



Catholic Parish of Lower North Shore



St Thomas' Willoughby

St Philip Neri Northbridge

St Leonard's Naremburn

Twinned with the Parish of Letefoho, Timor Leste.

We wish to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we gather, the Cammeraygal and the Wallumedegal peoples, who have walked upon and cared for this land for thousands of years. We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples to this Country and commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation.

PARISH OFFICE

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✉ office@lns.org.au

🌐 www.bbcatholic.org.au/lns

OFFICE HOURS

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Dionne Soares (Mon & Fri)

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♦ Finance (bookkeeper)

Ilona Dudek (Fri)

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CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

♦ St. Thomas' Primary School

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☎ (02) 7256 2104

Principal: Enrica Bova

enrica.bova@dbb.catholic.edu.au

♦ St. Philip Neri Primary School

📍 67 Baringa Rd, Northbridge NSW

☎ (02) 9958 7136

Principal: Liz Calabria

MISSION - "Together, in Christ's love, for others"

VISION - "To know and love God, and to be Christ to one another"

**FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT YEAR B
3rd DECEMBER 2023**



Dear Parishioners,

As we embark on the sacred season of Advent, let us come together in joyful anticipation and reflection. Advent is a time of preparation, a journey of the heart as we await the celebration of the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. During these weeks of Advent, let us cultivate a spirit of hope, peace, joy, and love in our lives and in our community. As we light the candles on the Advent wreath, let each flame remind us of the profound light that Christ brings into the world and into our hearts. May this season be a time of spiritual renewal and deepening faith. Let us open our hearts to the message of Advent, embracing the promise of Emmanuel—God with us. Together, let us seek the presence of Christ in our daily lives and share His love with others.

I would like to thank everyone for the wonderful celebration our parish had the pleasure of hosting last Friday evening as we welcomed & witnessed the Deaconate Ordination of Hien. There were over 55 Priests and Deacons, fellow seminarians, parishioners from many parishes across our Diocese, and Hien's family live streaming from Vietnam, all coming together to celebrating this important moment in Hien's life. I would like to thank the Vietnamese community for the amazing array of food that we all enjoyed on the evening. To my office staff & clergy, thank you for all the amazing preparations you made on the day and weeks leading up to this as well. To all those from our parish who volunteered on the evening, thank you!

Another wonderful celebration our parish celebrated last Wednesday evening was our "Volunteers Thank You Christmas Party." Around 100 people braved the weather to celebrate the year that has been. We ate, we sang, we danced we thanked one another for the wonderful year of 2023. A big thank you to our PFC, office staff, and clergy for making this event so special.

Wishing you a blessed and meaningful Advent season.

In Christ's love,

Fr Jose Philip OSH Parish Priest

we pray for the many people whose lives have been torn apart by conflict in Gaza and Israel.

We pray especially for those who have died, those who are grieving, the injured and those now without food, shelter or medical supplies. Strengthen and support the work of all relief organisations.



SUNDAY'S READINGS

Entrance Antiphon Cf Psalm 24:1-3

To you, I lift up my soul, O my God.
In you, I have trusted; let me not be put to shame.
Nor let my enemies exult over me;
and let none who hope in you be put to shame.

First Reading Isaiah 63:16-17; 64:1. 3-8

You, Lord, yourself are our Father, Our Redeemer is your ancient name. Why, Lord, leave us to stray from your ways and harden our hearts against fearing you? Return, for the sake of your servants, the tribes of your inheritance. Oh, that you would tear the heavens open and come down - at your Presence the mountains would melt. No ear has heard, no eye has seen any god but you act like this for those who trust him. You guide those who act with Integrity and keep your ways in mind. You were angry when we were sinners; we had long been rebels against you. We were all like men unclean, all that integrity of ours like filthy clothing. We have all withered like leaves and our sins blew us away like the wind. No one invoked your name or roused himself to catch hold of you. For you hid your face from us and gave us up to the power of our sins. And yet, Lord, you are our Father; we the clay, you the potter, we are all the work of your hand.

Responsorial Psalm Ps 79:2-3. 15-16. 18-19 R. v.4

(R.) Lord, make us turn to you, let us see your face and we shall be saved.

Second Reading 1 Corinthians 1:3-9

May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ send you grace and peace. I never stop thanking God for all the graces you have received through Jesus Christ. I thank him that you have been enriched in so many ways, especially in your teachers and preachers; the witness to Christ has indeed been strong among you so that you will not be without any of the gifts of the Spirit while you are waiting for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed; and he will keep you steady and without blame until the last day, the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, because God by calling you has joined you to his Son, Jesus Christ; and God is faithful.

Gospel Acclamation Psalm 84:8

Alleluia, alleluia!

Lord, show us your mercy and love,
and grant us your salvation.

Alleluia!

Gospel Mark 13:33-37

Jesus said to his disciples: 'Be on your guard, stay awake, because you never know when the time will come. It is like a man travelling abroad: he has gone from home, and left his servants in charge, each with his own task; and he has told the doorkeeper to stay awake. So stay awake, because you do not know when the master of the house is coming, evening, midnight, cockcrow, dawn; if he comes unexpectedly, he must not find you asleep. And what I say to you I say to all: Stay awake!'

IN OUR PRAYERS

Anniversaries: John Fitzgerald, Gustave & Helen Deltoer.

Sick: Bishop Peter Ingham, Peter Champion, Anne-Maree Nevil, Nicole Eve Van de Gard, **Lana** Zalmic, Lucy Rappa and Michael Chiu



BAPTISM

We welcome into our parish faith family the newly baptised

Zoe Isabel Gutierrez and Reuben Norman Ho
Please keep them and their families in your prayers.

HOLY HOUR EVENING



You are warmly invited to join us for an hour of guided Eucharistic Adoration.

TIME

7.30pm

DATE

12th
December

LOCATION

St Leonard's
Naremburn

ARRIVE FROM 7PM FOR A CUPPA

Discover Peace in His Presence
Uplifting Melodies that Stir the Soul
A Moment for Your Innermost Prayers
Escape and Encounter



Vinnies Christmas Appeal

 St Vincent de Paul Society
good works

This Christmas, Australia's cost of living crisis is hitting families hard and we need your help urgently. National figures show that 5,000 people turn to Vinnies for help every single day. This is an 18% increase on the number of people coming to Vinnies for assistance, with many people needing to ask for help for the very first time. Many people find Christmas to be a very difficult time and cannot afford even the basic necessities as costs spiral out of control. Can you please help? Your donation is vital.

Please consider making a donation this weekend.

Christmas Masses

Christmas Eve Mass Times

St Leonard's Church Naremburn

5.30pm Carols/ 6pm Family & Youth Mass

This Mass will include a Nativity Play & Music by
SPN & Youth Choir

10.30pm Carols/11pm PNGCCAA Mass

St Thomas' Church Willoughby

6pm Family Mass with a Nativity Play

11.30pm Carols/ 12 midnight Mass

Royal North Shore Hospital

4pm Mass

Christmas Day Mass Times

St Philip Neri Church North Bridge

9am Mass

St Thomas' Church Willoughby

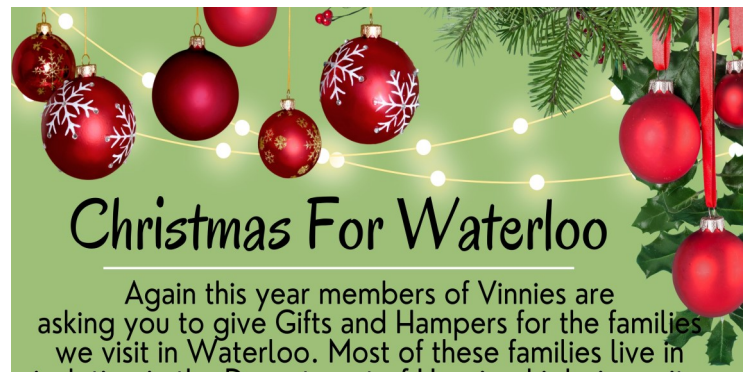
8am & 9.30am Mass

St Leonard's Church Naremburn

10.30am Mass

Please note all Sunday Morning
Masses over the 3 communities on
Christmas Eve will remain

- 9am St Philip Neri
- 8am & 9.30am St Thomas'
- 10.30am St Leonard's



Christmas For Waterloo

Again this year members of Vinnies are asking you to give Gifts and Hampers for the families we visit in Waterloo. Most of these families live in isolation in the Department of Housing high rise units.

For many years now our parish has generously given to these families bringing some joy into their lives for Christmas. For this they have always expressed sincere gratitude.

This year with the increase in food prices etc; the people we serve and of course the homeless cannot afford any treats or luxuries.

You have already given generously to the homeless and now we are asking for your help again. Under the Christmas tree you will find cards with suggestions for hampers. There will be cards on the tree if you wish to give gifts.

Please place your GIFTS or HAMPERS under the tree on the 9th & 10th December in each church so that they can be distributed in time for Christmas.

Thank you
June, Helen & Lynda



Join us for an evening of Reconciliation & Prayer



During Advent let us come together in prayer and restore peace in our hearts and lives. Take some timeout to reflect on the message of hope as we prepare to welcome Jesus into our hearts and homes this Christmas.

Date: Tuesday 12th December Time: 7:30 PM - 8:30 PM
St Leonard's Church Including Adoration

Date: Wednesday 20th December Time: 7:00PM - 8:30 PM
St Thomas' Church Including Rosary & Adoration

Latest from Letefoho

Thank you to all parishioners who continue to support students of Letefoho. This year LETS has sponsored 92 senior high school students, out of 289 school students and 69 tertiary education students, including 2 seminarians. Nine of the tertiary students sponsored will graduate this year!

In December, reminder letters will be sent regarding the fees for next year.

Our Lady of Mt Carmel School is growing in numbers and expanding in buildings. The Year 12 students from 2022 assisted in the building of a large covered outdoor area for school assemblies and meetings. This is where Maggy and I met with the students in November. This year Year 12 students are building new security gates and fence, as their token of "giving back" to the school and Parish, in gratitude for their education.



More projects will be updated next weekend.

Please read Maggy's November visit report - through the eyes of a first time visitor to Letefoho. Copies in the Church.

Lao ho Maromak, Georgina admin@lets.net.au



December EVENTS 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
STT- St Thomas 'Church SPN- St Philip Neri Church STL- St Leonard's Church					1 Healing Mass with Anointing STT 9am	2
3 1st Sun of Advent Youth Mass STL 6pm Family Mass STT 9.30am	4	5	6 Rosary STT 7pm SPN School Graduation	7	8	9
10 2nd Sun of Advent	11	12 Reconciliation & Prayer STL 7.30pm STT School Graduation	13 Rosary STT 7pm	14	15	16 Healing Mass with Anointing STL 9am
17 3rd Sun of Advent Youth Mass STL 6pm	18	19	20 Reconciliation & Prayer STT 7pm	21	22	23
24 Christmas Eve 31	25 Christmas Day	26	27 Rosary STT 7pm	28	29	30

PARISH SCHEDULE

	St Thomas' Willoughby	St Leonard's Naremburn	St Philip Neri Northbridge
Weekend Masses	6.00pm Vigil Saturday 8.00am & 9.30am Sunday	10.30am Sunday 6.00pm Sunday (Youth Mass)	5.00pm Vigil Saturday 9.00am Sunday
Weekday Masses	9.00am: Mon – Sat	9.00am: Tue, Thu, Sat	9.15am: Mon, Wed, Fri
Adoration	Tuesday: 9.30am - 10.30am	Saturday: 9.30am - 10.00am	
Reconciliation	Saturday: 5.15pm - 5.45pm	Saturday: 9.30am - 10.00am	Saturday: 4.15pm - 5.00pm
Healing Mass	9.00am on First Friday (Divine Mercy & Adoration)	9.00am on 3 rd Saturday	
Baptism	11.00am on 2nd and 4th Sunday	12pm on 4th Sunday	10.30am on 3rd Sunday
Children's Liturgy	9.30am Sunday (during school term)		9.00am 4 th Sunday (Family Mass)
Rosary	8.30am Mon-Fri 7.00pm Wednesday	9.30am Tue, Thu, Sat	9.45am Mon, Wed, Fri

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Letefoho - notes.

The district of Letefoho, which our parish has supported for over 10 years is about 3 hours out from Dili, the capital of Timor Leste, on very rough roads. It's in the mountains some 1500m above sea level so not too hot and quite cool at night. The area has a population of about 30,000 in 65 villages, and the village of Letefoho has about 600 people spread out randomly. It was incredibly dry and dusty, so I was rather dirty quite a lot of the time.

Time and arrangements are a rather fluid concept and there is a lot of talking about doing something and it is guaranteed to be considerably later than planned.

Most people are very poor, and the houses are mostly a larger room with curtains separating areas and a separate kitchen with a fire - a lot of fumes and smoke.

The people tend to be very thin due to a lack of protein and are quite small. They live mainly on rice and limited seasonal vegetables, with occasional chicken. Very little fruit and no dairy products.

The villagers walk to a well to collect water and wash their clothes there. There is a water project which is nearly complete, which will pump water from a well in a valley below the village to provide running water. Most equipment such as poles, electrical cables and pump had to be carried down a steep hill by hand and erected manually.

Electricity is usually off for some hours every day but there is a generator for the priests' residency and the accommodation connected to the new community hall near it, where Georgina, who I accompanied, and I stayed. If there is no electricity there is no running water as it needs to be pumped. Bottled water is drunk, and showering consists of a large plastic garbage bin filled with cold water and a scoop to throw it over yourself.

The people are so appreciative of the fact that we have left our country, family & friends to come all this way to visit them and for the ongoing support which has made so many positive changes. Thus, when one visits any group there is much welcoming, usually involving bowing & kissing of our hands & often singing and a meal presented.

When we visited the Catholic senior high school (Our Lady of Mt Carmel) the students, about 210, were all lined up, we were dressed in traditional clothes, and they sang and danced. We looked at the school including the "multi-media room" which consists of several battered desks, an old projector and 30 computers in plastic boxes, to protect from the dust, not connected to internet with a couple of old typing and very basic maths programs.

There is no science or other equipment at all, teaching is purely a teacher talking and chalk painting on a board. We had a big, and long, meeting (everyone likes meetings, and many have their say in great detail....) about problems and what they would like LETS to provide next – all very practical.

We saw the small pig farm, 7 pigs, where there was a consultant from Dili who was giving the message that if you buy good feed for them, the pigs will grow better.

Various NGOs visit and organisations donate across the district eg heavy duty 4 wheel drives and small trucks. LETS has also purchased vehicles for them, as vehicles are usually 2nd hand and get battered about on the dreadful roads. There is a Belgian couple living at accommodation near us here who are volunteering for 2 years as school consultants trying to improve teaching methods.

We were taken to a very remote village called Hatu-Lete nearly 2 hours further up in the mountains which was, for a significant part of the way, almost undrivable, so incredibly bumpy, eroded away, narrow and on edge of vertical drops into the valley. As we arrived people appeared, walking from the surrounding countryside and along the road. The chapel is the most solid building with maybe 20 houses spread randomly around, perhaps 150 people crowded around to welcome us with big smiles and bowing and kissing hands.

We were taken into a house and served a mixture of foods, including fried root vegetables & of all things, popcorn. Coffee is always available & is kept in thermoses. The people had waited patiently outside the chapel. Having the priest come plus us is a special day and they always dress up for Mass. During Mass Georgina and I were presented with tais, traditional hand-woven scarf/skirt like garments and thanked for coming to visit and the support of LETS for the kids to be able to attend school. LETS has supported 18 children from Hatu-Lete to complete their education.

Our visit coincided with a couple of significant events. One was a large gathering of youth from the area to join together for faith-based activities and the other was the annual commemoration of the massacre of Timorese by Indonesian soldiers at Santa Cruze on 12/11/1991. The Papal Nuncio- who is the Pope's representative for all of Oceania, and lives in Dili made his first trip to Letefoho to talk to the youth and also for the remembrance.

The evening the Nuncio arrived all the youth, plus villagers walked up to a "Cristo Rae" a giant statue of Christ the King ... and I mean up, firstly way out of the village and then up a couple of hundred steep steps - with the altitude one is certainly huffing and puffing by the top. There are quite a number of crosses and chapels, always on top of steep hills, in the Letefoho region. A beautiful setting as you can see 360 degrees across the valleys and clusters of tiny villages linked by winding roads. Then to climb down the steps...

Sunday morning was a huge Mass, it was supposed to start maybe 8.30 or 9am but when it was about to start another official aid was to be coming so we all waited as he arrived & was offered coffee & food. This waiting around is a common occurrence. People walked hours to attend. The beautifully decorated Church was overflowing with the brightly dressed congregation. It seems to be a genetic trait everyone can, and does, sing beautifully, mostly unaccompanied. There were also various officials from the district - Government and local.

After the actual Mass the speeches began, and continued on and on - and of course at one stage Georgina and I, who were seated with the officials, had to be brought onto the altar with the Nuncio and presented with tais and thanked for all the contributions from LETS.

As it was an official service the Mass was in Portuguese (even though the Nuncio speaks Tetum) with the sermon translated by Fr Elio into Tetum, it was very long. The speeches were in Tetum. This all took about 3 hours and probably about 800 people stood or sat - the hundreds of kids on stone floor without noise or wriggling, women on one side men on the other. After the ceremony the officials went back and had a meal, served by nuns who waited around the edge of the room as you eat. First time in my life I have been served by nuns!

I had expected to just do an inspection of the girls' boarding house but when we got there about 15 girls were lined up and sang to us in welcome. We were given tais & then had a meeting including asking them what they would like - comments included musical instruments and English lessons.

The boys & girls' boarding houses are built out of concrete - very simple including a large room with double bunks, sadly little maintenance so a number of bunks are broken in the room and left. Also, in the hall in the old part of the boys' house the ceiling has half collapsed due to water leaking in during the very wet season. The new part is not damaged so all the bunks are there. Maintenance is also an issue in the bathrooms with some broken taps & doors.

The kitchen is a simple room with a bench which has sort of little fireplaces with a metal plate and big pots cooking mainly rice and very limited vegetables. The problem is a lot of the smoke and fumes just circulate and is inhaled. This along with the dust everywhere is poor health wise, especially combined with poor nutrition.

A big problem is the fact that after independence the Government decided Portuguese should be the official language but most kids don't speak it. They only Tetum so the text books, which are way too hard, are in Portuguese and the kids in school struggle to understand, and many teachers have limited Portuguese. There is a real shortage of books written in Tetum for teenagers. The "library" in the girls boarding house, a dusty room with a collection of ancient, donated adult novels in English which I would struggle with plus other rubbish, eg old calendars and magazines. Very few of the kids or adults in the village spoke any English at all... a problem when they want to leave. The kids want to learn basic English, it's just there is no one to teach them.

We visited another large village in the Letefofo parish, Eraulo, and saw the progress of the very large chapel being built. It will be spectacular when the finished and has been constructed so far with thousands of hours of hard, manual labor. I was amazed by the size of the windows where the stained glass windows will be Stations of the Cross, bigger than anything I have seen.

It was a wonderful experience to be able to see how life really is and the important difference LETS is making in the area.

Maggy

Advent starts this Sunday, heralding a new church year and the Year B cycle of liturgical readings at Mass.

No season of the year is more at odds with our Australian culture than Advent. The advertising blitz for the Christmas shopping binge is in full swing, secular Christmas music is everywhere, neighbourhood streets become ablaze with Christmas lights and good cheer. We easily forget the true meaning of Christmas, the birth of our Messiah, so lost on many today. Then suddenly, all the commercial Christmas glitz disappears Christmas night makes way for Boxing Day sales, the Sydney to Hobart yacht race is on and the summer holidays are in full swing.

Yes, it's a crazy time of the year; school graduation ceremonies, concerts, farewells. Workplaces celebrating end-of-the year parties. We are preoccupied with plans for Christmas day feasting and summer holidays. For many, there's a spirit of indulgence in the air, congruent with the languor of balmy summer days ahead. For others the struggle is just to keep their lives together, with living costs causing enormous stress for so many. In 2023 we are all overshadowed by a darker world with wars, conflict, and social division. Will we simply let Advent pass by unnoticed?



What does our Church say about Advent?

Advent is the twofold coming of Christ. The season where we prepare ourselves in heart and mind, to remember the first coming of the Son of God, through his Incarnation (God becomes human), **and** to joyfully anticipate his second coming at the end of time.¹

Our Advent liturgy tells its own story.

Advent begins on the Sunday on or nearest to 30th November and ends before the evening prayer on Christmas Eve. Depending on the day of the week that Christmas falls, the number of days vary but there are always four Sundays. **This year the 4th Sunday of Advent falls on 24th December, Christmas Eve.**

Our **music** settings and hymns change, they're anticipatory, reflecting simplicity and restraint. We hear lovely hymns like the age-old *O Come O Come Emmanuel* and, *Creator of the Stars of Night*. The Gloria is not said or sung this season.

The **colour violet** springs up everywhere denoting a season of penance, humility, and prayer as we await Christ's birth.

The **Advent wreath** is an evergreen circular wreath signifying continuous life, the eternity of God who has no beginning or end. Each week of Advent, we will light one of the 4 candles, 3 purple and one rose, representing the 4 weeks of Advent: hope, faith, joy (rose) and peace. The white candle placed in the middle of the wreath is lit on Christmas Eve. This candle is called the "Christ Candle" and represents the life of Christ.

The Advent Sunday readings

The Sunday Mass readings are centred on the **Gospel** readings.

1st Sunday heralds the end times. (*The second coming*)

2nd and 3rd Sundays highlight the mission of John the Baptist,

4th Sunday turns attention to the forthcoming Nativity of Christ.

The **Old Testament** readings consist of messianic prophecies, mostly from Isaiah, while the **second readings** are season-related extracts from the writings of the Apostles.

Take a little time during each week this Advent to read through the Sunday readings and see this story unfold.

(UNLYGRC #39, 1969)

Ref: <https://www.catholic.au/s/article/Advent-and-Christmas>

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Take a little time during each week this Advent to read through the Sunday readings and see this story unfold.

Here are some ideas to help you focus on the Advent season this year.

We have put together a music play list of Advent music both old and new. Take a little time out, listen in the car, out walking, at home, to help you focus on this wonderful season of Advent. Keep the Christmas carols to later in Advent. <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/4NkqWPgXx4VeVwwcoqQxbf?si=e9771d18ae38423b>

Have a listen to the popular Fr Mike Schmitz on the true meaning of Advent (**8mins**). https://youtu.be/WD357YYDk1A?si=576WFL5_gll_QeBj

Partake in an Advent prayer study at home or with others. Eg <https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/advent/>

Spend calming prayer time with Jesus in the Advent Holy Hour 7.30pm Dec 12, St Leonards Church.

Go to confession.

Get to a local Handel's Messiah concert, specifically written as an Oratorio to be performed during Advent.



Broken Bay Diocese
FILIPINO CHAPLAINCY

Simbang Gabi 2023

CHRISTMAS NOVENA
LAUNCH MASS

SATURDAY | **09** | AT 7:00 PM
DEC

OUR LADY OF DOLOURS CHATSWOOD PARISH

Fellowship & Short Program follow from 8 - 9 PM

DAWN MASSES

Chatswood

16 - 24 DEC | 5:30 AM
OUR LADY OF DOLOUR PARISH
94 ARCHER ST CHATSWOOD

EVENING MASSES

Waitara & Dee Why

15 - 23 DEC 2023
7:00 PM 7:30 PM
HORNSBY CATHEDRAL ST KEVIN'S CHURCH
23 YARDLEY AVE, WAITARA 50 OAKS AVENUE DEE WHY

TRIDUUM MASS

Wyong

21-23 DEC 2023 | 7:00 PM
ST CECILIA CHURCH
23 BYRON ST. WYONG





CATHOLIC VOCATIONS
BROKEN BAY

Calling all Young Adults
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MERRYCHRISTMAS
HOLY HOUR
&
DINNER PARTY

Thursday evening, December 14

Holy Hour at 6:00pm

Dinner at 7:00pm

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