

Finding Joy in the Journey of Faith

Reflections for Gaudete Sunday – Rejoice, for the Lord is Near

A few years ago, a friend went through a time when he doubted everything about his Faith. He felt lost, confused, and even frustrated. One day, someone reminded him that even John the Baptist—who had known Jesus personally—had questions and moments of doubt. That simple reminder brought him hope: if John could survive a crisis of Faith, so could he.

This Third Sunday of Advent, *Gaudete Sunday*, gives us that same message. John's moment of doubt teaches us an important lesson: **it's normal to struggle in our Faith**. Even the strongest believers may encounter moments of confusion, discouragement, or disillusionment. These experiences, though difficult, can help us grow stronger. Faith isn't just about believing everything perfectly; it's about trusting Jesus even when we have questions. In moments of doubt, we are called to deepen our understanding of the Faith, to pray, and to trust that God can strengthen and renew us.

Jesus also tells John's disciples: "Go and tell others what you hear and see." This reminds us that God's love, mercy, and forgiveness are gifts meant to be shared. Advent is a season of preparation and joy, a time to notice how Christ is working in our lives. Our joy grows when we share it with family, friends, and neighbours. Small acts of kindness, patience, and forgiveness are ways of proclaiming Christ to the world. Even in ordinary life, we can become signs of God's love for others.

Today's readings also invite us to **open our hearts and let God transform us**. Advent calls us to make room for Jesus in our lives. If we live with ourselves at the centre, life can feel frustrating, lonely, or empty. But if we allow Christ to be at the centre, everything changes. God wants to transform our hearts, minds, and actions toward love, compassion, and service. Advent is a time for metanoia—a turning of our thoughts and lives toward God, others, and ourselves.



Photo by Priscilla Du Preez on Unsplash

Finally, we are called to **be more than prophets**—to be Christ's presence in the world. St. Teresa of Avila said it beautifully: "Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which Christ's compassion looks out to the world. Yours are the feet by which He goes about doing good. Yours are the hands by which He blesses us now." Each of us is invited to become Christ's voice, hands, and heart in our homes, workplaces, and communities.

This Gaudete Sunday, let us rejoice! Even in times of doubt, God is near. Even in small acts of love, Christ is present. And even in our ordinary lives, He wants to transform us and use us to bring His light to others.

Practical Takeaway: This week, notice one way God is at work in your life and share it with someone else. Let your actions, words, or prayers be a simple sign of Christ's love to others.

Fr Sebastian

Reconciliation Before Christmas

If you'd like to receive this precious Sacrament before Christmas, kindly plan a time from the following extra opportunities. Doing so you're helping yourself and others not to be disappointed to miss out in a Christmas rush:

Tuesday evening, 16th December 7pm to 8pm (with Adoration)

Saturday afternoon, 20th December 3pm to 4.45pm

Tuesday evening, 23rd December 7pm to 8pm (with Adoration)

Christmas Mass Times

CHRISTMAS EVE - 24th December

6:00pm

8.30pm

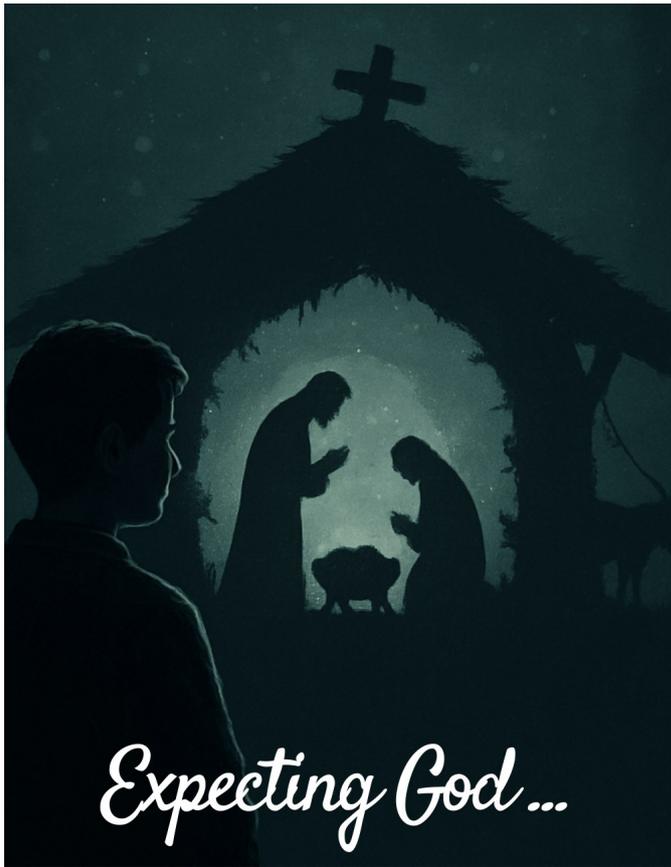
CHRISTMAS DAY– 25th December

12:00am (Midnight Mass) Carols will be before Midnight Mass - *Commencing at 11.15pm 24th Dec*

7:30am

9:30am

Faith B4U...



As we enter into Christmastide,
we would like to invite you to an hour's recollection

When: Tuesday, 16th December
Where: OLQP Church, 198 Old Prospect Rd Greystanes
Time: 10 to 11am (straight after the 9.15am Mass)

During this time together, we will meditate on the scriptures
and have a time of sharing.

Led by Sr Anne and Lisa from the Parish Team



We hope to see you there

Migrant Jubilee Cross

To mark the end of the Jubilee Year, the Vatican's Migrant Jubilee Cross will be visiting several parishes in the Diocese of Parramatta from 5-11 January. For one week, the Diocese of Parramatta will come alive with celebrations that recognise the faith, gifts and resilience of migrant communities who have enriched our parishes, schools and communities.

Bring your friends and family to experience the Migrant Jubilee Cross Pilgrimage at a parish near you. Learn more at parracatholic.org/migrant-jubilee-cross.

Caritas Australia's Global Gifts are Christmas Cards with purpose!

Every card you buy helps build brighter futures for children, women and men experiencing hardship and poverty. By putting your compassion into action and shopping for the Global Gifts of your choice you will bring hope and joy to the world's most vulnerable and communities, while giving your loved ones a meaningful Christmas card. View the range of Global Gifts: www.globalgifts.org.au

Lost Property

Missing an umbrella, water bottle, glove, rosary etc?

Please look in the main entry area of the church (Narthex) near the Lost Property Sign. For valuables, or if you have lost a ring, please call the parish office on 9631 8135.

On sale in the Parish Office

Christmas Cards (supporting Vinnies) **\$8.00 pack of 10**

Did you know?

Pope Francis says in *Laudato Si'*: The digital world can stop people from living wisely... Ever-present media creates a din of noise...Real relationships are sometimes replaced with virtual ones. While we seem to be communicating, we are shielded from people's real fears, joys, and hopes. Such media has exciting possibilities for us - if we manage it well (LS 47).

Q. How am I managing the media? What about my children?

Let us pray...

FOR OUR SICK, that they will be nourished with hope & recognise the loving presence of God in their lives.

Elie Aboumelhem, Mary Anjoul, Rita Attard, Amara Bewert, Ellen Boissett, Frank Borg, Haryono Budiono, Ann Bugaya, Karl Croning, Mario Curmi, Kathleen Davies, Nerida Fabri, Gabrielle Farfus, Delina Galea, Dorothy Gatt, Kay Jaunais, Margaret Jones, Rachel Karbic, Tulla Kavich, Patrick Kelly, Tyler Kenedy, Peter Kennedy, Maxine Kroebel, Michelle Makin, Joyce Mifsud, Elsie Moran, Joseph Moses, Alex Noble, Bob Nowfel, Brendon Onorato, Benjie Santiago, Michael Scanlon, Connie Shembri, Carmel Thompson, Connie Tudman, Eddie Vella, Joe Vella, Gerard Watts, Grace Widjaya, Maureen Zarb

FOR DEATH ANNIVERSARIES, that they now know the fullness of life & delight in God - may they pray for our active purpose in God's Mission.

Carmelo Attard, Joseph Farrugia, Jessie Sherry

FOR OUR RECENTLY DECEASED, may our Lord embrace them with unimaginable joy & bless those who grieve with the power of hope.

Nicholas Hornery - 19 Dec @ 10.30am, Filomena Rodriguez

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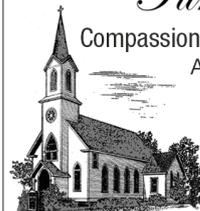
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Our Mission: To grow as a community in the likeness of Christ.

Safeguarding is a priority at OLQP

Volunteers, group leaders and assistant group leaders are asked to complete the Safeguarding modules either online or in person. Details below.

ONLINE: To sign up & log into your Safeguarding modules, visit: <https://learning.safeguarding.org.au>

IN PERSON TRAINING: To find a training session near you & to register, visit: <https://parracatholic.org/connect/events/?series=safeguarding-training>

For more information, please email:

safeguardingtraining@parracatholic.org

If you volunteer at the parish and are unfamiliar with Safeguarding, please contact the parish office for more details.

Are you spending Christmas alone this year?

Baulkham Hills Christmas Luncheon- The Parish of Baulkham Hills are hosting a Christmas Lunch for anyone who will be on their own on Christmas Day. You may be in town for a visit, or just moved into the area, or may simply be unable to share Christmas Day with your loved ones. So come and share it with us. It will be held on **Thursday 25 December** in and around the **St Michael's Primary School hall**, and **everyone is welcome, families and individuals**. But places are limited, so you will need to register to attend.

For more information, contact the parish office on (02) 9639 0598 or email baulkhamhills@parracatholic.org.

Mount Druitt Combined Churches Christmas Day Community Lunch - Don't spend Christmas alone. A free Christmas Day lunch hosted by Mt Druitt Combined Churches on **Thursday 25 December from 11am**, with Holy Family Parish, Mt Druitt as the venue host. **All are warmly welcome**. Registration is essential.

For more information and to register, please visit <https://www.facebook.com/MtDruittChristmasLunch>

New 2026 Academic Scholarship Opportunity

Nagle College Blacktown is now offering a limited number of Academic Scholarships for Year 7 students commencing in 2026. These scholarships are intended to recognise exceptional academic promise and help make an excellent Catholic secondary girls' education more accessible to families. Please review the eligibility criteria and application process on the school website as soon as possible.

Learn more here: <https://www.nagleblacktown.catholic.edu.au/nagle-scholarship>.

Christmas at St Mary's Cathedral

All are invited to experience St Mary's Cathedral and forecourt come alive **from Wednesday 17 December to Christmas Day**. The Cathedral's façade will be illuminated with the timeless story of the Little Drummer Boy. **Entry is free** and a great way to get into the Christmas spirit. Learn more at christmasatthecathedral.org.au

Positions Vacant

Catholic Chaplain: Catholic Care Western Sydney & the Blue Mountains

More details at: parracatholic.org/jobs

This Sunday's Readings

1st Reading

Isaiah
35:1-6, 10

2nd Reading

James
5:7-10

Gospel

Matthew
11:2-11

Next Sunday's Readings

1st Reading

Isaiah
7:10-14

2nd Reading

Romans
1:1-7

Gospel

Matthew
1:18-24

Mass Times

Monday - 9:15am

Tuesday - 9:15am

Wednesday - 6:30am | 9:15am

Thursday - 9:15am

Friday - 6:30am | 9:15am

Saturday - Vigil 5:00pm (live streamed)

Sunday - 7:00am | 8:30am | 10:30am | 6:00pm

Memorial Mass - Last Tuesday night of each month (except December) at 7:00pm

Mass for Peace with anointing of the sick - First Saturday of each month (except January) at 10:30am

Reconciliation:

Saturday - 4:00pm - 4.45pm

Please join us via Facebook or Website, olqp.org.au, every Saturday Vigil Mass at 5:00pm

Rosary in the church: Weekdays at 8:30am & Friday nights at 7:30pm

ZOOM option available Friday night for those who cannot travel to the church for rosary.

Meeting ID: 896 7944 2594 | Passcode: rosary

P: 9631 8135 | E: parishoffice@olqp.org.au

Emergency Contact Only 0447 509 207

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Parish Office hours: 9am - 1pm, 2pm - 4pm Monday to Friday

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