



St Peter Chanel & St Joseph Berala

Streams of living water will flow from within. ~John 7:38

Parish Office: 60 Kingsland Rd, Berala, 2141, Ph: 96447787 E: info@stpeter-stjoseph.org.au
Parish Website: www.stpeter-stjoseph.org.au, **facebook:** [stpeterstjoseph](https://www.facebook.com/stpeterstjoseph) **YouTube:** [BeralaParish](https://www.youtube.com/BeralaParish)

Holy Mass at Berala: Monday to Friday 6.45am, Saturday 8.00am | **Holy Hour:** Saturday 8.30am-9.30am

Lord's Day Mass Berala: Saturday 5.00pm (Vigil), Sunday 8.00am & 10.00am

Reconciliation at Berala: Saturday 8.30am - 9.30am. Or contact the parish office for any other time.

For Baptisms, Weddings, Bible Study and Catholic Enquiry, please contact Fr Thomas or the parish office on 9644 7787.

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT, YEAR B

13 DECEMBER 2020

You are the Message and the Messenger



Archbishop Anthony is launching Parish 2020, an Evangelisation Plan, **this weekend**. *'Go and Make Disciples'* is the theme of the program. Who is a disciple and whom should the disciples be following are questions to be considered.

Discernment in discipleship was a live issue to the Community of John's Gospel. This Gospel was written very early in the 2nd century. Disciples of John the Baptist **were significantly present at that time**. John the Baptist's identity assumed more importance because there was an expectation that Elijah would be part of the final unfolding, based on *Malachi 4:5*. Likewise, there was an expectation that a prophet like Moses would be part of the end, based on *Deuteronomy 18:15*. Since many people considered John the Baptist to be special, the Christians needed some guidance on whom to follow. *John 1:6-8* provides the needed clarity on this matter.

John the Baptist himself stated that he was neither Elijah nor any other prominent prophet many were waiting for. But he had the courage not to make any exaggerated **claims**. He **knew his worth and that is** *"the voice of one crying out in the wilderness"*. He announced the coming of the Messiah, the Saviour. John the Baptist highlighted the importance of the voice hope to those in the wilderness of despair. John calls for the conversion of hearts so that the coming of God into their lives will fill them with the Holy Spirit.

Just as John bore witness to Jesus, there were other people who have borne witness to you. It could be your parents, teachers, some relatives, friends, even strangers. It is worth recollecting on those moments of faith revelations and Jesus experience. You too may have borne witness to others of your moments of Jesus experiences. You may have been the voice of hope for someone in the wilderness of despair. Can you recollect some of them? You are to be the message and the messenger for Jesus to those who await the coming of God.

MASS INTENTIONS

Sick: Sr Tomsy, Graham Turner, Sr Salve Stuart, Theo Bergstedt, Tony Michael, Rosario Poli, Doreen Stanmore, Ann Bechiom, Grazyna Lukasiewicz, Lourdes Zabala, Ray Jarque, Brillo Amores

Recently Deceased: Guia Ribeiro, Florence Rodrigue, Tony Draybi, Vergenia V Nayon, Ikaw Kumon, Joseph Spiteri

Deceased: Tom Rodrigues

Anniversary: Maria Yen Vu, George Guanzon, Fely Sanchez

Birthday: Tyler Baldoria

Deceased Members and Friends of: O'Dwyer & Erwin Families, Ross & Mitchell Families

Other Intentions: For all those affected by the Corona Virus. For the intention of the Holy Father.



Please do not put the
bulletin back in the church.

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ANTIPHONS & READINGS

Entrance Antiphon

Phil 4:4-5

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice.
Indeed, the Lord is near.

First Reading

Is 61:1-2. 10-11

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for the Lord has anointed me. He has sent me to bring good news to the poor, to bind up hearts that are broken; to proclaim liberty to captives, freedom to those in prison; to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord.

‘I exult for joy in the Lord, my soul rejoices in my God, for he has clothed me in the garments of salvation, he has wrapped me in the cloak of integrity, like a bridegroom wearing his wreath, like a bride adorned in her jewels.

‘For as the earth makes fresh things grow, as a garden makes seeds spring up, so will the Lord make both integrity and praise spring up in the sight of the nations.’

Responsorial Psalm

Lk 1:46-50. 53-54. R. Is 61:10

R My soul rejoices in my God.

My soul glorifies the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour. He looks on his servant in her nothingness; henceforth all ages will call me blessed. **R**

The Almighty works marvels for me. Holy his name! His mercy is from age to age, on those who fear him. **R**

He fills the starving with good things, sends the rich away empty. He protects Israel, his servant, remembering his mercy. **R**

Second Reading

1 Thes 5:16-24

Be happy at all times; pray constantly; and for all things give thanks to God, because this is what God expects you to do in Christ Jesus.

Never try to suppress the Spirit or treat the gift of

prophecy with contempt; think before you do anything – hold on to what is good and avoid every form of evil.

May the God of peace make you perfect and holy; and may you all be kept safe and blameless, spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has called you and he will not fail you.

Gospel Acclamation

Is 61:1 (Lk 4:18)

Alleluia, alleluia!

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; he sent me to bring Good News to the poor.

Alleluia!

Gospel

Jn 1:6-8. 19-28

A man came, sent by God. His name was John. He came as a witness, as a witness to speak for the light, so that everyone might believe through him. He was not the light, only a witness to speak for the light.

This is how John appeared as a witness. When the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, ‘Who are you?’ he not only declared, but he declared quite openly, ‘I am not the Christ.’ ‘Well then,’ they asked, ‘are you Elijah?’ ‘I am not,’ he said. ‘Are you the Prophet?’ He answered, ‘No.’ So they said to him, ‘Who are you? We must take back an answer to those who sent us. What have you to say about yourself?’ So John said, ‘I am, as Isaiah prophesied: a voice that cries in the wilderness: Make a straight way for the Lord.’ Now these men had been sent by the Pharisees, and they put this further question to him, ‘Why are you baptising if you are not the Christ, and not Elijah, and not the prophet?’ John replied, ‘I baptise with water; but there stands among you – unknown to you – the one who is coming after me; and I am not fit to undo his sandal-strap.’ This happened at Bethany, on the far side of the Jordan, where John was baptising.

Communion Antiphon

Cf. Is 35:4

Say to the faint of heart: Be strong and do not fear. Behold, our God will come, and he will save us.

Next Week's Readings:

1st Reading:
2 Sm 7:1-5. 8-12. 14. 16

2nd Reading:
Rom 16:25-27

Gospel:
Lk 1:26-38

REFLECTIONS ON JOHN 1:6-8. 19-28

Have you thought? A time to Rejoice!

This Sunday, the third Sunday of Advent is traditionally known as Gaudete Sunday. Gaudete is the Latin word for Rejoice! Advent was originally celebrated as a five week season and with the same fasting and penitential nature as the season of Lent. The third Sunday, Gaudete, was like a break for rejoicing in the midst of the fasting. When Advent was reduced to four weeks and the nature of the season altered, Gaudete Sunday was retained. The colour of this Sunday is rose – a celebratory colour – and it is reflected in the vestments worn by the priest and in the colour of the third candle used in Advent wreaths.

Living the Gospel – A Witness? Me?

It came as something of a surprise to me to think that other people might observe the way I treated others and draw conclusions about my motivation. It was when I started to work with young people that the truth of this was revealed. I realised that my actions could speak so much louder than anything I might say. I hoped that the young people I was working with might stop some time and think to themselves, ‘I wonder why he treats us all that way? I wonder how it fits with that religion stuff he talks about?’ Well, I can hope can’t I?

Gospel Focus – Same but different

Having the same gospel passage from two different gospels used in the liturgy in consecutive weeks is an ideal opportunity to highlight the different focus adopted by the different gospels. The language of John’s gospel is remarkably different from that of the three synoptic gospels (synoptic = ‘seen together’). The synoptics share a fairly common narrative style, while John relies much more on metaphor and imagery – it is a more poetic language. In the gospel account of John the Baptist we see in John gospel’s greater emphasis on the conversation around what was occurring, while the Markan version emphasises recording the event.

John is the voice, and Christ is the Word

From a sermon by Saint Augustine

John is the voice, but the Lord is *the Word* who was *in the beginning*. John is the voice that lasts for a time; from the beginning Christ is the Word who lives for ever.

Take away the word, the meaning, and what is the voice? Where there is no understanding, there is only a meaningless sound. The voice without the word strikes the ear but does not build up the heart.

However, let us observe what happens when we first seek to build up our hearts. When I think about what I am going to say, the word or message is already in my heart. When I want to speak to you, I look for a way to share with your heart what is already in mine.

In my search for a way to let this message reach you, so that the word already in my heart may find place also in yours, I use my voice to speak to you. The sound of my voice brings the meaning of the word to you and then passes away. The word which the sound has brought to you is now in your heart, and yet it is still also in mine.

When the word has been conveyed to you, does not the sound seem to say: *The word ought to grow, and I should diminish?* The sound of the voice has made itself heard in the service of the word, and has gone away, as though it were saying: *My joy is complete.* Let us hold on to the word; we must not lose the word conceived inwardly in our hearts.

Do you need proof that the voice passes away but the divine Word remains? Where is John’s baptism today? It served its purpose, and it went away. Now it is Christ’s baptism that we celebrate. It is in Christ that we all believe; we hope for salvation in him. This is the message the voice cried out.

Because it is hard to distinguish word from voice, even John himself was thought to be the Christ. The voice was thought to be the word. But the voice acknowledged what it was, anxious not to give offence to the word. *I am not the Christ*, he said, *nor Elijah, nor the prophet.* And the question came: *Who are you, then?* He replied: *I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way for the Lord. The voice of one crying in the wilderness* is the voice of one breaking the silence. *Prepare the way for the Lord*, he says, as though he were saying: “I speak out in order to lead him into your hearts, but he does not choose to come where I lead him unless you prepare the way for him.”

What does *prepare the way* mean, if not “pray well”? What does *prepare the way* mean, if not “be humble in your thoughts”? We should take our lesson from John the Baptist. He is thought to be the Christ; he declares he is not what they think. He does not take advantage of their mistake to further his own glory.

If he had said, “I am the Christ,” you can imagine how readily he would have been believed, since they believed he was the Christ even before he spoke. But he did not say it; he acknowledged what he was. He pointed out clearly who he was; he humbled himself.

He saw where his salvation lay. He understood that he was a lamp, and his fear was that it might be blown out by the wind of pride.

FEASTS & MEMORIALS OF THE WEEK



Monday, 14 December - St John of the Cross (Memorial)

Born in 1542 at Fontiveros (Spain). Died on this day in Ubeda. A Carmelite priest who joined Saint Teresa of Jesus (15 October) in the work of Carmelite reform and, despite opposition and imprisonment, organised the discalced Carmelites. Remembered for his mystical writings, which combine theology and poetry to describe the spiritual journey through darkness to union with God.

WHAT'S NEW?

Christmas Luncheon

All are invited (with or without their families) to join Christmas Luncheon on 25 December at 11.30AM. You may invite other people also to dine together on Christmas day at Berala.

This year Christmas Lunch will be served at the tables. In the previous years it was buffet where the participants served themselves. But this time we want to be COVID safe. To organise we need volunteers.

Following is the list of tasks for you consider volunteering.

- Greeters. These are the people who welcome the guests as they arrive and make them register and sanitise their hands.
- Setting up the Jubilee Hall and preparing dinner accessories. This could be done on 24th December after 4PM.
- Dishing up meals in the kitchen and making them ready to serve. This is done mostly after 9AM on Christmas Day.
- Volunteers to serve plates of food to the tables. These volunteers should be ready to go from 11.30AM on Christmas day.
- Serving drinks – (Volunteer already assigned).
- Cleaning the Hall – this will be done with all available volunteers after the lunch.



Lunch Menu

The menu includes ham, chicken (roast), pasta bake, potato salad, green salad and dessert. Soft drinks, beer and red wine will also be available.

You are welcome to donate any one or more of the above items. Volunteers with food items can indicate in the sheet provided at the entrance of the church what they are bringing. Should you prefer email to inform the parish office what you are donating, that too is welcome. You can drop off food items by 10AM on Christmas day. That which could be brought earlier could be done so.

CHURCH CLEANER VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Looking for volunteers to help clean church once a month starting December. If you are able to help, please contact the Parish Office.

Just for Laughs

A man goes into a pet shop to buy a parrot. The shop owner points to three identical looking parrots on a perch and says, "The parrot on the left costs \$500 dollars." "Why does the parrot cost so much?" asks the man. The owner says "Well the parrot knows how to use a computer."

The man then asks about the next parrot and learns that it costs \$1,000 dollars because it can do everything the first parrot can do plus it knows how to use the UNIX operating system.

Naturally, the increasingly startled man asks about the third parrot, only to be told that it costs \$2,000 dollars. Needless to say this begs the question, "What can it do?"

To which the owner replies, "To be honest I have never seen it do anything but the other two call him boss!"



Mass Schedules for Advent and Christmas



The restrictions have been relaxed from Monday, 7 December. The church intake for weekend masses could be increased from 100 to 200, following the two square meter rule. That should satisfy our Sunday

congregations. Therefore, we will be returning the normal schedule of masses from next Sunday, Vigil (Saturday) 5PM, Sunday 8AM & 10AM.

There will not be any more 9AM mass.

To help plan Christmas Mass arrangements, please register which Mass you wish to attend for Christmas. You can register your name on the sheet provided at the entrance of the Church as well by email to the parish office.

Christmas Schedule

Thursday, 18 December

7.30pm Second Rite of Reconciliation

Saturday, 19 December

7.00pm Carols Night

Thursday, 24 December

7.00pm Christmas Vigil Mass, 12.00
midnight Solemn Mass

Friday, 25 December

8.00am Christmas Mass, 10.00am
Christmas Mass

Christmas Pageant

Christmas Vigil Mass at 7PM on 24 December will have a special focus on families with children. It will be celebrated outdoors (weather permitting) this year. There will be a Christmas Pageant as part of the Mass.

All children are invited to dress up as characters in the nativity scene. Options are to dress up as angel, shepherd, wise men, Joseph, Mary, and infant Jesus. There will be a parade of the Characters at the Vigil.



Christmas Giving Tree



As in the past years, the Parish will be working with Vinnies to distribute Christmas gifts. To ensure safety due to Covid, this year Vinnies will be holding a toy drive for their clients where they can come and pick up a present using a voucher from the school on a weekend. Vinnies would love your support by donating toys for children of all ages this Christmas. Please label wrapped gifts with whom they may be most appropriate for (boy or girl and age). Any food donations this year will be delivered to Vinnies office for distribution. Alternatively, you can donate gift cards for distribution to the needy. Your generosity will help bring a smile to those less fortunate. Thank you!

Carols 2020

The Parish Carols will be held on **Saturday, 19 December** at 7PM on the Church lawns.

A number of choirs and individuals will be singing:
Parish Choir, Sacred Heart Choir, Tongan Choir,
Ugandan Choir, Wilma Baker & Elias Eltarraf.



The Catholic Parish of St Peter Chanel & St Joseph, Berala
would like to invite you and your family to a



Christmas Luncheon

Friday, 25 December

11.30am to 2.00pm

Jubilee Hall

62 Kingsland Road

BERALA 2141

*The magic of Christmas is not in the presents, but in His presence.
May God bless you and your family this Christmas!*

St Peter Chanel Primary School Sends Christmas Greetings



Following a difficult year, our initiative for the Advent / Christmas season was about reconnecting with each other. And so in an effort to spread the spirit of Christmas, the families of St Peter Chanel have written heartfelt greetings into a card for another family in our community.

Children are selected daily from different classes to choose a card, take it home and share in the good wishes with their family. Some of the older

grades have written their own Christmas message.

The community of St Peter Chanel Primary school wish you all a happy and holy Christmas.



~ Barbara Mucha, Family Educator, St Peter Chanel Primary School

Church Shop

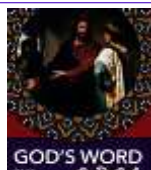
Come and grab some items perfect gifts for Christmas: Nativity statues, prayer books, Religious Christmas Cards, decorations, glass angels AND SO MUCH MORE!

Drop by our Piety Stall and grab a gift for that special someone. We have a range of religious items perfect as presents for those celebrating the Sacraments of Holy Communion, Baptism, Reconciliation and Confirmation. The Church Shop is open on weekends before and after the 5.00pm Saturday Vigil and Sunday 8.00am & 10.00am masses. If you have any product enquiry, please contact the Parish Office.



Are you struggling financially?

If you or you know anyone needing financial assistance during this time may contact Fr Thomas. He may be able to help you. Please contact the Parish Office to book an appointment or send a confidential email to pp@stpeter-stjoseph.org.au.



Give the gift of Christmas that lasts the whole year! God's Word Daily Reflections 2021

Available Now at the Church Shop for only \$20.00!

Evangelisers needed: Christmas at the Cathedral



If you're interested in helping our evangelising team at St Mary's Cathedral, please sign up using the form at this address: <https://forms.gle/p5nDMiK1J5USBBgr6>

To apply please email chris.dasilva@sydneycatholic.org

Dates: 14, 19 December

Times: 6:45 – 9:15 pm

Place: meet at Cathedral house at 6:45 for a short induction

Successful applicants must have a current volunteer Working with Children Check

Of Life and Love Marriage Preparation – 2021 Dates

2021 dates for the Of Life and Love Marriage Preparation course have been released. Please contact Steven Buhagiar on steven.buhagiar@sydneycatholic.org or 0415 600 290



Round 1: 27 Feb; 4, 11, 18 March

Round 2: 14 Aug; 19, 26 Aug and 2 Sep

All Enquiries: chris.dasilva@sydneycatholic.org

WE NEED YOU!

St Vincent de Paul Society - Berala Conference

The Berala Conference is always looking for volunteers. Whether you would like to do home visits, social visits, help with fundraising, office duties or just join a team of people who are determined to make our community a better place for all - we would love for you to join us! The time you contribute is up to you and the rewards are indescribable! **For more information, email amanda.gahan@syd.catholic.edu.au.**



Masculine Mission 1-day Course for Men

Join Simon Carrington of Fire Up Ministries for a 1-day course on the Masculine Mission!

Date: 12 December from 8 am – 5 pm

Registration price: \$99 (includes a PDF and studyguide)

Email simon@fireupministries.com to register

Registrations close 10 December

**Course limited to 20 men in-person. Also available via Zoom.*

Planned Giving Request Form

Your financial contribution to the Planned Giving of the Parish is your appreciation for the Parish. At the end of the financial year you will receive a receipt for your contributions. To join the Planned Giving Program fill this form, tear this part off and place it in the Sunday Collection plate.

Your Name:

Telephone NoEmail

☐ Yes, please organise a set of envelopes. ☐ Yes, please organise automatic credit card deductions. (An authority form will be sent)



Come Home to Mass! On returning to the Eucharist following easing of COVIDSafe restrictions
Eighth Pastoral Letter of the Archbishop of Sydney to the Clergy and Faithful
during the COVID-19 Pandemic, Third Sunday of Advent, 13 December 2020

Dear pastors and brothers and sisters in Christ,

Dispensation now lifted

The government has announced a significant easing of restrictions upon places and activities of worship. The only restriction on numbers at indoor and outdoor Masses is now the two-square-metre rule. Of course, we must continue to observe appropriate hygiene and distancing practices. We know we are not out of the COVID woods yet. Along with this letter I have issued **new liturgical directives**.

In light of the significant easing of the restrictions upon church attendance, I **rescind my decree of 20 March 2020 dispensing the faithful of Sydney from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and the Holy Days of Christmas and the Assumption. Under canon 1247 attendance at Mass on those days is now obligatory once again.** Of course, we want people to come to Mass out of love more than obedience, but love itself brings responsibilities. Those who are of great age, have health conditions or are otherwise anxious about the risks of COVID-19 are free to remain at home and find another way of keeping holy the Sunday Sabbath: I have indicated some ways in my previous letters.

If people find they cannot get in to a particular Mass, they should regard their attempt as satisfying the obligation. But most of our faithful have many options for Mass and it will be rare that someone can't get in: with greater capacity, additional Masses, pre-registering and other measures, almost everyone should be able to be accommodated. Our priests are looking at a mix of in-church, in-bigger-hall and outdoor Masses to accommodate the Christmas crowds.

Distancing has been hard

Distancing troubles Christians because we know life is about *following close behind Christ* (Mt 16:21-7): gathering in families, parishes and communities, hearing His word proclaimed and articulating our needs in common prayer, receiving His substance into our own in Holy Communion, and then being sent out to assist the poor and lonely.

For much of this year we've been unable to do these things, or could only do so in very reduced ways. Though our pastors and parishioners have shown remarkable resilience and creativity in responding, it has been a real loss for us.

We have accepted the restrictions imposed on us with a heavy heart because we want all the community to cooperate in keeping people safe. But even as we have physically distanced, we have been especially conscious that we must never distance ourselves emotionally or spiritually from God and others.

Community and communion

For some, this pandemic-enforced 'retreat' has been an opportunity to connect more deeply with family and God – to give time to conversation and prayer so often crowded out by our busyness. Many have maintained their connection to Mass and parish by live-streaming; others, who can't normally come to Mass, have enjoyed Mass coming to them at home.

But we rightly miss the experience of **community** at Mass, our union with family, friends, neighbours and fellow parishioners in Christ's mystical body the Church. It's been very isolating for many of us. As your bishop and on behalf of your priests may I say: **we've missed you!**

If we rightly miss community at Mass, we also rightly miss **communion** at Mass, our union with Christ's sacramental Body the Eucharist. Not being able to receive sacramentally has been a terrible loss for many of us. On God's behalf I say: **Jesus has missed you at Holy Communion time!**

We have rightly have missed congregating in our usual way. This is **the ecclesial consciousness**: that salvation is not just between me and God. We are saved and God is mediated with and through others. Human beings are made for community and communion.

Sign and sacrament

"Come to the water," God says through Isaiah (Isa 55:1-3), and in Advent we see John fulfilling this through baptism. "Come to the table", the prophets and psalmist cry out (Isa 25:6; Ps 23:5), and we see that fulfilled by Jesus in His Paschal Eucharist. If John was to be the witness to the Light, he had to be seen; if he was to call all to prepare for Christ's coming, he had to be heard; if he was to baptise us with water, he had to stand beside us (Jn 1:6-8,19-28). As spiritual as they were, these intimate encounters with God required physical presence.

Ours is a God-come-close religion, a come-close-to-God religion, sacramental, ecclesial, up close and personal. Because we are bodily, God became bodily. Because we are hungry, God became food. Because we are substantial, God lends His substance. No mere virtual reality, or spiritual feeling, or ghostly presence: God in the flesh, body-and-blood, for us to receive.

This is the sacramental consciousness: that through physical realities like bread and wine, oil and water, incense and vestments, ritual and music, art and architecture, bodily creatures like us are joined to spiritual realities like God. Sacraments require physical or 'moral' presence.

The big question

In our pandemic-enforced retreat we've been confronted with the question: **what is life for?** Many people have been re-examining their priorities. Such 'apocalyptic' events can be just the wake-up call we need.

Our health officials have naturally enough focussed on saving life. Our politicians have also been concerned to save the economy. But there's more to life than keeping healthy and affluent – desirable as both are. Other things like family and friends, education and sport, arts and leisure, issues of justice or service and, of course, the worship of God – these things matter very much also.

Our long fast *from* the Eucharist has sharpened our sense of these things. We appreciate better than before the personal connection the Mass occasions with our God and our fellows. Which is not to say that God's grace can't reach us outside His house! In today's Gospel people encounter God in the wilderness around the River Jordan (Jn 1:6-8,19-28). They hear God's prophet, John, as "a voice that cries in the wilderness: make straight the way of the Lord."

Yet even out there contact with God required contact with others. John gathered people together and baptised them in person – not via a letter or zoom! The experience of remoteness only serves to underline our need for community and communion. It whets our appetite for the satisfying Bread and priceless Wine.

The answer to our biggest question, the meaning of life, is: **Jesus Christ**. He is the God-who-comes-close and the only thing to fill our inner void.

Go Make Disciples!

The COVID-19 pandemic and public health orders have hit the faiths hard. Churches were closed for a time, then reopened with only a third to half our normal congregations. Many joined Mass by live-streaming and some donated on-line. But others fell away and collections fell dramatically. Now it is time to return to normal.

But it will be a **new normal**. There may be further outbreaks and so we must continue to be vigilant and to

pray for an end to the pandemic. There will be ongoing restrictions and a greater consciousness of hygiene and other safety measures. There will be a continuing challenge to reach out to the isolated, anxious or economically devastated. Above all, as people are called back to Church, we must ask **what kind of Church they are coming back to?**

By a happy providence, this very weekend we launch *Go Make Disciples*, our archdiocesan mission plan several years in the making. As things have turned out, it will be our COVID recovery plan as well. It is all about personal and community renewal, so that we can be the kind of missionary disciples and welcoming communities needed for the new normal.

The call of every generation to a 'new evangelisation' is as old as Christianity itself. What's *new* about it is our particular gifts, enthusiasm, audiences, approaches. Our new mission plan is packed full of ideas on how we can offer the kinds of evangelisation, leadership, community, formation and worship that people need today.

Come Home

The 19th century Scottish poet and Christian apologist, George Macdonald, published a poem entitled "The Shortest and Sweetest of Songs". The title is longer than the poem itself, which contains but two words:

*Come
Home.*

The poignancy of these two words, separated by a line, is undeniable. It could be addressed to anyone. Is it a directive? A plea? A hope? It seems to me that this song voices God's call to **come home to Mass**.

In coming back to Church, we are returning to *God's house and ours*, the entrance hall to our eternal home. But through the renewal ahead in *Go Make Disciples*, it should be more evident than ever. We want to make ourselves and our communities sites of encounter with God, where people will find their spiritual home.

Christmas is coming! Please plan to include Mass in your Christmas celebrations. Plan to bring with you some people who are less regular attenders. At last we will be able to sing carols again. At last we can celebrate the greatest of all Christmas gifts: God-made-baby for us.

Yours sincerely in Christ



Most Rev. Anthony Fisher OP
Archbishop of Sydney

OTHER NOTICES

Parish Missionary Internship for young Catholics: Seattle, USA

Our Lady Star of the Sea Parish, on the outskirts of the US city of Seattle is seeking young adult Catholics (10-30) who wish to spend a one year internship spreading the gospel to youth and young adults, while gaining valuable experience serving in a vibrant parish environment. Missionary interns will live and work in a team setting with other parish interns participating in daily prayer, Mass and evangelisation efforts in the parish and greater community. If you're interested in the program, please contact Sr Maria Caeli OP- Director of Missionary Internship Program at Our Lady Star of the Sea, Email: smcparmeter@starofthesea.net

Job Opportunity with Caritas Australia- Youth Participation Coordinator

The aid agency, Caritas Australia is looking for an energetic person who can implement an Australia-wide Caritas Youth Participation Strategy.

A signature program is our walking 'With God Program' or faith inspiring bush walks in groups around Australia, and this is the key focus along with helping to animate the stories of Caritas' work through virtual engagements with schools.

Ideally this is a full time role based in Sydney however we understand that for some youth they may be studying or have other part-time jobs therefore flexibility in location and work hours will be considered for the right person. More information is available online at: <https://www.caritas.org.au/about/jobs/positions-vacant#YouthParticipationCoordinator>

Carols from St Mary's Cathedral

Friday 18th December, 11am & 7pm | Admission is FREE
An opportunity to enjoy beautiful carols and Christmas readings, with the St Mary's Cathedral Choir and Orchestra, in our stunning Cathedral. Register at <https://sydneycatholic.eventsair.com/smcmass/carols/Site/Register>
Please spread the word about this special event with your parishioners through sharing the attached Facebook tile. Numbers are limited at the cathedral due to COVID-19 restrictions, so you should register as soon as possible to guarantee a seat.

Why Celebrate Christmas?

A series of Friday night presentations on the Sunday Mass readings during Advent, followed by questions from the audience. Where? 1880 Hall, Saint Peter's Parish, Surry Hills
When? Friday night: December 18 from 6.00pm to 7.00pm
For whom? Everyone is welcome | By whom? Dr. Ken Brimaud, LL. B., STD of the Catholic Institute of Sydney and the Angelicum University, Rome.

Home Care Services for Seniors

CatholicCare's Home Care Services for seniors can support you or a loved one to live at home independently

with comfort and confidence and to remain connected to your parish community. To learn more call our Home Care Team 13 18 19 or connect@catholiccare.org

CatholicCare outreach to the lonely and isolated

CatholicCare, through its CCareline 13 18 19 number and the Parish Volunteer Program in partnership with the Archdiocese of Sydney, is working together as the 'hands and feet of Christ in the community' reaching out to those most in need in our parishes and beyond. To register or learn more about the Parish Volunteer Program call CCareline on 13 18 19. If you are struggling and need help or support, or you are worried about someone else, please call CCareline on 13 18 19 today.

Got your wedding plans under control?

How prepared are you for marriage? Engaged Encounter provides you with deeper insights into each other and into married life. We give you a chance to spend time together to strengthen and enrich your relationship. For further information visit: www.engagedencounter.org.au. Next session: Feb 20-21.

The 2021 Archdiocesan Marriage Preparation course, Of Life and Love

Will be held on Saturday 27 February commencing at 10am and then Thursday evenings 4, 11, 18 March 2021
Saturday 14 August commencing at 10am and then Thursday evenings 19, 26 August & 02 September 2021
To Book Online - <https://www.trybooking.com/BMTLF>
For further information, please contact - The Life, Marriage and Family team on (02) 9307 8480 or e-mail steven.buhagiar@sydneycatholic.org.

Parent Line: 1300 1300 52

Many families are in the midst of or are facing serious challenges in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and need extra support but don't know where to start. Parent Line can help parents by providing support and strategies to manage. Call us 7 days a week on 1300 1300 52.

JRS Appeal for Foodbank Donations

The Jesuit Refugee Service mobile food bank is a huge and growing operation. Since 1 April, they have collectively fed more than 5,000 women, children, and men who have lost jobs, been excluded from Federal Government financial support and cannot return home. Their stocks of rice, pasta, oil, tuna, and long life milk are RUNNING LOW. If you can donate these items we have drop off spots around Sydney here. In the absence of Federal Government support for people in need, we continue to need your help. Please visit: <https://aus.jrs.net/en/jesuit-refugee-service/> and learn how you can support people who have no other means to buy these basics for their families.

20 DECEMBER 2020		4th SUNDAY OF ADVENT	
Mass	VIGIL	8AM	10AM
ACOLYTE	Bob KENSEY	Roland JAVIER	Mario CAPRA
LECTOR/S	Jann ROCKLIFF	William ANDREWS	Rhia VICTORINO
	Joy SKERRITT	Ingrid SCHARENGUIVEL	Hilary RIOFRIO
Cleaners SPC: Roland & Aida Javier		Altar & Sacristy: Group 3 Helen Le Mottee, Jann Rockliff	
Saturday 8AM		19 DECEMBER	
LECTOR FOR MASS		Christine KENSEY	