmas or at any stage of life’s journey, I pray that you will come to experience more deeply the joyful message of Christmas: God knows you, God understands you, God loves you and will never leave you!

Thank you to all parishioners who contributed to the Christmas hampers and to the St Vincent De Paul Society for all their work in putting these hampers together and distributing them to those most in need in our community. There will be one collection taken up at offertory during Christmas Masses, with all proceeds going towards the wonderful work of the St Vincent De Paul Society assisting those most in need in our community throughout the coming year.

Fr Duane Fernandez

Message from Sr Kerry

Scripture classes commenced back very early in the first term. Years 5 and 6 arrived for their first lesson of the year.

My first lesson usually recaps what they remember from previous scripture classes. We spoke about Christmas and one boy had been to Italy for a family holiday and spoke of the crib he saw. I encouraged him to tell us what the crib scene looked like. He spoke of statues of people and Jesus as a baby. Then he said, ‘Other people were there and they were taking animals home.’ I wasn’t quite ready for that but fortunately my mind saw an image of a shepherd holding a sheep. The image stayed with me.

This year as we celebrate Christmas what will you be taking home from the crib?

Sr Kerry Gardiner



ROSTER – THIS WEEKEND

December	Church Washing	Helen Murphy	
Sat 30 Dec	Church Cleaning	J Haywood, L Salway, M Hurley, T Vaafusuaga	
Sat 30 Dec	Lawns	No lawn mowing this week	
	Lectors	Welcomers	Children’s liturgy
6pm 30 Dec	D Nugent		
8am 31 Dec	P Gunning	M Matos	School Holidays
Counters	M Murphy(FT), S Alessi		

ROSTER – NEXT WEEKEND

January	Church Washing	Barbara Farraway	
Sat 6 Jan	Church Cleaning	G Lord, L Zanetti, S Adams	
Sat 6 Jan	Lawns	B Mannix, W Brown, F Caruana, J Lonard, J	
	Lectors	Welcomers	Children’s liturgy
6pm 6 Jan	D. Ferrer	C Cleary	
8am 7 Jan	C Cleary	G Simmonite	School Holidays
Counters	A Kelly, B Farraway		

PARISH NEWS

2023 We remember:

27 January - Australia Day breakfast BBQ



Australia Day began with a mass celebrated by Frs Duane and Jerzy praying for our great country and all Australians. After mass parishioners gathered for

breakfast. It was a great community celebration.

8 February and 30 August – ALPHA

Alpha commenced with a series of shared meals and conversation in the St Therese Parish Centre each week. Alpha explores life's biggest questions in a welcoming and relaxed space. Sessions start with a meal followed by great video input that leads to small-group conversation.



3 March - CWL Unanderra hosts the **World Day of Prayer** with Christian Churches in the area. The World Day of Prayer is an international ecumenical Christian laywomen's initiative. It is run under the motto "Informed Prayer and Prayerful Action," and is celebrated annually in over 170 countries on the first Friday in March.

6-8 April -The Triduum (Holy Thursday night to Easter Sunday)



was the highlight of the Liturgical year. We celebrated the prescribed liturgies (mass of the Lord's Supper, the Solemn Commemoration of the Passion and the Easter Vigil) with various ministries coming together to elevate the ceremonies of Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter.

26 June to 27 August - Church renovation



The renovation of the church included internal painting by the team at Legend Painting. New lighting was installed, the stained glass windows and skirting boards were cleaned and brass wear polished. Many hours of work by Parishioners has resulted in the beautiful church that we have today

30 June and 30 November - Parish social dinners at Figtree Sports Club held jointly with Immaculate Conception Parish gave us further opportunities to get to know each other better and build our awareness of community.

6 August - we had a **Community Fun Day** at Edmund Rice College was an opportunity for parishioners of all ages to get together, enjoy themselves and build parish community.

6 October - Extended Adoration

Extended Adoration on the first Friday of each month 7pm –10pm began. This was in response to many people, especially young adults, expressing a desire for Eucharistic Adoration after work hours.



26 November - Vinnies Giving Tree goes up

The Vinnies Giving Christmas Tree was placed in the church full of tags for children's toys and Christmas food. The gifts were used by the Unanderra Vinnies Conference to distribute approximately 40 Christmas hampers and toys for about seventy children within the Unanderra area.

8 December - The Feast of the Immaculate Conception.

Our Parish Feast Day celebrations began with mass at 6pm followed by sausage sizzle in the parish grounds. Our hospitality team provided tea, coffee and sweets.



22 December - Mission to Seamen

50 Christmas Care packages delivered to the delighted crew of #MV_Pounda. Additionally, bags of beanies, socks, lollies, chocolates and chewing gum delivered during the year.

22 December - Christmas Day lunch preparations

As the preparations for Christmas Day lunch continue, donations of food, Christmas cake, home made shortbread and treats have started to arrive. We are looking forward to hosting lunch in the St Therese Parish Centre. A joint initiative with St Therese, West Wollongong.



WHAT'S NEXT?

ARE YOU NEW TO OUR PARISH?

Our Parish Vision reminds us that we are a diverse community, and everyone is welcome here. We are constantly looking for ways to help people to feel more of a sense of welcome and belonging in our community. If you consider yourself new to the community we would love to hear from you! Email us at unanderra@dow.org.au with the subject "new parishioner" (or call 42711068) and we will get in touch with you soon!

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SHARE YOUR GIFTS?

Our parish vision reminds us that we are called to help each other to discover our unique gifts, because every single one of us has unique gifts from God. All of the good things that happen in our parish – both those listed above and so many more behind the scenes – are only possible because of the generous sharing of the gifts of parishioners, who in turn find joy, purpose and community in sharing their gifts. Email us at unanderra@dow.org.au with the subject "getting more involved in the parish" (or call 42711068) and we will get in touch with you soon!

ALPHA!



Alpha is an opportunity to explore life, faith and God in a friendly, open and informal environment. About 100 people have experienced Alpha this year, and I frequently hear them say "I didn't realize it would be this good!" It is a wonderful, unique atmosphere that you can only really understand by experiencing it – so feel free to come and experience the first session on Wednesday 7 February 2024 at 7pm (beginning with dinner) at St Therese Parish Centre (a joint initiative of Unanderra and West Wollongong parishes). No cost, no commitment, just come and see! Fill out the form at this QR code or email alphawwu@gmail.com

Are you interested in becoming Catholic? In early 2024, Fr Duane will be journeying with a number of adults who are also interested. Please contact him at duane.fernandez@dow.org.au if you'd like to know more about the process.

25 DECEMBER - CHRISTMAS DAY (YEAR B)

First Reading - Isaiah 9:2-4, 6-7

The people that walked in darkness has seen a great light;
on those who live in a land of deep shadow a light has shone.
You have made their gladness greater, you have made their joy increase;
they rejoice in your presence as men rejoice at harvest time,
as men are happy when they are dividing the spoils.
For the yoke that was weighing on him,
the bar across his shoulders, the rod of his oppressor,
these you break as on the day of Midian.
For all the footgear of battle, every cloak rolled in blood is burnt, and consumed by fire.
For there is a child born for us, a son given to us
and dominion is laid on his shoulders; and this is the name they give him:
Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty-God, Eternal-Father, Prince-of-Peace.
Wide is his dominion in a peace that has no end,
for the throne of David and for his royal power,
which he establishes and makes secure in justice and integrity.
From this time onwards and for ever, the jealous love of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Responsorial Psalm - Today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord.

1. O sing a new song to the Lord,
sing to the Lord all the earth.
O sing to the Lord, bless his name R.
2. Proclaim his help day by day,
tell among the nations his glory
and his wonders among all the peoples. R.
3. 'Let the heavens rejoice and earth be glad,
let the sea and all within it thunder praise,
let the land and all it bears rejoice,
all the trees of the wood shout for joy
at the presence of the Lord for he comes,
he comes to rule the earth R.
4. With justice he will rule the world,
he will judge the peoples with his truth R.

Second Reading - Titus 2:11-14

God's grace has been revealed, and it has made salvation possible for the whole human race and taught us that what we have to do is to give up everything that does not lead to God, and all our worldly ambitions; we must be self-restrained and live good and religious lives here in this present world, while we are waiting in hope for the blessing which will come with the appearing of the glory of our great God and saviour Christ Jesus. He sacrificed himself for us in order to set us free from all wickedness and to purify a people so that it could be his very own and would have no ambition except to do good.

Gospel Acclamation:

Alleluia, alleluia! Good News and great joy to the world: today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord.. Alleluia!

Gospel - Luke 2:1-14

Caesar Augustus issued a decree for a census of the whole world to be taken. This census - the first - took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria, and everyone went to his own town to be registered. So Joseph set out from the town of Nazareth in Galilee and travelled up to Judaea, to the town of David called Bethlehem, since he was of David's House and line, in order to be registered together with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to a son, her first-born. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them at the inn. In the countryside close by there were shepherds who lived in the fields and took it in turns to watch their flocks during the night. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone round them. They were terrified, but the angel said, 'Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.' And suddenly with the angel there was a great throng of the heavenly host, praising God and singing: Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace to those who enjoy his favour'