

FIRST READING

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

Let the wilderness and the dry-lands exult,
let the wasteland rejoice and bloom,
let it bring forth flowers like the jonquil,
let it rejoice and sing for joy.

The glory of Lebanon is bestowed on it,
the splendour of Carmel and Sharon;
they shall see the glory of the Lord,
the splendour of our God.

Strengthen all weary hands,
steady all trembling knees
and say to all faint hearts,
'Courage! Do not be afraid.
'Look, your God is coming,
vengeance is coming,
the retribution of God;
he is coming to save you.'

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
the ears of the deaf unsealed,
then the lame shall leap like a deer
and the tongues of the dumb sing for joy,
for those the Lord has ransomed shall return.

They will come to Zion shouting for joy,
everlasting joy on their faces;
joy and gladness will go with them
and sorrow and lament be ended.

The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

R/. Lord, come and save us.

SECOND READING

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

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

The Word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia!

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

GOSPEL

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

John in his prison had heard what Christ was doing and he sent his disciples to ask him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or have we got to wait for someone else?' Jesus answered, 'Go back and tell John what you hear and see; the blind see again, and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised to life and the Good News is proclaimed to the poor; and happy is the man who does not lose faith in me.'

As the messengers were leaving, Jesus began to talk to the people about John: 'What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swaying in the breeze? No? Then what did you go out to see? A man wearing fine clothes? Oh no, those who wear fine clothes are to be found in palaces. Then what did you go out for? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and much more than a prophet: he is the one of whom scripture says: Look, I am going to send my messenger before you; he will prepare your way before you. I tell you solemnly, of all the children born of women, a greater than John the Baptist has never been seen; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he is.'

The Gospel of the Lord



ANNOUNCEMENT Melbourne Archdiocesan Synod . Archbishop Comensoli has initiated preparations for a Synod. See Letter on Trolleys



ST JOHN THE BAPTIST PARISH
Knox Deanery
19 Forest Road, Ferntree Gully, 3156
Phone: 9758 1029
Email: office@stjohnthebaptist.net.au
Website: www.stjohnthebaptist.net.au



3rd Sunday of Advent -Year A
13th/14th December 2025 -Year of Jubilee

*Jesus,
You make the blind to see.
Help us to see our neighbours' need.
Open our Hearts to Hear Your voice.
Teach us how we can bring peace and
Joy to others. We await Your presence,
Come, Lord Jesus!*



FOCUS on YEAR OF JUBILEE Sunday 14th Dec, 2025 is the Jubilee of Prisoners. What makes this Jubilee particularly extraordinary is the unprecedented opening of a Holy Door at Rome's Rebibbia Prison on December 26, 2024—the first time in the history of Jubilee years that a Holy Door has been opened within a prison. This revolutionary act signals the Church's radical commitment to including those on the margins of society in its most sacred celebrations. Pope Francis designated December 14, 2025, as a special "Jubilee for Prisoners," culminating the year with a specific focus on the millions worldwide who are incarcerated, detained, or awaiting execution. For this Jubilee honouring people who are imprisoned or affected by the justice system **reminds us that born from our shared dignity as children of God and members of the Body of Christ, we are called to participate in a ministry of restorative practices** which seek to make whole all people impacted by crime and the carceral system. By doing so, we point to and embody the infinite love, mercy and forgiveness of God.

FOCUS on the WORD Today's readings invite us to rejoice at the rebirth of Jesus in our lives as we are preparing for our annual Christmas celebration. Today is called *Gaudete* Sunday because today's Mass begins with the opening antiphon: "*Gaudete in Domino semper;*" i.e., "*Rejoice in the Lord always.*" So, to express our joy in the coming of Jesus as our Savior into our hearts and lives, we light the rose candle in the Advent wreath, and the priest may wear rose-colored vestments..The prophet Isaiah, in today's first reading, encouraged the exiled Jews in Babylon to rejoice because their God was going to liberate them from slavery and lead them safely to their homeland. The Refrain for today's Responsorial Psalm has us sing, "*Lord, come and save us!*" In the second reading, James the Apostle encourages the early Christians to rejoice and wait with patience for the imminent second coming of Jesus. Finally, in the first part of today's Gospel reading, Jesus encourages John the Baptist in prison to rejoice by casting away his wrong expectations about the Messiah and simply accepting Jesus' healing and preaching ministry as the fulfillment of the Messianic prophecy of Isaiah. **Life Lessons:** We need to learn how to survive a Faith crisis: If John the Baptist, even after having had a direct encounter with Jesus, the Messiah, had his doubts about Jesus and his teachings, we, too, can have our crises of Faith. With the lighting of the rose candle, the third on the Advent Wreath, among the purple candles, and the priest's wearing the rose vestments, **we are reminded that we are called to live with joy in our world of sorrows and pain.** (Fr. James Farfaglia) <https://fitonyshomilies.com/>

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

*I have come that you may have life and have it to the full
(John 10:10)*

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

Assistant Priest:
Arriving 15th December -Fr Peter Nguyen 9754 2141
Email: To be confirmed.
Deacon: Rev. Peter Stringfellow
Email: Peter.Stringfellow@cam.org.au

FAITH DEVELOPMENT CO-ORDINATOR
Mary Makarucha 9758 1029
Email: marymakarucha@stjohnthebaptist.net.au

PARISH OFFICE: 9758 1029
Monday 10.00am – 4.00pm
Tuesday to Friday 9.00am -3.00pm
Secretaries: Charmaine Premaratne & Maree Wilson
Accountant: Bernard Negline
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@siferntreegully.catholic.edu.au

St. Joseph's College 9758 2000
Principal: Catherine Livingston

Mater Christi College 9754 6611
Principal: Maria Haggett

MASS TIMES
Saturday Vigil Emerald and FTG 6:00 pm
Sunday Belgrave 8.30am FTG 10.30am
Gembrook 9.00am and Monbulk 11.00am

Weekday Mass Times
Tuesday, Belgrave 9am FTG 7.00pm
Wed Belgrave 9am FTG 9.15am
Thurs Belgrave 9am FTG 9.15am
Friday Belgrave 9am FTG 11.00 am
Saturday Belgrave 9am Reconciliation Belg 9.45am

RECONCILIATION: FTG Saturdays 5.15 pm

GLENGOLLAN VILLAGE MASS 1st Friday 2pm
WILLOWBROOK MASS 2nd Thursday 11am

BAPTISMS: Either during a weekend Mass or at 12.00pm on the 2nd 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**

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

3rd Sunday of Advent – Year A
13th /14th December, 2025 -Year of Jubilee.

PRAYING FOR...
All who have died recently:
Rev. Michael Leonard Shadbolt PE,
Christopher Civelli
Those who we remember at this time:
Kevin Leddin, Justin Madeira, Giuseppe Rizio, Jacques Walter,
Peter Windebank.



The Sick: Bonnie Hoefer, Ann Jayawardena.
ROSARY is recited prior to Morning Weekday Mass on Wed, Thurs, Friday, in the Church. All welcome to join in the recitation.

FIRST SATURDAY ROSARY the First Saturday Rosary Enquiries: Please contact Joan on 0408411096 All Welcome.

The CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC PRAYER GROUP
Thank you for another wonderful year. We will break now over Christmas, resuming the 1st Tues in February 2026.

FRIENDSHIP GATHERING Thank you everyone for a fun filled 2025. See you in the New Year, 15th Jan 2026

CHILDREN'S LITURGY will now take a break but we will resume in the new year. **6PM MASS MUSIC MINISTRY** children are invited at our **Saturday night Mass** to come sing with the choir.

PARENTS AND KIDS GROUP is now on Christmas break, we look forward to seeing you in the new year.

ADVENT STUDY- THE PROMISE Advent is such a busy time, we can easily forget to prepare for the coming of Jesus. **If you would like to include some reflection and quietness, come to the Parish Community Centre, Mon 15th December at 7pm** for the Advent reflection group. All welcome.

COMBINED CHURCHES RAFFLE RESULTS 6th Dec.:

Prize / Voucher - Ticket	Winner	Permit No - 10189/25
1 st Kia Car 24826	Josie Ringdal	Lara/Corio
2 nd \$5,000 31741	Grace	Lifeboat
3 rd \$3,000 19400	Celia Williams	Broadmeadows
4 th \$1,000 22564	Hoai Pham	Bundoora
5 th \$1,000 48220	Frank Cosgittis	Wantima
6 th \$500 48710	Tak To Pang	Wantima
7 th \$500 38107	K & A Zmegac	Lilydale

AUSTRALIAN NATIVITY SCENE (ANS) 2025 Experience Australia's largest and most renowned traditional nativity scene, now in its 22nd year, on display at **St Elizabeth's Parish, Dandenong North**. Open from **Mon 1st Dec 2025 – Fri 9th Jan 2025** After Mass Services or by appointment : Call **Wilson Fernandes the designer/creator - PH 0428 927 110**

IMPORTANT DATES
Tuesday 16th December: Thanksgiving Mass **9.15am**. join us in giving thanks and celebrating the many volunteers and contributions shared so generously throughout the school year.
TUES 23rd December 7.00pm Extended Penitential Rite within Mass, Sacrament of Reconciliation (Individual) following Mass from 7.30pm.
CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES:
ST JOHN THE BAPTIST FTG
CHRISTMAS EVE WED 24th December.
5.30pm Carols – 6pm Family Mass
9.00pm Carols – 9.30pm Mass
CHRISTMAS DAY THURS 25th December
10.30am Mass of Christmas Day.

WELCOME TO FR PETER NGUYEN on Mon 15th Dec 2025, we welcome our new Assistant priest for the Belgrave-Ferntree Gully parishes. Fr Peter comes to us from Thornbury /Thornbury East /Northcote/Alphington/ Please extend to him a warm and heartfelt welcome as he joins our Parish Family.



ST VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY CHRISTMAS 2025 ANGEL TREE We invite you to contribute to our Angel Tree we will provide basket/ bags for your **Christmas food items/ toiletries;** or those who might like to donate a complete hamper. Please feel free to supply your own bags if you wish. 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. Or Gift cards can be purchased from: **Westfield; Kmart, Target, Coles/ Myer** to the amount of either: **\$10, \$20, or \$30;** other. **Please place your donation in the box near the tree.** On behalf of our SVDP local conference, we would like to **thank you most sincerely** for your ongoing generosity this year in supporting our work with the disadvantaged - **Conference of St Vincent de Paul Society**

HELP NEEDED OVER JANUARY: Don is seeking your assistance to give the Steve Barrington FTG Meals Group their traditional break for the month of January **You are invited to help with our Annual Community BBQ and Food Pantry/Parcels distribution.** You are invited to assist with people - and financial contributions toward the cost of operating this annual event. Details are as follows: **January 2026 BBQs Arrangements - Every Wednesday 7th, 14th, 21st and 28th - 4:30-5pm arrival in preparation for 5:30pm Start - help when you can Serving From 5:30 – Ferntree Gully Uniting Church 6 The Avenue,** Opposite the Fire Brigade. **If you can assist, please contact Don Campbell at FTG Uniting Church ph: 0410 413 483**

BAPTISM We offer our congratulations to **Enzo Guinane**, child of Christopher & Loredana who will be baptised this weekend: The Church of God welcomes you with great joy.



SAVE THE DATE This year marks the **90th anniversary** of the founding of the Presentation Sisters in our parish and the opening of St John the Baptist primary school. There will be a special Mass at 10.30am on **Sunday 1st February** followed by light refreshments in the hall. We invite you to save the date and join us on this special occasion.

3rd SUNDAY OF ADVENT GAUDETE SUNDAY—JOY
The 3rd candle, which is **Rose** is the Candle of **JOY** also known as the Shepherds' candle, and marks celebration, amid a long period of waiting. It offers many opportunities to point joy-starved people toward life-sustaining joy in Jesus. As the Advent wreath glows brighter each week, **Gaudete Sunday shines a light on the Light of God, our reason for joy** Christ is coming, and salvation is near.



CHRISTMAS SIGN UP SHEETS -HELP NEEDED -If you can sing or play an instrument, **we are looking for additional people to join us over the Christmas Masses.** We also need readers, Eucharistic ministers **Welcomers. Please sign up** on the sheet, thank you.



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SACRAMENTAL PROGRAM 2026 The Sacramental program for children **who do not attend a catholic school,** will begin early in term 1 2026. First Term is for students who are in grade 3 and upwards to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Second term will be for children, who will be celebrating the Sacrament of Confirmation, grade six or upwards and Third Term will be for children who will be celebrating their First Eucharist. For further details please contact the parish office of Ferntree Gully **E: marymakarucha@stjohnthebaptist.net.au** or Ph: 9758 1029.



ITEMS OF FURNITURE 2 items are **looking for a new home.** for a small donation to assist SVDP.
1. a Black Leather Electric Recliner – this is the kind that would help an elderly person up out of the chair.
2. A brand new Portable Massage Therapy Table – the kind a Masseuse could take to do an at home appointment and would suit a newly qualified Massage therapist.
Contact: Wayne McGough on 0408 505 356 Thank you

ROSTERS: Mon 15th Dec - Sun 21st December 2025

Flowers	Marg H & Judy G
Linen	Sabrina McK
Welcomers	6pm Myra N & Wilma H 10.30am Terry S; Neil R; Peter C
Lectors	6pm Gab C 10.30am Henner C
Counters	George, Genevieve, Bindu M
Gardening	Patrick S, Harry R

PALMS AUSTRALIA Don Bosco Technical School in Sihanoukville Cambodia together with three other technical high schools **have requested a Peer Youth Mentor/English Tutor for 12-24 months**, perfect for mature and motivated 2025 HSC or IB graduates looking to make a real difference while gaining invaluable international experience.

Main Responsibilities of the volunteer:

-Provide English instruction and practice to students in the academic program and extra classes in the evening and/or weekends.

-Facilitate an English students' club in the school or boarding accommodation, if requested.

Incorporate new materials and activities for student learning.

-Collaborate with local English teachers to support student learning and engagement.

-Conduct weekly Scouts classes for students at all primary levels.

-Respond to the needs of particular children or young people who may need individual support and accompaniment Assist with youth camps if these are organised by your host

-Assist your host with drafting or proof reading English documentation if requested.

-Assist with sporting and/or musical activities with and for the children and young people



The Location

Sihanoukville [known as Kampong Som] province, a coastal village is located in the southwest of Cambodia which has become a very popular holiday destination. The city was named in honour of former king Norodom Sihanouk, and has a population of around 235,190 people. There are 3 other Don Bosco schools in Cambodia which are also be available for placement. They have extensive grounds which provide the opportunity for recreation with other young people, and a peaceful space for 'time out' if necessary. Peer mentors will have the opportunity to build supportive friendships with Cambodian young people and fellow peer mentors from Australia and/or other countries. Cambodia is a safe and hospital country for personal travel for those interested during term breaks and on weekends.

Support Provided:

Accommodation and meals

Small monthly living allowance

Up to 20 hours in country language training

Comprehensive preparation and ongoing support
Professional development opportunities on return for anyone interested in a career in TESOL.

Contact: Palms Australia Ph: 02 9560 5333

<https://palms.org.au/current-opportunities/>

ADVENT CAROL SERVICE AT St Patrick's Cathedral Sunday 21st December 2025

3pm -4.15pm The renowned choir of St Patrick's Cathedral Melbourne presents its 51st Advent Carol Service (music, readings and

prayers in the spectacular setting of the Cathedral The choir will sing traditional Advent carols 'Es ist ein Ros entsprungen' ('Lo, how a rose e'er blooming') and 'The angel Gabriel' (arr. David Wilcocks), and some of the most beautiful and stunning Advent motets in the repertoire, including John Tavener's 'God is with us', Richard Marlow's 'Advent Responsory', based on the hymn 'Wachet auf!' ('Sleeper's, wake') and Richard's 'Drop down ye heavens from above'.

Traditional congregational carols include 'O come, O come Emmanuel', 'Eternal God, who made the stars' ('Conditor alme siderum'), 'Of the Father's love begotten' and, for the motet of adoration, 'Sweet sacrament divine'.

Conductor: Dr Philip Matthias

Organist: Dion Henman

PIETY STALL NEWS Children's Daily Gospel Readings

for 2026 are now available for \$15, in addition to St Vincent de Paul Christmas cards \$6 per pack of 5 – just in time to post overseas to relatives. There is also some 2026 Columban Art calendars left at \$11 which would make a beautiful Christmas gift.



AUSTRALIAN NATIVITY SCENE (ANS) 2025

Experience Australia's largest and most renowned traditional nativity scene, now in its 22nd year, on display at **St Elizabeth's Parish, Dandenong North**. The Australian Nativity Scene (ANS) has become a beloved tradition, growing each year and gaining recognition as one of the best nativity scenes in the country. This display is free and open to all ages, providing a magical experience for families, parishioners and visitors alike. Wilson Fernandez, the designer, creator and artist behind this annual display, has crafted a scene that continues to captivate the community. Visitors from near and far arrive early to secure their spot to witness this beautiful Christmas tradition. Open from **Mon 1st Dec 2025 – Fri 9th Jan 2025** After Mass Services or by appointment : Call Wilson - PH 0428 927 110

Our Parish Recipe Book- "From our Table to Yours" Thank you to all the parishioners who have purchased copies of the Parish Recipe Book, "From our table to yours."

The first print is sold out, and our 2nd print has arrived.. The re-print will even include Fr Thomas' favourite recipes Please contact the Parish Office if you would like a copy.. Cost: \$20- per copy. \$8- is going to support our parish community It would make a great Christmas gift!



St. John's Netball Club
Fernree Gully

Open to Boys & Girls

Make friends, have fun and get fit at the same time!

Interested in playing Netball?

Winter 2026 Season starts soon
(runs from Feb - Aug)

Reduced fees for new players!

< Registration fees for Winter(Feb-Aug):
New players \$73, Existing players \$353 >

Younger players (under 7 in 2026) can register with NetSetGo at MDNA (term based) and then play with our SJB team the year they turn 7

Contact our Registrations Officer, Leanne on 0430 568 058 or regofficer@stjohnsnetball@gmail.com if you are interested

Games – Sat morning at Knox RNC
Training – Mon 3.30 (ages 7-13)

THE SEVEN 'O' ANTIPHONS OF ADVENT – TWILIGHT MARKET AND HOLY HOUR. join us for a special evening beginning with a twilight marked offering unique handcrafted Christian items and gifts. Following the market, gather in the beautiful St Peter's Catholic Church for Holy Hour with adoration accompanied by sacred music, with moments of prayer and personal reflection. **When?** Sunday 21st December, 2025 **Where:** St Peter's Catholic Church 561 Toorak Rd Toorak. 7pm-8pm

THEOLOGY AT THE PUB: Our final T@P will be at the Hop Bar in Beer Deluxe - Federation Square! Join us as we enter into the joy and hope of the Christmas season, giving thanks for God's blessings throughout the year. Come share good food, good drinks and even better company as we celebrate together.

14 Date: Monday, 15th December 2025

14 Doors open: 6:00pm

About Theology at the Pub: Theology at the Pub is an opportunity for Catholics aged 18–35 (and religious of all ages) to meet, have great conversations over a meal and a drink and listen to engaging talks by Catholic speakers. New to T@P? Perfect! This casual Christmas social is the ideal way to meet people, get connected and enjoy a great night out. E: theologymelbourne@gmail.com



Archdiocese of Melb COME WORK WITH US

Applications are currently open for the following positions:

Archdiocese of Melbourne

•**Discipleship Internship—2026**

Parishes

•**Parish Secretary, Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception Church, Sunshine**

If you are interested in applying for either of the above positions, further details can be found here.

Or

[Current Job Vacancies - CatholicCare Victoria](https://www.catholiccarevic.org.au/vacancies)

go to [catholiccarevic.org.au/vacancies](https://www.catholiccarevic.org.au/vacancies)

VMCH Search Jobs:

<https://careers.vmch.com.au/jobs/search>

Or

Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools (MACs)

<https://www.macs.vic.edu.au/Working-in-our-schools/Job-Search.aspx>