



St Mary's Parish Concord

1st Sunday of Advent Year B

3 December 2023

LITURGY OF THE WORD

FIRST READING: Isaiah 63:16-17; 64:1, 3-8
*O that you would tear open the heavens
and come down.*

RESPONSORIAL PSALM: Ps 79
Lord, make us turn to you;
let us see your face and we shall be saved.

SECOND READING: 1 Corinthians 1:3-9
Christ Jesus our Lord is the revelation we long for.

GOSPEL: Mark 13:33-37
*Keep alert, for you do not know
when the Lord will come.*

PRAYER INTENTIONS

We pray for peace in the world and especially for people suffering because of war and violence.
We pray for reconciliation between all people who share this land, especially with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
We pray for communities facing bush fires and for those who are working to protect them.
We pray for Christine McCarthy, Mario Gallace (Italy) and all those who have died recently; we pray for Mario Lacomba, Rita Sorrenti, Giuseppe Camuglia, Elias Boumelhem and all those whose anniversaries occur about this time; we pray for all our deceased family members and friends.

COVID HEALTH GUIDELINES: The COVID virus is still spreading in the community. If you are unwell, please get tested and remain at home.

MORNING TEA: The parish social committee welcomes you to Morning Tea after the 9.30 am Mass this **Sunday 3 December**, in the parish hall.

ST VINCENT DE PAUL CHRISTMAS APPEAL

Envelopes for SVdP Society Christmas Appeal may be placed in the parish collections buckets. Donations given to the Appeal are 100% tax deductible. Please complete all the details on the envelope if you require a receipt. Donations to support SVdP may be placed in the SVdP boxes near church doors at any time.

CHURCH CLOSED: To allow the lights in the ceiling to be replaced, the church will remain closed on **Monday and Tuesday (4-5 Dec)**. Therefore, there will be **no Mass at 8.30 am** on those days.

ST MARY'S PLAYGROUP is held each Friday 9.30am to 10.45am in the Parish Hall during the school term. **Please note there will be NO PLAYGROUP on Friday 8 December. The final Playgroup for the year will be Friday 15 December.** All families are welcome to join with their pre-school aged children. Access is from Burton St via the Bell Tower courtyard between the church and St Mary's Villa. Contact the parish office for further information.

Acknowledgement of Country



We acknowledge the Wangal people of the Eora nation, the Traditional Custodians who have walked upon and cared for this land for thousands of years. We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to this country and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation.

CANA COMMUNITIES: Cana Communities are a Sydney based charity that helps to change lives. If you are looking for Christmas gifts ideas, visit the Cana Communities Christmas Shop at www.cana.org.au

The Sign

Daily Reflections for Advent and Christmas

The parish is once again providing copies of this resource prepared by the Diocese of Wollongong.

The Sign is primarily for personal use but is also an appropriate resource for a shared family reflection and prayer.

The reflections begin with the First Sunday of Advent (3 December 2023) and conclude on the feast of the Baptism of the Lord (8 January 2024).

A particular feature of the booklet is its use of religious artworks accompanied by insightful reflections by Monsignor Graham Schmitzer.

The parish is providing a FREE copy. Copies are available from the tables near the church doors. If you wish to make a donation to help cover the cost, your donation may be placed in the black buckets (parish second collection). The normal cost of the booklet \$4.00.

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL: **New members are needed for 2024.** 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 Parish Pastoral Council works with the parish priest to foster and support appropriate pastoral actions. Members serve a four-year term with half the Council changing every two years. The Pastoral Council meets on the first Tuesday of every second month from February to December. Any parishioner 18 years of age or older may be nominated or may nominate his/herself. If you are interested, please contact Fr Paul.

ALTAR SOCIETY and CHURCH CLEANING

In the past we were fortunate to have several groups of volunteers who ensured that our church was kept clean. Currently, there is only one group who are rostered once a month on a Saturday morning.

We thank Yvonne, Theresia and Frances who are continuing the long tradition of the Altar Society.

Our aim is to have at least two groups so that the church is cleaned once a fortnight. Generally, the cleaning tasks are completed in less than one hour.

We also used to have teams of volunteers who vacuumed the church carpet each week. The parish now pays a contract cleaner to clean the carpet each week.

Can you give one hour on a Saturday morning once a month? The time can be flexible. If you can help, please contact the Parish Office tel 9749 4210 or email parish@stmarysconcord.or.au

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

Christmas at the Cathedral

14 to 25 December. Live entertainment in the Cathedral Forecourt starts at 6.30 pm and the Christmas projection on the southern façade of the Cathedral starts at 8.30 pm. For more information visit the website: <https://christmasatthecathedral.org.au>

PROTECTING OUR CHILDREN

Child sexual abuse is a crime. The appropriate people to deal with crimes are the police. If you, or anyone you know, have been abused, please contact the police. Alternatively, you can contact the Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office Phone (02) 9390 5810 or safeguardingenquiries@sydneycatholic.org.

You may also want to speak to your Parish Priest who will be able to provide support and guidance. The Archdiocese has a legal obligation to report crimes to the police.

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.

SUPPORTING OUR PARISH There are many ways parishioners continue to support the Mission and work of the parish: the Planned Giving program, Tap n' Go donations and cash donations placed in the collection buckets each Sunday.



For your convenience this QR Code allows secure credit donations to be made to the parish through the Commonwealth Bank of Australia.

The QR Code will take you directly to the Donation Page on our parish website. If you

select the default option (Sunday collections) your donation will automatically be split between the normal parish 1st and 2nd collections. Alternatively, you can scroll down for other options.

PARISH COLLECTIONS: There are two containers at the back of the church and at the side door marked 1st and 2nd Collection. Your regular donations can be placed in the appropriate containers. For your convenience Tap and Go stations are also available at the doors of the church. Tap to donate the set amount. Please note that receipts cannot be issued for donations and the Tap & Go transactions cannot be reversed.

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 or email

parish@stmarysconcord.org.au

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.

In this painting Murillo combined two different iconographic traditions: the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption.

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. The Assumption of Mary was only declared to be a dogma in 1950. It too had been a popular devotion for many centuries.

The parish's copy was cleaned and restored in February 2020 to mark the Sesquicentenary of the founding of St Mary's Parish (1870-2020)

PARISH HERITAGE SIGNS

In 2020 St Mary's Parish commissioned five heritage signs to mark the sesquicentenary of the founding of the parish in 1870. They can be seen 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). The signs have been placed close to the original locations of the buildings.

THE FIRST CHURCH

The first church built on the St Mary's Parish site was blessed and opened by Archbishop Polding on 7 December 1845.

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.

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 1845

The painting is based on a photograph taken in 1917 when the hall was under construction behind the first church. That painting now hangs in the parish hall

THE PRESBYTERY

When Father McCarthy was appointed parish priest in 1870, he lived in a cottage on the Burwood side of Parramatta Road until the Presbytery (the priest's residence) was built in 1882. It stood on the northern side of the 1874 church facing Burton Street.



The Presbytery c 2003

The original building was extended several times as the needs of the parish changed. As well as providing a residence for the priests, it also served as the office for the parish until 1994 when the Parish Office was relocated to a cottage at 4 Ada Street. The Presbytery continued to be the residence for the priests of the parish until 2002.

In 2002 the residence for the parish priest was relocated to a cottage at 6 Ada Street that the parish had purchased in 1995.

In 2008, as part of the strategic plan for the development of the parish site, the Presbytery, the Convent and the 1950s school building were all demolished to make way for the new St Mary's Villa.



St Mary's Villa Residential Aged Care 2010

ST MARY'S SCHOOL

The 1845 church also served as a hall and from 1846 as a classroom for a one-teacher school with John Clancy as the first schoolmaster.

When John Clancy retired due to ill health in 1858, he was followed by a series of lay teachers. Records are unclear about the school's operation in the 1860s but when St Mary's Parish was established in 1870, the existing one-teacher school became part of St Mary's Parish.

When the New South Wales Colonial Government withdrew funding for denominational schools in 1879, it became more difficult for the parish to pay the salary of the teacher and to maintain the school.

Fr Callaghan McCarthy, the first parish priest, asked the Sisters of Charity to take charge of the school and in 1883 the Sisters began travelling each day from Ashfield to teach in the school-hall



The photo of the 1894 school was taken 1917 as the hall was under construction (on the left).

The first school building was erected on the parish site in 1894. It stood on the western side of the present Church Forecourt on what is now the "grass" area within the school precinct. The foundation stone laid by Cardinal Moran can now be seen on the western side of the church steps

St Mary's School continued to expand. In 1940 a new infants' school was built facing Burton Street and in

1956 a Commercial College for girls was built on the site of the second church. When more classrooms were needed in the 1970s, the first school building was demolished to make way for a new block of classrooms that were blessed and opened by Archbishop James Freeman on 3 September 1972. They became the Kindergarten block until almost forty years later in 2011 when another classroom block was built for Kindergarten along the Parramatta Road boundary of the school precinct on the western side of the hall.



The 1972 classroom block was then demolished to create the present "grass" area.