

## 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.*

## 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.

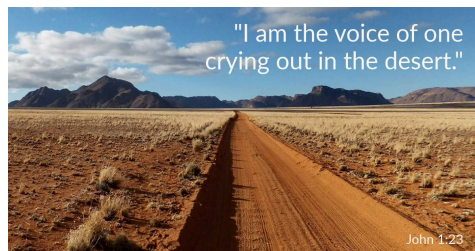
This is how John appeared as a witness. When  
the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem  
to ask him, ‘Who are you?’ he not only declared,  
but he declared quite openly, ‘I am not the Christ.’  
‘Well then,’ they asked ‘are you Elijah?’ ‘I am  
not’ he said. ‘Are you the Prophet?’ He  
answered, ‘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.*



**ST JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH**

**Knox Deanery**

**19 Forest Road, Ferntree Gully, 3156**

**Phone: 9758 1029**

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**Website: [www.stjohnthebaptist.net.au](http://www.stjohnthebaptist.net.au)**



**Third Sunday of Advent – Yr B**

**16<sup>th</sup> / 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2023**

*Ever-faithful God,*

*We are a people on the Advent Way,*

*Teach us to walk together,*

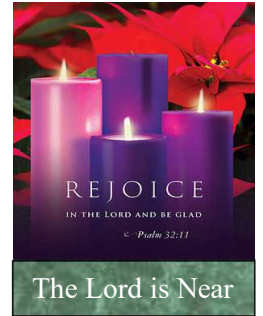
*in a spirit of listening, so that*

*we might respond to Your call like Mary.*

*Make us, like John the Baptist, eager to embrace*

*Your will for our world.*

*We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.*



**FOCUS ON THE WORD** this week we rejoice! This is the key theme of *Gaudete* Sunday, where the pink candle on the Advent wreath reminds us to find joy in Jesus. **Even amid difficult times, the light of Christ will overcome the darkness.** Responding to this week’s readings, Pope Francis suggests that ‘joy must be the characteristic of our out faith’. **Who will be drawn to follow Jesus with us if we seem to be constantly miserable?** If we are a people of faith, hope, and love, then let us be faithful, hopeful, and loving – all joyful attributes! In the opening line of his apostolic exhortation about proclaiming the Gospel, *Evangelii Gaudium*, the Pope says this: ‘The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus.’ The Pope reminds us that we Christians must start our journey of proclamation from a place of awe-filled, awesome joy!

Which is exactly what John the Baptist was doing. He saw himself as a voice proclaiming the Lord’s approach, which was obviously good news! And now, as then, such good news is best delivered joyfully. © Nick Brodie **Mary’s Magnificat:** It is called Magnificat because that is the first word of the canticle in the Vulgate Bible’s Latin text: “Magnificat anima mea, Dominum”, etc. (My soul doth magnify the Lord, etc.). Mary worshiped God with these words, likely in a chant, after Elizabeth greeted her and referred to her as the “Mother of my Lord.” H. Henry describes it in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* as “... an ecstasy of praise for the inestimable favour bestowed by God on the Virgin, for the mercies shown to Israel, and for the fulfillment of the promises made to Abraham and to the patriarchs.” Listen to the Magnificat here: <https://youtu.be/r85XG4OwQ8s?si=rVprAXQpOfxTn4in>

**SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN:** The Parish of St John the Baptist, and the Archdiocese of Melbourne are committed to the care, wellbeing and protection of children, young people and vulnerable people in our community. May our message be that child protection and the dignity of every person is the responsibility of every adult. You can find out more about the church’s work in this area at: [www.catholic.org.au/responseandprevention](http://www.catholic.org.au/responseandprevention)

**FEAST DAYS** Mon 17<sup>th</sup> Dec *Episcopal Ordination Most Rev Mark Edwards (2014)*

*I have come that you may have life and have it to the full*

*(John 10:10)*

**PARISH PRIEST:**  
Fr Thomas Kuruwila 9758 1029  
Email: thomas@stjohnthebaptist.net.au

**DEACON:**  
Rev. Peter Stringfellow 9758 1029  
Email: Peter.Stringfellow@cam.org.au

**FAITH DEVELOPMENT CO-ORDINATOR**  
Mary Makarucha 9758 1029  
Tuesdays and Wednesdays. 10.00am -2.00pm  
Email: marymakarucha@stjohnthebaptist.net.au

**PARISH OFFICE:** 9758 1029  
Monday 9.45am – 3.45pm  
Tuesday to Friday 9.00am –3.00pm  
Secretaries: Charmaine Premaratne & Maree Wilson  
Accountant: Sara Luk  
Email: office@stjohnthebaptist.net.au  
**PPG CHAIR** Carolyn Sombekke  
Email: csombekkesjb@gmail.com

**SCHOOLS:**  
**St John the Baptist** 9758 1013  
Principal: Kelli Johnston  
Email: kjohnston@sjferntreegully.catholic.edu.au  
**St. Joseph's College** 9758 2000  
Principal: Catherine Livingston  
**Mater Christi College** 9754 6611  
Principal: Maria Haggett

**MASS TIMES:**  
**Saturday** 6:00 pm  
**Sunday** 9:00 am, 11:00 am  
Tuesday 7.00pm  
**Wed & Thurs** 9.15 am  
**Friday** 11.00 am

**RECONCILIATION:** Saturdays 5.15 pm

**GLENGOLLAN VILLAGE MASS** 1<sup>st</sup> Friday 2pm  
**WILLOWBROOK MASS** 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday 11am

**BAPTISMS:** Either during a weekend Mass or at 12.30pm on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month. 6 weeks' notice required. Please refer to our Guidelines for Infant Baptism on our Parish Website.  
**Contact the Parish Office on: 9758 1029 or via email at: [office@stjohnthebaptist.net.au](mailto:office@stjohnthebaptist.net.au)**

**WEDDINGS:**  
By appointment, 6 months' notice required. Saturdays or weekdays (not Sundays). Contact the Parish Office: on 9758 1029.

3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent – Yr B  
16<sup>th</sup> /17<sup>th</sup> December, 2023

**PRAYING FOR...**

*All who have died recently:*

Justin Madeira

*Those who we remember at this time:*

Fredrick Bravington, Kevin Leddin; Maria Hilda Morillo, Francisco Morillo, Alfredo Morillo, Manuela Morillo, Leandro Morales, Terence McDermott, Judith Cherry; Giuseppe Rizio; Margaret King;

*The sick:*

Eamon Smith, Fame Pelgrim, Elsie Johnson, Peggy Spencer, Alan Alcock, Ann Good, Ben Mc Laey, Don Roberts, Maureen Wilson, Lucy Denzin, Gabby Sundstrom, Kathryn Kircos, Ruby Samtoy, Barbara Kenny, Anne Jayawardena, Lea Hatley, Patricia Quinn, David Merton, Michael Byrne, Bev McNamara, Anthony McNamara, Victoria Lewis, Nicole Moore, Peter Fairhurst, Hans Whitaker, Edward Osborne

**ROSARY** is recited prior to Morning Weekday Mass on Wed, Thurs, Friday, in the Church. All welcome to join in the recitation.



**GROUP ROSARY SESSION FOR PEACE**  
When: First Saturday of the Month at 10.30 am.  
Where: 37 Lane Road, FTG. All are welcome.  
Contact: Pauline Barlow on 9758 5106.

**MOTHERS' PRAYER GROUP** has finished for the year. A Merry Christmas to all, and a blessed New Year.

**CHARISMATIC PRAYER GROUP** Thanks to all who have attended throughout the year, and at our Christmas breakup Tuesday. We will now break until the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday in February 2024. We wish you all a very Merry Christmas & Happy New Year. See you next year!

**FRIENDSHIP GATHERING:** is having a break over the holidays. We wish you all a Happy, Holy and Safe Christmas & New Year. Looking forward to more fun times in 2024. Stay tuned for start up date. . .

**PARISH OFFICE HOURS THROUGHOUT THE CHRISTMAS/ JANUARY HOLIDAYS.** The Office



Closes Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2023

**Normal offices hours resume**

Tues 9<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

Please note that as Friday 26<sup>th</sup> January is a public holiday, the Parish office will be closed.

Merry Christmas to everyone, see you in the New Year!

**MELBOURNE OVERSEAS MISSION APPEAL** A huge thank you to all those who supported the MOM appeal. The amount raised was: \$.814.20



**CHRISTMAS SEASON MASSES**

**Tuesday – 19<sup>th</sup> December**

7pm Mass with extended Penitential Rite.  
Sacrament of Reconciliation (individual) following Mass.

**Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> December**

Individual Reconciliation after the 9.15am Mass

**Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> December – 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday Advent**

Individual Reconciliation at 5.15pm – 6pm.

**Sun 24<sup>th</sup> December** – 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday Advent 9am, 11am

5.30pm Carols followed by **6.00pm Family Mass.**

9.00pm Carols followed by **9.30pm Mass of Christmas**

**Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> December - Christmas Day**

**9 am Mass and 11 am Mass.**

*(Note - there will be no weekday Masses from Tue 26<sup>th</sup> up to and including Fri 29<sup>th</sup> December)*

**Sat/Sund 30<sup>th</sup> /31<sup>st</sup> December – Holy Family**

**Mass 6pm Saturday and 9am & 11am Sunday**

**Monday 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 – Mary, Mother of God 10am Mass only.**

**HELP FOR CHRISTMAS MASSES**

Be part of the Christmas liturgies by being a reader, collector, operate the computer etc. Sign-up sheets have gone up on the glass walls in the Church. **Please write your name against the Mass time where you would like to help out. Thank you!**

**SINGERS/MUSICANS** would you like to join a music group for any of the Masses during the Christmas period? Come & Join Us. **There will be a rehearsal on Wed 20<sup>th</sup> December, at 7pm in the Church. All welcome!**

**APPLICATIONS ARE INVITED FROM SUITABLY QUALIFIED AND EXPERIENCED PEOPLE FOR THE POSITIONS OF:**

**Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne**

- **Chief Advisor**

- **Creatives Officer, Parental Leave Contract**

**Parish Positions**

- **Parish Secretary- St Christopher's Parish, Syndal**

- **Finance Administrator - St Simon's Parish, Rowville**

- **Pastoral Worker - St Judes and St Simons Parish, Scoresby and Rowville**

- **Pastoral Worker – St Andrew's Parish, Clayton South**

**Other Positions**

**Marketing & Engagement Manager, Newman College**  
Further details of the above positions can be found on the Archdiocese website at: **Job vacancies | Melbourne Catholic** <https://melbournecatholic.org/job-vacancies>

**PIETY STALL UPDATE** We have received a very generous donation of **very nice small Advent Books** which are selling at a reasonable cost. Also, extra Christmas Cards and Columban Calendars are available.



**ARCHBISHOP'S ADVENT APPEAL FOR UKRAINE** In response to the continued conflict in Ukraine, Archbishop Peter A Comensoli has launched a special Advent appeal, the proceeds of which will go towards providing aid and practical assistance to those who have been displaced and are without basic supplies, especially as winter approaches.

'There are no winners in war, only families torn apart. Sadly, this is the painful reality facing so many at this time,' Archbishop Comensoli reflected. 'I'm inviting the faithful of Melbourne to offer whatever they can at this time. And I pray that, together, we can be a sign of God's nearness to those who need it most.'

All parishes have been sent cards and envelopes for the Advent Appeal, which we encourage you to distribute to your parishioners throughout the Season of Advent. Donations can be made using the envelopes or QR code.

For more information and resources, please visit <https://melbournecatholic.org/adventappeal>

**FUNERAL MASS** for the late **Rita May White** will be celebrated here at St John's Church on **Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> December – at 1pm.**

**FUNERAL MASS** for the late **Justin Madeira** will be celebrated at St John's on **Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> December at 1pm.** There will be a **Rosary the night previous Thurs 21<sup>st</sup> December at 7pm** here in the Church.

**ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY CHRISTMAS**

**2023 ANGEL TREE** Each year we provide **needy families who we have visited throughout the year with a Christmas Food Hamper and Gift cards for each of their children.** We invite you to **contribute to either of these.** The gift cards that you donate allow the parents to purchase a suitable gift themselves according to the age and needs of their child/ren. Thank you most sincerely for your ongoing generosity.- SVDP, Ferntree Gully Conference. ❤️

**SACRAMENTAL CLASSES 2024** for children who do not attend catholic schools will begin early February 2024. If you have children ready to make the sacraments or know of any children who do not attend catholic schools and are interested in celebrating their sacraments, please contact [marymakarucha@stjohnthebaptist.net.au](mailto:marymakarucha@stjohnthebaptist.net.au) or 9758 1029

**ROSTERS: Mon 18<sup>th</sup> Dec to Sun 24<sup>th</sup> Dec 2023**

Flowers	Genevieve & Gina
Linen	Sue N
Welcomers	6pm: Lia U & Help needed 9am Rosa L & Florence J 11am Shamindri & Chamal A
Lectors	6pm: Rosina Loerand 9am: Christmas Volunteers 11am: Christmas
Counters	Peter G, Peter C, Florence J & Joan R
Gardening	Patrick S & Harry R