

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
Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/LOL7Hills/>

THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT 17 December 2023 • Year B



Let us Pray for the Sick

Leonila Ahillon, Mary Attard, Cynthia Avery, Barrie Chamberlain, Rosella Booth, Penny Briscoe, Khien Doan, 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
 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 Cheteuti, 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, Pacienza Piscopo, Mercedes Yu, Anna Vingerhoed, Epifania Cruz Samaniego, Maria Fely Sebastian, Joseph & Theresa Vella

Anniversaries: Fredy Alphonse, Merlene & Ralph Blackford, Carolina Borg, Josephine & Family Calleja, Fe Licup Carmen, Mary Carmenzuli, Dennis Clarke, Philomena Corera, Mervyn Costello, Conchita Deloso, Rita de Silva, John Falzon, Josephine Francis, Charles Francis, Russell, Sheela Franklin, Paul Gauci, Charlie Gravina, Ivan Elisha, Martha Joseph, Ngoc Khuong Mai, Irene Moroney, Thelma Morrissey, Lourda Motha, Paul Mula, Jason Muscat, Francis Muscat, Alberto Nahoy, Aurora Nonato, Makalita Kilisitina Pongi, Sam Silvia, Cordula Paiva, Roseline Ratnam, 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, Sam & Silvia Debatista, Carmen, Joe, Lonsan, Jimmy & Tony De Guarie, Julian Epondulan, Melvyn Fernandes, Sammy Formosa, Evangeline Garcia, Jose Garcia, Christine Gomez, Harold, Rosine, Marc LaFleur, Sashin Patrick Manamperi, Elenoa Matavesi, Pauline Meilak, Mary Mifsud, Emilia & William Mifsud, Marcel Mohsen, Anton Motha, Louis & Stephen Mula, Felix & Adriana Muscat, Michelle Muscat, Mary Muscat, Josephine Muscat, Charles Muscat, Philippa & Jim Muscat, Piu Muscat, Adrian Pereira, Lakshman Pereira, John Portelli, John Ratnam, Jose Sanchez, Sem Serna, Joyce & John Sutari, 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

FIRST READING A reading from the prophet Isaiah 61:1-2. 10-11

The spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for the Lord has anointed me. He has sent me to bring good news to the poor, to bind up hearts that are broken; to proclaim liberty to captives, freedom to those in prison; to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord. 'I exult for joy in the Lord, my soul rejoices in my God, for he has clothed me in the garments of salvation, he has wrapped me in the cloak of integrity, like a bridegroom wearing his wreath, like a bride adorned in her jewels. 'For as the earth makes fresh things grow, as a garden makes seeds spring up, so will the Lord make both integrity and praise spring up in the sight of the nations.'

The Word of the Lord

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

(R) My soul rejoices in my God.

1. My soul glorifies the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God, my Saviour.
He looks on his servant in her nothingness;
henceforth all ages will call me blessed. **(R.)**

3. He fills the starving with good things,
sends the rich away empty.
He protects Israel, his servant,
remembering his mercy. **(R.)**

2. The Almighty works marvels for me.
Holy his name!
His mercy is from age to age,
on those who fear him **(R.)**

SECOND READING A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Thessalonians 5:16-24

Be happy at all times; pray constantly; and for all things give thanks to God, because this is what God expects you to do in Christ Jesus.

Never try to suppress the Spirit or treat the gift of prophecy with contempt; think before you do anything – hold on to what is good and avoid every form of evil.

May the God of peace make you perfect and holy; and may you all be kept safe and blameless, spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has called you and he will not fail you.

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 John 1:6-8. 19-28

A man came, sent by God. His name was John. He came as a witness, as a witness to speak for the light, so that everyone might believe through him. He was not the light, only a witness to speak for the light. This is how John appeared as a witness. When the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' he not only declared, but he declared quite openly, 'I am not the Christ.' 'Well then,' they asked, 'are you Elijah?' 'I am not,' he said. 'Are you the Prophet?' He answered, 'No.' So they said to him, 'Who are you? We must take back an answer to those who sent us. What have you to say about yourself?' So John said, 'I am, as Isaiah prophesied: a voice that cries in the wilderness: Make a straight way for the Lord.'

Now these men had been sent by the Pharisees, and they put this further question to him, 'Why are you baptising if you are not the Christ, and not Elijah, and not the prophet?' John replied, 'I baptise with water; but there stands among you – unknown to you – the one who is coming after me; and I am not fit to undo his sandal-strap.'

This happened at Bethany, on the far side of the Jordan, where John was baptising.

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





FROM FR. HENRY

Dear Friends,

'Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. Indeed, the Lord is near' (Phil 4.4-5). This is the Entrance Antiphon for this Third Sunday of Advent starting with the word 'rejoice' followed by a repeat, which sets the tone of joyful celebration for this Sunday Eucharist liturgically known Gaudete Sunday, and Gaudete in Latin means 'rejoice'. In a visible way, the third candle on the wreath in pink is lit up as a reminder of the theme of joy we are asked to embrace today.

Why do we rejoice? Because the commemoration of our Lord's Nativity is approaching as the Antiphon tells us and he comes to remind us that nothing can come between us and the love of us made visible through him, with him and in him. A sense of joy in fact runs through all the three readings this Sunday.

In the first reading, Isaiah highlights his ministry and prophecies the mission Jesus made his own many years later as he read out in the synagogue in his hometown (cf. Lk 4.18-19). The prophet then expresses his joy and thanks for all the good things the Lord has done to him.

The first reading is followed by the responsorial Psalm taken from the Magnificat, the hymnal response the Mother of the Lord gave to Elisabeth in return for her prophetic greeting (cf. Lk 1.46-54).

With the Second reading, St Paul encourages the Thessalonians keep these three practices: to remain happy at all times, to pray constantly and ever be thankful to God for his blessings.

Finally comes the Gospel of John highlighting John the Baptist's ministry as a witness to Jesus as the light of joy and salvation to the world. As a witness he was clearly aware of his task, which was to help people make a straight way for Jesus, meaning to turn away from sins and wickedness, and to transform their lives along the way of love and truth. He humbly told the Pharisees' disciples sent to ask him to clarify his identity that whether he was the Savior. Though he had been a popular preacher, John frankly admitted that was not the Messiah, but it was Jesus Himself, who came after him and he was unworthy even to undo Jesus sandal-strap. This is the same message Mark told us in his Gospel last Sunday. As we carry out our mission to bear witness to the Lord through our various calls in the Church and professions in the world, John the Baptist in no doubt presents to us an outstanding example to follow.

Pray that his example always inspire us in our mission to humbly bring Christ to those around us and make his faith constantly grow in the hearts of people through our good words and deeds.

Have a joy-filled week,

Fr Henry

PARISH NEWS...

PARISH SECOND RITE OF RECONCILIATION

Will be on Tuesday, the 19th of December at 7.30pm with assistance from our local clergy.

INDIVIDUAL CONFESSIONS

Thursday 21 December from 9.30am to 10.30am

Friday 22 December from 9.30am to 10.30am

CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES

Christmas Eve 6pm, 9.00pm & Midnight

Christmas Day 8am & 9.30am



MINISTERS FOR CHRISTMAS MASSES

There is a sign up sheet at the back of the church from this weekend for Ministers of the Eucharist, Acolytes and Altar Servers who would like to serve at one of our Christmas Masses.

CHURCH WELCOMERS

As part of the feedback from Synod in our parish, we need some new welcomers to greet and offer bulletins at all services to help continue to create a better community, welcoming parishioners and visitors before each mass. If you are able to assist please contact the parish office.

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 WINDOWS

We all know that our church has been more 60 years old, and so its windows. Unfortunately some of them have been broken and waiting to be fixed at the moment, so please be gentle to our aging windows when you need to open them. Thank you for not pushing them all the way out, as you might damage them.

ADVENT WREATH

This circular base is traditionally taken to symbolise the ever-renewing cycle of the seasons.

The four candles, represent the four Sundays of Advent.

The third candle is known as the Shepherd's candle and symbolises joy. To the shepherd's great joy, the angels announced that Jesus came for humble people like them, too. This joy is celebrated in the Readings of the Mass.



CHRISTMAS EVE CHOIR PRACTICE

Children's Christmas Eve Mass 6pm choir will have a practise in the church Saturday 23rd December 10-11am.

Anyone wishing to join in the choir for the 6pm Mass, please come forward to this practise.

Tongan Choir for the 9pm Mass will also practise on that Saturday 11-12noon.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY—CHRISTMAS STORY

Thank you to the children who have volunteered to act out the Christmas Story this year. This will take place on the Sunday 24th December at 6pm mass. For those children not participating but attending the mass, you are invited to dress up as angels or shepherds.

WELCOME TO OUR PARISH

We would like to welcome Rev Deacon Thong Nguyen who was appointed recently to serve in our Parish community. Deacon Thong is my compatriot and we have known each other for a long time, five years before the end of the Vietnam War. We wish him all the best and look forward to his companionship with us.

COMMUNION TO THE SICK MINISTERS

If you are a current Minister who gives Communion to those sick or homebound or wishing to serve in this ministry, please kindly contact the Parish Office to provide your name as Deacon Thong is creating a parish data base to offer any assistance when needed with home visits.

DIOCESAN NEWS

NEW Diocesan website launched

The new 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!

2023 Diocese of Parramatta Christmas Mass 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) and on Catholic Outlook (www.catholicoutlook.org). The Diocese of Parramatta wishes you, your families and faith communities a Merry Christmas.

Advent and Christmas | Summer 2023 Catholic Outlook Magazine out now!

The Advent and Christmas | Summer 2023 edition of the Catholic Outlook Magazine is out now! This edition features reflections on Mary's journey into the dark night, how our communities celebrate Christmas, our four new leaders in the Diocese, a handy Christmas Mass Times guide, plus so much more. Pick up your free copy from parishes and offices across Western Sydney and the Blue Mountains today or read it online via catholicoutlook.org/magazine

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/>

Epiphany Pilgrimage and Fiesta 2024

Commit the first fruits of your new year to Christ with the 2024 Epiphany Pilgrimage (2 - 9 Jan 2024). Enjoy 7 days of bushwalking, fellowship and prayer as we journey from Emu Plains to the top of the Blue Mountains, experiencing the wonderful hospitality of parish communities along the way. Day 1 is a family-friendly day, with the option for a children's pilgrimage finishing with the Finnies Fiesta at St Finbar's Glenbrook. For more information and to register for all or part of the journey, visit www.epiphanypilgrimage.org.

Sydney Summer School of Evangelisation: 7 – 14 January 2024

Summer School is a week-long, live-in, life-changing retreat at the Mt Carmel Retreat Centre in Varroville NSW, featuring praise and worship, inspiring talks, engaging liturgy, time to chill & learn and more in the midst of a community of 150+ young people aged 16-35. Registrations open 31 October. Register by 30 November to receive early bird rates (concession \$525/adult \$625). More info: contact@summerschool.org.au. Bookings: summerschool.org.au

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 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 Saturday 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

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 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 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 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/

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. For further information, please contact the Registrar, Mary Pearson via email marypearson@gmail.com



POPE FRANCIS' ANGELUS

Dear brothers and sisters, *buongiorno!*

On this second Sunday of Advent, the Gospel speaks to us about John the Baptist, the precursor of Jesus (cf. *Mk* 1:1-8), and it describes him as “the voice of one crying in the desert” (v. 3). The desert, an empty place, where you do not communicate; and the voice, a means to speak – these seem like two contradictory images. But they are joined in the Baptist.

The *desert*. John preaches there, near the Jordan River, near the place where his people had entered the promised land many centuries earlier (cf. *Joshua* 3:1-17). In so doing, it is like he was saying: to listen to God, we must return to the place where, for forty years, he accompanied, protected and educated his people, in the desert. This is the place of silence and essentials, where someone cannot afford to dwell on useless things, but needs to concentrate on what is indispensable in order to live.

And this is an always relevant reminder: to proceed on the journey of life, we need to be stripped of the “more”, because to live well does not mean being filled with useless things, but being freed from the superfluous, to dig deeply within ourselves so as to hold on to what is truly important before God. Only if, through silence and prayer, we make space for Jesus, who is the Word of the Father, will we know how to be freed from the pollution of vain words and chatter. Silence and sobriety – from words, from the use of things, from the media and social media – these are not just *fioretti* (translator’s note: a common practice in Italian devotional life in which someone offers a small sacrifice, a resolution, or the proposal to do a good deed to Our Lord or Our Lady) or virtues, they are essential elements in the Christian life.

And we come to the second image, the *voice*. This is the means by which we manifest what we think and what we bear in our hearts. We understand, therefore, that it is quite connected with silence, because it expresses what matures inside, from listening to what the Spirit suggests. Brothers and sisters, if someone does not know how to be quiet, it is unlikely they will have something good to say; while, the more attentive the silence, the stronger the word. In John the Baptist that voice is linked to the genuineness of his experience and the purity of his heart.

We can ask ourselves: What place does silence have in my days? Is it an empty, perhaps oppressive, silence? Or is it a space for listening, for prayer, for guarding my heart? Is my life sober or filled with superfluous things? Even if it means going against the tide, let us value silence, sobriety and listening. May Mary, Virgin of silence, help us to love the desert, to become credible voices who testify to her Son who is coming.

After the Angelus

Dear brothers and sisters!

Seventy-five years ago, on 10 December 1948, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was signed. It is like a master plan. Many steps have been taken, many still need to be made, and unfortunately, at times, steps backward have been taken. The commitment to human rights is never finished! In this regard, I am near all those who, without fanfare, in concrete daily life, fight and personally pay the price defending the rights of those who do not count.

I welcome the release of a significant number of Armenian and Azerbaijani prisoners. I look with great hope on this positive sign between Armenia and Azerbaijan, for peace in the Southern Caucasus, and I encourage the parties and their leaders to conclude the peace treaty as soon as possible. In a few days, the work of COP28 on the climate, underway in Dubai, will conclude. I ask all of you to pray for a good outcome for the care of our common home and the protection of people.

And we continue to pray for the populations who are suffering because of war. We are heading toward Christmas: Are we able, with God’s help, to take concrete steps of peace? It is not easy; we know that. Certain conflicts have historically deep roots. But we also have the testimony of men and women who have worked wisely and patiently for peaceful coexistence. Let their example be followed! Let every effort be put toward addressing and removing the causes of conflict, while at the same time – speaking of human rights – protecting civilians, hospitals, places of worship, freeing hostages and guaranteeing human rights. Let us not forget battered Ukraine, Palestine, Israel. I assure my prayers to the victims of the fire that took place two days ago in the hospital in Tivoli. I heartfully greet all of you, pilgrims from Rome, and Italy, and other parts of the world, particularly the faithful from San Nicola Manfredi, the adult scouts from Scafati and the groups of young people from Nevoli, Gerenzano and Rovigo. I wish you all a good Sunday. And please, do not forget to pray for me. Enjoy your meal and *arrivederci!*

POPE FRANCIS ANNOUNCES FIRST WORLD DAY OF CHILDREN *By Vatican News*

At the end of the Angelus on Friday, Pope Francis announces that the first World Day of Children will take place in May 2024. The initiative is being promoted by the Dicastery for Culture and Education. A World Day of Children, in the wake of World Youth Day, will be held in Rome on 25-26 May 2024. Pope Francis made the announcement, “with joy”, at the Angelus on the feast of the Immaculate Conception. The initiative responds to the question, What kind of world do we want to leave to the children who are growing up now? “Like Jesus, we want to put children at the centre and care for them”.

Sponsored by the Dicastery for Culture and Education

The event, which will see thousands of boys and girls from all over the world flock to Rome, is sponsored by the Dicastery for Culture and Education. The Dicastery had already offered its patronage in November, at the “Let’s Learn from Boys and Girls” event that saw Pope Francis surrounded by some 7,500 children from around the world in the Paul VI Hall. A great meeting of music and testimony, the event can be seen as a prelude to 2024’s World Day of Children.

Proposed by 9-year-old Alessandro

The idea of a Day entirely dedicated to the youngest among us had been proposed to the Pope in July by a child, 9-year-old Alessandro, on the occasion of the Popecast, the second podcast made by Vatican Media with Pope Francis in view of the WYD in Lisbon.

“I like it very much!” the Pope replied after listening to the voice message. “We can have it organized by the grandparents. A beautiful idea. I will think about it and see how to do it.”

POPE FRANCIS' AUDIENCE ADDRESS

Catechesis. The passion for evangelization: the apostolic zeal of the believer. 30. *Ephphatha, Church, be open!*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Today we will conclude the series dedicated to apostolic zeal, in which we have allowed the Word of God to inspire us, to help nurture a passion for the proclamation of the Gospel. And this involves every Christian. Let us consider the fact that in Baptism, the celebrant, touching the ears and the lips of the baptized, says: "May the Lord Jesus, who made the deaf hear and the mute speak, grant that you may soon receive his word and profess the faith". (cf. *Mk* 7:31-35).

And we have heard about the miracle of Jesus. The evangelist Mark goes to great lengths to describe where this took place: toward "the Sea of Galilee" (*Mk* 7:31). What do these two regions have in common? The fact that they were predominantly inhabited by pagans. They were not areas inhabited by Jews, but mostly by pagans. The disciples went out with Jesus, who can open the ears and the mouth, thus, the phenomenon of mutism, of deafness, which is also metaphorical in the Bible, signifying being closed to God's calls. There is a physical deafness, but in the Bible, the one who is deaf to the Word of God is mute, and does not communicate the Word of God.

There is another indicative sign: the Gospel reports Jesus' decisive word in Aramaic. *Ephphatha* which means "be open", may the ears be open, may the tongue be open. And it is an invitation that is addressed not so much to the deaf man, who could not hear him, but precisely to the disciples of that time and of every age. We too, who have received the *ephphatha* of the Spirit in Baptism, are called to be open. "Be open", Jesus says to every believer and to his Church: be open because the Gospel message needs you to witness it and proclaim it! And this also makes us think about the attitude of Christians: Christians should be open to the Word of God and to service to others. Christians who are closed always end up badly because they are not Christians. They are ideologists of closure. A Christian should be open to the proclamation of the Word, and to welcoming brothers and sisters. And this is why *ephphatha*, this "be open", is an invitation to us all to open ourselves.

Even at the end of the Gospel, Jesus entrusts us with his missionary desire: go beyond, go and tend, go and preach the Gospel.

Brothers, sisters, let us all feel called, as baptized people, to witness and proclaim Jesus. And let us ask for the grace, as Church, to bring about a pastoral and missionary conversion. On the banks of the Sea of Galilee, the Lord asked Peter if he loved him and then asked him to tend his sheep (cf. vv. 15-17). Let us too ask ourselves. Let each one of us ask ourselves this question, let us ask ourselves: Do I truly love the Lord to the point of wanting to proclaim him? Do I want to become his witness or am I content to be his disciple? Do I take to heart the people I meet, bringing them to Jesus in prayer? Do I want to do something so that the joy of the Gospel, which has transformed my life, may make their lives more beautiful? Let us think about this, let us think about these questions and go forward with our witness.

Appeal

I am continuing to follow the war in Israel and in Palestine, with great concern.

I renew my appeal for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire. There is much suffering there. I encourage all the parties involved to resume negotiations, and I ask everyone to make an urgent commitment to ensure that humanitarian aid will reach the people of Gaza, who are at the end of their tether and in great need of it.

May all the hostages be freed. They had seen some hope in the recent truce. May the enormous suffering of the Israelis and the Palestinians end.

Please: no to weapons, yes to peace!

Special Greetings

I extend a warm welcome to the English-speaking pilgrims and visitors taking part in today's Audience, especially the groups from Malaysia and the United States of America. I pray that each of you, and your families, may experience a blessed Advent in preparation for the coming of the newborn Saviour at Christmas. God bless you!

Summary of the Holy Father's words

Dear brothers and sisters: Today's catechesis concludes our series of reflections on apostolic zeal and our baptismal mission to be joyful witnesses to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In the rite of Baptism, our lips were blessed as a sign that, reborn in Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, we are sent forth to share with others the Good News of our redemption and our newfound dignity as adopted sons and daughters of the Father. May the love of God, poured into our hearts by the gift of the Spirit, inspire within us ever greater zeal for the Church's mission of proclaiming the Gospel, drawing all hearts to Christ and working for the spread of his Kingdom of holiness, justice and 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

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

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.

CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE 2023

19 Parish Second Rite of Reconciliation	7.30pm
21 Individual Confession	9.30-10.30am
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



LOL MINISTRY ROSTER

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

16/17 December 2023

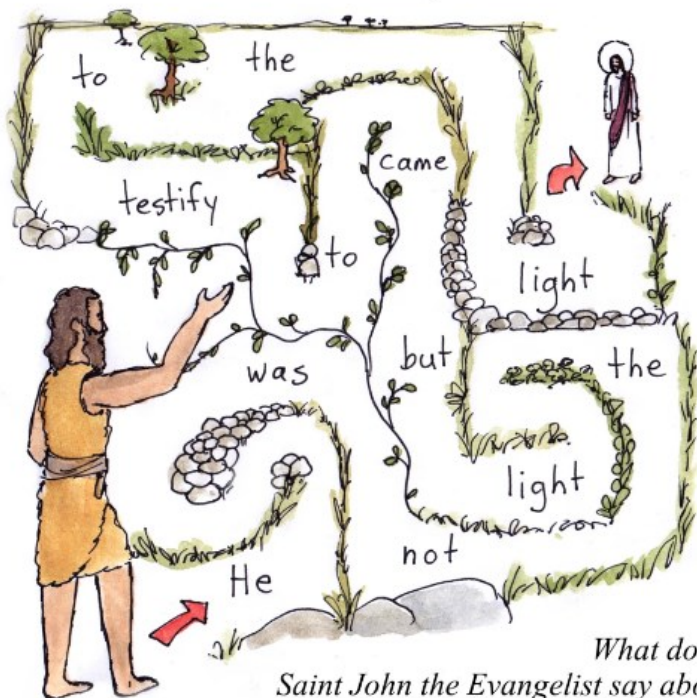
Acolytes	Vigil: Daniel La Guidara 8am: Jerome Irudayaraj 9.30am Eugene Mui	
Ministers	Vigil: L.La Guidara, M.Mifsud 8am: C.Gonzales, H.Gonzales 9.30am: G.Basili, S.Lenthall	
Readers	Vigil: B.Motha, A.Punch 8am: A.McNally, K.Walker 9.30am: M.Aquino, A.Walker	
Altar Servers	Vigil: A.La Guidara, C.La Guidara, S.Thoms 8am: Volunteers 9.30am: J. Kingston, A.Melki	
Morning tea (after 9.30am Mass)	Parish Pastoral Council	
Musicians	Vigil: K.Thoms & C.Woodward 8am: Fr. Henry 9.30am: Maximilian's Chorale	
Flowers	Fennie & Angela	
Church Cleaning	16 December	Judith Deloso
Welcomers	Vigil: Volunteer 8am: Volunteer 9.30am: Kathy Chamberlain	

23/24 December 2023

Acolytes	Vigil: Derick Soares 8am: Ernie Gartner 9.30am Ramzee Michael	
Ministers	Vigil: A.Bellissimo, R.Soures 8am: F.Balatbat, A.Joseph 9.30am: P.Gow, M.Michael	
Readers	Vigil: L.Bellissimo, C.Rodrigues 8am: M.Santos, K.Walker 9.30am: F.Kennedy, S.Manamperi	
Altar Servers	Vigil: A.Laus, L.Laus 8am: Volunteers 9.30am: S.Culili, L.Culil	
Morning tea (after 9.30am Mass)	Couples for Christ	
Musicians	Vigil: Nina's Group 8am: Fr. Henry 9.30am: Nina's Group	
Flowers	Annette & Mary B	
Church Cleaning	21 December	Cathy Hutchings & Annette Peatman
Welcomers	Vigil: Judith Deloso 8am: Volunteer 9.30am: Volunteer	

The Kids' Bulletin

Third Sunday of Advent
December 17th, 2023



What does
Saint John the Evangelist say about
Saint John the Baptist at the beginning of the Gospel?
Read the words you pass as you go through the maze.



The Light of the World

Decode the message by finding each substitute letter.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
r	i	n	m	s	i	c	j	a	k	g	z	q	u	h	d	b	f	y	o	v	t	x	e	w	p

VOXAX GIDX I DIC YOT YIE EXCV RATD KTP; OFE

CIDX YIE HTOC. OX GIDX IE I YFVCXEE VT

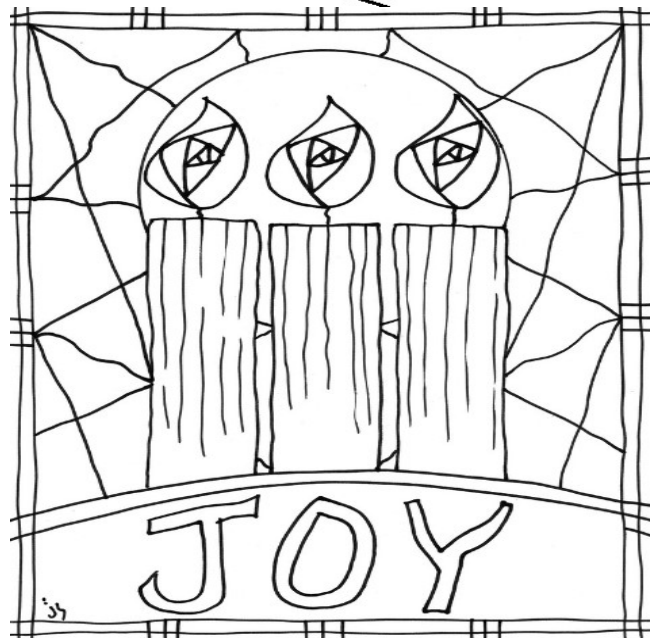
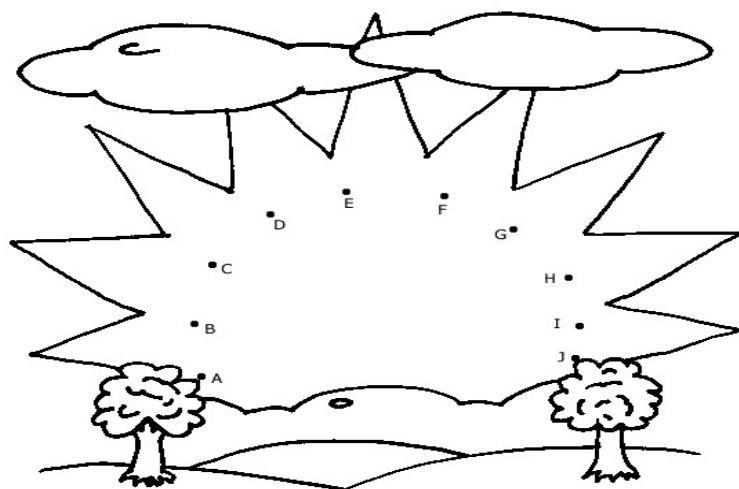
VXEFRS GTCGXACFCK VOIV BFKOV, ET VOIV

VOATNKO OFD IBB DXC DFKOV QXBFUX. OX

OFDEXBR YIE CTV VOX BFKOV; OX GIDX TCBS IE I

YFVCXEE VT VOX BFKOV.

Reflecting the Light (Sun)
Dot to Dot



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

BETHANY	JOHN	BELIEVE	SENT	LEVITES
CHRIST	TESTIFY	NAME	GOD	WATER
JORDAN	BAPTIZE	JERUSALEM	CONFESS	PRIESTS
LIGHT	PROPHET	ELIJAH	MAN	WITNESS