



THE SAVING WORD

MATTHEW

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT / A

21 DECEMBER 2025

FIRST READING

Isa 7:10–14

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

The virgin will conceive.

The Lord spoke to Ahaz and said, 'Ask the Lord your God for a sign for yourself coming either from the depths of Sheol or from the heights above.' 'No,' Ahaz answered 'I will not put the Lord to the test.'

Then Isaiah said:

'Listen now, House of David:

are you not satisfied with trying the
patience of men

without trying the patience of God, too?

The Lord himself, therefore,

will give you a sign.

It is this: the maiden is with child

and will soon give birth to a son

whom she will call Emmanuel,

a name which means "God-is-with-us".'

■ The word of the Lord.

RESP PSALM

Ps 23:1–6. R. cf. vv. 7. 10

R. Let the Lord enter; he is king of glory.

1. The Lord's is the earth and its fullness,
the world and all its peoples.

It is he who set it on the seas;
on the waters he made it firm. **R.**

2. Who shall climb the mountain of the Lord?
Who shall stand in his holy place?

The man with clean hands and pure heart,
who desires not worthless things. **R.**

3. He shall receive blessings from the Lord
and reward from the God who saves him.

Such are the men who seek him,
seek the face of the God of Jacob. **R.**



SECOND READING

Rom 1:1–7

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the
Romans

*Jesus Christ, a descendant of David, is the
Son of God.*

From Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus who has been called to be an apostle, and specially chosen to preach the Good News that God promised long ago through his prophets in the scriptures.

This news is about the Son of God, who, according to the human nature he took, was a descendant of David: it is about Jesus Christ our Lord who, in the order of the spirit, the spirit of holiness that was in him, was proclaimed Son of God in all his power through his resurrection from the dead. Through him we received grace and our apostolic mission to preach the obedience of faith to all pagan nations in honour of his name. You are one of these nations, and by his call belong to Jesus Christ. To you all, then, who are God's beloved in Rome, called to be saints, may God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ send grace and peace.

■ The word of the Lord.



The Parish of St Joseph's, Elsternwick & Holy Cross, Caulfield South
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PARISH PRIEST: Rev Fr Leenus Neetany SAC

Permanent Deacon: Rev John Lam

Parish Coordinator: Joanna Lam

ST JOSEPH'S, ELSTERNWICK

71 Orrong Road, Elsternwick 3185

Mass

Friday 10:00am, Saturday 6:30pm and Sunday 10:30am

Reconciliation

Friday after Mass, Saturday 6:00pm

HOLY CROSS, CAULFIELD SOUTH

707 Glen Huntly Road, Caulfield South 3162

Mass

Thursday 10:00am and Sunday 9:00am

Reconciliation

Thursday after Mass

ST ANTHONY'S, GLEN HUNTLY

74, Grange Road, Glen Huntly 3163

In Residence: Fr Pat Jackson SAC, Br Lindsay Rust SAC

Mass

Monday - Saturday 9:15am

Saturday 6:00pm

Sunday 9:00am, 11:00am, 5:00pm

Reconciliation

30-mins before all Masses & Saturday 9:45-10:10am

Thanksgiving & Special Collections

Church: \$TBA Presbytery: \$TBA

Special Collection: -

Thanksgiving



Next Week's Roster

Lectors:

Saturday 6:30pm Young Adults

Sunday 9:00am A Powell 10:30am E Galero

Counters: No Counting

Upcoming Week's Liturgical Calendar

Thu 25 Dec: The Nativity of the Lord

Fri 26 Dec: St Stephen

Sat 27 Dec: St John

Sun 28 Dec: The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON (cf. Isa 45:8)

Drop down dew from above, you heavens, and let the clouds rain down the Just One; let the earth be opened and bring forth a Saviour.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON (Isa 7:14)

Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son; and his name will be called Emmanuel.

PLEASE PRAY FOR

Those who are ill*: Tony Messina, Paulette Dobbin, Carol Burgess, Pam O'Reilly, Bernie Smith, Marie Gaudry

** Names will be published for a month, unless otherwise requested.*

Recently Deceased: -

Death Anniversary: -



St Vincent de Paul Society
CAULFIELD SOUTH & ELSTERNWICK *good works*

Columban Calendars and Vinnies Christmas Cards

- Calendars \$10.00 each
- Christmas Cards \$5.00 per pack of 5 cards

Christmas Hampers

Thank you for all your kind donations for the food parcels we will be putting together for our Conference's Companions this Christmas.

Carols by Candlelight at St Anthony's

We thank all the volunteers who helped and all participants and organisers of last Sunday's Carols by Candlelight.

This was a successful joint event by the sister Parishes of St Joseph's & Holy Cross and St Anthony's & St Aloysius.

Thank you all and God Bless.

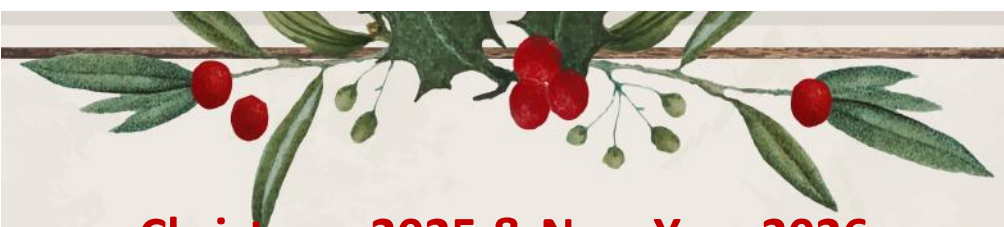
Young Adults & Youth Mass - 27 December

We look forward to celebrating Mass with the Young Adults and Youth from our 3 churches.

This is an initiative from the Young Adults' Group to host the 6:30pm Saturday Vigil Mass on the 4th Saturday of every month at St Joseph's Church.

Our Young Adults are aged 18-35 and our Youth are those aged 7-17. For the slightly older but still young-at-heart, you are most welcome to join the group as Youth Coordinators; to support the Young Adults and also to guide our Youth at Mass and during fellowship.

This will be the first gathering after the recently concluded ACYF-2025. Please encourage our youth and young people to attend.



Christmas 2025 & New Year 2026

St Joseph's, Elsternwick
Holy Cross, Caulfield South

1st Rite of Reconciliation * Saturday 20 December

5:30pm Reconciliation - St Joseph's

Christmas Eve * Wednesday 24 December

6:00pm Carols, 6:30pm Vigil Mass - St Joseph's

8:30pm Carols, 9:00pm Vigil Mass - Holy Cross

Christmas Day * Thursday 25 December

9:00am Mass - Holy Cross

10:30am Mass - St Joseph's

New Year's Day * Thursday 1 January

10:00am Mass - Holy Cross

Christmas Day Dinner 2025



We all know that December can be a difficult time for many and 2025 is no exception. So, as always, we ask for your help to reach out to others. We are expecting to prepare over 400+ meals on Christmas Day.

The Tony’s Café Team will be setting up at the hall on Sunday after 11 am Mass and would be glad of some help to carry trestles and chairs and to blow up some balloons. Donations of shortbread, cake and Christmas pudding are still needed. We would also welcome some more volunteers on the day.

Despite these small shortfalls, we are always happy to welcome last minute guests, either to a sit down meal; or a takeaway meal; or a home delivery for local people who are housebound. Both yellow and green forms can be collected from the doors of St Anthony’s Church, or the Parish House, 74 Grange Road.

For more information please contact us via email stanthony.christmasdinner@gmail.com or call 0458-702118

Donations to the Dinner can also be made to:

Account name: St Anthony’s Parish Tony’s Café
BSB 083-347 Account number 227-402-477
(Reference Christmas Dinner)

For more info email stanthony.christmasdinner@gmail.com or call 9401-6336. Thank you all for your support.

Note: After the Christmas Day Dinner, Tony’s Café will close and reopen on Tue 3 Feb 2026 at 12.30pm - 1.30pm.

Fr Pat’s Birthday Celebration

Fr Pat’s 90th birthday is on 30th January 2026. We, together with our sister Parish of St Anthony’s, will celebrate the occasion on Sunday, 1st February at St Anthony’s Parish Hall after the 11am Mass.

We seek expressions of interest in forming an organising team. Please contact the Parish Office.



Prayer for Life



Helpers of God's Precious Infants
helpers101@hotmail.com

Feast of the Holy Innocents
MONDAY 29TH DECEMBER 2025

THE JERICHO PRAYER
near Jolimont Station,
Wellington Pde. East Melbourne

8.30am to 9.30am

Surround the ‘Fertility Control Clinic’ with prayer. Pray for the conversion of all those involved in abortion and those who condone the killing.

Followed by morning tea in the park.

HOLY MASS & ROSARY
St. Mary Star of the Sea
33 Howard St West Melbourne

11am Holy Mass
Fr James Grant OFM Cap

12.15am Holy Rosary

Luncheon after Rosary provided by Helpers. Please bring a dessert.

ALL WELCOME
PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS REPLACES OUR NORMAL FOURTH SATURDAY VIGIL FOR DECEMBER

4th Sunday of Advent

Dear brothers and sisters in Jesus, This Sunday, we are entering the fourth Week of Advent. The lighting of the last candle of the Advent wreath will announce the imminent birth of Christ.



In preparing ourselves for a worthy celebration of the birth of Christ, we could reflect on the theme of Trust as found in Mary and Joseph. Mary trusted the angel Gabriel, who brought her the message from God. Mary trusted the message itself. Mary trusted God who sent the angel with the message. She trusted in the promise of God and in his plan for our salvation.

In turn God trusted Mary. God also trusted in Mary’s consent. God trusted that Mary would remain faithful to her word till the end. God trusted also the angel, that the angel would convey the right message to the right person.

In the same way, we see that Joseph trusted the angel who appeared to him in a dream. He trusted the words of the angel, and thus trusted God who sent the angel. And in turn God trusted Joseph. We again see Joseph trusting Mary and Mary trusting Joseph.

They could easily trust each other because they themselves were trustworthy. Because of their trustworthiness God entrusted with them our Saviour. “Trust” has an important role in our lives too.

Our relationship with God is also based on trust. God places his trust in us and we place our trust in God. If any of God’s plans is going to take effect in our lives, we have to trust in God and be trustworthy. And our prayers are best heard when we trust and prove ourselves to be trustworthy. Every one of us likes to be trusted. God too likes to be trusted. Jesus in his apparition to St Faustina demanded that a title be inscribed on his picture, “Jesus I trust in you”. It shows that Jesus loves to be trusted, and He is 100% trustworthy. We can count on him.

Let us most willingly place all our trust in the Lord, as he is eager to be born for and in us. Let our lives prove that we are trustworthy. God bless!

Fr Leenus.

A woman went into a post office to buy some stamps for her Christmas cards. “What denomination do you want?” asked the lady at the counter. “Good God!” she replied. “Has it come to this? I suppose you’d better give me twenty Catholic and twenty Presbyterian.”

Message from Archbishop Comensoli

Preparations for a Synod: Archbishop Comensoli has initiated preparations for a Melbourne Synod in 2026. Building on the Jubilee Year of Hope, the Synod will give all of us, lay, religious and ordained the opportunity to listen deeply to the Holy Spirit and to one another, reflecting on how we live communion, foster participation and carry out Christ’s mission in the Church.

Events at Bondi Beach: In a recently released statement, Archbishop Comensoli has called upon all people of good will to reach out in sorrow, friendship, and resolve to the Jewish community. “In the face of calculated hatred and terrifying violence, we must reject knowing silence and calculated indifference. We must choose to be present, to pray, and to stand in solidarity. Yet even in devastating darkness, there is light. Hanukkah proclaims that light cannot be extinguished by darkness. Our faith, too, calls us to be a light for the world—to resist despair, to name evil truthfully, and to move together from desolation toward hope. May the God of all humanity draw us from this darkness onto a path of light. May we be strengthened to stand together, to reject hatred in all its forms, and to bear witness - through prayer and action - to a future shaped not by fear, but by solidarity, justice, and peace.” melbournecatholic.org

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Mt 1:23

Alleluia, alleluia!

The virgin will give birth to a son;
his name will be Emmanuel: God-is-with-us.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Mt 1:18–24

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Jesus was born of Mary, the betrothed of Joseph, a son of David.

This is how Jesus Christ came to be born. His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph; but before they came to live together she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a man of honour and wanting to spare her publicity, decided to divorce her informally. He had made up his mind to do this when the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, and said 'Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived what is in her by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.' Now all this took place to fulfil the words spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

The virgin will conceive and give birth
to a son
and they will call him Emmanuel,
a name which means 'God-is-with-us'.

When Joseph woke up he did what the angel of the Lord had told him to do: he took his wife to his home.

■ The Gospel of the Lord.

Breaking Open the Word

GOD WITH US

With Christmas only days away, today's Gospel announces Jesus' birth. Unlike the perhaps more familiar story from Luke's Gospel, with the annunciation by Gabriel to Mary, Matthew's focus is on Joseph, a heroic character for the Gospel's Jewish audience, reminiscent of the Old Testament patriarch, Joseph. Matthew's story is different from Luke's. In Matthew's Jewish world marriage occurred in two stages. The first was engagement; the second, cohabitation. Mary and Joseph are married according to Jewish law, though not living together. We must remember, too, that the Gospel in general and this story in particular is a *theological* narrative. Matthew is not concerned with gynaecology, but *theology*. It is about God and the Holy Spirit. Mary's pregnancy is the fruit of God's action. As this becomes known to Joseph, he wants to step out of the scene and divorce her quietly without bringing her shame—an option open to him from Jewish law.

Through an angel in a dream—reminiscent again of the Old Testament patriarch, 'the dreamer'—Joseph comes to a profound theological truth. Mary's conception is the work of God's Spirit. This is God's act. Joseph is then instructed to name the child, an important Israelite convention that incorporates the one to be born into Joseph's kinship group. Matthew concludes the scene with a second naming, now provided by the prophet Isaiah. The child will be 'Emmanuel', 'God with us', a theme that will continue throughout Matthew even to the Gospel's concluding scene on Easter day. We celebrate and affirm God 'being-with-us' this Christmas. We want this God to 'be with us' for the year ahead.

A SERVICE OF THE SOCIETY OF ST PAUL



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