



The Barra

Weekly Newsletter of St. Finbar's Catholic Parish, Glenbrook
4th Sunday of Advent & Christmas 2023- Year B
23rd, 24th & 25th December 2023

4th Sunday of Advent Readings: 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8-12, 14, 16; Ps 88; Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38

Christmas Day Readings: Isaiah 52:7-10; Ps 97; Hebrew 1:1-6; John 1:1-18

FR JOE'S MUSINGS

Christmas 2024 – We cannot cancel Christmas.

We have gotten used to the voices attempting to downplay the Christian message by referring and comparing Christian celebrations to pagan feasts. Christmas is then considered as an adaption of the Roman holidays. Often I hear “wise” people making the claim that the dating of Christmas on 25th December was originally referring to a pagan feast, perhaps corresponding to the Roman festival of Saturnalia or the feast of the sun god *Sol*.

If Christmas is just an adaption of pagan festivities, then it could also be cancelled, some voices may conclude. Indeed, Christmas was cancelled in Massachusetts in 1659 because it was deemed sacrilegious: “The observation of Christmas having been deemed a Sacrilege, the exchanging of Gifts and Greetings, dressing in Fine Clothing, Feasting and similar Satanical Practices are hereby FORBIDDEN, with the Offender liable to a Fine of Five Shillings.”

However, it was cancelled because of practices and adaption that were alienated to the real intention of Christmas. Donald Heinz notes the subtle yet deeply deforming effect such a racket, coming at such a time, can have on God's people. Engaging in mindless Christmas commercialism “re-trains believers to act like consumers precisely when they are behaving religiously”. Here indeed is our threat: not that we would imagine toys and trinkets as the meaning of Christmas, but that the liturgies of the shopping mall would become enmeshed with the liturgies of worship, shaping us in ways we hardly recognize.

When researching and writing on my new book on Ambrose of Milan (339-397), I discovered a text passage ascribed to the early Christian author named Hippolytus of Rome (170-235) who had stated that Saturnalia and the feast of Sol were not celebrated on December 25 that early in Roman history; Saturnalia and the feast of Sol only came to be later. Hippolytus clearly could not have chosen the date to please pagan sentiments. There are also other inscriptions from 222 AD that appear on the chair's sides and the back of the statue of Hippolytus. One of the inscriptions includes a date for Jesus' conception on April 2, 2 BC. Nine months after this date would situate Jesus's birth in late December of 2 BC or early January of 1 BC. December 25 falls nicely within that range.

What then may be the real intention of Christmas? No matter how jolly, a Christmas shorn of Christ offers gifts without a Giver, a feast without God's Favour, and cheer without the costly love of our incarnate Lord. We hail the Lord on Christmas morning who was born and raised in poverty. The shepherds, after witnessing the wonder with their own eyes, then “returned, glorifying and praising God” (Luke 2:20). Shortly after, Simeon and Anna lifted their voices heavenward at the sight of the infant Christ (Luke 2:28-32, 38). And whenever those wise men saw his star, “they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy” (Matthew 2:10)

Please continue reading on page 2

Merry Christmas

& HAPPY NEW YEAR

Wishing you all a Happy and Safe Christmas and all the best for 2024. The Parish office will be closed from Tuesday the 26th of December to Tuesday the 9th of January. The Parish Staff

PARISH INFORMATION

Parish Priest: Fr Joseph Lam

E-mail: joseph.lam@parracatholic.org

Secretary: Juliana Khnouf

E-mail: secretary@stfinbars.org.au

Admin: Peter McMahon

E-mail: admin@stfinbars.org.au

PPC:

E-mail: stfinbarsppc@gmail.com

Office Hours: 9.30am – 3.00pm

Tuesday to Friday

(Closed on Mondays)

Office Phone: (02) 47426958

Parish QR Code:

Please use this QR Code to donate to St Finbar's Parish Glenbrook using your Credit Card, or to make any payments. Please select from the list.



Address:

52 Levy Street, Glenbrook 2773

PO Box 123 Glenbrook NSW 2773

Sacraments

Confessions: Saturdays 4.30-5.15pm

Baptisms: By Appointment

Weddings: By Appointment

Web: www.stfinbars.org.au

Facebook: Glenbrook Catholic Church St Finbars

Parish School: Principal

Mrs Robyn Clarke

Phone: 4724 3600

WE WELCOME

all visitors to our church today. We extend our greetings to you. If you wish to join St Finbar's Parish, please make yourself known to one of our Wardens so we can give you our Parish Welcome Pack.

WE ACKNOWLEDGE

the Traditional custodians of this land on which we worship at St Finbar's - The Darug and Gundungurra People. We pay respect to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

PARISH CALENDAR

Sunday 24th December <i>4th Sunday of Advent Year B</i>	7.30am Mass 9.30am Mass 7.00pm Christmas Eve Mass 10.00pm Christmas Night Mass
Monday 25th December <i>The Nativity of the Lord</i>	8.30am Christmas Day Mass
Tuesday 26th December <i>St Stephen</i>	9.15am Mass
Wednesday 27th December <i>St John</i>	9.15am Mass followed by Rosary
Thursday 28th December <i>The Holy Innocents</i>	9.15am Mass 1.15pm Bridge Club P/C
Friday 29th December	9.15am Mass
Saturday 30th December	9.15am Mass 5.30pm Vigil Mass
Sunday 31st December <i>The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph</i>	7.30am Mass 9.30am Mass
Monday 1st January 2024 <i>Mary The Holy Mother of God</i>	10.00am New Year's Day Mass
Tuesday 2nd January 2024	No Mass. Office is Closed
Wednesday 3rd	6.30am Outdoor Mass
Thursday 4th & Friday 5th	9.15am Mass. Office is Closed
Saturday 6th	5.30pm Vigil Mass
Sunday 7th January <i>The Epiphany of the Lord</i>	7.30am Mass 9.30am Mass
Monday 8th <i>The Baptism of the Lord</i>	No Mass. Office is closed
Tuesday 9th	No Mass. Office is open

FR JOE'S MUSINGS CONTINUED FROM PAGE

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Perhaps more than all, can we not believe that the coming of Christ holds treasures of wonder we have barely begun to explore? Augustine leads us in Christmas worship: "Man's Maker was made man, that he, ruler of the stars, might nurse at his mother's breasts; the Bread might be hungry, the Fountain be thirsty, the Light sleep, the Way be tired from the journey" — and all so that sinners might be saved, the dead made alive.

We cannot cancel Christmas! But as secular carols fill the mall, and as the craze of commercialism tramples the season like a runaway sleigh, we do have the opportunity — indeed, the commission — to point the season's lights in another direction: to God enfleshed, the Infinite as infant, I Am as Immanuel.

To you all I truly wish you a wonderful Christmas with abundant blessings from the God who entrusts himself to us and to this world.

Fr Joe

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE RECENTLY DECEASED:

Pat Bell, Lilian Pockran and Maria Faggion (Fran Isaksen's Mother).

PLEASE PRAY FOR SICK PARISHIONERS, RELATIVES & FRIENDS:

Huia Kingi, Bernie Fisher, Sue Bland, Connor Sipple, Katie Maloney, Christopher Thomson, David Haynes (Yvonne Scanlan's Dad), Gwen Cullinan, Chris Paine, Lyn Downes, Jacqui Visser, Margaret Stevens, Mark Bates, Margaret Christensen, Terry Stevens, Sophie Hollies, Colleen & Michael Nolan, Maddison Farrugia, Harrison Aggar (Margaret & Ian Dickson's Grandson), Diosdado Roque (Geraldine Agahari's Father), Joan and Hubert Pereira & Maureen Brown (Marcia Pereira's Sister, Brother & Niece).

PLEASE PRAY FOR THOSE WHOSE ANNIVERSARIES OCCUR AT THIS TIME:

Madeleine Oxley, Alice Nolan, Richard Mason, Violet Clements, Kathleen Macbeth, Colleen Pedersen, Joy Serne, Allen Klein, Lucy Barrett, Alice Quinn, John Simon, Colin Sell, Arthur Adamson, Richard Cranbrook, Phil O'Danaghoe, Kathleen Thomas, Harriet Walsh, Patrick Walsh, Dorothy Palise, Robyn Kopp, Alfred Groves, Valma Adamson and Joan Kelly.

EPIPHANY PILGRIMAGE 2024 PRAYER REQUESTS

Our parish community will be hosting the Epiphany Pilgrimage group again in 2024 as they journey up the mountains from 2 - 9 January. In preparation for the pilgrimage, you are invited to write any prayer requests on the cards provided and place them in the Epiphany Pilgrimage prayer box to be prayed each day by the pilgrims. To participate in some or all of the pilgrimage - including walks, Mass, Adoration / prayer sessions and meals - visit www.epiphanypilgrimage.org, or to assist with hospitality when the group visits our parish, please contact the parish office.

2023 IN PICTURES



SCOTT GLEESON
Funeral Director

0404 770 008

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www.scottgleesonfunerals.com.au

2 Fennell Street, Parramatta,
NSW 2150

LITURGICAL ROSTER FOR 24TH, 25TH, 30TH & 31ST DECEMBER 2023

Liturgical Ministries	Christmas Eve 7pm	Christmas Night 10pm	Christmas Day 8.30am	Saturday 5.30pm	Sunday 7.30 am	Sunday 9.30 am
Sacristan	Ahyiesha D'Souza	Peter McMahon	Carl Moll	Vince Dobson	Carl Moll	Lukas Rajnoch
Senior Server	Ahyiesha D'Souza	Peter McMahon	Carl Moll	Vince Dobson	Carl Moll	Lukas Rajnoch
Junior Servers	Eoghan McKenna Oliver Wilson Zoe Wilson	Volunteers Please	Volunteers Please	Volunteers Please		Volunteers Please
Warden	Vince Dobson	Allan Jones	1. Tricia Murnane 2. Kieren Murnane 3. Cecilia Zammit 4. Frank Zammit	Volunteer Please	Volunteer Please	Gary Clune
1 st Reading	Joanne Stubbs	Maire Griffin	Cecilia Zammit	Philomena Watkins	John Killeen	Annissa Nilsson
2nd Reading	Dawn Willis	Louise Debeck	Elizabeth Konza	Dawn Willis	Volunteer Please	Cecelia Zammit
Intercession	Erin Kelly	Volunteer Please	Todd Stanford	Katy Ferris	Elizabeth Konza	Justin Dowling
Music	Youth Group	Cantabile	Naomi's Group	Cormac's group		Youth Group
IT Operators	Lachlan Lloyd	Robyn Flynn	Patrick Watson	Robyn Flynn	Kylie Mills	Thais Turner
Gifts	The Young Family	Jan de Bie Lorraine Brown	Volunteers please	Parishioners are invited	To offer to bring up	The gifts
Communion	1. Gerard Egan 2. Carmel Higgins	1. Louise Debeck 2. Thea or Brian Robertson	1. Jim Tierney 2. Kath Tierney	Lorraine Brown & Volunteer Please	Jean Di Nucci & Volunteer Please	Elizabeth Rowe & Volunteer Please
Church Care	Robyn Flynn, Jan de Bie, Jessica Doherty, Dawn Willis, Wendy Bohan & Marsha O'Meara					
Hospitality	Julie Fehon, Anne Hobbs, Martin & Lyndal Rogers					



Ballimino's
CAFE & PIZZERIA
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✉ Gerard.Morson@turnerfreeman.com.au

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LAWYERS

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