

## St Mary's Parish Concord

4th Sunday of Advent

20 December 2020

### LITURGY OF THE WORD

Year B

**FIRST READING:** 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8-12

*I will greatly rejoice in the Lord.*

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM:** Ps 89

*For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord.*

**SECOND READING:** Romans 16:25-27

*The mystery is now revealed to all.*

**GOSPEL:** Luke 1:26-38

*You will conceive and bear a son.*

### PRAYER INTENTIONS

We pray for Marija Mikulic, Fr Robert Flaherty, Pierina Altizio (Italy) and all those who have died recently.

We pray for Isolina Favotto, Gino Cortiana, Maria Cecillia Nguyen, Cristina Moll and all those whose anniversaries occur about this time.

We pray for all our deceased family members, friends and parishioners.

We pray for those in many places who have died of the COVID-19 virus, for their families and all who mourn for them.

We pray for all those who are sick and for the health workers who care for the sick.

*May the blessings  
of Christmas  
be yours today and  
always*

**BOOKING FOR CHRISTMAS MASSES**

**Please note that the 6.00 pm Vigil Mass, the 9.00 pm Mass on Christmas Eve and the 9.30 am Mass on Christmas Day are now fully booked.**

The latest Government Health Regulations for churches still require social distancing. Individuals must be 1.5m apart unless they are members of the same household.

Therefore, it is still necessary to limit the number who can attend each Mass. Allowing for the required social distancing, the realistic limit for St Mary's Church will remain at 170 per Mass.

Those who applied on the parish yellow Registration Form have had their details entered on TryBooking. If you provided an email address, you will receive a confirmation email from TryBooking.

**Online bookings for 7.30 am Mass and 11.00 am Mass on Christmas Day can be made on TryBooking.**

Go to the Parish Home Page, [www.stmarysconcord.org.au](http://www.stmarysconcord.org.au) and click on Register for Parish Christmas Masses.

**We invite you to join us on Sundays. No bookings are required for our normal Sunday Masses.**

**LIVE STREAMING MASSES:** The 9.30 am Sunday Mass is now being live streamed to on the parish Facebook page (St Marys Parish Church Concord) and to the parish YouTube channel.

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCL0awxfUmJ6XjHJZcqsR2\\_A](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCL0awxfUmJ6XjHJZcqsR2_A)

**The 6.00 pm Vigil Mass on Christmas Eve and the 9.30 am Mass on Christmas Day will also be live streamed.**

Unfortunately, the restriction on numbers due to the COVID health regulations mean that not all those who want to join us at our Christmas Masses will be able to do so.

While we encourage all who can to join us on Sundays, we know that some older and frail parishioners are not able to come to the church.

### REQUIREMENTS FOR ATTENDING MASS AT ST MARY'S CONCORD

Those who cannot attend Mass should keep Sunday holy by setting aside some time for prayer at home, reading the Scriptures of the day, or watching Mass on television or online, asking God for the graces they would normally receive in Holy Communion.

All those entering the church must record their name and contact details (phone number or email address of one adult in each family) on the forms at the church doors. Please use the hand sanitizer available at the doors.



## THE LIGHTS OF CHRISTMAS

This year the façade of St Mary's Cathedral is again being used to provide a spectacular *Lights of Christmas* from 8.30 pm to 11.00 pm until 25 December.

## ST MARY'S CONCORD

### CHRISTMAS EVE

Thursday 24 December

6.00 pm Vigil Mass (**FULLY BOOKED**)

9.00 pm Mass (**FULLY BOOKED**)

*Please note there is no Mass  
at 12.00 Midnight*

### CHRISTMAS DAY

Friday 25 December

7.30 am Mass,

9.30 am (**FULLY BOOKED**)

11.00 am Mass

**NO EVENING MASS ON CHRISTMAS DAY**

## COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions

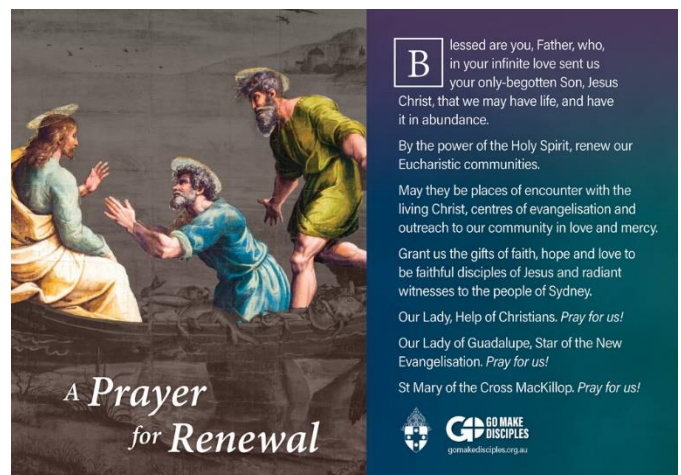
To help with any questions you may have around COVID-19 and its impact on the celebration of Sacraments such as Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage and funerals, you may find the FAQs page on the Archdiocese of Sydney website helpful.

<https://www.sydneycatholic.org/coronavirus-frequently-asked-questions/>

**GO MAKE DISCIPLES:** Archbishop Anthony Fisher has launched a new Archdiocesan Mission Plan *Go Make Disciples*. The new plan is aimed at renewing parishes as places of encounter with the living Christ and centres of outreach to our community in love and mercy.

In the weeks and months ahead we are invited to join in an Archdiocesan-wide prayer campaign, calling on the Holy Spirit to prepare the hearts of each of us and of all our parishes and Eucharistic communities to receive anew the fire of God's love and the desire to be ever more faithful witnesses of Jesus Christ.

A **Prayer for Renewal** card is available in the church and join communities throughout Sydney as we pray.



## FIRST CHURCH 175<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY

The first church built of the St Mary's Parish site was blessed and opened by Archbishop Polding on 7 December 1845. The painting that now hangs in the parish hall is based on a photograph taken in 1917 when the hall was under construction.

Prior to European settlement, the Burwood-Concord district was occupied by the Wangal clan. They called themselves the Eora, meaning 'the people' and they had been living in the Sydney area for at least 10,000 years.

The British colony of New South Wales had been established in January 1788 with the arrival of the First Fleet under the command of Captain Arthur Phillip.

In late 1788 a small settlement was established at Parramatta and by 1791 a bush track had been built between Sydney and Parramatta that became what is now Parramatta Road. In 1793 some free settlers received grants in the area then named Liberty Plains. In that same year, land grants were made to six non-commissioned officers in the district that came to be known as Concord.

## Australians' Spiritual Practices in a year of crises

NCLS Research is a world leader in research focused on connecting churches and their communities. Decades of rigorous and thoughtful research has examined wellbeing, spirituality and church health. The most well known five-yearly project is called the **National Church Life Survey**, which has had millions of participants. Cooperating denominations, including Catholics, Anglicans and Protestants, are a network for sharing practical resources to help churches and communities.



Life changed significantly for Australians in 2020, with bushfires, floods and then the COVID-19 pandemic. Many church services went online, people stayed home and zoom meetings became commonplace.

In this context, we asked Australians about their experiences of stress, wellbeing, spirituality and church, in the 2020 Australian Community Survey. Nearly seven in 10 Australians say that spirituality is important in personal wellbeing, in the context of events including bushfires and COVID-19. The greatest stressors listed are family relationships and social isolation.

Just under half of Australians report personally drawing on spiritual practices during the year, with 15% of those people increasing the level of their practice in 2020. While fewer Australians participated in religious services after March 2020 than before, a moderate proportion of Australians engaged in other spiritual practices.

Spending time in nature or outdoors; listening to music; and praying and meditating are the spiritual practices of most appeal.

As we approach Christmas, around four in ten Australians say they are open to being invited to church by family and friends.

**For more information about the work of NCLS go to <http://www.ncls.org.au/>**

**SECURITY:** The church is fitted with CCTV and images are recorded for the purpose of preventing crime and public safety.



The Concord-Burwood district continued to grow and in 1844 land was purchased by the Catholic Church on Parramatta Road at Concord for the site of a church and school. The first church stood in the present Church Forecourt in front of the parish hall. It was blessed by Archbishop Polding on 7 December 1845.

At that time there was no resident priest. A priest came from Parramatta, where the parish of St Patrick's had been established in 1827. When the parish of Petersham (now Lewisham) was established in 1851, the church at Concord became part of Petersham parish. St Mary's Concord became a parish in 1870.

The first church was also used as a hall and a school. A Catholic School, operating with Government funds, had begun operating on the parish site in 1846.

**HERITAGE SIGNS:** St Mary's Parish commissioned five heritage signs to mark the sesquicentenary of the parish.



They have now been installed in the Church Forecourt and recall historical parish buildings that once existed on the parish site: the first church (1845), the second church (1874), the presbytery (1882), the first school building (1894) and the convent (1898). They have been placed close to the original locations of the buildings.

## PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN

The Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney Safeguarding Office provides support and training for parish communities to ensure that our communities offer a safe and caring environment. The Safeguarding Office also provides support for those who have suffered abuse.

If you or a person close to you has been abused by someone working or ministering within the Archdiocese of Sydney, the Safeguarding Office will listen to you respectfully, offer support and discuss the options you have available to you. Please contact the Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office on phone: 9390 5812.

## SOCIAL JUSTICE STATEMENT 2020-21

The ACBC Office for Social Justice have released the Social Justice Statement for 2020-21, entitled To Live Life to the Full: Mental Health in Australia Today.

This year's Statement encourages faith communities, governments, and each one of us to make mental health a priority. It is a timely message in a year where we have experienced bushfires, floods and the pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic has also influenced the way in which the Statement and associated materials are being distributed this year. The Social Justice Statement and prayer card for 2020-21 have been made available online as free downloads. To download your copies now, please visit <https://socialjustice.catholic.org.au>

**MEALS ON WHEELS:** Volunteers are needed to assist with the delivery and/or packing of meals. If you can help or need more information, please contact: 9747-1135 or [delivery@bcw.org.au](mailto:delivery@bcw.org.au)

**PRIVATE PRAYER IN THE CHURCH:** The church will be open for private prayer on Sunday after the 9.30 am Mass until 12 noon and on Monday to Friday from 9.00 am until 12 noon. All those entering the church must record their name and contact details.

## SHOULD YOU WEAR A MASK IN CHURCH?

Health authorities recommend use of a mask in situations where social distancing is difficult, e.g. on public transport and at religious gatherings. The Premier has asked (but not yet required) that churchgoers wear masks at church.

The present position of the Archdiocese is that in addition to all requirements around social distancing and hand hygiene, parishioners are encouraged to wear masks at Mass. However, you need to provide your own mask for hygiene reasons.

Particular care should be taken when greeting and talking to others before and after Mass. When entering the church, please keep social distancing requirements when signing in and please use the hand sanitizer that is provided.

## PLENARY COUNCIL DISCERNMENT PAPERS RELEASED

Due to the COVID 19 pandemic the National Plenary Council Assembly has been postponed to October 2021 (Adelaide) and April 2022 (Sydney). Importantly as part of the journey towards the national Assembly, the discernment papers foundational to the development of the working paper and ultimately the agenda for the Assembly are available on the National Plenary Council webpage under the Discernment tab: <https://plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/continuing-the-journey-of-discernment/>

Follow us on Twitter   
**St Marys@ParishConcord**

**FOODBANK DONATIONS:** earlier this year a bin was placed at the back of the church and parishioners regularly donated food items to assist the Jesuit Refugee Service. With the church closed except for Masses it is more difficult to donate food but we can still help. There are drop off points including St Columba's Parish at 213 Elswick St North Leichhardt on Tues. Wed or Thurs. between 10am and 2pm. For more information, please contact [amelia.savage@jrs.org.au](mailto:amelia.savage@jrs.org.au) and/or [zoe.grant@jrs.org.au](mailto:zoe.grant@jrs.org.au)

**GIFT OF BREAD:** Due to the current COVID-19 health restrictions many of the organisations who previously supported the *Gift of Bread* outreach program are no longer able to continue their support. The calls for assistance and support from *Gift of Bread* have significantly increased over the past three months which leaves the GOB program in need of financial assistance. The *Gift of Bread* program has created a donation page called "**Who gives a loaf? You can.**" The banner photo on the donate page is the team from St Mary's Concord in the parish hall. The program needs cash donations to keep their outreach services operational. If you can support this program, please go to: <https://www.givenow.com.au/givealoaf>

## CELEBRATING AT HOME

We can be united with each other in prayer by setting aside a time when we can pause and read the Word of God and share our reflections. Many find it helpful to create a "prayer space" that helps us to focus. We can also find those places where the Mass is being televised or live streamed.

For those who have access to the Internet there are many places that offer prayers and resources to help us. Those listed below are some examples

**LITURGY BRISBANE** offers a range of resources that are updated each week. They can be found on the Liturgy Brisbane website at <https://www.liturgybrisbane.net.au/prepare/sunday-readings-and-family-prayer/>

## **SUNDAY READINGS** READ AT HOME

The Brisbane Liturgy website gives the Sunday readings with associated commentaries and prayers. It is suggested that families gather to read the Scriptures aloud together.

## **FAMILY PRAYER** WEEK BY WEEK

The second resource is designed for families with young children. An extract from the Sunday gospel is provided, along with some reflection questions, a family activity and a worksheet for children.

We invite you to share these resources with anyone who may find them useful.

**THE MASS** Watch Mass online if you have a computer or a TV that allows you to search the Internet. There are many places now streaming the Mass.

**GO TO THE WEBSITE** of The Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney [www.sydneycatholic.org](http://www.sydneycatholic.org) On the Home page there is a WATCH HERE button that gives links to parishes that are live-streaming Sunday Mass and in some cases weekday Masses and other devotions.

**SACRED SCRIPTURE** Set aside a time each day to read the Bible by taking a book, such as one of the Gospels or the Psalms, and working your way through it together. Pause and reflect on the passage. Use *Lectio Divina* when reading a bible text – this is explained in **Universalis** (see below) and also on the Jamberoo Abbey website.

**THE ROSARY** is a prayer that a family can easily recite together or can be said by those living alone.

**APPS and PODCASTS:** For those with access to a smart phone or a computer, the following Apps and Podcasts my help families and individuals to set aside time for prayer.

**The Examen** is a daily reflection that aims to help us to review how God is present in the ordinary moments of life. It is done at the end of the day and is inspired by the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius of Loyola.

Search iTunes or other platforms for the following podcasts:

### ***The Examen with Fr James Martin SJ***

This 18 minute Podcast offers a guided reflection from the American Jesuits.

### **Are you struggling in this time of crisis?**

Depression. Anxiety. Loneliness. Conflict. Stress. CCareline 13 18 19 is a free and confidential helpline for counselling, relationships, parenting, ageing, disabilities, addictions and mental health. For help finding help, call CCareline on 13 18 19



## **HOUSE OF WELCOME FOODBANK APPEAL**



Foodbank provides household necessities for people seeking asylum who have limited or no income. People can access groceries on a weekly basis to alleviate the cost of living. The Foodbank program is largely stocked through the generosity of people in the community. No contribution is too small.

**Contact: [office@houseofwelcome.com.au](mailto:office@houseofwelcome.com.au)  
197 The Trongate, Granville  
Ph: 02 9727 9290  
[stfrancis.org.au/house-of-welcome](http://stfrancis.org.au/house-of-welcome)**