

# St. Monica's Parish

North Parramatta



*"Our mission is to build up an active parish community with the Eucharist as the centre, foster deeper prayer and spirituality and reach out as a witnessing community"*

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT - YEAR B

17TH DECEMBER 2023

## ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

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

## FIRST READING

A reading from the prophet Isaiah  
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.'

*The word of the Lord*

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM Lk 1

Response: My soul rejoices in my God.

1. 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.)
2. The Almighty works marvels for me.  
Holy his name!  
His mercy is from age to age,  
on those who fear him. (R.)
3. He fills the starving with good things,  
sends the rich away empty.  
He protects Israel, his servant,  
remembering his mercy. (R.)

## SECOND READING

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians  
1 Thess 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.

*The word of the Lord*

## GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

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

## GOSPEL

A reading from the holy Gospel according to John  
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.


*The Gospel of the Lord.*

## COMMUNION ANTIPHON

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

ADVENT FEATURE

## GAUDETE SUNDAY



The Third Sunday of Advent is called *Gaudete Sunday*, the day when we light the pink candle on the Advent wreath (hence the 'pink candle' Sunday). Rose vestments are worn to emphasize our joy that Christmas is near. *Gaudete* means "rejoice". This day reminds us of the joy that is to come, and serves, amid this season of penance, as a kind of 'break' when we recall the hope we have because of the coming of Our Lord Jesus.

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# St. Monica's Catholic Parish

Cnr Church Street and North Rocks Road, North Parramatta

<b>SUNDAY MASSES:</b>	Saturday Vigil - 5pm; Sunday - 9am, 11.30am (Cantonese/Chinese Mass) and 6pm		
<b>WEEKDAY MASSES:</b>	Tuesday-Friday - 9.15am		
<b>EXPOSITION:</b>	Every Thursday 8pm—9pm Every Friday following 9.15am Mass until 10.45am,		
<b>RECONCILIATION:</b>	Friday 10-10.30am, Saturday 4-4.40pm, 3rd Sunday of the month 10:15-11am, or on request		
<b>MARRIAGES:</b>	Please contact the Parish Priest at least 12 months prior		
<b>BAPTISMS:</b>	Please contact the Parish Office for appointment with the Parish Priest. Phone: 9630-1951		
<b>ANOINTING OF THE SICK/ EUCHARIST AT HOME</b>	Please contact the Parish Office or Fr Ephraim Lam Phone: 9630-1951		
<b>PARISH PRIEST/ CHINESE CHAPLAIN:</b>	Fr. Ephraim Lam	Phone: 9630 -1951	Email: shingmanlam@gmail.com
<b>ASSISTANT PARISH PRIEST</b>	Fr Pio Jang	Phone: 9630 -1951	Email: stmonicanp@bigpond.com
<b>POSTAL ADDRESS:</b>	8 Daking Street, North Parramatta, 2151	Website: <a href="http://www.stmonicanp.org.au">http://www.stmonicanp.org.au</a>	
<b>OFFICE HOURS:</b>	Tuesday-Friday 8.30am-2.30pm	Phone: 9630-1951	Fax: 9630-8738 Email: stmonicanp@bigpond.com

## St. Monica's School

School Principal: Lisa Crampton

Phone: 8832 4100

Fax: 8832-4199

Email: stmonicasparra@parra.catholic.edu.au

## COMMENTARY

### Witness to the Light

St John's Gospel never calls John, 'the Baptist'. No, he is John the Witness: 'a witness to speak for the Light'. We discover in this Gospel that this light is embodied in Jesus Christ, most graphically portrayed in the Transfiguration when Christ's body is radiant, translucent, with Divine Light.

Jesus Christ is the light of the world, the One who came to liberate human beings from the many dark captivities which imprison them, the One who vanquished the inky blackness of the tomb.

We can become partakers in the life of this Divine Light. At baptism, this is symbolised by the lighting of a small candle from the great Easter candle which is sung into the church on the Easter Vigil as 'Christ our Light', the Conqueror of Death.

As a baptised people our allegiance to 'The Light' is not to be a private matter between 'me and God'. No, like John, we must bear witness to 'The Light' by being instruments of His power to dispel the darkness which can enshroud people's lives.

We could pause for a moment to commit ourselves to fulfil the promise of our baptismal candle so that we might more authentically celebrate the birth of the Divine Light come into human history.

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## Christmas & New Year Mass Time

### 23rd December 2023 (Sat)

5pm (English Vigil Mass of 4th Sunday of Advent)

### 24th December 2023 (Sun)

9am (English Mass of 4th Sunday of Advent)

11:30am (Chinese Mass of 4th Sunday of Advent)

6pm (English Christmas Eve Mass)

9pm (Chinese Christmas Eve Mass)

### 25th December 2023 (Mon)

12am (English Christmas Midnight Mass)

9am (English Christmas Day Mass)

11:30am (Chinese Christmas Day Mass)

### 30th - 31st December 2023 (Sat & Sun)

#### Feast of the Holy Family

All Masses are at usual time

### 1st January 2024 (Mon)

#### Solemnity of Mother God

9am (English Mass)

### 6th - 7th January 2024 (Sat & Sun)

#### Epiphany of the Lord

All Masses are at usual time

### 8th January 2024 (Mon)

#### Baptism of the Lord

9:15am (English Mass)

## FEAST DAYS & COMMEMORATIONS

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO PRAY  
FOR THOSE OF OUR PARISH  
FAMILY WHO ARE SICK.  
ESPECIALLY**

Peter Handcock, John Hilton,  
Paul Chiu, John Rodrigues,  
Dave & Fan Lin Wilson,  
Francis Lee, Jerry A,  
Michelle Barnes, Levi Bell,  
Gesualda Borg, Monica Teresa  
& Fernanda Carigliano,  
Margaret Dorahy,  
Heidi Ellich, Josie Estera,  
Philippe Kalife, Tim Kelly,  
Mary Korunic, Lillian Leigh,  
Monique Malouf,  
Maria Itang Tagle,  
Sheila Watts,  
Tina de Larrazabal,  
Rosa Santos, Llave Family,  
Gloria Cherote

## MASS INTENTIONS

*Please refer to the notice  
board at the entrance.*

## PARISH ACTIVITES



**Silent Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament**  
Every Thursday from 8pm–9pm.  
Every Friday following 9.15am Mass until 10.45am.  
All are welcome.



**St Monica's Parish Rosary Group** Every Wednesday,  
from 10.00am to 12.00pm in the Parish Centre.  
Enquiries : Lynn McBride : 0423 696 961



**Christian Meditation** It will be resumed on 8 Feb 2024, then every Thursday, from 6.30pm to 7.30pm. Participation via zoom is available.  
Enquiries: Nathan Cook, email:cookn4@gmail.com



**Catholic Women's League St Monica's Branch**  
Last Monday at 10.30am in the Parish Centre.  
Enquiries : Julie Skulander on 0411 988 361



**St Monica's Piety Stall** (open alternate weeks)  
Stall is open on Saturday 4.40 - 6.15pm  
Sunday 8.40 - 10.15am  
Contact : Julie Skulander on 0411 988 361



**St Monica's Art Group** It will be resumed on 13 Jan 2024, then every Saturday, 6pm–8pm. The Art Group will gather at the Parish Centre. Mini workshops are available in Feb 2024. Please contact Vera (WhatsApp 0402936947) for details.



**Bible Brekkie** It will be resumed on 4 Feb 2024, then every FIRST and LAST Sunday of the month, 10.15am - 11am, at the Blue Room.  
Fr. Ephraim will talk about interesting topics from the Bible. All are welcome.



**Remember the Deceased** There is an open diary and pens next to the Sacred Heart of Jesus statue and you are welcome to write down the names of your deceased loved ones or family members on the day of their anniversaries and we will pray for them.



Tap & Go is now available for donation for ongoing Church building maintenance fund. Machine is placed near the Statute of Saint Joseph. Envelopes are also available if you wish to donate via cash/credit card. Your donation is greatly appreciated.



### SOAP Reflection 17th December

**Scripture:** This week, we meet John, who will play out his role to identify Jesus as the son of God. He goes and meets with priests and Levites who question his authority and identity. He announces that he is not the Messiah or a prophet, but rather just a prophetic voice to the people, the pave the path between the people and Jesus. We see him here simply as a witness to the one that God has sent

**Observation:** Coming into this weeks Gospel, we see that we do not meet John just by chance, but as it is willed, being sent by God himself. As for the purpose of us meeting him, it's not for praise or for worship, but to see a messenger who is destined to light the way for the word of God to be spread as a witness for Jesus. John's role, not just in this weeks Gospel, but in this book, is to make way for the Messiah, doing this through the identity that he has been given by God. We see him introducing himself to the Jews and Levites, authority figures of Jerusalem who oversee activity and people of interest, only to be questions upon his authority and status. After a standoff, a sense of uneasiness resides within the Jews and Levits, only to be comforted by John with a message for the arrival of Jesus.

**Application:** Although it is the Book of John, and we open with the introduction of John, he himself is never truly the centre of attention, as we see him declare not who he is himself, but when he is not and what he is here to do, rather than an introduction to the character. All we are here to witness here, is the message, that so happens to be passed on by John. One of the most outstanding lines in this is "Make straight the way of the Lord", spoken by John, where two messages can be taken. One to prepare yourself for the coming of Jesus, as well as the ease in which you should make it. Rather than a complicated and defensive path, we should not make it difficult for ourselves of for Jesus to reach our hearts, thus being asked to make a straight way, devoid of complication and ease of travel. In the gospel, John is a symbol and a reminder to bear witness to the messiah. Jesus Christ, the one who has come in the flesh, the one who is here with us, and the one who will come again. Such is the takeaway from this week's gospel.

**Prayer:** Jesus, when I come upon situations that require serious thought, please send your Holy Spirit to guide me, that I may always do Your holy will. Guide me with Your counsel, and give me the courage to act rightly when it is difficult. Please grant me foresight when the future is unclear. Help me to enter into the unknown without fear, and provide courage to others that need it. Let me be prepared for anything, so that I can better appreciate the surprises that come my way. Amen

Samuel

### VINNIES CHRISTMAS APPEAL 2023

1 **Christmas cards and Columban calendars** are for sale at the Piety Stall. Please place the money into the Poor Box.

2 Take a tag at the **Gift Tree** at the main entrance and prepare a gift according to the details on the tag. Place your gift with the tag at the Christmas Tree beside the St. Joseph statue before 17<sup>th</sup> December.

3 **Donations of Hampers Items** are most welcome! Please place them at the Christmas Tree beside the St Joseph statue before 17<sup>th</sup> December.

4 **Cash donations** will be collected on 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> December during all Masses.

*Your support will be highly appreciated*

### 23rd/24th December ROSTERS

	5pm Vigil	9am	6pm
<b>Readers</b>	C. Meleca S. Meleca	B. Hooker S. Younes	P Fleming R Talanpas
<b>Extraordinary Ministers</b>	L. Iemma J. Knight	S. Joseph B. Hooker	
<b>Acolytes</b>	TBA	I. Goldthorpe	I. Goldthorpe
<b>Cleaning</b>	Group 2 - Vera (22nd December)		
<b>Children's Liturgy</b>	School Holidays		
<b>Morning Tea</b>	Julie & Grazyna		
<b>Counting</b>	Group 1 - Joel Pinto & Jacob Payra		

### Youth Announcements



- **St Monica's Youth Group (FYRE)**  
Youth Group continues for another month in the community room, starting at 10:30AM! Feel free to drop by for some games and friendly chats! Our topic for December is Social Justice. 😊
- **Christmas Party**  
Thank you to everyone who came along to our Christmas Party yesterday night! We hope you had a wonderful time, and we wish you all a happy Christmas with your family.