



## St Mary's Parish Concord

### 4th Sunday of Advent

Year A

18 December 2022

### LITURGY OF THE WORD

**FIRST READING:** Isaiah 7:10-14

*The virgin is with child.*

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM:** Psalm 23

Let the Lord enter; he is king of glory.

**SECOND READING:** Romans 1:1-7

*Jesus Christ, a descendant of David, is the Son of God.*

**GOSPEL:** Matthew 1:18-24

*Jesus was born of Mary, the betrothed of Joseph, son of David.*

### 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 Rose Crowley, Orlando Fragomeli and all those who have died recently; we pray for Pippo Senzio, Cristina Moll, Elias Boumelhem, Maria Cecillia Nguyen, Jean McKubbin, Richard Abraham, John Tannous, Tony & Mannie Tannous and all those whose anniversaries occur about this time; we pray for Iolanda & Luigi Moschetti and for all our deceased family members and friends.

### CHRISTMAS TREE and NATIVITY SCENE:

Once again special thanks to Vince & Rita Lamotta and Lauren, Amelia, Christina and Danielle who have set up our Christmas Tree and Nativity scene.

## CHRISTMAS MASSES

### CHRISTMAS EVE

Saturday 24 December

6.00 pm Vigil Mass for Christmas

9.00 pm Mass during the Night

*Please note there is NO MASS at 12.00 Midnight*

### CHRISTMAS DAY

Sunday 25 December

Masses at 7.30 am, 9.30 am and 11.00 am

**NO EVENING MASS ON CHRISTMAS DAY**

### SACRAMENT OF PENANCE (RECONCILIATION)

Saturday from 5.00 pm to 5.30 pm.

The last opportunity for the 1<sup>st</sup> Rite (individual)

Reconciliation at St Marys Concord before Christmas

was Saturday 17 December.

**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.

## Acknowledgement of Country



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

**CHRISTMAS NATIVITY TABLEAU** at the Christmas Vigil Mass, 6.00 pm on Saturday 24 December. We are again inviting children to present a simple Nativity Tableau at the Christmas Vigil Mass. There will be a short rehearsal on Thursday 22 December at 9.30 am in the Church. Only children who attend the rehearsal will be able to have an active role in the tableau.

### CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD

will conclude this Sunday and resume in February 2023. We thank the adult leaders who make it possible for the children to have their own celebration of the Word of God.

# ST MARY'S CONCORD 2022

As we come to the end of another year, it is always important to pause and to give thanks for the blessings we have shared.

After the disruption caused by COVID in 2020 and 2021, we were able in 2022 to begin the journey of recovery. Unfortunately, for many people life has not yet returned to pre-COVID conditions.

We particularly thank all healthcare workers for their extraordinary dedication to caring for those who needed care in hospital or at home. Special thanks to all the staff of St Mary's Villa who cared for the residents in the face of constant COVID lockdowns.

St Mary's School is an important part of our parish. This year we welcomed Liz Pisano as the new principal. We thank all the school staff for their commitment and for the support they give to the parish families who entrust their children to their care. Leeanne Favotto in her role as the school's Family Educator has continued to encourage families to become more involved in the parish.

The work of the parish has continued, although some ministries still face restrictions. We have not yet been able to resume regular visits to residential aged care facilities. One of the challenges we will face in 2023 is the rebuilding of our team of Communion ministers to the sick. Special thanks to Rita Attard who has continued to go into St Mary's Villa as a volunteer to support the residents and lead Communion Services.

We also need to rebuild the various ministry teams who assist at Sunday Masses. Our Sunday Masses depend on many people: the altar society who clean the church, the musicians and singers in our choir, the readers, special ministers of Communion and the wardens. How can you help?

The catechists and those who lead the Children's Liturgy of the Word on Sundays were able to resume in 2022. They share in our Mission to bring Christ's love to the children and young people of our parish. Their ministry is very much appreciated.

The members of the St Vincent de Paul Society are the face of the compassionate Christ to our sisters and brothers who are struggling to find the necessities of life. We thank them for their willingness to give of their time to help others.

As a community there are many other ways that we have continued to reach out to those who are in need. Many families and individuals generously support the work of *Caritas Australia* through Project Compassion and respond generously to various special appeals.

As a parish community, we continue to help the Catholic community of Sacred Heart Parish, Serabu in Sierra Leone, West Africa.

The parish also depends on your financial support. Without your support the parish would not be able to function. People expect a priest to be available for funerals and weddings and on other occasions. They forget that the presence of a priest in their time of need depends on a viable parish community.

We are fortunate to have committed parish staff who provide administrative support: Jenni McEntee, the parish secretary and Monica Vaughan, the parish business manager.

The parish also depends on volunteers who give their time to assist in various roles: the Parish Pastoral Council, the Parish Finance Committee, the Social Committee and others who have helped with special events.

It is important that we remember that St Mary's parish is first and foremost about people. We come together every Sunday to support each other on our journey of faith and to reach out to others.

My thanks to all in the parish community; without you there would be no St Mary's Parish. I thank you sincerely for your support during 2022. I wish you every blessing for Christmas and the New Year.

*Paul Crowley*  
*Parish Priest*  
*16 December 2022*



## 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 have now gathered in Canada for COP 15, the United Nations Conference of the Parties on biodiversity.

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/>

**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](mailto:admin@sydneytribunal.org.au)

**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](mailto:mow@bcws.org.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](http://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 be 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](http://www.socialjustice.catholic.org.au) or Tel (02) 62019845.

Facebook | [www.facebook.com/socialjusticeACBC](http://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.



**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.

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](http://www.stmarysconcord.org.au)

## 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](mailto:calixsydney@outlook.com) for meeting times and resources. Perhaps this could be a crucial step toward recovery and saving a life.

## 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](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)**

## 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](http://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***