

The Spirit of Christmas is alive as Fr Dang leads volunteers to make it happen



FRIENDS IN GRACE

Join us for a Morning Tea/Christmas Party on December 21st, 9:30am at the Parish Office/Presbytery. Bring a plate of food to share and a friend.

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

Dec. 24, Sunday Vigil Family Mass - 5:00pm Carols, 5:30pm Mass
Dec. 24, Sunday Midnight Mass - 11:00pm Carols, 11:30pm Mass
Dec. 25, Monday Christmas Day Mass - 9:00am Carols, 9:30am Mass

3rd Sunday of Advent - 17 December

“Rejoice always. Pray without ceasing. Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus.” 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 This scripture reading sums up Stewardship. “Rejoice always” means place your trust in God; He will provide all that you need. “Pray constantly? means prayer should be a “running conversation with God throughout the whole day, every day. ?Give thanks in all circumstances? means even in bad situations, thank God. Suffering a little bit helps build empathy for others in similar situations and shows our dependence on God.

(Accessed on December 4, 2023 from www.archstl.org/about-stewardship/bulletin-inserts/weekly-bible-reflections)

4th Sunday of Advent - 24 December

“Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!” - Luke 1:28 After Jesus, we look to Mary as an ideal steward. Her entire life was lived in obedience to God’s call. Mary teaches us to live with joy for all we have been given. Just as the moon reflects the light of the sun, Mary reflects the light of Christ. Like Mary, we are called to reflect Christ’s light to the world through our gratitude and generosity.

Accessed on December 4, 2023 from www.archstl.org/about-stewardship/bulletin-inserts/weekly-bible-reflections)

Our prayers are with those who are suffering illness at this time.

OUR LADY OF FATIMA PARISH

Acacia Ridge | Algester
 Calamvale | Parkinson
 | Larapinta | Pallara

PARISH ADMINISTRATION

Fr Dang Nguyen
 Administrator
nguyend@bne.catholic.net.au

Steffanie Le
 Director of Ministries

Ellen Tran
 Youth & Pastoral Coordinator

Lizet Sanchez
 Parish Assistant (on leave)

Virginia Sharpe
 Acting Parish Assistant (Volunteer)

Efren Altez
 Liturgy/Newsletter (Volunteer)

Bernadette Maguire
 Digital Media Communications & Ministry Development

PARISH OFFICE

Located in Presbytery
 350 Mortimer Road
 Acacia Ridge QLD 4110

Hours Monday to Friday
 9.30am to 4.30pm

Telephone 07 3274 5513

Email
acaciaridge@bne.catholic.net.au

Postal
 PO Box 12 Acacia Ridge QLD 4110

Website
www.fatimaacaciaridge.org.au

MASS TIMES

Tue | Wed | Thurs | Fri | Sat 9 am
 Saturday 4.30pm (Vigil)
 Sunday 9am & 5pm

CONFESSIONS (by appointment)

BAPTISMS
 3rd Sunday of the month 10.15am

PIETY STALL

1st Sunday each month

AWAKEN IN CHRIST MINISTRY

admin@awaken.org.au
 0437006264

RISING YOUTH | RISING HIGH MINISTRY

hello@risingyouthministry.org
 0488220606 (Ellen)

SCHOOLS

Our Lady of Fatima School
 Acacia Ridge
www.ourladyoffatima.qld.edu.au
 3275 1152
pacaciaridge@bne.catholic.edu.au

St Stephens School Algester
www.ststephens.qld.edu.au
 3711 4911
palgester@bne.catholic.edu.au

FATIMA NEWS

3rd & 4th Sundays of Advent /Christmas Day-Year B
 December 17-25, 2023

Greetings to all,

One question confronts us on this Third Sunday of Advent: Who is he? Who is this figure in the desert that everyone is going out to see? St. Matthew calls him John the Baptist. St. Mark calls him John the Baptizer. St. Luke refers to him as John, the son of Zechariah. But St. John simply refers to him as John. Even more interesting, when the priests and Levites confront him in the gospel reading of this Sunday and ask “Who are you?”, he does not even give his name.

He responds to them by telling who he is not. He is not the Messiah. He is not Elijah. He is not a prophet.

In frustration the priests and Levites beg him to say something of who he is. And, quoting the great prophet Isaiah, this is his answer: **“I am a voice...” A voice that cries out in the wilderness to make straight the way of the Lord.**

John declares himself as a voice, this begs us to ask further question: what is the voice saying to us? This voice is telling us to look for the One who is coming. Look for the One who is coming to touch our hearts so that we might discover Him not in the glittering decorations of Christmas. Rather, that we might discover Him in the poor, in those in need, in the person who is forgotten, the stranger who is unwanted and unloved. We are to discover



Him in those forgotten in nursing homes, in the homeless... We are to discover Him in all that we are so that we might find Him in all that He is for others.

We are the ones who need Christ to be born in our hearts so that the richness of Christ’s love may call us to love one another....not in theory, but in practice.

We wait for Christmas...but we rejoice. Rejoice because Christ is coming...not to some distant land in some long-forgotten time, but coming now to heal our hearts.

The voice cries out...make straight the way of the Lord. Prepare a path so our hearts might be ready to once again cradle the love of God made real in Jesus Christ.

Blessings.

Fr Dang



Seasons Greetings
 From the Parish Office

Another year has gone by so quickly. We have had a busy year, many of us in the parish picked up some additional administrative responsibilities to help Fr. Dang with his workload. Thanks to all especially the volunteers, we are all settling in well to our new routines and looking forward to a productive 2024.

Follow us on **facebook**



Many homes, businesses and churches use the Advent wreath as a symbol of this season.

The Advent wreath is of ancient origin and relates to celebrations of the winter solstice when European days are shortest and gloomiest. Because people longed for the return of the sun's light and life, they suspended wagon wheels, decorated with greenery and candles, in their celebration halls. There they waited for their sun gods to return.

Around 200 years ago, the Advent wreath became customary in German homes and public buildings. It made its way into the church and has become a popular symbol of the passing of time during Advent.

The circle of the wreath, without and beginning or an end, symbolises God's unending love for us and reminds us of eternity. The evergreen leaves represented growth and hopes of eternal life. The symbol of evergreens is rather lost in our part of the world, so Australian gum leaves, nuts and flowers are sometimes substituted.

The four candles mark the four Sundays before Christmas, with one more candle lit each Sunday during Advent. Traditionally three candles are purple with the candle for the third Sunday being rose, but it's the increase in light as more candles are lit that is the focus, not the colour of the candles themselves.

Sometimes a 'Christmas candle' is placed in the centre of the wreath on Christmas Eve. This candle should be lit throughout the Christmas season. Its visual link with the Paschal candle helps connect the celebration of Christ's birth with its fulfilment in the Easter mystery. **(TO BE CONTINUED...)**

- Elizabeth Harrington

Christmas on Monday

Normally it is quite easy to determine what feast we celebrate on any given day. The higher-ranking feast take precedence over a lower-ranking commemoration. That gets quite tricky when Christmas falls on a Monday. **Both the Fourth Sunday of Advent and Christmas Day have the same ranking and both are what we call "days of obligation"**. The question then arises: what do we celebrate on Sunday evening? A common rule of thumb is that the actual day itself takes precedence over an anticipated Mass of the following day. But that will not work in this case.

In Australia, people's certain expectation will be that Christmas Eve will feature celebrations of the Christmas solemnity, and not the Advent Sunday. Therefore, while it is technically possible to celebrate the Advent Sunday with an evening Mass on Sunday 24 December, it would not be wise to do so. They should be the usual Christmas Masses which people have come to expect. The Sunday will therefore be celebrated on the evening of Saturday 23 and the morning of Sunday 24. Make it clear in the parish Newsletter well in advance. - Fr Tom Elich, Liturgy Brisbane

The Date of Christmas

Early Church documents show that the birth of Christ has been celebrated in Rome on 25 December since the early fourth century. How and when was it decided that this was the date of Christ's birth?

The most common theory is that Christians took over the date of the pagan feast of the Unconquered Sun which was proclaimed by the Emperor Aurelian in 274 AD. As the days stopped getting shorter and the hours of sunlight began to increase at the time of the winter solstice (December 25 in early calendars), people celebrated the sun's rebirth. Christians, who saw Christ as the true unconquered light of the world, celebrated his birth date on the same day.

Other researchers suggest a different theory. Scripture gives the date of Christ's death as 14 Nisan, the fourteenth day of the spring moon. It was calculated that the equivalent date in the Roman calendar that year was 25 March. Early Christians believed that the lives of patriarchs spanned a whole number of years from conception to death. This resulted in their conviction that Christ was conceived on the same date that he died, 25 March. In fact we celebrate the Annunciation on that date. Adding exactly nine months (because Christ is the perfect human being) gives 25 December as the date of his birth.

This connection between Christmas and Easter reflects a theological link. If it had not been for Christ's passion, death and resurrection, we would not be celebrating Christmas at all! - Elizabeth Harrington

Goodbye, Thank You and Amen

Dear Friends,

It has been my good fortune to be able to serve and/or work with so many of you over the years (Father, Deacons, Parish secretaries). Thank you for all your co-operation and assistance, and for putting a human face on the church. Now comes the time to turn the page and allow the wellspring to fill again with rest and doing something different. This final edition of the year is a little light on for content so as a parting gift I will fill Santa's stocking with a short story and some light reading. Pope Francis has recently made mention of the need for female Theologians to de-masculinize the church. Just as everything old can be new again here is a 19th century female author already doing some of the Pope's heavy lifting by re-writing the parable of the prodigal son in a Christmas setting. Till 'ere we meet again, auf wiedersehen, pet.

Preparing for Christmas

With The Catholic Guy, Bruce Downes

"You don't have to become, who you hope to become, you only become what you do!" You are invited to Prepare for Christmas this Advent (starting 3rd December) with a new Daily Devotional series. Each day, you will receive a short inspirational video from Bruce Downes, known as The Catholic Guy, full of inspiration, real-life stories and practical ways to become all that God has created you to be!

Register now or for more information:
<https://BruceDownes.org/Advent>



Go and make disciples of all nations: Matthew 28:19

Aims to equip and form leaders in evangelisation at the service of the Dioceses of Qld and beyond. A dynamic and flexible resource that places the Church's mission to evangelise at the heart of Holy Spirit Seminary's formation.

Xavier School of Mission
One Word, emerging voices: Is mission the key to a synodal Church?

Sunday 9 June—Friday 14 June 2024
xaviercentre@acu.edu.au | www.seminary.catholic.net.au

New 2024 Lent Resource now available to order



A RESURRECTED LIFE

\$6 each

BULK DISCOUNTS available for orders of 50 books or more.

PURCHASE NOW AT LENTPROGRAM.COM.AU

An Evening of Mass and Reflection to Launch the Mass of the Ascension—Wednesday 8 May 2024, 6pm, Cathedral of St Stephen, Brisbane

An early date claimer or diary clearer for 2024 - Sing a New Song: How we Might Name God Into the Future

This evening brings together a new composition of the Eucharist entitled Mass of the Ascension with other songs and pieces of music which seek to do just this: to name God in song in ways that help us to pray; to voice God in ways the generations of the future might resonate with.

We are celebrating sixty years since the promulgation of Sacrosanctum Concilium, the Second Vatican Council's Constitution on Sacred Liturgy. Such an event invites us to revisit the concerns and question, the hopes and dreams of the Church in relation to its prayer-life - that source of every other dimension of Christian life. Prayer is also the first apostolic priority of our Archdiocese. How do Catholics pray, and how might we pray, into the future? How might we "sing a new song" in our liturgies and gatherings, ever drawing from the past that brought us to life while opening pathways into the future of the Church? We need to explore these questions with, and for our young people.

Organisers: Maeve Louise Heaney VDMF, Xavier Centre for the Theological Formation and Campus Ministry, ACU, in collaboration with Brisbane Catholic Education and the Cathedral of St Stephens Cathedral, Brisbane

Needed!



We need more volunteer readers, communion ministers, power-point operator and mass coordinator for Sunday 5:00pm Mass. If you are able to help, would be very much appreciated. Please contact the parish office on 3274 5513.