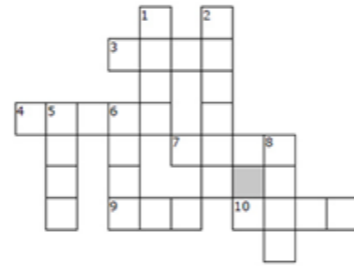


The Kids' Bulletin

Third Sunday of Advent
December 11th, 2022

Crossword Puzzle



ACROSS

- To receive sound using your ears
- Unable to see
- Something that is pleasant or enjoyable
- To be aware of what is around you by using your eyes
- To move along by putting one foot in front of the other

DOWN

- Not living
- A place where criminals are forced to live as a punishment
- Unable to walk correctly because of injury to or weakness in the legs or feet
- Information or reports about recent events
- Unable to hear

DEAF	SEE	NEWS	GOOD	WALK
HEAR	DEAD	BLIND	PRISON	LAME



The Gifts that Jesus Brings

Matthew 11:2-11

Word Search

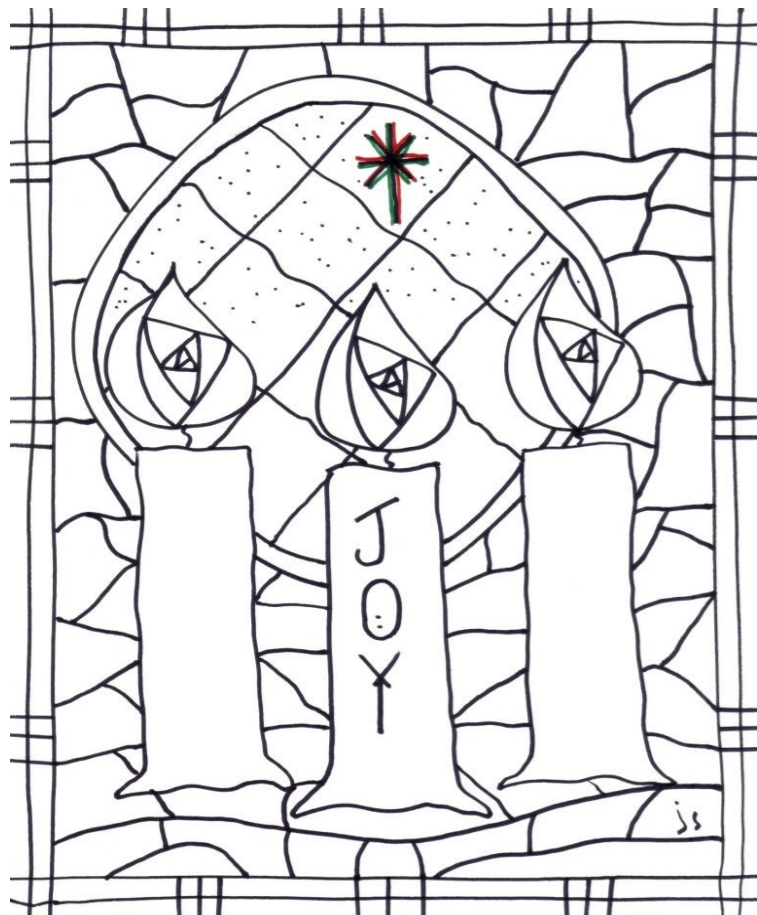
P F R A I S E D X P X G W O B
R K P R I S O N T T U P O X O
E S J E F N I B S U Q D O O A
A D O F K O I I S B C N E O D
C U H N G I R H E Y U L U A R
H W N S R H M E F D R Z N F D
E A M F C C C A D L E Z E T N
D L M K R C E X L M D E W C I
V K J A S D F L L C S W S Q S
H B E S B B I E E D H E A R T
E H L U I L A M E P H O N N I
A Y Z I P G W H I P R B P X N
R O N C N H H M I M G O Q A E
D Y D X Q D I T A H I Y S M J
A O Y K B B P H F L F E H Y E

BLIND	LAME	HEARD	DEAF	HEAR
GOOD	PREACHED	POOR	CHRIST	DEAD
RAISED	SEE	LEPROSY	PRISON	JOHN
NEWS	CURED	SIGHT	WALK	HEAR



Saint John the Baptist was the messenger who prepared the world for Jesus' coming.

Where was he in today's Gospel reading?
Connect the dots to find out!
Then you can finish colouring in the picture.



OUR LADY OF LOURDES
PARISH OF SEVEN HILLS
"Still a wonderful place to pray & stay"

7 Grantham Road, Seven Hills. NSW. 2147

Ph. 9622 2920

Email: secretary@olol7hills.com.au

Parish Priest:

Fr Henry Huu Duc Tran

Parish School:

OLOL 8869 6800

Parish Office Team:

Erika Hien, Sarah Lenthall,
Kim Dang, Tricia Brown

Principal:

Ms Keiran Byrnes

Sacrament Co-Ordinator:

Artelle Lenthall

Reconciliation:

Saturday 4:30-5:30pm

Office Hours: Monday-Friday:

9am - 3.00pm

Baptism

18 December 2022

WEEKDAY MASS:

Tues, Wed, Fri. 8.00am
Thursday 9.00am

Baptismal Preparation:

15th February 2023

WEEKEND MASS:

Saturday Vigil 6pm
Sunday 8am & 9:30am

Parish Website:

www.olol7hills.com.au

Pastoral Care of the Sick:

Bathista Emmanuel
0405 833 655

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/OLOL7Hills/>

Happy Diamond Jubilee

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT

11 December 2022 - Year A



Let us Pray for the Sick

Leonila Ahillon, George Alagiah, Mario Attard, Mary Attard, Cynthia Avery, Rosella Booth, Barrie Chamberlain, John Chandler, Ruby Chary, Parakrania Dias, Danilo Dolot, Elizabeth Ehsman, Afredo Fernandez, Anush Fernando, Joseph Franco, John Glover, Anthony Janicska, Spencer Leon, Cynthia Lopez, Carmenu M, Marie Marchand, Blago Milicevic, N. Muscat Family, Sr Colleen O'Sullivan, Wiranjan Peiris, Salome Pillay, Debra Price, Camy Ratnam, Sandra Roseworn, Susantha Seranayake, Bernie Sivapatham, Joan Spillane, Pummalin Sumcad, Sue Tiplado, Natalie Woodward.

If you would like to add to our Sick List or know of any Parishioner who is unwell please contact Father Henry or email the Parish office: secretary@olol7hills.com.au

We can also arrange for Holy Communion or a visit if required.

Let us Pray for the Deceased

Recently Deceased: Ranjan Fernando, Francisca Garcia, Ladislo Legaspi, Ray Monteclaro, Francis Muscat, Romeo Noble, Zenaida Reyes, Edwin Tabone, Bevan Woodward

Anniversaries: Carolina Borg, Melvyn Fernandes, MA Fernando, Felina Cabral Mayuyo, Pauline Meilak, Irene Moroney, Anton Motha, Aurora Nonato, Rosaline Ratman, Julia & France St Flour, Shane Vaz, Alison Vella.

Remembrance: France Angseeing, Rosario Cabasa, Roy, Mary and Des Barney, Rosario Cabasa, Bonosa Enfesta, Fernandes Family, Joseph & Carmena Myrn Cruz, Gerard Marcello, Cini & Mangion Family, Mary Mifsud, Lourda Motha, Stephen and Louis Mula, Muscat Family, Josephine & Charles Muscat, Mary Muscat, Jesus Opuencia, John & Rosaline Ratnam, Jose, Laureano & Karen Reyes, John Williams.

Our Lady of Lourdes



Ever Immaculate Virgin, Mother of mercy,
health of the sick, refuge of sinners,
comfort of the afflicted, you know my needs,
my troubles, my sufferings;
cast on me a look of pity.
By appearing in the grotto of Lourdes,
you were pleased to make it a privileged sanctuary,
from which you dispense your favours,
and already many sufferers have obtained the cure of their
infirmities, both spiritual and physical.
I come, therefore, with the most unbounded confidence
to implore your maternal intercession.
Obtain most loving mother, my requests,
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord.
Amen.

COVID- 19 UPDATE



• **MASKS:** are no longer mandatory but still *encouraged*

As previously communicated, density limits are no longer applicable for our Churches and other buildings within the Parish since December 2021.

HOWEVER OUR SAFETY PLAN STILL RECOMMENDS SOCIAL DISTANCING WHERE POSSIBLE.

PLEASE DO NOT ATTEND IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING ANY FLU LIKE SYMPTOMS.
Please Help Us Keep Our Community Safe.

REGULAR COLLECTIONS - First and Second

* **FIRST COLLECTION** and **Matt's Point** are for the support of Priests throughout the Diocese.

ON-LINE BANK DONATIONS

Account name: Parramatta Diocesan Clergy
BSB: 067 950
ACC: 00 00 4265
Reference: Seven Hills - 6035

* **SECOND COLLECTION** or **Planned Giving Program**

On behalf of the Parish Community, I would like to thank you very much for your ongoing support, which has been absolutely vital in keeping our Parish going strong. Projects completed include the Hall Kitchen renovation, Parish Meeting Room painting, Parish Office and Meeting Room Roof painted, Church roof cleaned and ceiling repaired and painted.

ON-LINE BANK DONATIONS

Account Name: Seven Hills Catholic Church.
BSB: 067 950
ACC: 000552
Reference: (Your *Planned Giving envelope number* or for a one off donation, 'DONATION')

IN-PERSON BANK DEPOSIT (at a Bank Inst / Branch)

Account Name: Seven Hills Catholic Church
BSB: 062 315
ACC ID # 00901486
AGENT # 660



All are welcome to join us for **Our Lady of Lourdes, Seven Hills, Sydney, NSW, Australia Facebook LIVE-STREAM WEEKEND MASS** celebrated by **Fr. Henry Huu Duc Tran on Saturdays 6PM (Vigil)**, <https://www.facebook.com/OLOL7Hills/>

First Reading

A reading from the prophet Isaiah 35:1-6, 10

Let the wilderness and the dry-lands exult, let the wasteland rejoice and bloom, let it bring forth flowers like the jonquil, let it rejoice and sing for joy. The glory of Lebanon is bestowed on it, the splendour of Carmel and Sharon; they shall see the glory of the Lord, the splendour of our God. Strengthen all weary hands, steady all trembling knees and say to all faint hearts, 'Courage! Do not be afraid. 'Look, your God is coming, vengeance is coming, the retribution of God; he is coming to save you.' Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf unsealed, then the lame shall leap like a deer and the tongues of the dumb sing for joy, for those the Lord has ransomed shall return. They will come to Zion shouting for joy, everlasting joy on their faces; joy and gladness will go with them and sorrow and lament be ended.

The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

(R.) Lord, come and save us.

It is the Lord who keeps faith for ever, who is just to those who are oppressed. It is he who gives bread to the hungry, the Lord, who sets prisoners free. **(R.)**

It is the Lord who gives sight to the blind, who raises up those who are bowed down, the Lord, who protects the stranger and upholds the widow and orphan. **(R.)**

It is the Lord who loves the just but thwarts the path of the wicked. The Lord will reign for ever, Zion's God, from age to age. **(R.)**

SECOND READING

A reading from the letter of St James 5:7-10

Be patient, brothers, until the Lord's coming. Think of a farmer: how patiently he waits for the precious fruit of the ground until it has had the autumn rains and the spring rains! You too have to be patient; do not lose heart, because the Lord's coming will be soon. Do not make complaints against one another, brothers, so as not to be brought to judgement yourselves; the Judge is already to be seen waiting at the gates. For your example, brothers, in submitting with patience, take the prophets who spoke in the name of the Lord.

The Word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; he sent me to bring Good News to the poor. **Alleluia!**



GOSPEL

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew 11:2-11

John in his prison had heard what Christ was doing and he sent his disciples to ask him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or have we got to wait for someone else?' Jesus answered, 'Go back and tell John what you hear and see; the blind see again, and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised to life and the Good News is proclaimed to the poor; and happy is the man who does not lose faith in me.' As the messengers were leaving, Jesus began to talk to the people about John: 'What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swaying in the breeze? No? Then what did you go out to see? A man wearing fine clothes? Oh no, those who wear fine clothes are to be found in palaces. Then what did you go out for? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and much more than a prophet: he is the one of whom scripture says: Look, I am going to send my messenger before you; he will prepare your way before you. I tell you solemnly, of all the children born of women, a greater than John the Baptist has never been; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he is.

The Gospel of the Lord.



PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

My Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the altar. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from you. Amen

GENERAL NOTICES...

NEW TO OUR LADY OF LOURDES? HOW CAN WE SERVE YOU?

Welcome. Wherever you are in your faith journey, it is great to have you. Please visit our website or call the parish office. We're here to serve you. www.olol7hills.org.au

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK <https://www.facebook.com/OLOL7Hills/>

SICK AND/OR HOMEBOUND?

Would you like to receive Communion? Or seriously ill or in danger of death? We have dedicated ministers who can visit and bring you communion. Feel free to approach or call Fr Henry for the Holy Anointing of the Sick. Please call the parish office 9622 2920.

FUNERALS

When a funeral is to be celebrated, please contact Fr. Henry before contacting the funeral home. Funerals are not permitted on Sundays or Holy Days of Obligation.

BAPTISM

Parents desiring Baptism for their children are encouraged to contact the Parish Office to arrange for the required preparation class for parents.

SCAM ALERT!!

Beware of any suspicious emails or text messages. Call the parish office for verification.

MASS INTENTIONS

All Mass intentions must be submitted to the Parish Office on or before Thursday.

YOUNG ADULTS GROUP

Meet the second Friday of every month in the Parish Hall at 7pm. For more information contact Ian Epondulan: youtholol7h@gmail.com

KEEP UP TO DATE By visiting our parish website with news, the bulletin, prayers and much more - a great way to stay up to date with what's on in our parish. Visit www.olol7hills.org.au

LEGION OF MARY

Thursdays at 1.30pm in the Parish Meeting Room. All Welcome.

CHRIST COMMUNITY PRAYER GROUP

The last two prayer group meetings for 2022 will be held at 9am on Wednesday 14 and Wednesday 21 December. Next year the weekly prayer group meetings will begin on Thursday 12 January 2023 and held after the 9:30am Mass. **All Welcome.**

VINNIES SUPPORT CENTRES ARE STILL AVAILABLE TO THOSE IN NEED

St Vincent de Paul Support Centres across Greater Sydney are still available and taking calls to arrange for food vouchers or other items to be provided to those in need. If you need assistance, call the Support Centres in Blacktown on (02) 8861 9777, Harris Park on (02) 8861 9757 and Penrith on (02) 8861 9770. To find out more about what support is available, visit <http://vinnies.org.au/covidsupportnsw>

OLOL PARISH CALENDAR		
December		
11	Parish Diamond Jubilee	
12	St Vincent De Paul	7pm
14	Christ Christian Prayer Group	9am
14	OLOL School Graduation	12pm
15	OLOL School Graduation Mass	9.30am
15	OLOL School Graduation	0.30am
15	Legion of Mary	1.30pm
18	Baptism	

OLOL MINISTRY ROSTER

10/11 December 2022

Acolytes	Vigil: James Dinning 8am: Ernie Gartner 9.30am: Ian Epondulan
Ministers	Vigil: Abel Do Rosario, Benno Motha 8am: Edith Gartner, Antony Joseph 9.30am: Anna Bellissimo, Sandy Manamperi
Readers	Vigil: Noreen Do Rosario, Alison Punch 8am: Jo Cabasa, Anne McNally 9.30am: Mercy Aquino, Laura Bellissimo
Altar Servers	Vigil: Alexa Bagatella, Alex Spadaro 8.00am: Not filled 9.30am: Leo Culilli, Sofia Culilli, Majeri Pieris
Morning tea (after 9.30am Mass)	Young Adults Group
Flowers	Claudette & Judith
Church cleaning	15 Cathy Hutchings & Annette Peatman
Welcomers	Vigil: John Jordan 8am: Rita Paolini 9.30am: Kathy Chamberlain

17/18 December 2022

Acolytes	Vigil: Derick Soares 8am: Louis Fernandes 9.30am: Ramzee Michael
Ministers	Vigil: Crystal Menezes, Rosey Soares 8am: Fennie Balatbat, Lorraine Fernandes 9.30am: Maria Michael, Eugene Miu
Readers	Vigil: Erika Hien, Catherine Rodrigues 8am: Pepito Ferriols, Benno Motha 9.30am: Christina Diaz, Helen Katopau
Altar Servers	Vigil: Johnathan Sant, Samuel Thoms 8.00am: Volunteers 9.30am: Oliana Katopau, Celestina Katopau, Volunteer
Morning tea (after 9.30am Mass)	
Flowers	Fennie & Angela
Church cleaning	21 Dec Jessie Borg & Anne McNally
Welcomers	Vigil: Judith Deloso 8am: Volunteer 9.30am: Volunteer

POPE FRANCIS CATECHIS ON DISCERNMENT: 'INNER PEACE CONFIRMS OUR DECISION'

By Devin Watkins

"We can recognize some important aspects that help to read the time after a decision as a possible confirmation of its goodness."

Pope Francis made that observation in his continuing catechesis on discernment at the Wednesday General Audience. He focused his reflections on the importance of confirming decisions with signs from our daily lives.

"One of the distinctive signs of the good spirit is the fact that it communicates a peace that lasts in time. A peace that brings harmony, unity, fervour, zeal."

Good choices improve daily life

The Pope offered the example of someone who decides to dedicate an extra half-hour to prayer.

He said the person should ask themselves whether the other moments of their day are more serene or anxious, if they care more or less for their work, or if their relationships with difficult people are more or less tranquil.

"The spiritual life is circular," he said. "The goodness of a choice benefits all areas of our lives. For it is participation in God's creativity."

Alignment of our lives

Pope Francis said one aspect of post-decision discernment is the awareness of "feeling in one's proper place in life" and a useful part of a larger plan.

He noted that St. Peter's Square has two points from which the columns of Bernini are perfectly aligned. In the same way, he said, we understand that we have made a good decision when our day becomes more ordered and integrated and we discover renewed energy.

Overcoming desire to possess

Another sign of a good discernment, said the Pope, is when we "remain free" in relation to what we have decided and are "willing to revisit the decision" to find a possible teaching from the Lord.

"This is not because He wants to deprive us of what we hold dear, but in order to live it with freedom, without attachment," he said. "Only God knows what is truly good for us."

Pope Francis added that the desire to possess is the enemy of goodness, pointing to the many cases of domestic violence which he said often are the result of the desire to possess the affection of another person.

"We can only love in freedom, which is why the Lord created us free, free even to say no to Him."

Courage in fear of the Lord

In conclusion, the Pope said that the "fear of God" or "respect of God" is an indispensable gift of Divine Wisdom that helps us in our discernment.

"It is the fear that casts out all other fears, because it is oriented to Him who is Lord of all things. In His presence, nothing can disquiet us."

POPE FRANCIS: THE JOY OF FAMILY CONTINUES EVEN IN DIFFICULTIES

By Edoardo Giribaldi

"Being a family is a joyous gift that inspires gratitude," Pope Francis said in his address to the Family Association forum, thanking its members for giving a proper voice to Italian families. "Not a complaining voice, but a propositive one.

Not ideological, but capable of interpreting the needs" of larger families, which are often "unfairly penalized."

Pope Francis started by recognizing in the association members the "testimony of the joy of being a family," which is also the core message of his Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris laetitia*. It is a happiness that doesn't correspond to a reality where everything is fine, without any problems. "We all know that family life is made of serene periods and others much more difficult," the Pope said. "However, there is a joy that can run through all these situations, because it lies at a deeper level, and that comes precisely from being family, perceived as a gift, with an intimate sense of gratitude."

There is not, according to the Pope, a standard model of family that everyone will follow. Instead, "every family has its own path and history, as does every person." There are many households, he continued, in which each member seeks to go forward, not by following a worldly model, but by embracing a "style" of simplicity and of service.

Politics with and for families

Another aspect that Pope Francis addressed and encouraged is the need for "good politics, with families and for the families." He exhorted the participants to apply an open and comprehensive approach, seeking the "common good."

A Christian family, said the Pope, can't get wrapped up in its own world. "You cannot say, 'We are good; the others will figure it out by themselves.'" The qualities of a Christian household reside in its being open, welcoming, and supportive, starting in its own neighbourhood. "A family is called to be a factor of fraternity and social friendship, rooted in a territory and, at the same time, open to the world."

Pope Francis noted the need for a political commitment aimed at bringing up themes related to childbearing in political agendas. "Don't limit yourselves to merely denouncing an issue. That would be too easy. Try to follow its development and bring realistic and documented proposals to the table".

The Pope invited people to take care of themselves "as couples and as families," encouraging them to set time apart for prayer, dialogue, and community life within the Church. "Also, take some time to play with your children."

Pope Francis concluded his address by reflecting on the demographic decline that Italy is experiencing. "We have to react, with our work and our ideas. We need children."



FROM FR. HENRY DUC

Dear Friends,

As we know, most Jewish people believed that God was going to send them a strong savior to help win over the Romans and other enemies. Then through such a powerful messiah, God would establish his kingdom on earth by transforming this world into a new Eden Garden. This period of time was defined as the reign of God or the kingdom of God where sickness and suffering would be no more to threaten God's people. Jewish people often referred to the messiah as 'the one who is to come', in other words, as a powerful leader both militarily and politically, and probably in this sense John the Baptist sent his disciples away to clarify his question about whether Jesus was the one who was to come, or he and his followers had

to wait for another leader.

Instead of giving John's disciples a direct answer to their query, Jesus brought their attention to the healing power that Jesus was going to carry out in his ministry. He could help the blind see, the lame walk, the deaf hear, lepers cleansed, and even the dead come back to life, and these extraordinary things were traditionally associated with the time of God's reign. Here Jesus indirectly means to convey this message to John and his followers that 'Yes, I am the Messiah, but not the type of messiah you have in mind.'

Throughout this Gospel account, a great sense of mutual respect between John and Jesus is to unfold for us to see and be inspired. Remember that John was rather better known in the community at that time, but he made the effort to send his disciples to consult with Jesus. The matter about Jesus' true identity, and Jesus, the Son of God, on the other hand, was so kind and generous in what he said about John, that 'of all the children born of women, a greater than John the Baptist has never been seen', in other words, Jesus called him the greatest man on earth.

Let us pray today for grace to help us show due respect to people with whom we live or work with. We pray for parents to show respect to each other and children to show respect to parents and children to parents at home, and we also pray for each of us at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish to show respect for one another the way John and Jesus lead us by example in the Gospel today.

Have a respect-focused week.

Fr Henry

PARISH NEWS...

DIAMOND JUBILEE CELEBRATION:

SUNDAY 11 DECEMBER

Congratulations to all our parishioners for this remarkable milestone marking our 60th anniversary. Thank you everyone so much for your ongoing support to keep this community 'still a wonderful place to pray and stay'.

Please maintain the spirit of thanksgiving throughout all our Masses this weekend, and join us for a special

Thanksgiving Mass at 9.30am on Sunday and lot of festivities after Mass.

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE OUR LADY OF LOURDES 2022 December

20 Parish Second Rite of Reconciliation	7.30pm
21 Individual Confession	8.30-9.30am
22 Individual Confession	9.30-10.30am
24 Children/Family Christmas Mass	6.00pm
24 Christmas Mass	9.00pm
24 Midnight Mass	12.00am
25 Christmas Day Mass	8.00 & 9.30am

January

1 New Years Day Mass	8.00 & 9.30am
7 Vigil of the Epiphany	6.00pm
8 The Epiphany of the Lord	8.00 & 9.30am

MASSES ON CHRISTMAS EVE

Ministers are urgently required for the Christmas Eve Masses. If you are able to help, please put your name on the Christmas Mass Roster 2022 sheet on the back Sacristy notice board.



FREE ZUMBA CLASSES

Every Tuesday and Thursday 6-7pm in the Hall.

Everyone Welcome!

CALLING ALL NEW ALTAR SERVERS

If you completed The Altar Servers training this year, either during school hours or on the weekend. We would like to invite you to receive a Special Blessing from Fr Henry on Sunday 18 December 2022 at the 9.30am mass. Please come along.

PARISH WORKING BEE

We are going to have a Working Bee starting from 9am on Saturday 17 December, 2022 to tidy up the surrounding areas of the church and all are welcomed to join the community for this physical preparation for Christmas. Please come along for a good exercise with lunch to be provided.

CHURCH VACUUMING

We urgently need extra people to do the church vacuuming once a month for about one hour mostly on a Wednesday after the 8.00 am Mass or on a Thursday after the 9.00 am Mass. If you can help either phone the Parish Office 9622 2920 or Mary on 0447 676 371.



TO ALL PARISHIONERS OF OLOL SEVEN HILLS

Faith **doing** justice" is a core part of our community here at Our Lady of Lourdes. As St Teresa of Calcutta said, "Give to the poor in handfuls."

It has been humbling to be part of the generosity displayed by our parishioners in the past. Our final collection for the year is our Annual Vinnies Christmas Appeal.

By helping the St. Vincent De Paul Christmas appeal and Christmas hamper donations, you will be assisting in two ways. At a local level, our members and volunteers will be able to offer direct assistance to families and individuals. At a broader level, you will be contributing to the large and varied network of short and long-term support services for people in NSW who require specialised care.

How to Donate:

We are requesting donations of gift cards from Woolworths, Coles or Aldi. They will then be distributed to Individuals and families in need in Seven Hills. These individuals and families then have the dignity of selecting food and/or gifts for themselves at Christmas. Gift cards can be brought and placed in one of the poor boxes in the church.

Take a tag from one of the Christmas trees and make up an appropriate hamper. Please return your hamper by the 11th of December to enable us to distribute them in time for Christmas.

Envelopes are available in the pews - Fill out and return during one of the collections or send by post. Donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible.

St. Vincent De Paul told his followers there are no people so rich that they have nothing to receive and none so poor that they have nothing to give. Support for this appeal will benefit recipients, and addresses poverty and disadvantage in our communities. At the same time, it is an endorsement of the concern and generosity of donors. We thank you in advance for your compassionate generosity.

Reno Abela
On Behalf of the OLOL Seven Hills Conference of the St. Vincent de Paul Society we wish you all a Merry Christmas and a happy new year.

2022 CHRISTMAS MASS AND RECONCILIATION TIMES

Christmas Mass and Reconciliation Times from parishes across Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains are available now on our Diocesan website (www.parracatholic.org), on Catholic Outlook (www.catholicoutlook.org) and on our Diocesan social media channels. Merry Christmas from the Diocese of Parramatta.

CARITAS AUSTRALIA'S ADVENT 2022 RESOURCES

Journey through Advent with Caritas Australia's new Parish Resources, useful for small groups or individuals. Exploring seasonal themes of peace, hope, joy and love through a social justice lens, this resource offers Gospel readings, stories of people Caritas Australia serves, reflection questions, prayers, song suggestions and ideas for putting faith into action. Visit www.caritas.org.au/advent to download the resource.

DIOCESE OF PARRAMATTA WYD23 PILGRIMAGE REGISTRATIONS OPEN!

Registration for WYD23 in Lisbon has now opened. Young people aged 16-35 can now view our itinerary, inclusions, indicative pricing, register and pay their \$800 deposit to secure their place. Limited spaces still available to join our team of 170 pilgrims with Bishop Vincent. Visit www.parrawyd.org

GLENWOOD-STANHOPE GARDENS PARISH CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT: 17 DECEMBER St John XXIII Parish,

Glenwood-Stanhope Gardens, invites you to their annual Carols by Candlelight evening on Saturday 17 December at 7.30pm in the grounds of St John XXIII Catholic College, Stanhope Gardens. All are welcome to attend. For more information, contact the parish office on (02) 8883 5981.

SHARE JOY THIS CHRISTMAS WITH A GIFT THAT CAN CHANGE A LIFE

If you would like to give the gift of hope this Christmas, why not buy a Global Gift? Global Gifts are Caritas Australia's charitable Christmas cards that reflect real items that support vulnerable communities around the globe. Visit www.globalgifts.org.au or call 1800 024 413 toll free to browse our range of Global Gifts cards today.

ST BERNADETTE'S LALOR PARK Wednesday Evening Devotions

St Bernadette's Parish, Lalor Park, is hosting weekly devotions to Our Lady of Lourdes and St Bernadette every Wednesday evening at 6.30pm with Adoration and Rosary and special prayers, followed by Mass at 7.30pm. All are welcome. For more information, contact the parish office on (02) 9672 4037 or admin@stbernadetteslalorpark.org.au

ACBA ADVENT APPEAL FOR UKRAINE

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference is supporting a special Advent appeal for the people of Ukraine, following a request from Bishop Mykola Bychok CSsR, Eparch of Sts Peter and Paul for the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Australia. Collections in dioceses, eparchies and parishes on the Second and/or Third Sunday of Advent will support *Mudra Sprava* (Wise Action), a Patriarchal Charitable Foundation in Ukraine. The organisation has three focus areas: Evacuation of people from frontline territories; Food packages for people in need; Shelters for internally displaced persons. Find out more at: www.catholic.au

POPE FRANCIS AT ANGELUS: WITH JESUS WE CAN ALWAYS BEGIN ANEW

By Vatican News staff writer

Speaking to pilgrims gathered for the Sunday Angelus, Pope Francis spoke about the role of John the Baptist as recounted in the Gospel in inviting everyone to conversion, saying "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" John the Baptist was an austere and radical believer, the Pope said, calling people to conversion with a "cry of love to return to God."

Allergic to hypocrisy

The Pope said we might think that John the Baptist, given his severity, was a harsh person, even instilling a bit of fear, and we might wonder why he is our primary companion during the Season of Advent. Instead, rather than harshness, it was the Baptist's strong reaction when he encountered duplicity in persons. Recalling episodes when the Pharisees and Sadducees, known for their hypocrisy, approached him, he would challenge them, the Pope explained. They thought "they had it all together" and did not need repentance, he continued, and with this presumption and duplicity did not welcome this moment of grace and the opportunity to begin a new life.

"So, John tells them, "Bear fruit in keeping with repentance!" This is a cry of love, like the cry of a father who sees his son ruining himself and says to him, "Don't throw your life away!"

Hypocrisy presents the greatest danger, the Pope said, because it can ruin even the most sacred realities. And this is why John the Baptist, and Jesus later, would be harsh with hypocrites, those without humility or any sense of their own sinfulness and weaknesses, and seeing these problems only in others.

"Therefore, bravura is not important to welcome God, humility is. It requires getting off the pedestal and being immersed in the water of repentance."

The way of humility

The Pope said then we also need to think about our own behaviours and attitudes and consider if we also are at times a bit like the Pharisees recounted in the Gospel. Do we sometimes think we are better than others, that we have everything under control, or do not have daily need of God and our brothers and sisters?

"Advent is a moment of grace to take off our masks and line up with those who are humble, to be liberated from the presumption of the belief of being self-sufficient, to go to confess our sins and to welcome God's pardon, to ask forgiveness from those whom we have offended."

When we ask God for forgiveness, we begin a new life, the Pope emphasized, and "there is only one way, the way of humility," that can lead us to being forgiven and purified from our weaknesses, sense of superiority, or hypocrisy, to realizing that we are all sinners. "Jesus as the Saviour...comes for us just as we are, with our poverty, misery and failings, above all with our need to be raised up, forgiven and saved."

"And let us remember one thing: with Jesus, there is always the possibility of beginning again. Always!"

Jesus awaits us, and never gets tired of us, the Pope emphasized. And Advent offers us a special time of grace to return to the Lord, he added, praying that Mary may "help us to meet Him and our brothers and sisters on the way of humility."

Pray for peace

Following the Angelus prayer, the Pope recalled that this Thursday we will celebrate the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, and that we might entrust to her intercession our prayers for peace, especially for the suffering people of Ukraine. Among the groups of pilgrims present in St. Peter's Square, he also mentioned in particular those from Poland, expressing his gratitude for those supporting today's Day of Prayer and the collection of funds for to assist the Church in Eastern Europe.

POPE FRANCIS: VOLUNTEERS ARE THE STRENGTH OF THE CHURCH

By Benedict Mayaki

Pope Francis on Monday, sent a message to the volunteers for the upcoming World Youth Day on the occasion of International Volunteer Day, commemorated annually on 5 December.

In a short video in Spanish, Pope Francis said that he has been most impressed by the "strength of volunteers" whenever he visits churches.

Volunteering, said the Pope, is a "shocking force" that departs from patterns to "carry out something" as it has the "perseverance to carry something forward."

He went on to give the example of those who volunteer to care for the sick, pointing at the example of the men and women who "are there all day long" using their free time to work with the sick.

Volunteering – a grace from God

"Volunteering is a grace from God," the Pope affirmed, urging volunteers to "please accept it with strength."

"Do not be afraid", Pope Francis urged.

The Pope further added that "volunteers are the strength of the Church" as they are "a dimension of the Church's mission because you go there with your volunteering and maintain so many actions of the Church."

Bringing his message to a close, the Pope expressed his gratitude to the volunteers for their generosity – the generosity that every volunteer has.

International Volunteer Day 2022

International Volunteer Day 2022 celebrates the theme of "Solidarity through volunteering". It highlights the capacity of collective humanity to stimulate positive change through volunteer efforts.

The Pope's message comes as preparations are beginning for the event that gathers young people from all over the world, which is scheduled to hold from 1 – 6 August 2023 in Lisbon, Portugal.

