

# OUR LADY OF LOURDES

PARISH OF SEVEN HILLS

*"Still a wonderful place to pray & stay."*

7 Grantham Road, Seven Hills. NSW. 2147

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**Parish Priest:** Fr Henry Huu Duc Tran  
**Parish Deacon:** Deacon Thong Nguyen  
**Parish Office Team:** Rosie Sadipoor, Kim Dang Jane Nguyen  
**Office Hours: Monday-Friday:** 9am - 3.00pm  
**WEEKDAY MASS:** Tues, Wed, Fri. 8.00am  
Thursday 9.00am  
**WEEKEND MASS:** Saturday Vigil 6pm  
Sunday 8am & 9.30am

**Parish School:** OLOL 8869 6800  
**Principal:** Ms Keiran Byrnes  
**Reconciliation:** Saturday 4:30-5:30pm  
**Baptismal Preparation:** 21st February 2024  
**Baptism:** 28th January 2024  
**Sacrament Co-Ordinator:** Mrs Artelle Lenthall  
**Parish Website:** [www.lol7hills.com.au](http://www.lol7hills.com.au)  
**Facebook** <https://www.facebook.com/LOL7Hills/>

## The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph 31 December 2023 • Year B



### Let us Pray for the Sick

Leonila Ahillon, Mary Attard, Cynthia Avery, Barrie Chamberlain, Rosella Booth, Penny Briscoe, Khien Doan, Para Dias, Anthony Janicska, Carlos Moreno, Zeferino Jayson Morales, Debra Price, Camy Ratnam, Sr Colleen O'Sullivan, Sue Tipaldo, 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@lol7hills.com.au](mailto:secretary@lol7hills.com.au)  
We can also arrange for Holy Communion or a visit if required.

### Let us Pray for the Deceased

**Recently Deceased:** Mansour Ahmad, Ronald Bailey, Connie Busuttill, Charlie Calleja, Charlie Chetenti, Noel DCruz, Maximilian Epondulan, Sonny Elluh, Bonosa Enfesta, Gladys Fernando, John Lionel, Joan Falzon, Mary Ann Farugia, Alfredo Fernandez, Ranjan Fernando, Epifanio Jalandoni, Mary Mifsud, Solomon Morias, Anthony & Evangelista Micallef, Josip Mrzljak, Marilyn Nalapo, Auxiliadora Nochete, Caridad Nufable, Pacienza Piscopo, Connie Redman, Mercedes Yu, Anna Vingerhoed, Epifania Cruz Samaniego, Maria Fely Sebastian, Joseph & Theresa Vella

**Anniversaries:** Fredy Alphonse, John Azzopardi, Carolina Borg, Merlene & Ralph Blackford, Josephine & Family Calleja, Fe Licup Carmen, Mary Carmenzuli, Dennis Clarke, Philomena Corera, Mervyn Costello, Conchita Deloso, Rita de Silva, John Falzon, MA Fernando, Josephine Francis, Charles Francis, Russell, Sheela Franklin, Frank Galea, Paul Gauci, Charlie Gravina, Ivan Elisha, Martha Joseph, Ngoc Khuong Mai, Andrew McPhee, Prudencio Monses, Irene Moroney, Thelma Morrissey, Anton Motha, Paul Mula, Jason Muscat, Alberto Nahoy, Aurora Nonato, Makalita Kilisitina Pongi, Sam Silvia, Cordula Paiva, Bernabe Quinto, Jose Reyes, Lorraine Rigney, Cornelio & Iluminada Rondario, Santan & Pauline Soares, Caroline Susainathan, Jim Vella, Alison Vella, Melchor Usman.

**Remembrance:** Neil Amaratunga, France Angseeing, Carmen Attard, Joseph Azzopardi, Roy, Mary & Des Barney, Eveillino Bhundoo, Brian Carrebine, Lina Cabaero, Mary Chircop, Cini Family, Sam & Silvia Debattista, Carmen, Joe, Lonsan, Jimmy & Tony De Guarie, Congetta Enrico D'Andreti, Julian Epondulan, Melvyn Fernandes, Sammy Formosa, Evangeline Garcia, Jose Garcia, Christine Gomez, Harold, Rosine, Marc LaFleur, Sashin Patrick Manamperi, Mangion Family, Elenoa Matavesi, Pauline Meilak, Mary Mifsud, Emilia & William Mifsud, Marcel Mohsen, Lourda Motha, Louis & Stephen Mula, Felix & Adriana Muscat, Michelle Muscat, Mary & Francis Muscat, Josephine Muscat, Charles Muscat, Philippa & Jim Muscat, Piu Muscat, Adrian Pereira, Lakshman Pereira, John Portelli, John & Roseline Ratnam, Jose Sanchez, Sem Sema, Joyce & John Sutari, Tony Vassallo, Shane Vaz, Jonathan Tek Kie, Stevenson Upulasi and all the Holy Souls of Purgatory.

### Funeral Notices

*May the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace. Amen*



### THE PILGRIM STATUE OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES

The Statue of Virgin Mary is available for home visitation and will reside with you for a week, being Sunday to Saturday. If you are wishing to participate, please leave your name and address at the Parish Office or contact Maryse Augseeing on 0467 701 010 .

### 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.*

### REGULAR COLLECTIONS - First and Second

**FIRST COLLECTION and Matt's Point** is 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



### 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.lol7hills.org.au](http://www.lol7hills.org.au)

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**FIRST READING** A reading from the second book of Genesis 15:1-6, 21:1-3

The word of the Lord was spoken to Abram in a vision, 'Have no fear, Abram, I am your shield; your reward will be very great'. 'My Lord', Abram replied, 'what do you intend to give me? I go childless...' Then Abram said, 'See, you have given me no descendants; some man of my household will be my heir.' And then this word of the Lord was spoken to him, 'He shall not be your heir; your heir shall be one of your own flesh and blood.'

Then taking him outside he said, 'Look up to heaven and count the stars if you can. Such will be your descendants,' he told him. Abram put his faith in the Lord, who counted this as making him justified. The Lord dealt kindly with Sarah as he had said, and did what he had promised her. So Sarah conceived and bore a son to Abraham in his old age, at the time God had promised. Abraham named the son born to him Isaac, the son to whom Sarah had given birth.

The Word of the Lord.

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**RESPONSORIAL PSALM****(R) The Lord remembers his covenant forever.**

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|---|--|
| 1. Give thanks to the Lord, tell his name,<br>make known his deeds among the peoples.<br>O sing to him, sing his praise;<br>tell all his wonderful works! <b>(R.)</b> | 3. Remember the wonders he has done,<br>his miracles, the judgements he spoke.<br>O children of Abraham, his servant,<br>O sons of the Jacob he chose. <b>(R.)</b> |
| 2. Be proud of his holy name,<br>let the hearts that seek the Lord rejoice.<br>Consider the Lord and his strength;<br>constantly seek his face. <b>(R.)</b>           | 4. He remembers his covenant for ever,<br>his promise for a thousand generations,<br>the covenant he made with Abraham,<br>the oath he swore to Isaac. <b>(R.)</b> |
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**SECOND READING** A reading from the letter to the Hebrews 11:8, 11-12, 17-19

It was by faith that Abraham obeyed the call to set out for a country that was the inheritance given to him and his descendants, and that he set out without knowing where he was going.

It was equally by faith that Sarah, in spite of being past the age, was made able to conceive, because she believed that he who had made the promise would be faithful to it. Because of this, there came from one man, and one who was already as good as dead himself, more descendants than could be counted, as many as the stars of heaven or the grains of sand on the seashore. It was by faith that Abraham, when put to the test, offered up Isaac. He offered to sacrifice his only son even though the promises had been made to him and he had been told: It is through Isaac that your name will be carried on. He was confident that God had the power even to raise the dead; and so, figuratively speaking, he was given back Isaac from the dead.

The Word of the Lord.

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**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION**

Alleluia, alleluia!

In the past God spoke to our fathers through the prophets;  
now he speaks to us through his Son.

Alleluia!

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**GOSPEL** A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke 1:26-38

When the day came for them to be purified as laid down by the Law of Moses, the parents of Jesus took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord – observing what stands written in the Law of the Lord: Every first-born male must be consecrated to the Lord – and also to offer in sacrifice, in accordance with what is said in the Law of the Lord, a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons. Now in Jerusalem there was a man named Simeon. He was an upright and devout man; he looked forward to Israel's comforting and the Holy Spirit rested on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death until he had set eyes on the Christ of the Lord. Prompted by the Spirit he came to the Temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the Law required, he took him into his arms and blessed God; and he said: 'Now, Master, you can let your servant go in peace, just as you promised; because my eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared for all the nations to see, a light to enlighten the pagans and the glory of your people Israel.' As the child's father and mother stood there wondering at the things that were being said about him, Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, 'You see this child: he is destined for the fall and for the rising of many in Israel, destined to be a sign that is rejected – and a sword will pierce your own soul too – so that the secret thoughts of many may be laid bare.' There was a prophetess also, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was well on in years. Her days of girlhood over, she had been married for seven years before becoming a widow. She was now eighty-four years old and never left the Temple, serving God night and day with fasting and prayer. She came by just at that moment and began to praise God; and she spoke of the child to all who looked forward to the deliverance of Jerusalem.

When they had done everything the Law of the Lord required, they went back to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. Meanwhile the child grew to maturity, and he was filled with wisdom; and God's favour was with him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

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**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**

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## FROM FR. HENRY



Dear Friends,

The feast of the Holy Family is relatively young compared to others in the Church calendar, as the devotion of the Holy Family became popular in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and Pope Leo XIII promoted it as the model and exemplar for all Christian families to counter the crisis of the family unit, and Pope Benedict XV formally inserted this feast into the Church liturgy in 1921.

In his Gospel account today, Luke shows us the perfect example of why the Holy Family is considered as the model for all families in the Church. It is because they fully fulfilled what the Law of Moses required from them by taking Jesus up to the Temple of Jerusalem together with the sacrificial offerings, and as the family completed the rituals and returned to Nazareth, Jesus grew up as a perfect son filled with wisdom and God's favour.

At the temple, they met Simeon who publicly acknowledged Jesus as the Saviour he had been waiting for, the glory of Jewish people and the light to enlighten all peoples on earth. Simeon also foretold the sorrow Mary had to go through as a result of Jesus' Passion and death later on.

They also encountered the eighty-year-old Anna, a widowed prophetess who dedicated her whole life to serve in the Temple through fasting and prayer, who began to praise God when she spotted Jesus, and then keep spreading the word about Jesus to those around her, in other words, she became a witness to Jesus through what she said to others from her meeting with the Holy Family.

As a whole, this Gospel narrative had a lot to offer all of us no matter who we are in the Church: Firstly it inspires parents of their duties to lead children by good example through their mutual love and commitments to bring up their children in the Christian faith and the Church constantly reminds parents of such duties at the time of their marriage and Baptism; secondly it encourages children to follow the way Jesus had shown them by pleasing a life making God and their parents proud; and thirdly through the witnessing life of Anna telling people about Jesus presents to us a model of what we need to do to bear witness to Jesus today by means of our words and deeds filled with our genuine love for God and people around us.

Have a Holy Family inspired week,

*Fr Henry*

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## PARISH NEWS...

### **MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR**

In this joyful time of the year, I would like to thank each of you for your support throughout the year and wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. May the Lord fill your hearts with joy and hope and help you share them with people around you both in this Parish community and beyond.

### **PARISH OFFICE HOURS & BULLETIN**

Our Parish office will close between Christmas and New Year and there will be no bulletins throughout the month of January 2024 to allow our Parish staff to take a break. However, I will be around in the Parish office and masses will run as usual.

Ministry rosters for January can be found in front of the back Sacristy.

### **THANKSGIVING 40 DAY MASS**

Ian and Michelle Epondulan invite all to join in celebrating the 40th day Thanksgiving Mass for their son, Maximilian Elijah Epondulan here in our church on Friday the 5th of January 2024 at 7.30pm.

### **MINISTRY ROSTERS 1 February - 31 July 2024**

Are now available and you can find a copy in front of the back sacristy or on the Ministry Pro website. If you require more copies, please contact the Parish office or email [secretary@olol7hills.com.au](mailto:secretary@olol7hills.com.au)

### **CHRISTMAS THANK YOU**

Many thanks to all volunteers and ministers in our Parish for generously offering their services to help us have a wonderful preparation and celebration of Christmas.

I would like to thank everyone for keeping me in your prayers at Christmas and also for your kindness to spoil me with lot of Christmas presents.

### **DISCONTINUITY OF LIVE-STREAMED MASS SERVICE**

Like most of parishes throughout the country, we shall discontinue our live-streamed Mass service from the start of 2024. The aim means to encourage our parishioners to return to face-to-face attendance of Mass and physical contact with fellow members of this spiritual family. I would like to thank all our volunteers both regular and occasional for doing their best to bring Mass to our on-line community after nearly 4 years.

### **CHURCH CLEANING**

We urgently need extra people to do the church cleaning once a month for about an hour. If you can help please phone the Parish Office or put your name and number on the A3 roster located at the back of the church under the weeks of your availability.

### **PARISH BIN ROSTER - VOLUNTEERS REQUIRED**

We are seeking volunteers to assist 4 times a year to place the Parish bins on the kerbside (Grantham Road) once a week on Tuesday. Please contact the Parish Office if you are able to help out. *Thank you.*

## DIOCESAN NEWS

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### NEW Diocesan website launched

The new [parracatholic.org](http://parracatholic.org) website is now here with exciting new features and functionality including a comprehensive 'Find a Mass' function which includes Daily and Weekend Masses, Reconciliation and Adoration times; a centralised event calendar; Daily Mass readings and different ways you can contribute to the Church in Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains. Check it out today!

### Be Part of Our Synod Journey: Diocesan Synod Report Now Available

The Diocesan Synod Report is now available for download. The newly released Diocesan Synod Report offers a summary of our first Diocesan Synod assembly, held from 13-15 October 2023, its preparatory stages, in-depth details of the proceedings, and insights from delegates. Download your copy from the Parramatta Synod website now:

<https://parracatholic.org/synod2023/>

### Liturgical Ministry Course returns in 2024

The Liturgical Ministry Formation Courses will recommence in February 2024. This is formation for anyone interested in serving within the Liturgical Ministries either as Readers, Extraordinary Ministers of Communion, Communion to the Sick and Dying and Ministers at the Altar. If you are interested or would like more information, please contact the Office for Worship on 0460 037 795 or [mary.gale@parracatholic.org](mailto:mary.gale@parracatholic.org) or visit our website to download an enrolment form at

<https://officeforworship.org.au/>

### Diocesan World Day of the Sick Mass: 10 February 2024

A Mass for the World Day of the Sick, including the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, will be held at 11am on the Saturday of 10 February 2024 at St Patrick's Church, Mary, Queen of the Family Parish, Blacktown. All are welcome, including those who may be sick, and those who care for the sick and dying and health care professionals. RSVPs are required by 6 February 2024 to [mary.gale@parracatholic.org](mailto:mary.gale@parracatholic.org)

### Music for Lent Workshop: 12 February 2024

Musicians and Liturgy Planners are invited to attend an evening exploring Music for Lent on Monday 12 February 2024 from 7pm to 8.30pm at the Bishop Bede Heather Centre, Blacktown. The session will be presented by Eric Grella, Music Formation Facilitator, Mission Enhancement Team. To RSVP, please contact [mary.gale@parracatholic.org](mailto:mary.gale@parracatholic.org) by 5 February 2024.

### Marriage Preparation Courses in 2024

Getting married in 2024? Let the Diocese of Parramatta help you prepare. Visit [www.parracatholic.org/celebrate/marriage/marriage-preparation](http://www.parracatholic.org/celebrate/marriage/marriage-preparation) to view weekend course dates in the New Year, to book and pay. An online preparation called *SmartLoving* can also be booked via the website. For more information, email [met@parracatholic.org](mailto:met@parracatholic.org) or phone Karin on 0419 242 435 or Marisa on 0412 280 017.

### Donate to Caritas Australia's Gaza Appeal

Following a series of surprise attacks against Israel by Hamas in early October, Caritas Australia is supporting partner agencies on the ground to provide emergency cash, shelter, and psychosocial support to those affected by the violence. The efforts of these partner agencies are expected to support 17,000 displaced families, representing around 100,000 of the 1 million people displaced. To support Caritas Australia's Gaza Appeal, call 1800 024 413 toll free or visit [www.caritas.org.au/donate/emergency-appeals/gaza-crisis/](http://www.caritas.org.au/donate/emergency-appeals/gaza-crisis/)

### Are you interested in becoming a pastoral and professional supervisor?

Transforming Practices offers a rich formation in Pastoral Supervision. Supervision Formation comprises of 5 two day Modules, held over 7 months. The next Portfolio of Learning Day will be held on Friday 3 February 2024 (with sufficient applicants). For those proceeding – an Introductory Day will be held on Friday 5 April 2024. All training days may be held on Zoom, face to face or in dual mode depending on successful applicant's location. For program prerequisites, please visit [www.transformingpractices.org](http://www.transformingpractices.org). For further information, please contact the Registrar, Mary Pearson via email [marypearson@gmail.com](mailto:marypearson@gmail.com)

### Soul Food Podcast – Mission Enhancement Team

#### Do you find life & faith inspiration by listening to the experiences of others?

The Mission Enhancement Team's *Soul Food Podcast* features life & faith stories of people from our diocesan family. Listen now for FREE via our website or on Spotify: [www.parracatholic.org/resources/soul-food](http://www.parracatholic.org/resources/soul-food)

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Jesus, Mary, and Joseph,  
help our family to be  
more and more like your  
Holy Family.



## POPE FRANCIS' ANGELUS



Dear brothers and sisters, good morning!

Today, straight after Christmas, we celebrate the Feast of Saint Stephen, the first martyr. We find the account of his martyrdom in the Acts of the Apostles (cf. Chapters 6-7), which describe him as a man of good repute, who served food to the poor and administered charity (cf. 6:3). And precisely because of this generous integrity, he cannot but bear witness to what is most precious to him: he bears witness to his faith in Jesus, and this unleashes the wrath of his adversaries, who stone him to death mercilessly. And this all happens in front of a young man, Saul, a zealous persecutor of Christians, who acts as “guarantor” of the execution (cf. 7:58). Let us

think a moment about this scene: Saul and Stephen, the persecutor and the persecuted. There seems to be an impenetrable wall between them, as hard as the fundamentalism of the young pharisee and the stones thrown at the man condemned to death. And yet, beyond appearances, there is something stronger that unites them: indeed, through Stephen’s witness, the Lord is already preparing in Saul’s heart, unbeknownst to him, the conversion that will lead him to be a great Apostle. Stephen, his service, his prayer, the faith he proclaims, his courage, and especially his forgiveness at the point of death, are not in vain. It was said, at the time of the persecutions – and today too it is right to say it – “the blood of the martyrs is the seed of Christians”. They seem to end in nothing, but in reality, his sacrifice plants a seed that, going in the opposite direction to the stones, plants itself in a hidden way in the breast of his worst rival. Today, two thousand years later, unfortunately we see that the persecution continues: there is persecution of Christians. There are still those – and there are many of them – who suffer and die to bear witness to Jesus, just as there are those who are penalized at various levels for the fact of acting in a way consistent with the Gospel, and those who strive every day to be faithful, without ado, to their good duties, while the world jeers and preaches otherwise. These brothers and sisters may also seem to be failures, but today we see that it is not the case. Now as then, in fact, the seed of their sacrifices, which seems to die, germinates and bears fruit, because God, through them, continues to work miracles (cf. Acts 18:9-10), changing hearts and saving men and women. Let us ask ourselves, then: do I care about and pray for those who, in various parts of the world, still suffer and die for the faith today? So many who are murdered for their faith. And in turn, do I try to bear witness to the Gospel consistently, with meekness and confidence? Do I believe that the seed of goodness will bear fruit even if I do not see immediate results? May Mary, Queen of Martyrs, help us bear witness to Jesus.

### After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters,

I renew to all of you the wish for peace and good that flows from the Nativity of the Lord. And I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of you who have sent me messages of good wishes from Rome and many parts of the world. Thank you, especially for your prayers! And continue to pray for the Pope! There is need. In the spirit of the witness of Saint Stephen, I am close to the Christian communities who suffer discrimination, and I urge them to persevere in charity towards all, striving peacefully for justice and religious freedom. I also entrust the invocation of peace of war-torn peoples to the intercession of the first Martyr. The media show us what war produces: we have seen Syria, we see Gaza. Think of tormented Ukraine. A desert of death. Is this what we want? The peoples want peace. Let us pray for peace. Let us strive for peace. I greet you, Romans and pilgrims, families, parish groups, religious communities and associations. I invite you to pause before the large Nativity scene in Saint Peter’s Square, inspired by the one Saint Francis made in Greccio eight hundred years ago. As you observe the statues, you will see a common feature on their faces and in their poses: wonder. You will see a wonder that becomes adoration. May we let ourselves be struck by awe before the birth of the Lord. I wish that you preserve this in yourselves: the wonder that becomes adoration. And thanks to all of you, to the young people of the *Immacolata*, and the many who are here in front of me! I wish you all a happy feast day! And please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your lunch, and *arrivederci*.

### POPE FRANCIS MESSAGE TO VATICAN EMPLOYEES *By Devin Watkins*

*“God hides Himself in the littleness of a Child being born”.*

Pope Francis took the twin words of “hiddenness and littleness” as the focal point of his Christmas greetings to employees of the Vatican on Thursday. As he does every year, the Pope exchanged festive greetings with Vatican employees and their families ahead of the celebration of the Lord’s birth.

**Hiddenness and littleness** In his prepared remarks, the Holy Father recalled that Jesus’ birth reveals God’s preferred style, “which is neither grandiose nor noisy, but rather a style characterized by hiddenness and littleness.” “These characteristics,” he said, “convey to us the gentle trait of God, who does not come to us to terrify us with His greatness or to impose Himself with His magnificence, but makes Himself present in the most ordinary way, becoming one of us.” Pope Francis noted that Jesus was born in a simple stable in Bethlehem, as a sign of God’s desire to be close to all. “He is the God of the little ones and the last,” said the Pope, “and with Him, we all learn the way to enter the Kingdom of God: not through apparent and artificial religiosity, but by becoming small like children.”

**Christian witness at work** Pope Francis went on to invite Vatican employees to imitate Jesus’ hiddenness and littleness in their daily labors. “Your work here in the Vatican mostly takes place in daily hiddenness, often doing tasks that may seem insignificant but, instead, contribute to providing a service to the Church and society,” he said. The Pope urged people employed in the Vatican to bear Christian witness in their relations with their colleagues in a “spirit of gratitude, serenity, and humility”. The Nativity Scene, he added, offers an invitation to simplicity of heart, noting that their work bears fruit and “the perfume of joy” even when it is hidden and invisible.

**Love makes no noise** The Holy Father extended his Christmas greetings to the families of Vatican employees as well, noting that our world seeks to put everything on display for the world through the window of social media. “It’s a bit like wanting precious crystal glasses without worrying whether the wine is good,” he said. However, in the family, appearances and masks count for little, he said, since family life must be filled with “the good wine of love, tenderness, and mutual understanding” in order to function well. “And love—as we know well—makes no noise,” he said. “We experience it in the hiddenness and littleness of daily gestures, in the care we know how to exchange.”

**Care and concern within families** Pope Francis wrapped up his annual Christmas greetings with an invitation for Vatican employees to care for their families in the model of the Holy Family. “This is my wish for you: to be attentive, in your homes and families, to the little things of everyday life, to small gestures of gratitude, to the care and concern for one another.”

## POPE FRANCIS' URBI ET ORBI MESSAGE 2023

*Dear Brothers and Sisters, Merry Christmas!*

The eyes and the hearts of Christians throughout the world turn to Bethlehem; in these days, it is a place of sorrow and silence, yet it was there that the long-awaited message was first proclaimed: "To you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord" (*Lk 2:11*). Those words spoken by the angel in the heavens above Bethlehem are also spoken to us. We are full of hope and trust as we realize that the Lord has been born for us; that the eternal Word of the Father, the infinite God, has made his home among us. He became flesh; he came "to dwell among us" (*Jn 1:14*). This is the good news that changed the course of history!

The message of Bethlehem is indeed "good news of great joy" (*Lk 2:10*). What kind of joy? Not the passing happiness of this world, not the glee of entertainment but a joy that is "great" because it makes *us* great. For today, all of us, with all our shortcomings, embrace the sure promise of an unprecedented gift: the hope of being born for heaven. Yes, Jesus our brother has come to make his Father our Father; a small child, he reveals to us the tender love of God, and much more. He, the Only-Begotten Son of the Father, gives us "power to become children of God" (*Jn 1:12*). This is the joy that consoles hearts, renews hope and bestows peace. It is the joy of the Holy Spirit: the joy born of being God's beloved sons and daughters. Brothers and sisters, today in Bethlehem, amid the deep shadows covering the land, an undying flame has been lighted. Today the world's darkness has been overcome by the light of God, which "enlightens every man and woman" (*Jn 1:9*). Brothers and sisters, let us exult in this gift of grace! Rejoice, you who have lost confidence in your certitudes, for you are not alone: Christ is born for you! Rejoice, you who have abandoned all hope, for God offers you his outstretched hand; he does not point a finger at you, but offers you his little baby hand, in order to set you free from your fears, to relieve you of your burdens and to show you that, in his eyes, you are more valuable than anything else. Rejoice, you who find no peace of heart, for the ancient prophecy of Isaiah has been fulfilled for your sake: "a child has been born for us, a son given to us, and he is named... Prince of Peace" (9:6). Scripture reveals that his peace, his kingdom, "will have no end" (9:7).

In the Scriptures, the Prince of Peace is opposed by the "Prince of this world" (*Jn 12:31*), who, by sowing the seeds of death, plots against the Lord, "the lover of life" (cf. *Wis 11:26*). We see this played out in Bethlehem, where the birth of the Saviour is followed by the slaughter of the innocents. How many innocents are being slaughtered in our world! In their mothers' wombs, in odysseys undertaken in desperation and in search of hope, in the lives of all those little ones whose childhood has been devastated by war. They are the little Jesuses of today, these little ones whose childhood has been devastated by war. To say "yes" to the Prince of Peace, then, means saying "no" to war, to every war and to do so with courage, to the very mindset of war, an aimless voyage, a defeat without victors, an inexcusable folly. This is what war is: an aimless voyage, a defeat without victors, an inexcusable folly. To say "no" to war means saying "no" to weaponry. The human heart is weak and impulsive; if we find instruments of death in our hands, sooner or later we will use them. And how can we even speak of peace, when arms production, sales and trade are on the rise? Today, as at the time of Herod, the evil that opposes God's light hatches its plots in the shadows of hypocrisy and concealment. How much violence and killing takes place amid deafening silence, unbeknownst to many! People, who desire not weapons but bread, who struggle to make ends meet and desire only peace, have no idea how many public funds are being spent on arms. Yet that is something they ought to know! It should be talked about and written about, so as to bring to light the interests and the profits that move the puppet-strings of war. Isaiah, who prophesied the Prince of Peace, looked forward to a day when "nation shall not lift up sword against nation", a day when men "will not learn war any more", but instead "beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks" (2:4). With God's help, let us make every effort to work for the coming of that day!

May it come in Israel and Palestine, where war is devastating the lives of those peoples. I embrace them all, particularly the Christian communities of Gaza, the parish of Gaza, and the entire Holy Land. My heart grieves for the victims of the abominable attack of 7 October last, and I reiterate my urgent appeal for the liberation of those still being held hostage. I plead for an end to the military operations with their appalling harvest of innocent civilian victims, and call for a solution to the desperate humanitarian situation by an opening to the provision of humanitarian aid. May there be an end to the fueling of violence and hatred. And may the Palestinian question come to be resolved through sincere and persevering dialogue between the parties, sustained by strong political will and the support of the international community. Brothers and sisters, let us pray for peace in Palestine and in Israel.

My thoughts turn likewise to the people of war-torn Syria, and to those of long-suffering Yemen. I think too of the beloved Lebanese people, and I pray that political and social stability will soon be attained.

Contemplating the Baby Jesus, I implore peace for Ukraine. Let us renew our spiritual and human closeness to its embattled people, so that through the support of each of us, they may feel the concrete reality of God's love.

May the day of definitive peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan draw near. May it be advanced by the pursuit of humanitarian initiatives, by the return of refugees to their homes in legality and security, and by reciprocal respect for religious traditions and the places of worship of each community.

Let us not forget the tensions and conflicts that trouble the region of the Sahel, the Horn of Africa and Sudan, as well as Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan.

May the day draw near when fraternal bonds will be consolidated on the Korean peninsula by undertaking processes of dialogue and reconciliation capable of creating the conditions for lasting peace.

May the Son of God, who became a lowly Child, inspire political authorities and all persons of good will in the Americas to devise suitable ways to resolve social and political conflicts, to combat forms of poverty that offend the dignity of persons, to reduce inequality and to address the troubling phenomenon of migration movements.

From the manger, the Child Jesus asks us to be the voice of those who have no voice. The voice of the innocent children who have died for lack of bread and water; the voice of those who cannot find work or who have lost their jobs; the voice of those forced to flee their lands in search of a better future, risking their lives in grueling journeys and prey to unscrupulous traffickers.

Brothers and sisters, we are approaching the season of grace and hope that is the Jubilee, due to begin a year from now. May this time of preparation for the Holy Year be an opportunity for the conversion of hearts, for the rejection of war and the embrace of peace, and for joyfully responding to the Lord's call, in the words of Isaiah's prophecy, "to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners" (61:1).

Those words were fulfilled in Jesus (cf. *Lk 4:18*), who is born today in Bethlehem. Let us welcome him! Let us open our hearts to him, who is the Saviour, the Prince of Peace!

## 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](http://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 96222920

### FUNERALS

When a Funeral is to be celebrated, please contact the parish office to organise a meeting with Fr Henry. 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.

### MASS INTENTIONS

All Mass intentions must be submitted to the Parish Office on or before Thursday. Names will be published for 4 weeks at a time.



### LOURDES OVER 50s GROUP

Over 50s meeting Thursday 8th February 2024, 10.30am– 1pm. Please bring a plate to share. Look forward to seeing you there.

### Lourdes: Luminate Young Adults Group

Wishes you a Merry and Blessed Christmas. The next group night will be in early 2024. If you would like more information please kindly contact Ian Epondulan: [youtholol7h@gmail.com](mailto:youtholol7h@gmail.com)

### LOURDES PLAYGROUP

Our Lady of Lourdes Parish playgroup is a fun playtime for children aged 0 to 5 years old and their carers. It is held every Friday morning during school terms 9.30am-11.30am in the Parish Meeting Room. For further information please contact Maria Hosni 0432 174 056 or the Parish Office.

### FREE ZUMBA CLASSES

Every Tuesday and Thursday 6.00pm-7.00pm in the Hall. Everyone Welcome!

### LEGION OF MARY

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

### Christ Catholic Community Prayer Group

Thursdays at 9.30am in the Parish Meeting Room. 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>

### OFFERTORY PROCESSION FOR OUR WEEKEND MASSES

With the intention to help our community to get more involved at Mass and better appreciate our share in the priesthood of the faithful, meaning our call to be priests, prophets and kings or queens of Jesus through baptism that Fr David Orr reminded us in our recent Parish retreat, I would like to invite all our parishioners to take part in the offertory procession, especially families that have some special celebrations in the families, such as wedding anniversaries, baptisms, birthdays, or death anniversaries. Please see Fr Henry or Ernie before Mass to arrange it.

## OLOL PARISH CALENDAR

### JANUARY

26	Australia Day Mass	8.00am
31	Parish Pastoral Council Meeting	7.30pm

### FEBRUARY

1	School Term 1 Starts	
4	Sacramental Program 2024 Enrolment Mass	9.30am

## OLOL MINISTRY ROSTER

**Acolytes, Ministers, Readers and Altar Servers, please remember to arrive 15 minutes before the beginning of Mass.**

### 30/31 December 2023

Acolytes	Vigil: Abel Do Rosario 8am: Terry Jordan 9.30am: Ian Epondulan	
Ministers	Vigil: M.Mifsud, J. Sarmiento 8am: E.Gartner, F.Paiva 9.30am: C.Brooks, B.Chandler	
Readers	Vigil: N.Do Rosario, A.Punch 8am: P.Ferriols, A.McNally 9.30am: C.Diaz, R.Epondulan	
Altar Servers	Vigil: A.Bagatella, M.Gluvic, J.Martinez 8am: S.Park, P.Park 9.30am: C.Attard, F.Wanandy	
Morning tea (after 9.30am Mass)	Volunteer	
Musicians	Vigil: Shaun's Group 8am: Fr. Henry 9.30am: Maximilian's Chorale	
Flowers	Team	
Church Cleaning	4 January	Lourdes Spiteri
Welcomers	Vigil: Ram Urge 8am: Volunteer 9.30am: Volunteer	

### 6/7 January 2024

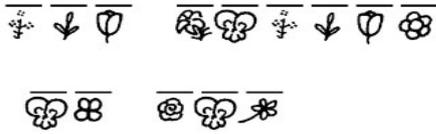
Acolytes	Vigil: James Dinning 8am: Eugene Miu 9.30am: Jane Seaman	
Ministers	Vigil: C.Gonzales, M.Simic 8am: A.Joseph, S.Nemorin 9.30am: P.Gow, K.Huihui	
Readers	Vigil: B.Motha, C.Rodrigues 8am: N.Arambulo, M.Santos 9.30am: A.Hye Rin Han, K.Huihui	
Altar Servers	Vigil: E.Reardon, L.Sadipoor, B.Spadero 8am: Volunteers 9.30am: Volunteers	
Morning tea (after 9.30am Mass)	Volunteer	
Musicians	Vigil: 8am: Fr. Henry 9.30am:	
Flowers	Team	
Church Cleaning	13 January	Tongan Community
Welcomers	Vigil: Helen Gonzales 8am: Volunteer 9.30am: Kathy Chamberlain	

# The Kids' Bulletin

December 31st, 2023: Feast of the Holy Family  
 January 1st, 2024: Feast of Mary the Mother of God



Mary,



Under what title do we honour Our Lady on January 1st?  
 Use the code to find out!

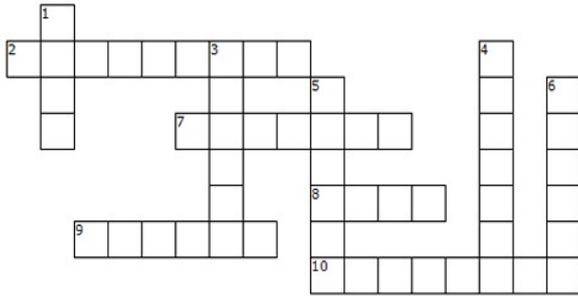
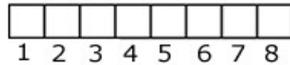
D E F G H M O R T



Answers:  
 Simeon,  
 promises,  
 Spirit,  
 Mary,  
 Joseph,  
 doves



God is faithful to keep his \_\_\_\_\_.



**ACROSS**

- Deliverance from the penalty of sin
- Something you said that you would do
- The organs for seeing in the faces of humans and animals
- A building dedicated to religious ceremonies or worship
- The town where Mary, Joseph, and Jesus lived

**DOWN**

- The mother of Jesus
- The homeland of the Jewish people
- A person who is not Jewish
- The man who was promised he would not die until he had seen the Messiah
- The earthly father of Jesus

TEMPLE	SALVATION	MARY	NAZARETH	ISRAEL
SIMEON	JOSEPH	GENTILE	PROMISE	EYES

## Simeon Recognizes Jesus

Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. Luke 2:25-26 (NVI)

Based on Luke 2:22-40 (NIV)



SPIRIT	RIGHTEOUS	PRAISED	COURTS	TEMPLE
CHILD	DEVOUT	LIGHT	JOSEPH	JESUS
PARENTS	SALVATION	ISRAEL	REVEALED	PIGEONS
SIMEON	PROMISED	DOVES	SACRIFICE	MARY

Draw a picture below of your family.



## THE HOLY FAMILY

Jesus + Mary + Joseph

