



St Mary's Parish Concord

1st Sunday of Advent
Year A

27 November 2022

LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING: Isaiah 2:1-5

The Lord gathers all nations in eternal peace in the kingdom of God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Psalm 121

Let us go rejoicing to the house of the Lord.

SECOND READING: Romans 13:11-14

Salvation is nearer to us now.

GOSPEL: Matthew 24:37-44

Stay awake, you must be ready.

PRAYER INTENTIONS

We pray for those who continue to suffer because of war and violent conflicts, especially for the people of Ukraine and of Myanmar (Burma).

We pray for communities in many places who are affected by floods and other natural disasters.

We pray for those who are sick, especially those who have no one to care for them.

We pray for Mario Severino (Italy), Sapienza Raiti, Br Robert Brogan cfc, Ante Tomic and all those who have died recently; we pray for Mario Lacomba, Michael & Elmaza Boumelhem, Hanna & Antounia Boumelhem, Biagio Durante, Thomas Yoon and all those whose anniversaries occur about this time, those who are remembered in November Masses and for all our deceased family members and friends.

COVID HEALTH GUIDELINES: The COVID virus is still spreading in the community. **Wearing a mask in indoor public spaces helps protect everyone** in our community and especially those who are at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 and flu.

ST MARY'S VILLA PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

St Mary's Villa has been a work of St Mary's Parish for the past 37 year. It has always enjoyed an excellent reputation for the care that it provides to the residents. However, recent changes to Commonwealth Government regulations have placed additional administrative demands on Aged Care facilities.

It has become clear that smaller stand-alone facilities, like St Mary's Villa, will need significant support if they are to meet those demands in the future.

A review of the needs of St Mary's Villa has concluded that the best way to secure its long-term future is for the Villa to become part of a larger Catholic Aged Care group.

A fuller statement that provides more background information can be found on the last page of this bulletin.

Acknowledgement of Country



We acknowledge the Wangal people of the Eora nation as the traditional custodians of this land.

ST VINCENT DE PAUL - MEMBERS NEEDED:

The St Mary's Concord SVdP Conference is seeking new members. If you are interested in joining or in hearing more about their important ministry, please call or text Poppy on 0438430347 or email poppy@archb.com.au to express your interest.

The Concord Conference currently meets in the parish hall once a fortnight at 6.30 pm on Tuesday evening for about an hour. Between meetings members also help to distribute emergency assistance in the local area.

CATECHISTS are needed for 2023 to teach the children of our parish who attend Concord Primary School. If you are retired or have flexible work hours, this is a great opportunity to share your faith with the children. Join our parish Catechists in this fulfilling mission of sharing the story of Jesus and the hope and joy he brings. Full training is provided. For more details contact the Parish Office 9747 4210 or visit www.ccd.sydneycatholic.org

ADVENT – WAITING IN HOPE



The Season of Advent opens the Church's liturgical year. The English word "advent" comes from the Latin "adventus" which literally means "coming". In pagan Rome "adventus" was the celebration of the anniversary of the coming of the Emperor.

The early Christians took over the term and used it for the time of preparation for Christmas when they celebrated the first coming of Christ. That remains the focus of the last week of Advent.

However, the season begins by looking to the future, not to Christmas but to the second coming of Christ in glory. In that sense the first weeks of Advent continue the focus of the last Sunday of the Church's year, the feast of Christ the King.

By the end of the fourth century, as the Christmas season became established in Spain and Gaul, Advent emerged as a time of preparation for those who were to be baptized on the feast of the Epiphany and so it came to be seen as a "second Lent".

At one time it extended for 40 days from the feast of St Martin (11 November) to the Epiphany (6 January) leading to the popular name of "St Martin's Lent".

The traditional use of purple or violet vestments recalls that connection with Lent. But Advent is not a penitential season. At St Mary's, we distinguish the different seasons by using blue-purple vestments for Advent and red-purple vestments for Lent.

In Rome the season of Advent did not become established until the middle of the sixth century. By then the link with a time of preparation for Baptism had diminished as had the earlier penitential practices. Pope Gregory the Great (591-604) reduced Advent to four Sundays to make a clear distinction between Advent and Lent.

In Advent we continue to use Alleluia as our Gospel acclamation, but the *Gloria* is not said or sung. It is omitted so that it may resound with greater freshness at Christmas. Popular devotions such as the Advent wreath give a focus to our waiting in hope for the coming of Christ.

Paul Crowley

CLIMATE CHANGE: World leaders gathered over the past two weeks in Egypt for COP 27, the United Nations Conference of the Parties on climate change. They will also gather in Canada in December for the Conference of the Parties on biodiversity (COP 15).

In his Message for the **2022 World Day of Prayer for Care of Creation**, Pope Francis urged world leaders to commit to ambitious plans at the COP 27 to achieve the goal of keeping global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees Celsius. He also urged leaders gathering at the COP 15 to make new multilateral agreements to halt the alarming increases in destruction of ecosystems and extinction of species.

The Holy Father reminds us that the Gospel calls us to repentance, to a new relationship with God and a different relationship with others and with all of creation. This conversion of heart will lead us to take action personally, but also communally to care for our common home.



These two meetings present another opportunity for world leaders to agree on actions which will address the twin crises of climate change and loss of biodiversity.

They also present us with an opportunity as people of faith to join with others in calling for effective action to deal with these immense ecological crises.

The Australian Catholic Bishops Office for Justice, Ecology and Peace has produced a new **Information Sheet on COP 27 & COP 15**.

For more information:

<https://socialjustice.catholic.org.au/2022/11/10/cops-docs/>

MEALS ON WHEELS is seeking volunteers to assist the elderly in our community. All it takes is a spare 2 hours a week to make a difference in someone's life! Packers, drivers and helpers are all needed. Phone 9747 1135 or email mow@bcws.org.au

MASS FOR EXPECTANT MOTHERS: The Annual Mass for Expectant Mothers and those hoping to conceive will be celebrated by Bishop Daniel Meagher on Sunday 11 December, 10.00 am at St Paul of the Cross, 532 New Canterbury Rd. Dulwich Hill. Morning tea provided. RSVP by 1 December 2022 www.trybooking.com/CDILN

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL The Parish Pastoral Council is a consultative body entrusted with the task of reflecting on the parish's vision and mission. In a spirit of service to the community the Pastoral Council works with the parish priest to foster and support appropriate pastoral action. Members serve a four-year term with half the Council changing every two years. Over the past two years the work of the Pastoral Council has been disrupted by the COVID Lockdowns.

As we begin to plan for 2023, new members are needed. Any active parishioner 18 years of age or older may be nominated or may nominate his/herself. If you are interested, please talk to Fr Paul or to any of the current members. For more information go to the "Our Parish" tab on the Home Page of the parish website www.stmarysconcord.org.au

REDEFINING NORMAL is a free workshop on **Mental Health, Alcohol, & Other Drugs** presented by the Justice and Peace Office of the Catholic Archdiocese of Sydney on 1 December 2022 at Sydney Catholic School Campus, 38 Renwick St, Leichhardt from 8.30 am to 1.00 pm.

The workshop embraces a cross-cultural, inter-generational, and interfaith approach and aims to provide practical support and assistance to individuals living with these challenges, as well as to their families. Also invited are faith and community leaders. There will be practical workshop sessions led by key community stakeholders. See the parish Notice Board for more information or visit the link below to register:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/redefining-normal-mental-health-alcohol-other-drugs-aod-workshop-tickets-421083380727>

PALMS Australia is seeking qualified and experienced Australians to mentor people abroad in education, health, administration, trades, agriculture and more. Communities in Samoa, Cambodia, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Thailand, Solomon Islands and Zambia are seeking to fill a variety of roles. Contact www.palms.org.au or call 02 9560 5333 for further

MARRIAGE ANNULMENT: The Tribunal of the Catholic Church offers advice to all of those who have experienced a marriage breakdown and question the validity of their first marriage as understood by the Church. Inquiries: 9307 8300 or email: admin@sydneytribunal.org.au

CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD has recommenced within the 9.30am Sunday Mass. All children of primary school age are invited to attend. We ask that pre-school children remain in the church with their parents. The Children's Liturgy is a celebration of the Word of God at a level appropriate for young children.

ST MARY'S PLAYGROUP: Resumed on 14 October for Term 4. Families are invited to join for games, music and fun activities each Friday in the parish hall 9.30-10.45 am. For details contact: info@stmconcord.catholic.edu.au

THE LETTER: The Feast of St Francis of Assisi (4 October) saw the world premiere at the Vatican of the documentary film *The Letter: A Message For Our Earth*. Based on Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical letter, "Laudato Si', on Care for Our Common Home" the film was made in partnership with the Laudato Si' Movement, the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development and the Dicastery for Communication.

It explores the consequences of climate change through the voices of the poor, young people, indigenous peoples and others who met with Pope Francis last year. The film is streaming for free at theletterfilm.org and **YouTube Originals**.

HOW DO I BECOME A CATHOLIC? Adults who have not been baptized and wish to become part of the community of the Catholic Church receive the Sacraments of Christian Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist) in the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (RCIA).

The RCIA presumes that there is an extended period of formation and preparation, usually leading to the celebration of Baptism at Easter.

Baptised members of other Christian Churches who wish to become members of the Catholic Church do so through *Reception into Full Communion*.

If you are interested, or if you know of someone who may be interested in becoming a Catholic, please contact Fr Paul or the Parish Office tel 9747 4210.

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: This year's Social Justice Statement, *Respect: Confronting Violence and Abuse*, invites us to engage with a complex and confronting social reality. It explores the roots of violence and abuse, honours the voices of victims, offers a social and theological exploration of the reality of violence, especially against women and children, and invites us to develop relationships in all parts of our lives 'marked by equality and reciprocity rather than domination and violence, respect and freedom rather than coercion and control.'



If the content of the Statement raises issues or concerns for you, please refer to the Getting Help page in the Statement for a list of support channels, or speak to a trusted friend, your GP, your parish priest or parish pastoral worker.

Access the Statement: <https://bit.ly/SJS22-23>.

More information: ACBC Office for Justice, Ecology and Peace, www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au or Tel (02) 62019845.

Facebook | www.facebook.com/socialjusticeACBC

Twitter | @JusticeCatholic

Instagram | @JusticeCatholic

MARRIAGE Are you planning to celebrate your Marriage in 2023? Many couples begin their planning by booking a venue for the reception. If you are hoping to celebrate your marriage in a Catholic church, it is important to confirm your date with the church and with a priest before committing yourself to a reception or any other booking.

JESUIT REFUGEE SERVICE FOODBANK

The JRS continues to support those seeking asylum and temporary migrants in Australia, as they remain excluded from all forms of Federal government support. This has meant that people who were once working and self-sufficient have had to rely on charities, like JRS, for rent, medication, bills and food. To help keep everyone fed, we are asking those who can to donate one item a week (1 or 2 Kg bags of Basmati Rice, Tuna in oil, Cooking Oil (750ml/1L/2L bottles), tinned tomatoes, tinned lentils, chickpeas, red kidney beans, pasta (spaghetti, penne, spiral) but please not tinned spaghetti. Donations can be placed in the blue bin on the table at the back of the church.

MARIAN COURT INDEPENDENT LIVING

Marian Court Units is an independent living village for over 55s, acquired by the Trustees of Catholic Aged Care Sydney in April 2022. Conveniently located near Strathfield station, there are currently vacant units featuring one bedroom one bathroom (46sqm) and two bedrooms two bathrooms (65sqm). There is a sliding scale of entrance and exit fees to suit your circumstances. Please call the Manager on 0400 077 781 for an inspection.

Help with Alcoholism and Addiction

Do you, a family member, or friend need help with an addiction concern? You can reach out to the **Calix Society**. Calix is an association of Catholic alcoholics, drug addicts, and family members and friends affected by addiction, who are maintaining their sobriety through participation in their Catholic faith and a 12 Step program. We welcome anyone concerned with the illness of alcoholism or addiction who wish to join with us in prayer for *the virtue of total abstinence, promoting our spiritual development, and striving for the sanctification of the whole personality of each member*. Contact calixsydney@outlook.com for meeting times and resources. Perhaps this could be a crucial step toward recovery and saving a life.

Catholic Men's Fellowship:

A Catholic Men's Formation and Prayer Group currently meets Thursdays 8pm till 9pm, via online conference (zoom). We are a group of men who have met on a regular basis over the past ten years. We invite men to various formation programs, and to conclude with Prayer of the Church. Our chaplain is Deacon Louis Azzopardi. We are currently using Kapaun's Men, Virtue Series. For details on how to connect, contact Lee Caruana via email leecaruana@hotmail.com

HOUSE OF WELCOME FOODBANK



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

197 The Trongate, Granville

Ph: 02 9727 9290

stfrancis.org.au/house-of-welcome

Caritas Australia Ukraine Appeal

The continuing violence in Ukraine is a humanitarian crisis. Over three million people have been displaced and thousands of civilians have lost their lives. Our long-standing partner, Caritas Australia, is on the ground to provide support for those forced from their homes. Donate today at www.caritas.org.au/ukraine or call 1800 024 413 toll free.



HERITAGE SIGNS: St Mary's Parish commissioned five heritage signs to mark the sesquicentenary of the parish in 2020.



The First Church 1845

The signs are located in the Church Forecourt and recall the 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). Each sign has been placed close to the original location of that building.

The sign near the Parramatta Road gates also reminds us that 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 was established in January 1788 with the arrival of the First Fleet. 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.

St Mary's Church Concord



The painting of the Blessed Virgin Mary that is the dominant image of Mary in the church is a copy of *The Immaculate Virgin of Los Venerables* painted by the Spanish artist Bartolome Esteban Murillo (1618-1682) in about 1678.

It is believed that the original painting was commissioned from Bartolomé Esteban Murillo by Justino de Neve, who was ecclesiastical president of the *Hospital de los Venerables* in Seville. He later donated it to the chapel at the hospital. The original painting is now in the Prado Museum in Madrid

The title of *Immaculate Virgin* reflects the belief that Mary was without sin from the first moment of her being. Although it was only officially declared a dogma of the Church in 1854, belief in the Immaculate Conception of Mary had been a popular devotion in Spain since the 16th century.

In this painting Murillo combined two different iconographic traditions: the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption. Although the Assumption of Mary was only declared to be a dogma in 1950, it too had been a popular devotion for many centuries.

St Mary's Villa Concord – Planning for the Future

St Mary's Villa, a residential aged care facility, is a work of St Mary's Parish Concord. It opened in 1985 at 38 Burton Street Concord and then in 2010 it was relocated to a new building on the parish site at 56 Burton Street. St Mary's Villa has been operated by St Mary's Parish for the past 37 years.

When reforms were introduced by the Commonwealth Government in the 1997 Aged Care Act, it became necessary for an aged care provider to be a body corporate in civil law. To comply with the 1997 Act, the Archdiocese of Sydney established the Trustees of Catholic Aged Care Sydney (TCACS) who became the approved provider under the Aged Care Act for all the parish operated residential aged care facilities in the Archdiocese of Sydney.

By 2019, St Mary's Villa was the only remaining parish operated facility under TCACS. It was also becoming apparent that to meet increasing government regulations, St Mary's Villa needed additional management support. Unfortunately, the COVID pandemic interrupted the plan to establish a management support agreement with a larger Catholic aged care group.

While St Mary's Villa continues to offer excellent care for its residents, the new Commonwealth Government Aged Care Act, introduced in the 2021, places additional administrative demands on all aged care facilities.

The new aged care standards have introduced important reforms. However, it has also become clear that smaller stand-alone residential facilities, such as St Mary's Villa, will find it challenging to meet those standards without additional support systems.

The St Mary's Parish Villa Advisory Committee and the Trustees of Catholic Aged Care Sydney have been carefully reviewing the needs of St Mary's Villa.

While St Mary's Villa will continue to operate on the parish site and will always be associated with St Mary's Parish, we have accepted that it needs to become part of a larger Catholic Aged Care group.

We believe that the best way we can secure the long-term future of St Mary's Villa is to seek an appropriate approved provider, who is able to provide the resources that will be needed to care for the frail aged members of our community.

TCACS continues to be the current approved provider for St Mary's Villa and any change will require the prior approval of the Archbishop of Sydney and of the Parish Priest of St Mary's Parish.

It is presumed that no further information will be available until early 2023.

*Fr Paul Crowley
Parish Priest
St Mary's Concord
24 November 2022*