

Christmas Message 2024

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children. Gal. 4:4

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

When we meditate on the Christmas Story, we sometimes overlook the fact that God enters into human history. It is difficult for many to imagine that God would have the desire to become human, to be confined to time and space as we all are. Yet from the very beginning of creation, this was the desire of God, not to remain distant and far away, but to be so close to his people that he walks as one with his people. When we look at our world in 2023 and going into 2024, we can ask the question, "Why would God want to enter into human history at all?" After all as humans, we have not done the best job looking after this gift of creation from God to us. However, when we look at the history of Salvation, it is exactly at those moments of great turmoil that we see God closest with his people. For example, the leading of the Israelites out of Egypt, the returning exiles from the Babylonian exile, and even at the time of Christ's birth when the Jewish people were oppressed by a foreign regime and subject to harsh foreign rule. Yet into this confusion, this chaos, this seemingly hopeless situation, *"the Word became flesh"*. St. Paul in his letter to the Galatians reminds us *"when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son"*. In other words, the birth of Christ occurs at a time of God's choosing, at a time when God saw that humans most needed the closeness of God. This Christmas Season when you look upon the Christmas Crib, and meditate on this awe-filled sight, may you realise and know just how precious you are in the eyes of God. May you realise and know that God desires to be close to you, and looks back at you with his Divine Eyes, loving you. Thank you for sharing your Christmas celebrations with us and may the Christ-Child bless you and your families abundantly during the Christmas Season and into the New Year.

With prayers and blessings

Fr. Peter James & Fr. Casimir.



CHRISTMAS OFFERING

Christmas Offering envelopes will be available in the church over the Christmas Season. Please take an envelope home and return it with your offering in the first collection. These offerings support the priests of the Parish. Thank you for your constant support and generosity.

26th - 29th December (Tuesday - Friday)

St Therese's Church
8:00 am Mass

St Benedict's Shrine
10:00 am Mass

30th December - (Saturday)

St Therese's Church
8:00 am Mass
5:30 pm Vietnamese Mass

St Benedict Shrine
6:00 pm Mass

31st December - The Holy Family (Sunday)

St Therese's Church
7:30 am Mass of the Day
5:30 pm Syriac Rite

St Benedict's Shrine
9:00 am Italian Mass
10:30 am English Mass
6:00 pm English Mass

1st January - Mary, The Holy Mother of God (Monday)

St Therese's Church
8:00 am English Mass
10:00 am Vietnamese Mass

St Benedict's Shrine
10:00 am English Mass

2nd January - (Tuesday)

St Therese's Church
7:00 am Mass

St Benedict's Shrine
9:15 am Mass



Please note: No Wednesday evening Mass during January. Wednesday evening Mass and Novena will recommence 7th February 2024.

ST JOHN THE APOSTLE TUESDAY 27TH DECEMBER BLESSING OF WINE



On Wednesday 27th December we celebrate the Feast of St. John The Apostle. It is a tradition on this day to bless wine. You are welcome to bring wine to the church for this blessing.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

It is with sincere gratitude that I thank all who have sent to Fr. Casimir and myself Christmas wishes and Christmas gifts. We are truly and truly humbled by your heartfelt wishes and words of support.

I would also like to thank Fr. Casimir and all who have assisted in our Christmas celebrations this year, especially those who have made both St. Benedict's Shrine and St. Therese's Church look and sound beautiful and festive.

I also take this opportunity of wishing all our regular Parishioners and those visiting a very happy, safe, healthy and holy New Year.

I look forward to 2024 knowing that with God and together we can achieve so much for our community.

With my prayers and blessings, Fr. Peter James.

PARISH DONATIONS

First Collection (Priests) Account : Smithfield House – Order of St Paul the First Hermit
BSB 066711 Acct. No. 007392

Second Collection (Parish) Account : Smithfield Catholic Church
BSB: 062784 Acct. No. 100001084

Thank you for your continued support and generosity . God Bless.

ST GERTRUDE'S PARISH

St Benedict's Shrine

Corner Justin & Neville Street
SMITHFIELD

Sunday Masses:

Saturday Vigil 6:00 pm;
9:00 am (Italian); 10:30am; 6:00 pm.

Weekday Masses:

9:15 am Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday;
7:00 pm Wednesday

Weekday Public Holidays: 10:00 am

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament/Adoration:

Wednesdays after evening Mass with Novena to St Benedict until 8:30 pm; Saturday from 4:30 pm—5:30 pm; & Friday after the 9:15 am Mass

First Friday of the Month:

9:15 am followed by Devotions
7:00 pm Mass & Adoration followed by Devotions

Chaplet of Divine Mercy: Tuesday after Mass & Friday after 9:15 am Mass with Exposition.



Parish Priest

Fr Peter James Strohmayer OSPPE

Assistant Priest

Fr Casimir Zielinski OSPPE

St Therese's Church

Corner The Boulevard & Stella Street
FAIRFIELD WEST

Sunday Masses:

Saturday Vigil 5:00 pm (Vietnamese);
7:30 am (English); 12 noon (Spanish); 6:00pm (Syriac)

Weekday Masses:

Mon - Fri 7:00am; Saturday 8:00 am
Weekday Public Holidays: 8:00 am

First Friday of the Month:

6:30 am Exposition & Confession; 7:00am Mass

First Saturday of the Month:

7:00 am Rosary, 8:00 am Mass

Chaplet of Divine Mercy:

Tuesdays after Mass

PARISH INFORMATION

Parish Office:

6 Justin St, Smithfield
Phone: 9604 1199 Fax 9609 6585
Email: office@stgertrude.org.au
Website: www.stgertrude.org.au

Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday (closed Wednesday)
9:00 am - 4:00 pm

Parish Council: Denise Namroud

Finance Committee: Tan Do
Andrew Maia: Work Health & Safety

Catechists: 9725 4317

Mimi Romeo: catechist@stgertrude.org.au

Sacraments: Contact: Jodie Micallef

Mob: 0412-804-465 (*to leave a message*)

sacraments@stgertrude.org.au
Reconciliation/Eucharist/Confirmation

Liturgy: 9725 4317 Anna Kleibert
liturgy@stgertrude.org.au

Adult Sacraments (RCIA): Mariola Herbert
Every Sunday at 8:30 am in the
Crying Room (in front of St Benedict's)
Contact Mariola: 0421 944 051.

Children's Liturgy: Currently not available
at this time

Reconciliation:

Smithfield: Saturday 4:30 — 5:30 pm

Baptisms: Parish Office 9604 1199

Every 1st & 3rd Sunday of the month at
12:00 noon in St Benedict's Shrine Church
Smithfield

Marriages: Parish Office 9604 1199

By appointment only (6 months required)

Sick Calls: 9604 1199 — Any Time

Safeguarding: psso@stgertrude.org.au
(Parish Safeguarding Support Officers and
all WWCC renewals)

Other: FCI (Italian Catholic Federation)
Tony Coiera 0409 908 424

Parish Playgroup: Thursday during school
term. 9:30 am - 11:30 am.

The Nativity of the Lord



THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD (CHRISTMAS) ~
VIGIL & MASS DURING THE NIGHT

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Let us all rejoice in the Lord,
for our Saviour has been born in the world.

FIRST READING *Is 9:1-7*

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

The people that walked in darkness
has seen a great light;
on those who live in a land of deep shadow
a light has shone.
You have made their gladness greater,
you have made their joy increase;
they rejoice in your presence
as men rejoice at harvest time,
as men are happy when they are dividing the spoils.
For the yoke that was weighing on him,
the bar across his shoulders,
the rod of his oppressor,
these you break as on the day of Midian.
For all the footgear of battle,
every cloak rolled in blood,
is burnt
and consumed by fire.
For there is a child born for us,
a son given to us
and dominion is laid on his shoulders;
and this is the name they give him:
Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty-God,
Eternal-Father, Prince-of-Peace.
Wide is his dominion
in a peace that has no end,
for the throne of David
and for his royal power,
which he establishes and makes secure
in justice and integrity.
From this time onwards and for ever,
the jealous love of the Lord of hosts will do this.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

(R.) Today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord.

1. O sing a new song to the Lord,
sing to the Lord all the earth.
O sing to the Lord, bless his name. *(R.)*
2. Proclaim his help day by day,
tell among the nations his glory
and his wonders among all the peoples. *(R.)*
3. Let the heavens rejoice and earth be glad,
let the sea and all within it thunder praise,
let the land and all it bears rejoice,
all the trees of the wood shout for joy
at the presence of the Lord for he comes,
he comes to rule the earth. *(R.)*
4. With justice he will rule the world,
he will judge the peoples with his truth. *(R.)*

SECOND READING *Ti 2:11-14*

A reading from the letter of St Paul to Titus

God's grace has been revealed, and it has made
salvation possible for the whole human race and taught us that
what we have to do is to give up everything that does not lead to
God, and all our worldly ambitions; we must be self-restrained and
live good and religious lives here in this present world, while we
are waiting in hope for the blessing which will come with the
Appearing of the glory of our great God and saviour Christ Jesus.
He sacrificed himself for us in order to set us free from all
wickedness and to purify a people so that it could be his very own
and would have no ambition except to do good.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

Good News and great joy to all the world:
today is born our Saviour, Christ the Lord.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL *Lk 2:1-14*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to St. Luke

Caesar Augustus issued a decree for a census of the whole world
to be taken. This census – the first – took place while Quirinius
was governor of Syria, and everyone went to his own town to be
registered. So Joseph set out from the town of Nazareth in
Galilee and travelled up to Judaea, to the town of David called
Bethlehem, since he was of David's House and line, in order to be
registered together with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.
While they were there the time came for her to have her child, and
she gave birth to a son, her first-born. She wrapped him in
swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger because there was no
room for them at the inn. In the countryside close by there were
shepherds who lived in the fields and took it in turns to watch their
flocks during the night. The angel of the Lord appeared to them
and the glory of the Lord shone round them. They were terrified,
but the angel said, 'Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of
great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the
town of David a saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the
Lord. And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in
swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.' And suddenly with the
angel there was a great throng of the heavenly host, praising God
and singing:

'Glory to God in the highest heaven
and peace to men who enjoy his favour.'

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

The word became flesh, and we have seen his glory.



FEASTS FOR THIS COMING WEEK

Tuesday 26th December: St Stephen, The first Martyr

Wednesday 27th December: St John, Apostle, Evangelist

Thursday 28th December: The Holy Innocents, Martyrs

CHRISTMAS OFFICE HOURS

Please note that the Parish Office will **close on Tuesday 26th December** and **re-open on Monday 8th January 2024.**



REMINDER ~ PLEASE TURN OFF MOBILE PHONES
Please remember to turn off your mobile phones – or
switch to silent – when entering the Church.

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The English translation of the Psalm Responses, the Alleluia and Gospel Verses, and the Lenten
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THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD (CHRISTMAS) ~
MASS DURING THE DAY

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

A child is born for us, and a son is given to us;
his sceptre of power rests upon his shoulder,
and his name will be called Messenger of great counsel

FIRST READING *Is 52:7-10*

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

How beautiful on the mountains,
are the feet of one who brings good news,
who heralds peace, brings happiness,
proclaims salvation,
and tells Zion,
'Your God is king!'
Listen! Your watchmen raise their voices,
they shout for joy together,
for they see the Lord face to face,
as he returns to Zion.
Break into shouts of joy together,
you ruins of Jerusalem;
for the Lord is consoling his people,
redeeming Jerusalem.
The Lord bares his holy arm
in the sight of all the nations,
and all the ends of the earth shall see
the salvation of our God.

The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

(R.) All the ends of the earth have seen the saving power of God.

1. Sing a new song to the Lord
for he has worked wonders.
His right hand and his holy arm
have brought salvation. *(R.)*
2. The Lord has made known his salvation;
has shown his justice to the nations.
He has remembered his truth and love
for the house of Israel. *(R.)*
3. All the ends of the earth have seen
the salvation of our God.
Shout to the Lord all the earth,
ring out your joy. *(R.)*
4. Sing psalms to the Lord with the harp,
with the sound of music.
With trumpets and the sound of the horn
acclaim the King, the Lord. *(R.)*

SECOND READING *Heb 1:1-6*

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews

At various times in the past and in various different ways, God
spoke to our ancestors through the prophets; but in our own time,
the last days, he has spoken to us through his Son, the Son that he
has appointed to inherit everything and through whom he made
everything there is. He is the radiant light of God's glory and the
perfect copy of his nature, sustaining the universe by his powerful
command; and now that he has destroyed the defilement of sin, he
has gone to take his place in heaven at the right hand of divine
Majesty. So he is now as far above the angels as the title which he
has inherited is higher than their own name.

God has never said to any angel: You are my Son, today I have
become your father, or: I will be a father to him and he a son to me.
Again, when he brings the First-born into the world, he says: Let all
the angels of God worship him.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

A holy day has dawned upon us.
Come you nations and adore the Lord.
Today a great light has come upon the earth.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL *Jn 1:1-18*

A reading from the holy Gospel according to St. John

In the beginning was the Word:
the Word was with God
and the Word was God.
He was with God in the beginning.
Through him all things came to be,
not one thing had its being but through him.
All that came to be had life in him
and that life was the light of men,
a light that shines in the dark,
a light that darkness could not overpower.
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.
The Word was the true light
that enlightens all men;
and he was coming into the world.
He was in the world
that had its being through him,
and the world did not know him.
He came to his own domain
and his own people did not accept him.
But to all who did accept him
he gave power to become children of God,
to all who believe in the name of him
who was born not out of human stock
or urge of the flesh
or will of man
but of God himself.
The Word was made flesh,
he lived among us,
and we saw his glory,
the glory that is his as the only Son of the Father,
full of grace and truth.
John appears as his witness, He proclaims:
'This is the one of whom I said:
He who comes after me
ranks before me
because he existed before me.'
Indeed, from his fullness we have, all of us,
Received - yes, grace in return for grace,
since, though the Law was given through Moses,
grace and truth have come through Jesus Christ.
No one has ever seen God;
it is the only Son, who is nearest to the Father's heart,
who has made him known.

