

Welcome to

St Joan of Arc Parish Haberfield



FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

YEAR B 24 December 2023

Parish Office:

97 Dalhousie St Haberfield NSW 2045

P: 02 9798 6657

E: admin@stjoanofarc.org.au

W: www.stjoanofarc.org.au

Office hours:

Tues, Wed, Thurs 9am - 3pm

Parish Priest: Fr Phillip Zadro

Parish Team:

Secretary:

Antonella Pesci

Pastoral Associate:

Maria Condello

Pastoral.Associate@stjoanofarc.org.au

Parish Safeguarding Support Officer (PSSO):

Tony Mediati

0413 481 039

PSSO@stjoanofarc.org.au

Eucharist:

Weekend:

Saturday evening: 5.00pm

Sunday: 9.00am & 6.00pm

*(Check for changes on special
Feast Days)*

Weekdays:

Wednesday & Thursday: 9.00am

Friday: 9.15am

**Tuesday evening may be available
for memorial Masses.**

Reconciliation:

Saturday: 4:30pm - 4.50pm

Schools:

SJOA Primary:

Principal: Amanda Gahan

P: 9798 9780

Domremy College:

Principal: Antoinette McGahan

P: 9712 2133

Christmas Mass times and Rosters

24th December

5pm - Children's Mass

9pm - Vigil

25th December

Midnight Mass

9am

Dear Parishioners of St Joan of Arc

I am privileged to be appointed to be your pastor, from 20 January 2024 onwards. After finishing 12 years of service at Berala Parish, I had been doing a Sabbatical Program (Ministry to Ministers) of renewal in Texas, USA, four months of renewal. Currently I am with my 95-year-old mum and my siblings in Kerala, India. I will be returning to Sydney on 15 January; and I am looking forward to making my home with you at Haberfield. I thank Fr Phil Zadro whom I know as a wonderful pastor. Before becoming Parish Priest for the first time, I was his assistant Priest at Bankstown where I was trained well.

I wish you all a blessed Christmas and happy New Year.

Looking forward to meeting you all in person

Fr Thomas Kurunthanam

Farewell morning tea for Fr Phil will be held after the 9am Mass on 14th January. All welcome.



We wish all those who will be away over the summer break a wonderful and safe holiday.



The Parish Office will be closed from 25th December, reopening on Tuesday 2nd January.

New Year's Day - Mass 9am

Our Vision as presented in our Strategic Plan

"...a welcoming and modern Catholic community grounded in faith and spirituality, we want to engage with and build a broader community, particularly among the young and with the families of our local Catholic school as well as providing pastoral outreach to those in need within our Haberfield community and also reach out to deliver broader social justice in our community, our nation and beyond."

The Checkered Origins of Grace

God writes straight with crooked lines. We know that expression, though we rarely apply it to sacred history or to the birth of Jesus. We should. The Christmas story is written with some pretty crooked lines.

The renowned biblical scholar, Raymond Brown, writes up a particularly insightful piece on the origins of Jesus as described in Matthew's gospel, where Matthew, in a text we like to ignore, traces the lineage of Jesus from Abraham to Mary. What Matthew reveals in his list of people begetting other people is, as Brown highlights, quite a checkered story. Jesus' family tree contains as many sinners as saints and his origins take their roots too in the crooked lines written by liars, betrayers, adulterers, and murderers. Jesus was pure, but his origins were not.

Matthew begins his story of the origins of Jesus with Abraham, who fathers Isaac and then sends his other son, Ishmael, and his mother packing, off into the desert, to be rid of them. Not quite what you would expect from the great patriarch. How can that be fair and how can that be justified? Then Jacob steals his older brother's blessing from Isaac (just as Israel itself earlier had seized the land of Canaan from a people who had a prior claim). Next, among all the sons of Jacob, Joseph is clearly the most worthy, but he is not the one who gets chosen. Judah, who had sold Joseph into slavery out of jealousy and then impregnated his own daughter-in-law, taking her to be a prostitute, is the one who gets chosen. It is fair to ask the question, why Judah?

Then Matthew lists the names of fourteen kings who are part of the genetic origins of Jesus. Of those fourteen, only two, Hezekiah and Josiah, were considered faithful to God as judged by the Book of Kings. The rest, in Brown's words, were "adulterers, murderers, incompetents, power-seekers, and harem-wastrels." And then there is David, the great king, from whose lineage the gospels proudly proclaim that Jesus descends. Admittedly, David was a great man, humanly and spiritually; he united the community, built the temple, and wrote the psalms, but he was also an adulterer who covered sin by murder.

Finally there is the question of which women are named as significant in Jesus' lineage. Instead of naming Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel, Matthew names instead: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Bathsheba, before finally naming Mary, as Jesus' mother. A curious selection: Tamar was a Canaanite woman who, because she had been left childless by two of Judah's sons, disguised herself as a prostitute and seduced Judah himself. Rahab was a real prostitute, though her kindness protected Israel's spies during the conquest of the promised land. Ruth, like Tamar, was foreigner, and Bathsheba, as we know, was the woman David seduced before he had her husband killed. The scandal of their affair and the death of their illegitimate child didn't prevent her from scheming to insure that one of her children became heir to the throne. Each of these

women had marital issues that contained elements of irregularity or scandal and yet each was able to be an instrument in God's birth on this planet. Clearly Matthew highlights their names to set the stage for Mary, whose pregnancy is also irregular, since Jesus had no human father.

The last part of the genealogy contains mostly names of unknown persons, no-names. That too is important since, if unknown persons contributed so significantly to Jesus' origins, then we too are not too insignificant, unimportant, or anonymous to contribute to the continuation of that story.

God writes straight with crooked lines. Nowhere is this more evident than in the birth of Jesus. There is an important challenge in this. To quote Raymond Brown: If the beginning of the story involved as many sinners as saints, so has the sequence. ... The God who wrote the beginning with crooked lines also writes the sequence with crooked lines, and some of those lines are our own lives and witness. A God who did not hesitate to use the scheming as well as the noble, the impure as well as the pure, men to whom the world hearkened and women upon whom the world frowned – this God continues to work with the same mélange.

Perhaps the real challenge in all of this comes to those of us who would want to accept only an idealized portrait of Jesus' birth, one that has only straight lines, no impurities, no dark colors. But, despite our struggle to digest this, it is important that we do so because what is highlighted by the Gospels in the birth of Jesus throws light on all subsequent Christian history and on our own lives. Grace is pure, but we who mediate it often aren't. Still God's love and God's plan aren't derailed by our infidelities, sin, and scheming. God's designs for grace still somehow work and this, Raymond Brown points out, is not a lesson in discouragement, but in encouragement.

Used with permission of the author, Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser. He can be contacted through his website, www.ronrolheiser.com. Now on Facebook www.facebook.com/ronrolheiser



Nativity set

There were two silent auctions held over the last few weeks. (one at the Church and the other at the School). The winners are

Youssef Family (church) and Belinda Bayssari - SJA Family Educator (school).

Sacraments 2024

Details in relation to the reception of the Sacraments (Reconciliation, Confirmation and Eucharist) are available on the parish website under Sacraments 2024. If you have a child/ren eligible for any of the Sacraments next year please complete the google form ASAP.

REFLECTION

“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so, the child born of you will be holy and will be called Son of God.”

The incarnation is the most extraordinary, mind-dazzling, significant and fascinating event in human history. It has fired the imagination of artists of every kind. Poets, sculptors, writers, and biblical experts have used striking imagery to put this unimaginable truth into human language. They’ve spoken of it as “a divine kiss of peace”, an “explosion of God’s extraordinary love for us”, a “fresh bond of intimacy” between God and humanity, between the mighty God and God’s tiny creatures. At the heart of this astonishing story stands a woman who is totally one with us in our humanity.

The annunciation uniquely focuses, not upon a great man, such as a general, a politician or a renowned scholar, but upon a young teenager called Mary. Almost from early childhood she has been hidden away in a tiny village called Nazareth located on the very edges of the mighty Roman Empire. She is the kind of person who might be dismissed as a “Little Miss Nobody”. St John’s Gospel records that when Philip, one of Jesus’ first disciples, was told that the long-awaited Messiah had come and was living in Nazareth, his cool reaction was, “What good ever came from Nazareth?”

The story of the annunciation begins with the arrival of an unexpected visitor at Mary’s little cottage. An angel, the bearer of startling news, reveals that she is to conceive, carry in her womb, give birth and finally be mother to the long-awaited Messiah.

From the beginning of this Mass, we agreed that if we’re looking for someone to guide us through the final days of Advent, into our Christmas celebrations, and finally into the living-out of the Christmas message in the year ahead, we could not do better than turn to our Blessed Lady.

Strangely enough, it is sometimes argued that we can’t take Mary as a model. After all – so the argument goes – she saw Jesus in the flesh, lived with him for thirty years and was endowed with special privileges. Think of her immaculate conception or her glorious assumption into heaven.

However, it is none of these things that make her our model. It is, rather, the fact that her life centred upon the Father, on trying to discern his will for her, on daily turning to him in prayer, on alertness to the needs of others, and her readiness to help them in their needs.

It is precisely the same things that God is asking of us: not that we should become someone else, but rather that we should remain as we are. God wants us as we are, loves us as we are, with our strengths and weaknesses, our failings and our successes, because God made us as we are, and God has no regrets.

In the days before Jesus’ coming, people generally acknowledged God’s almighty power. A prophet like Isaiah could picture God holding the whole world in his hands and encompassing the heavens with an outstretched palm. But even Isaiah could never have begun to imagine what we celebrate at Christmastime – this same God coming to live among us as one of us – coming as a tiny baby, a bundle of weakness and helplessness and, in the end, dying in shame on a wooden cross. He comes into our world, just as we did, by being born of a woman. Without a woman’s cooperation, there would have been no incarnation. Without Mary’s cooperation, there would be no Christmas. It is that thought that leads many people, even small children, to try to

reflect her love by practical acts of kindness to their sisters and brothers.

If we take time, make time – even just a few minutes each day in this often hectic period – to recall how Mary treasured and pondered “these things” in her heart, we too will ponder them, and come to appreciate why the wonder of Christ’s birth – even at the end of a difficult year like 2023 – calls for celebration, for rejoicing, and for gentle, loving wonder, in the company of Mary. It is she who best teaches us how to love Jesus; it is she who shows us, despite our littleness, to love Jesus as she did by making him the love of our lives.

And so as Pope St John Paul II put it, “the faithful, living in the spirit of the liturgy, by thinking about the inexpressible love with which the Virgin Mother awaited her son, are invited to take her as model and prepare themselves to meet the Saviour”.

The Living Word

Saints Days/Coming Events

Monday	25th December	Christmas Day
Tuesday	26th December	St Stephen, the first martyr
Wednesday	27th December	St John, apostle, evangelist
Thursday	28th December	The Holy Innocents, martyrs
Sunday	31st December	The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph

-SACRAMENTS-

For information on BAPTISM, FIRST RECONCILIATION, FIRST HOLY COMMUNION, CONFIRMATION, MARRIAGE, ANOINTING OF THE SICK - EUCHARIST TO THE HOUSEBOUND please visit the parish website for details.

Recently Deceased: Frank Bova, Robert Pirto, Cathy Rinaudo, Pietro Leto, Giuseppe Annetta, Ken McTaggart Colin A. Kerr, Giustino Tauriello, Fatima Taukitoku, Jose Antonio Probaos, Placido Veneziano, Fr Michael Mullins SM, Sr Joan McBride SM.

Please note: Names of recently deceased will remain for a 3 month period before being removed.

Rest in Peace: Concetta Lo Surdo, Giustino Tauriello, Antonio Nesci, Beniamino Di Pasquantonio, Antonino Di Girolamo, Giuseppe Colantuono, Michael & Mary Kayrooz and Families, Marco Monaco, Nunzia Ferrara, Angelo Testa, Salvatore Giarratano, Joe Di Marti, Mary Attard, Luciano Frisone, Elisa Procopio, Salvatore Procopio, Monika Fisi’ihoi, Domenico Nicita, Kaliammah Subramaniam, Grazia Scuderi, Saverio Mafodda, Valentina Mannino, Antonio Cardillo, Helen Bedirian, Luigino De Domeneghi, Rofayla Daoud, Michael & Mary Kayrooz & families, Rocco Delfino, Rosa Delfino, Domenico Nicita, Iolanda Caruso, Domenico Catalano, Ilario Furlan, Carmela Catania, Salvatore Catania Concetta Cardillo, Maria Oppedisano, Anna Rosa Angilletta, Cosimo Angilletta, Joe Angilletta, Frank & Immacolata Angilletta, Giuseppe Aversa, Domenico & Olimpia Spadaro, Lawrence Wong, Pietro Banno, Jack McEnally, Domenico Banno, Lucy The, Jim Tuite, Sarina Torrisi, Lattari & Aversa families, John & Moya Phillips, Mons Dino Fragiagomo, Fr Frank Furfaro & All Souls in Purgatory.

In your love and concern please pray for the following ill members of our community: Enrico Cuomo, Neville Hill, John Kcoury, Mary Finios, Rose Uthappa, Asela Savieti, Glen Dixon, Venu Uthappa, Roberto Tramarin, Vittoria Lavecchia, Anna Attard, Rosa Santos, Elisha Lau, Aitken Family, Liz Smith, Pat Rankine, Jerry Andre, Donna Neeley, Adeline Ashing, Annelise Buda, Giovanni Luci, Stephan Ferenc, Giancarlo Buda, Mario Bianco, Jozo Tadic

In keeping with the Privacy Act names cannot be published in our Parish Bulletin without the permission of the persons themselves or their next of kin. Please specify on your Mass Envelope your intention to include the person’s name in this Bulletin or contact the Parish Office on 9798 6657



A message from the Archdiocese of Sydney

Child sexual abuse is a crime. The appropriate people to deal with crimes are the police. If you, or anyone you know have been abused, please contact the police. Alternatively, you can contact the Safeguarding and Ministerial Integrity Office at (02) 9390 5810 or safeguardingenquiries@sydneycatholic.org. You may also want to speak to your Parish Priest who will be able to provide support and guidance. The Archdiocese has a legal obligation to report crimes to the police.



Changes to Working with Children Checks in Parishes

Ministers of the Word/Readers/Lectors and Parish Collectors (AKA Wardens) are no longer required to have a WWCC

Updated fact sheet as at 6 Dec 2023

In NSW, the *Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012* stipulates who requires a Working with Children Check (WWCC). The WWCC scheme is monitored and audited by the **Office of the Children's Guardian**.

Who needs a Working With Children Check?

Parish roles that **DO** require a WWCC

(if Children form part of the ministry work)

- Priest in Ministry
- Parish Secretaries
- Youth Ministers, Workers or Leaders
- Pastoral Associates
- Sacramental Coordinators
- Sacramental Group Leaders
- Catechists in State Schools
- Children's Liturgy Coordinators
- Children's Choir Ministry Leaders
- Acolytes and Senior Altar Servers
- Eucharistic Ministers

Parish roles that **DO NOT** require a WWCC

Cleaner	Gardener
Choir members	Musicians
Piety Stall	Flower Arranger
Offertory	Hospitality Workers
Finance Committee	Counters
Parish Pastoral Council	
Ministers of the Word/Readers/Lectors	
Parish Collectors (AKA Wardens)	
Ministers of the Homebound	
Audio Visual Coordinators	
Welcoming/greeting Ministry	
St Vincent de Paul	

For more information contact Tony Mediati - psso@stjoanofarc.org.au



Safeguarding Audit

St Joan of Arc has been chosen as one of 33 parishes and 7 church agencies to be audited. The required documentation has been completed and submitted.

Next year sometime the auditor will attend the parish to review what has been submitted etc., so Tony Mediati continues to work towards ensuring we comply with all we have submitted.

Baby Change Table

A baby change table has been purchased and will be placed in the disabled toilet (carpark side of church). There will be a packet of wipes there, please ensure you wipe it down after use.

Thank you Rhonda Albani for arranging this.

The Christian's Final Journey:

Catholic Cemeteries and Crematoria and partner, the ACU Centre for Liturgy, are offering a one-day workshop on Catholic funerals on **13 February 2024**.

It has been designed for all those interested in Catholic funerals including parishioners, clergy, Funeral Directors, Bereavement Teams, Pastoral Associates, Parish Secretaries and Family Faith Educators, and all school staff. Catholic practices around burial and cremation will be investigated as well as **preparation of a funeral (for future discussion with the funeral celebrant)** and how to support the grieving.

It will be held at Club Ashfield, 1-11 Charlotte Street Ashfield NSW. Time: 9am-5pm (registration from 8.30am). Registration is essential by 7 February. Cost: \$60 (includes lunch and a workbook) (\$120 for Funeral Directors who will receive certification for 5 years.)

Enquiries: CentreforLiturgy@acu.edu.au or 02 9701 4751. For more information, and to register, go to www.acu.edu.au/centreforliturgy/pastoral-training



To all those who donated prizes for the Christmas raffle at last week's parish Christmas Celebration.

- Clara's Hairdressing
- Nadia's Beauty Room
- IGA Haberfield (Robert)
- Lorena's boutique
- Haberfield Health
- Garnish Café
- Amatos Liquor Mart

We also thank the following parishioners who made donations. Marea Dorman, Pina Furlan, Frank Capra, Josie Cavallaro, Peter Doyle & Nerina Friscone



Thank you to all who donated gifts for Mary MacKillop Outreach. The seats and floor space in the van were full and the smiles of the staff reflected that of their clients, making their Christmas extra special.